



# Media News

Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa

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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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### Outside the Ballot Box

Southern Africa *News*..... P1

**25 years Zimbabwe: "New breed of journalist has emerged"**

Zimbabwe *Background*.....P2

### Treasures of Bidoc

Southern Africa *Portrait*.....P4

### A Zambian journalist in Swaziland

Swaziland .....P6

### The NSJ Exchange Programme

Southern Africa *Information*.....P7

**Gender Links: "No longer a lone cry"**

Southern Africa *Partner Profile*.....P10

### Outside the Ballot Box

#### News

A comparative analysis of six countries in the Southern African region where elections took place in 2004/5 suggests that five of these countries are one-party elected states. In these countries ruling parties have consistently won all national elections since the holding of their first multiparty elections.

The African National Congress (ANC) has ruled in South Africa since its first non-racial democratic election in 1994, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has ruled in Zimbabwe since its first independence election in 1980, the South

West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) has ruled in Namibia since its first independence election in 1990, the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELMO) has won every election since the country's first multiparty election in 1994 and the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has ruled since the country's first independence election in 1965.



Malawi is the only exception to this trend and at the other end of the spectrum. Instead of being dominated by a strong ruling party, it is characterised by the extreme fragmentation of political parties resulting from a severe lack of intra-party democracy. Many of these parties are controlled by dominant leaders who exert power through patronage to loyal officials and supporters, with little or any cohesion derived from shared policy positions.

These and other observations are contained in a book to be launched in the SADC region in the near future. *Outside the Ballot Box : Preconditions for Elections in Southern Africa 2004/5* is the product of a collaboration among five organisations: the Netherlands Institute of Southern Africa (NiZA), the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos).

*Preconditions*

The book will be launched at a conference in South Africa in mid-June, itself another element of this inter-organisational collaboration. After conducting a feasibility study last year, the five organisations have decided to launch a joint project to be called the *Preconditions for Elections Project in Southern Africa* (PEPSA). PEPSA will annually publish a book analysing pre-electoral conditions in the SADC region. Each edition will focus on those countries that held or are scheduled to hold elections in the previous and current year of publication. An annual Observatory Conference is also to be held at which preconditions for elections will be monitored and discussed.



A specialised monitoring tool is being developed to track elections and preconditions for elections for this purpose. Studies are

also being conducted in a number of Southern Africa countries to identify projects and activities that will help to broaden and strengthen the struggle for democratisation – defined by some in PEPSA as a fundamental return to the notion of ‘government of the people, by the people and for the people’.

All the articles in the book, as is the case with the monitoring tool and the country studies, are written or being conducted by experts in the SADC region, with funding support from allies in the North. NiZA has provided the funding for the book. The sensitive issue of donor involvement and support in Africa is itself a sub-theme in some articles. To what degree can a country own its own history, processes and institutions when it is unable to fund them, or fund them alone?

The PEPSA project intends to work on a number of inter-connected levels in the years to come. It will work with formal electoral institutions and others at the level of state, and

it will work with grassroots organisations, where the issues of development, poverty alleviation, service delivery, respect for human rights and a real space for civil society to influence democratic transformation, are the real tests of whether ordinary people in Africa are benefiting from multiparty rule.

By Jeanette Minnie

*Outside the Ballot Box: Preconditions for Elections in Southern Africa 2004/5.*

*Edited by Jeanette Minnie, an international Freedom of Expression Consultant from South Africa. © 2005 Published by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).*

Information on the PEPSA programme and its partners: [www.mpobservatory.org/](http://www.mpobservatory.org/)  
<http://www.mpobservatory.org/mpo/about.htm>

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## 25 years Zimbabwe: 'New breed of journalist has emerged'

Background

The shelves at Kingstons, Zimbabwe's leading bookchain, that used to stock scores of magazines and newspapers, are now filled with files, photo albums and notebooks.

The only local magazines available are the Catholic-owned *Moto*, and the *New Farmer* and *Zimbabwe Traveller*, both published by Zimbabwe Newspapers. There are only three international magazines: *New African*, *African Business* and *Newsweek*.

The dailies: *The Herald*, the *Chronicle*, *The Daily Mirror* and the weeklies: *The Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard*; and occasionally the *Mail and Guardian* and the *Sunday Times* of South Africa, are available at the counter.

The few newspapers and magazines in Zimbabwe's bookshops reflect the dwindling reading material now available to Zimbabweans because of the government's clampdown on the media, particularly over the last five years.

Zimbabweans are avid readers, but the limited choice of reading material coupled with the ever-escalating prices of publications, have seen circulations of newspapers and magazines tumble with some closing down. Journalism itself has suffered.

The media in Zimbabwe has gone through three distinct phases over the last 25 years. The first phase was characterized by self-censorship. This was followed by more daring, investigative journalism and finally by a concerted government clampdown on the media. Sadly this final phase has been accompanied by more irresponsible journalism because of the emergence of a new breed of journalist-cum-political activist.

#### *Euphoria*

The first seven years of Zimbabwe's independence was marked by self-censorship, largely because of the independence euphoria, which gripped the media. Though there had been four dailies at independence, two: the *Zimbabwe Times* and the *Drums of Zimbabwe* died shortly after the elections because they had lost relevance.

*The Times* supported ZAPU, which was now part of the government of national unity while the *Drums* supported Bishop Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council, which was trounced in the elections ending up with only three seats. Even *Moto* that had consistently supported the ruling ZANU-PF, which was shunned by all the other media, was forced to transform from a weekly to a monthly magazine.

The new government consolidated its control on the local media by acquiring the Argus group of South Africa's stake in Zimbabwe

Newspapers as well as the South African Press Association's entire stake in the national news agency Ziana. As the majority shareholder, the government appointed editors to all the main newspapers thus making them beholden to the state.

#### *New era*

This jinx was broken in 1988, a year after the signing of the unity accord between ZAPU and ZANU-PF, when the *Chronicle* broke the Willowvale motor scandal. Government ministers had been taking advantage of a shortage of cars to cash in on the government-owned Willowvale Motor Industries. Five ministers lost their jobs.

Though the editor of the *Chronicle* Geoffrey Nyarota was fired after the scandal, clearly indicating that the government did not tolerate that kind of journalism, his expose opened a new era. Apart from a few gaffes, this period saw the development of more aggressive and in-depth journalism.

New publications such as *Horizon*, the *Sunday Times*, *The Daily Gazette*, the *Zimbabwe Independent*, and *The Standard* came up. But though readers welcomed the new publications and their circulations soared, with *The Daily Gazette* reaching 55 000 copies a day, business did not support them. They closed down one after the other with the exception of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard*.

Business was still in its cocoon when Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), which aimed to take Zimbabwe Newspapers, head-on, was established. ANZ was forced to close its provincial papers, one by one because of mounting debts and lack of advertising support. Even its flagship, *The Daily News* was about to close when it was bailed out first by the Media Institute of Southern Africa's media development fund and later by business tycoon Strive Masiyiwa.

#### *Cocoon*

It was, however, the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the

strongest opposition party in the country's history, together with the defeat of the ruling ZANU-PF in a national referendum in February 2000, and the farm invasions thereafter that pulled the white business community out of their cocoon and saved the Daily News. It offered them a platform to air their views. Its circulation more than trebled within weeks and the paper failed to accommodate all advertising on offer.

But the government, which had hired Jonathan Moyo, as its propaganda chief began its clampdown on the opposition and the privately-owned media. It introduced the inappropriately named Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

AIPPA required that all publications and journalists to be registered with the government-appointed Media and Information Commission. *The Daily News* refused to register and challenged the constitutionality of the Act and was closed down when it lost its case in the Supreme Court. Two other publications, *The Tribune* and the *Weekly Times* were subsequently closed under AIPPA.

#### *Good and bad*

Using typical divide-and-rule tactics Moyo created two types of journalists: the good and the bad; the good being those who worked for the state media mostly a new breed of inexperienced young journalists who were rewarded for their loyalty to Moyo rather than their professionalism; and the bad, being those who worked for the private media.

Journalists swallowed the bait. Some broke away from the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) to form the Independent Association of Journalists. Journalism ethics were thrown out of the window and a new form of journalist-cum-political activist emerged.

ZUJ founder-member Christopher Muzavazi, who rose to become one of the secretaries at the Institute of Journalism in Prague in the

1990s, lamented the present media situation thus: "ZUJ sought to promote journalism as a profession by encouraging training and working within an accepted code of practice and conduct. I find the new environment a threat to journalism as a profession. I don't understand it when individuals think they can openly champion political causes and still consider themselves impartial journalists. I have come across new terms, independent journalists, independent media. Independent from whom? This I find a delusional concept."

This is the sad state of Zimbabwean journalism today.

*By Charles Rukuni*

*Charles Rukuni is a journalism trainer and Bulawayo bureau chief of the Financial Gazette. <http://www.fingaz.co.zw/> He has also initiated the website Insiderzim <http://www.insiderzim.com>*

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## Treasures of Bidoc

### Portrait

Everybody interested in southern Africa, from students and journalists to development workers, should be familiar with Bidoc, the Library, Information and Documentation centre of the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NiZA). For the centre offers a lot of information on and from the region.

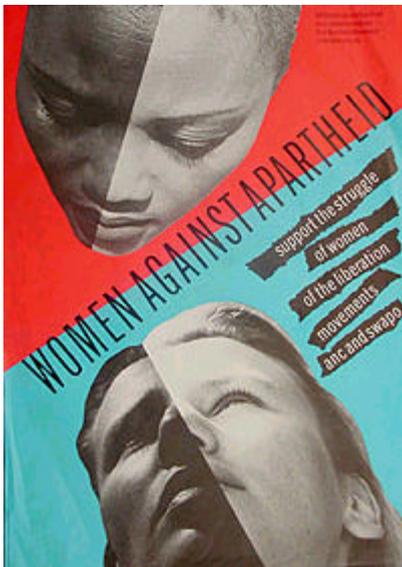


*NiZA's Bidoc*

The Bidoc collection includes 60,000 referenced articles and documents, 5,000

books, 175 subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals, travel guides, photographs and slides and more than 1,000 documentaries and television items. So for anybody looking for material on southern Africa NiZA's Bidoc is a good place to start.

Historians may delve into one of the main treasures of Bidoc. Tucked away in the basement of the NiZA building in Amsterdam you will find the archives of the Dutch former solidarity and anti-apartheid organisations that merged into NiZA in 1997 and of other groups that fought against apartheid from the 1960s well into the 1990s.



*Bidoc also has a large collection of Anti-apartheid posters*

Kier Schuringa has been collecting material for one of these groups from the early 1970s and continued this work for NiZA's Bidoc. According to Schuringa the documents of the former solidarity groups are very interesting for researchers. A scholar from Utrecht has used the archives to analyse the Dutch attitude towards political prisoners in South Africa, and a South African professor used the collection for his research into the arms embargo against his country.

#### *Current issues*

Since Bidoc's birth, however, the archivists, rather than just collecting material on South

Africa have broadened their attention to what is happening today in the whole of southern Africa. "While collecting information, Bidoc focuses on issues that NiZA is involved in, such as media freedom, human rights, democratisation, gender relations, as well as more specific topics like conflict diamonds and the crisis in Zimbabwe," says Schuringa.

Besides keeping track of topics that fit under NiZA's umbrella, Bidoc also documents issues that NiZA isn't directly involved in but which are important enough to keep track of, such as HIV/Aids or land policy. With such a sizeable interesting and broad collection the main question is how to lay hands on this vast amount of knowledge.

Some of it can be accessed through the NiZA website. The last few years Bidoc has been actively searching the web for papers, and NiZA's website presents hundreds of links to sites on and from southern Africa. The rest of the collection is categorized in computerized databases that can only be accessed at the offices of Bidoc.

#### *Specific questions*

Those who are not able to visit Amsterdam can send Bidoc an e-mail. "Ask us a question and we will make sure you receive a list of sources that are relevant to your question," says Schuringa. "Just make sure your question is specific. Recently somebody asked us what had changed in South Africa over the past ten years. Queries like that are interesting but difficult to answer."

Schuringa emphasizes that partner organisations of NiZA may call on Bidoc as well. "A lot of partner organisations don't have the time or capacity to collect material. For them it's usually a sideline. At Bidoc we have three documentalists who collect and select all day long."

There is much knowledge at Bidoc and a great willingness to share it. The collection keeps expanding as every week people walk in with

books, videos or magazines that they want to donate to Bidoc. There is one type of material Schuringa is really looking for. Schuringa: “We would be very grateful if partner organisations and other NGOs send us copies of their research that hasn’t received international attention or wasn’t posted on the internet. That would be a great contribution to our collection.”

*By Elles van Gelder*

*For more information:  
www.niza.nl/bidoc*

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*The NSJ exchange programme in practice*

## **A Zambian journalist in Swaziland**

The NSJ exchange programme in practice

“Respect, courtesy and patience are the key to understanding one another and even when language and culture gaps may divide us, sharing a common interest will see us meet as strangers and part as friends,” is the wise statement from the Ministry of Tourism in Swaziland. It is like the statement was directed at the Southern African Media Training Trust NSJ to introduce a programme for journalists in the SADC region to enable them interact and share experiences.

Late last year, NSJ introduced the programme with an objective to provide print and broadcast journalists with expertise, skills, ideas and experience in their respective areas of specialisation. It was also meant to start a network of skilled journalists who would later share and discuss experiences for the betterment of their profession.

The *Swazi Observer* Editor-in-Chief, Musa Ndlangamandla, noted that the exchange

programme was an important component in training that would not only stimulate a sharing of experiences and skills among journalists but also foster unity in the SADC region.

“If Africa is to unite, journalists should play a vital role. And if they are to play this role, they have to learn and understand each other’s countries. Negative reports from reporters who do not understand or know the social, culture and economy of our countries feed wrong information to the public. It is only through such programmes that we shall get correct and better interaction among journalists,” said Ndlangamandla.

*Pilot participants*

I happened to be among the first pilot participants of the exchange programme and I was selected to go to Swaziland, a country qualifying as Africa’s best kept secret and indeed one of Africa’s only three monarchies still surviving on the continent.

Here I joined two male journalists from Zimbabwe, Fidelis Zvomuya and Stanley Tederera at the *Swazi Observer*. We were accommodated in a three bed-roomed house at the Castle hotel right in the Tembelihle mountains of this Kingdom. Staying in one house with these two journalists and being able to relate to each other well and carry out house chores after work was an experience in itself. However, we got along together. As it turned out the exchange programme gave me an opportunity to learn how the Swazis rejoice in their traditions; how they staunchly safeguard their rich culture, and conserve their natural heritage for future generations. A trip to Swaziland is indeed a journey into the rich cultural depths of Swazi life.

But it was not an easy trip. I was to be a journalist in a foreign land, with a language I hardly spoke or understood. The house style of my paper was new, co-workers and supervisors were total strangers and hardest of them all I had no news sources. But with or

without these I was determined to give a diary every morning which I would meet and execute.

The Swazi people, I discovered, are warm, friendly and will respond to all questions about their culture. They are hospitable too to a point they make you feel a 'royal experience'.

#### *Communication*

The Swazi people are extremely committed to their language. I recall one day going for an assignment at which all the speeches were delivered in Siswati. I almost came out with no story! But through initiative – interviews, translations here and there I was able to come out with a story.

Naturally I dreaded answering the phone in the newsroom because each time I did I would be greeted with Siswati words – 'Unjaani sissy, nikuluma nabaani?' and then the caller would go into details in Siswati. I had no problem with greetings but to expect me to conduct a full conversation in the language was out of my depth.

Communication was even more difficult in rural areas. By the time I was winding up, I felt the need for this programme to continue and afford other journalists an opportunity to explore other countries' cultures, social life and learn how to break communication barriers.

While in Swaziland I learnt and understood that a journalist is one anywhere, and that one worth their salt will always break all barriers and get news and report it to readers of the English language!

#### *Jaywalking*

Just a week before the end of the course, Stanley was picked up by the Royal Swazi Police for jaywalking. At the police station Stanley adamantly told the officers to put posters around Swaziland alerting people especially visitors about 'jaywalking'. "I am not paying the 60 Emalangi. Just take me to

court and then to prison," Stanley arrogantly told the police officers who were now getting annoyed with him.

I recalled what Lomalangeni Dlamini, a journalist with Trans World Radio had advised me: "This is Swaziland, my dear, and this is a Swazi way of doing things, you don't rush or try to be more clever than the citizens."

*By Christeter Macha*

*Christeter Macha is a Zambian journalist.  
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*Read also: The NSJ Exchange Programme*

## **The NSJ Exchange Programme**

### Information

The NSJ Southern African Media Training Trust Exchange Programme started last year and so far has proved popular and successful. So far the programme has accommodated 15 participants. They have been attached to ten different institutions, which include newspapers, and broadcast institutions within the southern African region.



The aim of the exchange programme is to expose journalists to

other media institutions within the region to exchange expertise, skills, ideas and culture. It is also an avenue for establishing a network of skilled journalists, able to share and discuss experiences for the betterment of their profession. This programme will also avail exchange programme participants access to different types of democracies within the region and to further gain better understanding of governance in southern African region.

Through this programme it is hoped that journalists will gain experience different from their own house styles and be able to

disseminate what they learn to colleagues upon their return home. The NSJ Trust hopes to use the exchange programme as an alternative means of sharing experiences, cultural values and learning democratic practices.

Journalists from both print and broadcast media interested in learning through attachment to other media institutions within the Southern African region are eligible. Applications will be accepted throughout the year and consideration will be given to early applications while scholarships last.

Placement is still on going as more journalists are now aware of our programme. Countries from the southern region of Africa are welcome to participate and these include - Zambia, Malawi, Angola, Botswana, Swaziland, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho.

*By Donna Mpengula*

*Donna Mpengula is Training Coordinator NSJ Trust*

Applications forms and/or more information:

The Training Manager on email:

[nsj@nsjtraining.org](mailto:nsj@nsjtraining.org)

The application forms are available on the website: [www.nsjtraining.org](http://www.nsjtraining.org)

Read also: A Zambian journalist in Swaziland

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## **Gender Links: 'No longer a lone cry'**

Partner Profile

Founded in March 2001 by gender and media activists, Gender Links has grown from strength to strength through its wide network of partnerships with media houses, advocacy and training institutions, all brought together at a landmark Gender and Media Summit in September 2004 that led to the formation of the Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (GEMSA).

A few months after we moved into our new offices in Bruma Lake on the east side of Johannesburg, our neighbours, who specialise in helping women to shed unwanted cellulite,

paid us a visit. They had noticed the Gender Links logo: the male and female symbol "linked." Concluding that we must be a dating agency, they arrived with a business proposition: they could help women look beautiful, and we could help them find men! It's not a partnership that Gender Links – a Southern African NGO that promotes gender equality in and through the media – has entered into. But it does show that we are an NGO open to joint ventures of all kinds!

Among the first of these partnerships, GL formed a strategic alliance with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), which it assisted in developing a gender policy and action plan. This led to the two organisations undertaking a Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) with technical support from the Media Monitoring Project (MMP).

### *Diverse roles*

For its part GL has followed a two-prong approach: training gender advocates 'to think media', and training media advocates and practitioners 'to think gender'. Following the GMBS, GL has initiated new research on how audiences respond to the news from a gender perspective. This study, which shows that both male and female audiences would like to see women portrayed in more diverse roles, is a further powerful advocacy tool with media owners and editors resistant to change because of its perceived effect on their bottom line

Training is critical to changing attitudes in the long term. Each year, GL has taken a theme and worked with media training institutions in the region to improve reporting on the subject. Themes have included 'gender violence', 'gender, HIV/AIDS and the media' as well as 'gender, elections and the media'.

These tools have been intensively applied in pilot projects for mainstreaming gender in the work of two key media training institutions: the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and Polytechnic of Namibia. These pilot projects have produced study materials of

their own and are being replicated through a GEMSA Trainers Network. Trainers contribute case material to a Virtual Resource Centre for trainers first developed with support from NIZA using case material from the GMBS.

#### *Campaigns*

Work with gender activists has led to a training manual – 'Getting Smart: Strategic Communications for Gender Activists', produced with Women's Media Watch, the lobby and advocacy unit of the Southern African Media and Gender Institute (SAMGI).

GL, in partnership with NGOs across the region, has applied these skills in major gender justice campaigns, most notably the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence from 25 November to 10 December each year.

#### *Momentum*

With support from NIZA, GL has built its internal IT capacity through a comprehensive website, database of over 2000 contacts, list serve and e-conferencing facility. These all came into play in a major venture launched by GL, GEMSA and partner agencies across the globe to produce a daily newspaper and hold cyber dialogues during the Ten Year Review of the Beijing Conference in New York in March 2005. This resulted in a high quality publication produced by African gender and media activists being distributed around the globe and sparking off daily, inter-active debates on topical gender issues.

The formation of GEMSA, an umbrella organisation consisting of institutional members such as GL, the gender and media (GEM) networks that GL has helped to establish in eight countries, MISA, the Federation of Media Women in Southern Africa (FAMSA), the Southern African Editors Forum (SAEF), MMP as well as individual members, is a welcome sign that the clamour for gender equality in and through the media is no longer the lone cry of a few

activists but a demand that is gaining momentum.

Among the significant first activities undertaken by GEMSA country chapters was participating, on a voluntary basis in the global gender and media monitoring project coinciding with Beijing Plus Ten. The results of this one-day global monitoring of the media from a gender perspective on 16 February this year will help to benchmark Southern Africa against the globe, as well as against the findings of the GMBS two and a half years ago.

Ad hoc monitoring that has been undertaken by the networks suggests considerable improvement in both the quantity and quality of reporting on gender issues and reporting from a gender perspective, for example in elections coverage. The many eyes around Southern Africa now 'watching the watchdogs' in the media will help to make sure that there is no turning back.

*By Colleen Lowe Morna*

*Colleen Lowe Morna is Executive Director of Gender Links*

*[www.genderlinks.org.za](http://www.genderlinks.org.za)*

<http://www.genderlinks.org.za/pubs/resrepubcat.asp?scid=3> for publications on gender and media

<http://www.genderlinks.org.za/gemsa/gemsa.asp> for information on GEMSA

<http://www.genderlinks.org.za/beijing/cd-sum.asp> on the Beijing plus 10 Cyber dialogues

<http://www.samgi.org.za/About%20Us/whatwedo.htm> web-site of the Southern African Media and Gender Institute