

REPORT ON NATIONAL ELECTIONS REPORTING WORKSHOPS

Polokwane, 04 – 05 March 2004
Durban, 11 – 12 March 2004
CapeTown, 18 – 19 March 2004

Media Institute of Southern Africa – South Africa Chapter

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Development Bank of Southern Africa

International Federation of Journalists

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes

Telkom South Africa

United States Agency for International Development

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCORD	The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ANC	African National Congress
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Foundation
KZN	Kwa-Zulu Natal
MISA-SA	Media Institute of Southern Africa – South Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
SABA	Southern African Broadcasters Association
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAJA	Southern Africa Journalists Association
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. INTRODUCTION: REGIONAL ELECTORAL REPORTING WORKSHOP

Cognisant of the fact that five countries in the region would be holding national elections in 2004, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), in partnership with the Sub-Sahara Media Project of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), agreed to collaborate on a series of workshops to prepare journalists for reporting on elections in South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia.

The first workshop, for regional media editors was convened in Johannesburg in October 2003, under the auspices of the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Fund (UNESCO) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

The second workshop in the series was convened in Ormonde, Johannesburg in February 2004 with a focus on regional reporters. This workshop took place under the auspices of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), supported by the European Union's Media for Democracy Programme and represented by the Southern African Journalists Association (SAJA). Participants included journalists from both private and public media.

The final workshops in the series were conceptualised for local national reporters and editors and will be taking place in Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and Malawi during the course of 2004.

The South African national workshops took place in Polokwane, Durban and Cape Town in March 2004 with direct financial support from KAS, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolutions of Disputes (ACCORD), representing the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Telkom South Africa (Telkom S.A.) and with the support of IFJ.

There was also a workshop held for state and public broadcasters in March 2004, that was facilitated by the Southern African Broadcasters Association (SABA) with the support of ACCORD and USAID.

1.1 MONITORING

The workshops will be followed by a performance assessment in the form of election coverage analysis in order to assess the impact that the training had on journalists reportage. A follow-up workshop will be convened in 2005 by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for the journalists that attended the workshops in order to present the results of the monitoring report.

2. NATIONAL ELECTIONS REPORTING WORKSHOPS

2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The final workshops in the series, the national workshops focused on community radio and print journalists and aimed to equip community media workers with the necessary skills that would enable them to cover the elections in a balanced, pro-active and responsible manner.

The workshops took place on the following dates in the following provinces:

04 – 05 March 2004, Polokwane, Limpopo;
11 – 12 March 2004, Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal;
18 – 19 March 2004, Cape Town.

2.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The national workshops were conceptualised to meet the following objectives:

- Improve journalists' reporting during elections;
- Raise awareness and discussion around political, commercial and other influences on their reporting;
- Raise the level of information and the quality of media coverage during the election period;
- Enhance media freedom, accountability and independence as a fundamental essence of democracy; and
- Stimulate media self-monitoring during elections.

2.3 TARGET GROUP

The workshops targeted news editors/senior reporters of community media. We also targeted media that were to cover elections for the first time.

The workshops were attended by community journalists, with a bias toward community radio, although every effort was made by the organisers to ensure a balance between radio and print. The workshop was also attended by some mainstream and regional media representatives which provided community media with an opportunity to interact with their more established counter-parts. There was fairly balanced gender representivity.

The workshops were attended by a total of 55 participants. Each workshop was limited to 20 participants in order to allow for better interaction. Participants were invited from eight provinces, namely Gauteng, North-West, Mpumalanga and Limpopo (for the Polokwane workshop), Gauteng, Free State, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape (for the Durban workshop) and Western and Eastern Cape (for the Cape Town workshop). Due to transport constraints and availability of

participants, there were no representatives from the Northern Cape at any of the workshops.

2.4 METHODOLOGY

The programme was structured around formal presentations by the speakers and facilitators with time allocated for discussion. The workshops also included a practical component as participants were given assignments to work on in groups and reported in plenary sessions.

2.5 PROGRAMME

The programme structure was the same for all three workshops with some minor adjustments. The main presenters and facilitators remained the same throughout the series and travelled to the different provinces. An independent local monitor was invited in each province to provide the political and cultural dynamics of the province. A local editor from an established media house was invited to provide a broader perspective on how to cover elections.

Ms Tusi Fokane opened the workshops on behalf of MISA-SA. She welcomed all the participants, introduced partners and facilitators, and provided some background to the workshop series. Ms Gaby Neujahr from KAS made her opening remarks focusing on the regional and monitoring aspects of the series and provided information on the activities of the KAS Media Programme. Ms Neujahr urged participants to send their tapes/articles to KAS for monitoring purposes and also informed them that a representative from the Media Monitoring Project would contact them with regard to the monitoring of their reporting. Mr Jabu Mthembu from DBSA also welcomed participants and gave some background to the Development Bank as well as highlighting the Bank's interest in community media and development. Ms Titi Pitso and Ms Kemi Ogusanya from ACCORD welcomed the participants on behalf of USAID, and provided some background on the training and dispute resolution work that ACCORD carries out on the Continent. Telkom SA could not attend the workshops and requested that we flight a short video instead of a formal presentation. After thanking partners for their input, Ms Fokane introduced and handed over to the facilitators, Ms. Mary Papayya and Mr Raymond Joseph. After introductions the participants were asked to introduce themselves, their media houses and give an indication of the type of election coverage activity they had undertaken thus far, and were also asked to give an indication of their current resources . Participants were also asked to discuss their expectations of the workshop.

3. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The first presentations were from representatives of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), with the exception of Cape Town, where the IEC was not available.

3.1 ELECTIONS AND THE MEDIA

Mr Zwo Nevhutalu: Limpopo Provincial Election Officer (IEC)

Mr Nevhutalu's presentation focused on the point that the media have a dual role to play during elections; firstly by informing members of the public about the electoral process and secondly, to keep the IEC informed on events taking place on the ground. He pointed out that one of the IEC's main challenges was voter education. Mr Nevhutalu then provided details on the IEC's readiness to host elections in the province. He also took the media to task on the perceived lack of professionalism by media workers citing lack of investigative journalism skills and disregard for the right of reply as the main issues. This, he said, would jeopardise the freeness and fairness of the elections process.

Q: The IEC contributes to premature reporting. Why don't you ask journalists to accompany you?

A: Mr Nevhutalu replied that journalists should do their jobs properly and that media in the province needs to become more professional. He conceded that media in the province was poorly resourced citing lack of transport as a particular problem. He emphasised the need for media and skills development in rural areas.

Q: Why is there no money allocated to community media for advertising? There is a perception that money is allocated first to the national broadcaster, and then to community media but community media is expected to deliver on its mandate without adequate funding.

A: Mr Nevhutalu replied that advertisements are placed with the national broadcaster because the geographic coverage of community media is small. He mentioned that the IEC had tried (unsuccessfully) to conclude an agreement with the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), and again commented on the lack of professionalism in the sector.

There was a comment from the floor that the IEC in Kwa-Zulu Natal had made specific provisions to target provincial media.

Q: *Will all the infrastructure be in place by election-time?*

A: Mr Nevhotalu replied that sanitation and road works were underway and were expected to be completed by election-time. He indicated that there was a problem with electricity as ESKOM lacked the capacity to roll out in the province. He also reported that not all polling stations would have adequate water supply on election day.

Q: *Who are the local political parties in Limpopo?*

A: Mr Nevhotalu replied that the Alliance for Democracy and Prosperity and the Ximoko Party were the main local parties.

Q: *Will journalists have access to the IEC during the election period and who should they contact for further information?*

A: Mr Nevhotalu replied that access to the IEC has been arranged and that he was the sole spokesperson for the IEC in the province.

Q: *Why is there only one spokesperson in the province?*

A: Mr Nevhotalu replied that due to the nature of elections, it was better to speak with one voice in order to avoid confusion. He further mentioned that IEC officials have not been trained to deal with the media.

3.2 ELECTIONS AND THE MEDIA

Ntomb’futhi Masinga – IEC Electoral Manager: KZN

Ms Masinga outlined the broad framework within which the IEC operates. She highlighted the fact that the IEC starts preparing for elections four years in advance. She then also gave a run-down of the electoral process, clarifying roles and responsibilities and also discussed special votes at length.

Ms Masinga also provided details on the provinces readiness for elections. She mentioned that the IEC had held workshops with media houses in the province in order to provide journalists with the necessary context for the elections. She also said that the IEC was relying on the media to assist in ensuring that the elections were peaceful, free and fair. She also mentioned that any voter not able to vote in his/her registered district could apply for a special form that would enable him/her to cast a national but not provincial vote. She discussed special votes at length.

She also mentioned that they are currently assisting the Department of Education with incorporating aspects of democracy and constitutional development into the school curriculum. Finally, Ms Masinga provided the election timetable.

Q: *Don't you think it is unfair that a prisoner, who has broken the law is allowed a vote, but someone who is working overseas is not?*

A: Ms Masinga replied that that was a Constitutional Court decision that had to be respected.

Q: *What is the status of journalists in terms of having to apply for accreditation at voting stations?*

A: Ms Masinga replied that journalists would have to apply for accreditation to gain access to voting stations, as well as the IEC results centre which would be based in the Durban Exhibition Centre.

Q: *Are presiding officers allowed to speak to the media?*

A: Ms Masinga replied that municipal managers were IEC information officers and could give comment at voting station level.

3.3 COVERING THE ELECTIONS: ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Mr Justin Arenstein: Editor African Eye News Services (AENS) Polokwane workshop

Mr Arenstein's presentation focused on the role of local media in elections. He urged participants to focus on issue-based coverage and highlighted the importance of research in news. He suggested that smaller media players should pool their resources and try to localise their news content.

Q: *What happens when there is no distinction drawn between party political and government business and a reporter is invited to cover an event, only to find that it is nothing more than electioneering?*

A: Mr Arenstein responded by saying that he encouraged his journalists not to drink during functions and especially during election time to decline complimentary tickets and other social invitations.

There was comment from the floor that the story is not the event but rather the impact on the community.

Q: *But events can sometimes help to inform another story?*

A: Mr Arenstein replied that it is particularly dangerous for junior and or inexperienced reporters to fraternise with politicians due to the fact that they are at risk of being unduly influenced.

Q: *How does one deal with anonymous sources?*

A: Mr Arenstein replied that anonymous sources should be treated as a tip-off and that a good reporter will seek documentation, evidence and official comment in order to corroborate the story. Mr Arenstein also explained that it was important to establish clear ground rules with a potential source

and do thorough investigation, not only on the story but on the source itself.

Q: What about airtime? And equal and equitable coverage?

A: Mr Arenstein replied that the guidelines for equitable coverage are laid out in ICASA's regulations on elections broadcasting, and that coverage will also be informed by issue-based reporting.

Q: How should we deal with a case where the ANC is more dominant as a result of a more aggressive campaign?

A: Mr Arenstein responded by saying that journalist should be pro-active and do issue-based reporting. Journalists should start to build up image-banks and test/analyse promises made by the government.

3.4 COVERING THE ELECTIONS: ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Mr Cyril Madlala : Editor UmAfrika Durban workshop

Mr Madlala's presentation focused on advocacy role that could be played by community media. He cautioned community media workers against falling into the trap of conventional media as mainstream media, in most cases defines the agenda and makes assumptions that are unchallenged. The danger in this is that journalists are not connected to the community and lack experience in real community life.

He urged community media workers to avoid spin-doctoring in order to remain true and credible. Mr Madlala also encouraged media workers to share information amongst each other and emphasised the need for thorough research and understanding the election issues in terms of manifestos, terminology, electoral processes and cultural and regional dynamics.

He mentioned that it was the journalists' responsibility to be accountable by ensuring that they have prepared thoroughly for interviews. Finally, he commented again on the need for community journalists to localise the issue and define their own agendas.

Q: Who is going to be the Deputy President?

A: Mr Madlala replied that journalists should familiarise themselves with the Electoral Act.

Q: How can we better understand our environment as media workers because journalists do not always understand the issues. How can you

understand the elections without understanding governance / human rights issues?

A: Mr Madlala responded by saying that journalists should undertake thorough research before they report and that they should make a special effort to report within the local context.

Q: *How can we localise international or national events?*

A: Mr Madlala replied that journalists should seek commentary from local leaders.

Q: *We need to be multi-skilled as journalists as some of us do not understand the content and context of elections.*

A: Mr Madlala replied that it was each journalist's responsibility to ensure that they understand the issues.

Q: *How do you as an editor handle political interference ie politicians trying to manipulate young journalists?*

A: Mr Madlala replied that the editor or senior member of the newsroom handles all correspondence from political leaders about articles published or broadcast and not the journalist in question, in this way young journalists can be protected from politicians and can get on with the business of writing their stories.

Q: *How do you handle commercial pressures that may influence editorials?*

A: Mr Madlala replied that it was important to draw a clear distinction between the editorial and advertising departments.

3.5 COVERING THE ELECTIONS: ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Mr Mansoor Jaffer : Deputy Editor Cape Community Newspapers Cape Town workshop

Mr Jaffer presentation looked at various theoretical models on the role of the media. He presented an outline of theories such as; liberal pluralism, social democracy (which frames ideas of citizenship and democracy, where the media is a guide rather than a guardian), neo-liberalism (which encourages a diversity of voices), democratic participation (relating to the daily participation of citizens in democracy); and the neo-marxist critical theory (concerned with conceptions of meaning and reality).

Mr Jaffer also pointed out that media credibility in South Africa is very low and that the reason for that was that reporters write about elections without understanding the electoral process. He suggested that journalists educate themselves about the elections and electoral systems.

Finally, Mr Jaffer urged journalists to seek creative ways of stimulating debate in order to build citizenship and democracy. He urged community journalists to tackle the real issues and to network with other NGOs and community radio stations.

3.6. COMMUNITY/RURAL REPORTING: CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

Ms Mary Papayya: Independent Media and Broadcast Trainer

In her presentation Ms Papayya identified the media, politicians, and civil society as the key role players in any election. She highlighted the role of the media as an agenda-setter that influences public and political opinion as the main source of news and information. She also mentioned that it was incumbent on journalists to prepare adequately for covering elections in order to provide fair and balanced coverage.

Some of the challenges she highlighted included the planning of the election coverage, lack of resources and lack of training and development as impacting on the reporting process. She also mentioned covering hot-spots, inaccessible terrains and lack of experienced journalists as obstacles to effective reporting.

She further highlighted the need for journalists to establish and maintain contact with rural communities, noting that it was sometimes difficult to assess the needs of the community. As a way around this challenging task, Ms Papayya suggested that journalists should try to work with community based organisations in order to get closer to the needs of the community. She further suggested pooling of resources to overcome cost constraints.

Ms Papayya emphasised that community journalists should aim to tell stories about real people in order to provide context and suggested that journalists should try to interview local opinion-leaders such as academics and other social commentators. She also emphasised the importance of research in order to provide accurate information to readers and listeners.

In conclusion, Ms Papayya suggested the following as guiding principles for local and community media:

- expose violations;
- investigate allegations of electoral fraud;
- correct mistakes;
- question what is being said;
- maintain balance and fairness and;
- tell/write the truth.

Ms Papayya's presentation generated debate and there was general discussion on how journalists can better equip themselves to handle the challenges that they currently face as well challenges that lie ahead.

Q: *What happens if political parties try to prevent journalists from entering a no-go area?*

A: Ms Papayya said that it was illegal to bar anyone access to an area as per the IEC Code of Conduct for political parties and that such infringements should be reported to the IEC and the police.

Q: *Can and should a journalist be affiliated to a political party?*

A: Ms Papayya replied that journalists cannot hold public office for political parties as this would obviously affect the independence and credibility. She mentioned however, that this did not preclude journalists as citizens to support a particular party as long as it did not affect their independence.

Q: *Some farmers do not allow the media to enter their communities, how should we deal with that?*

A: Ms Papayya responded by saying that journalists should expose the farmer by calling other media and government officials to comment on the situation.

Q: *How do you access rural areas without resources?*

A: Ms Papayya recommended that journalists should try to share transport costs with other community-based organisations.

3.7 ETHICAL ELECTION REPORTING

Mr Greg Dardagan: Part-time Lecturer – Durban Institute of Technology (DIT)

Mr Dardagan started his presentation with the observation that respect cannot be demanded and has to be earned. He highlighted the fact that ethics are influenced by pay, competition, organisational culture and individual morals. He recommended the following as guiding principles to ensure that a journalist covers a story in an ethical manner:

- Be satisfied that the story is accurate;
- Be satisfied that it is angled correctly;
- Be satisfied that it is fair to all parties;
- Be sure that every effort has been made to contact all parties involved;
- Be sure the subject has received fair treatment;
- Correct mistakes immediately;
- Allow for right of reply.

Q: *Is it ethical to record an interview without informing the subject?*

A: Mr Dardagen replied that it was important to ask for permission before recording an interview and that it is illegal to conceal tape recorders. Unless working underground.

Q: *Do you give the politician an article before it is published?*

A: Mr Dardagan replied that this was not necessary nor advisable as the politician would come to expect that of every single story.

Q: *What if you are asked to fax through interview questions before the interview?*

A: Mr Dardagan replied that it was probably better to fax through the interview questions rather than risk losing the interview.

There was a comment from the floor that journalists should fax a few questions and then 'ambush' the politician by sneaking in a few more questions.

Q: *What happens if, as a community radio journalist, your story is stolen by another journalist? Or you lift stories from different sources?*

A: Mr Dardagan replied that there was no copyright on ideas and that the source of the information would also have to be taken into consideration. For example, information gleaned from a press conference is different to information gleaned from another journalist's interview. He cautioned against lifting stories without checking all the facts.

Q: *What happens in the case of a live broadcast on the SABC?*

A: Mr Dardagan replied that any live broadcasts on the public broadcaster are in the public domain and are therefore public information.

Q: *What about the issue of five-star treatment by politicians?*

A: Mr Dardagan advised that journalists should be careful of receiving lifts from politicians or attending private parties. He advised that journalists should refer to their code of conduct in order to get a sense of the parameters.

Q: *How should we handle off-the-record briefings?*

A: Mr Dardagan responded by saying that a journalists should first get clarification on the nature of the briefing to establish what kind of information is being discussed.

3.8 CONTENT AND CONTEXTS IN ELECTION REPORTING

Ms Nakatiwa Mulikita

Outreach Co-ordinator: Afrobarometer Survey Project (IDASA)

Ms Mulikita provided an outline of opinion surveys and their application during the election process. She explained key concepts such as sampling and also provided participants with a detailed explanation of how surveys are conducted. Her presentation concluded with a group exercise.

Q: *Why is it that polls are not accurate, especially in the case of Kwa-Zulu Natal?*

A: Ms Mulikita responded that polls have no control over events that actually occur and should be used as indicators of an anticipated outcome.

There was a comment from the floor that journalists should interrogate poll results. There was also a discussion around the impartiality of people who conduct polls. In Kwa-Zulu Natal, there was also discussion around political settlements/ power sharing and the need for journalists to be educated and trained beyond electoral processes and more broadly about democracy.

3.9 A REGIONAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DYNAMIC

**Mr Lucas Nemutanzhela: Analyst and Lecturer
School of Economics and Management - University of the North
Polokwane workshop**

Mr Nemutanzhela provided a fascinating insight into the cultural and political dynamic in the Limpopo region. He mentioned that the province was divided into three territories, namely, Pedi, Tsonga and Venda, under Apartheid legislation. The main challenge facing the region now, was multi-lingual language policy, taking into account the complexities of the region.

He also mentioned that the homeland system had created chieftaincies and traditional leaders from the three territories groups that are vying for power. He also mentioned that despite the ethnic cultural differences, the ANC was still the dominant political party in the province.

Q: *How does race/ethnicity affect the media?*

A: Mr Nemutanzhela replied that the media as a medium or channel of information should try to report accurately and should not be affected by race/ethnicity issues.

Q: *Would you say that community radio is succeeding in meeting the challenge of language diversity in the province?*

A: Mr Nemutanzhela concurred with this view but emphasised that community print should also play a role in contributing to language diversity. He made reference to one community newspaper in particular, "Seipone, Xivoni, Tshivoni" that publishes in SePedi, XiTsonga and TshiVenda.

There was animated discussion on the feasibility of publishing/broadcasting in local languages. The editor of Seipone noted that it was sometimes difficult to write or report on certain issues in a local language as some people found it offensive to read about rape for example in a local language.

There was another comment from the floor that community radio stations were marginalising the poor as 80% of their broadcasts were in English and aimed at a younger and more sophisticated generation, in contravention of their licence conditions.

Q: *How did political parties such as the ANC manage ethnic diversity in Limpopo?*

A: Mr Nemutanzhela replied that there was much in-fighting amongst the ANC in the province but that somehow they were still managing to attract support for historical reasons.

Q: *There is a certain tension between marketing departments and news departments because of the fact that marketing will feel that we should not report on certain issues because that company or person also advertises in the newspaper/radio station. How would you deal with a situation like that?*

A: Mr Nemutanzhela replied that the news department would have to develop creative ways of dealing with that situation, perhaps by leaking the story to another newspaper or radio station first, and then reporting on it once it was already in the public domain.

3.10 A REGIONAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DYNAMIC

Ms Mary de Haas

Independent Monitor: Natal Monitor Project

Durban workshop

Ms de Haas started her presentation with the observation that journalists must reach rural communities. She gave some political and historical background to the province, noting that people fight over identity when that identity is linked to economic privileges / limitations. She mentioned the political settlement that was reached in Kwa-Zulu Natal in 1994 in order to create stability and peace in the region. In her opinion, she thought there were irregularities in the 1994 election, irregularities which only marginally improved in 1999.

She mentioned that KZN was of strategic importance in terms of the harbour and mineral resources found in the province, thus traditional leaders were in competition with businessmen who want to mine in the province. One of the main criticisms she had of politicians in the region was that they were using ethnicity irresponsibly.

There was a comment from the floor that journalists were not reporting from an African point of view as a result of Eurocentric funding.

Q: *Do you have any projections for the upcoming elections?*

A: Ms de Haas replied that the IEC must be present and accountable in the province.

There was a question and comment from the floor about the potential chaos that would occur in KZN were the ANC to win the provincial election.

Ms de Haas responded by advising that media should put pressure on the police to take action in cases of violence or intimidation as there was a culture of impunity in the province and the justice system was not reliable.

3.11 A REGIONAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DYNAMIC

Ms Lydia Mokgatle

Independent Monitor: Peninsula Technikon

Cape Town workshop

Ms Mokgatle's presentation provided an overview of the historical, cultural and racial influences that inform the dynamics of the Western Cape Province. She highlighted the role that race played in politics through the Apartheid system and points out that even though officially racism has been abolished, race relations and especially language and identity still play a big role in the Western Cape. This has also affected the way in which the media still resorts to stereotypical and sensational reporting. Although there is a fair amount of media diversity in the province, she outlined the following as challenges facing the media in the Western Cape:

- Fair reporting;
- Right to reply;
- Ensuring that marginalised voices are heard;
- Guard against sensationalism;
- To actively seek positive stories;
- To give relevant and useful information.

Q: *Why do you think the NNP won the elections in 1999?*

A: Ms Mokgatle replied that it was mainly an election that was won on propaganda and stereotyping. Coloured voters in particular were told that that the new South Africa did not accommodate them, as during Apartheid, they were not White enough, and now, are not Black enough under the new government. She concluded by saying that people don't want to acknowledge racial differences in the province and that it only comes up as an issue when it used in a negative way.

3.12 HOW TO ACCESS NEWS STORIES

Mr Raymond Joseph: Media Trainer

Mr Joseph presented a comprehensive plan for covering elections and provided useful tips on a number of areas such as: information gathering; interviews; basic components of a news story; attribution; and ethics.

The main focus of Mr Joseph's presentation was planning for the elections. He identified three crucial stages in the electoral planning process, namely:

The pre-election phase;
Election day and;
The post-election period.

Participants then broke into groups to prepare, plan and present their proposed election plan. The main points and activities are summarised below:

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

- Identify parties and review manifestos;
- Identify party representatives and find contact details;
- Identify and contact local IEC office;
- Talk to members of the community and find and research their issues;
- Create debate and discussion around community issues and elections;
- Continue with voter-education;
- Divide up the electoral area/wards amongst reporters;
- Ensure that you have applied for accreditation;
- Note election-readiness status of polling stations in terms of access to water, electrification, sanitation, contingency plans etc;
- Radio: hold talk shows with political parties;
- Print: ensure that there are enough photographs and biographies in archives
- Discuss news elections plans with on-air (disc jockeys);
- Check that cell-phones are charged, spare batteries, air-time, transport arrangements

ELECTION DAY

- Visit polling stations and check whether they opened on time;
- Vote;
- Conduct short interviews with party representatives and presiding officer in order to find out whether or not parties are complying with the code of conduct;
- Note size of the queue and conduct interviews with members of the public;
- Note conduct of voters, party agents and IEC officials;
- Note security provisions;

- Note prominent voters;
- Inform radio listeners of status of voting stations and voting process;
- Visit other polling stations;

POST-ELECTION PERIOD

- Go to IEC Results Centre and get official comment from the IEC with respect to proclamation of fairness;
- Note queries from political parties (that are given three days to lodge complaints);
- Request post-election conference with political parties;
- Note provincial and national results and interview winner;
- Seek analytical comment on results;
- Interview members of community with respect to election results;
- Cover election celebrations;
- Check the progress of winning party after 100 days, 200 days, 300 days;
- Keep newly elected government accountable and check that it follows up on election promises.

4. WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The three workshops were a success and were interesting and informative for both presenters/ facilitators and participants. The main issues for participants centred around resources, training and basic journalism practice. Political and commercial pressures continue to threaten the survival of the community media sector.

The main points that were agreed upon by participants included:

- localising issues for the community radio listener or community newspaper reader;
- sharing resources at both a community media level but also with other mainstream media;
- researching and understanding the issues / processes around elections.

There was a general agreement that lessons learned from this experience and discussion points could and should be incorporated into the normal newsroom as the principles under discussion formed the foundation of basic news reporting.

The monitoring aspect of the workshops provides an opportunity to conduct training impact assessment in order to ensure that the training met the needs / skills shortage within the sector. The monitoring will also allow the partners to assess the efficiency of such interventions in the future.

Finally, MISA-SA and its partners made a commitment to do further research into the general training needs of community journalists and MISA-SA committed to organising a similar workshop for participants and other community media ahead of the Local Government elections in 2005.

APPENDIXES

TOWARDS COMMUNITY JOURNALISM IN THE 2004 ELECTIONS!

**Dates: 4 – 5 March 2004 , Polokwane
11 – 12 March Durban
18 – 19 March Cape Town**

Day One:

Facilitators: Raymond Joseph and Mary Papayya

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Registration |
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Opening and Introduction (funders and participants) |
| 09:30 – 10:30 | Elections and the Media
Independent Electoral Commission:
Mr. Zwo Nevhutalu (Polokwane)
Ms Ntomb'futhi Masing (Durban) |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Tea |
| 11:00 - 12:30 | Covering the Elections: Role of Media
Mr. Justin Arenstein (Polokwane)
Mr. Cyril Madlala (Durban)
Mr. Mansoor Jaffer (CapeTown) |
| 12:30 - 13:30 | LUNCH/NETWORKING |
| 13:30 - 14:30 | Community/Rural Reporting – Challenges and Obstacles
Ms Mary Papayya

<i>Discussion includes:</i>
Accessibility to audiences
Language, Culture and Gender in Relation to community media
Structures and Local Governance – Traditional leaders
Audience access to media |
| 15:30 – 16:30 | Ethical Election Reporting
Mr. Greg Dardagan

<i>Discussion includes:</i> |

Behaviour of journalists
Fairness and balance
Gender, race and culture

Day Two:

- 09:00 – 10:00 **Content and Contexts in Election Reporting**
Ms. Nakatiwa Mulikita
- 10:00 – 10:30 TEA
- 10:30 – 11:30 **A Regional Cultural & Political Dynamic**
Mr. Lucas Nemutanzhela (Limpopo)
Ms Mary de Haas (Durban)
Ms Lydia Mokgatle (CapeTown)
- 11:30 – 13:00 **How to access news stories?**
Mr Raymond Joseph:

Discussion includes:
Gathering information including research skills
Interviewing Techniques
How to cover rallies, meetings, conferences and workshops
Dealing with press releases
Dealing with political parties/controversies
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch/Networking
- 14:00 – 15:00 **Group Discussion: Framework/Guide for community journalism**
- 15:00 – 15:30 TEA
- 15:30 – 16:30 **Way Forward/Closing**

SPEAKERS PROFILES

Mary Papayya:

Is a leading Independent Media & Broadcast Trainer/Consultant in SA and the African Continent. She is a former Editor, Executive Producer & Senior Journalist who has worked in Community, mainstream print and radio news in SA for the past 16 years. She is the former Bureau Chief & Senior Journalist of the Witness newspaper. She launched Newsbreak Current Affairs at SABC Radio News in KZN & the news product at East Coast Radio where she served as News Manager for about 5 five years. She is the KZN Regional Convener for the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) and a member of the South African Trainers Trust.

Mary de Haas:

This leading SA anthropologist and author heads the Natal Monitor Project. The Natal Monitor is a University of Natal-based violence monitoring project, which has its roots in social science research on political violence carried out from the mid 1980s. The project researches violence and human rights abuses in KZN and does interventionist work such as court actions. The Natal Violence Monitor is a totally independent body, and is in no way aligned to any political party, or governmental organization. www.violencemonitor.com

Raymond Joseph:

A well-known South African freelance writer and news trainer. Also does training, especially print on the African Continent. Founder of the Southern Tip and member of the Southern African Freelancers Association: www.safrea.co.za

Cyril Madlala:

A leading KZN Editor and former journalist. Founder Editor of the Independent on Saturday.

Greg Dardagan:

Former Assistant Editor & News Editor at The Mercury. Former Journalist at The Daily News & The Friend in Bloemfontein. Part-time Lecture at Durban Institute of Technology (DIT).

Nakatiwe Mulikita:

Outreach Coordinator of Afrobarometer Survey Project - Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)

Lydia Mokgatlé:

Lydia started her career in media as an in-service trainee at Bush Radio in 1992 (before the station went on the air). She has since worked for Kgaso Fund, a funding agency for community radio set up by the SA government and the Danish government. After the wrapping up of the Fund, she went to work for a Dutch Foundation administering grants for Afrikaans-medium community radio stations in the Northern and Western Cape.

She became a trainer and facilitator in community radio and has since moved into Higher Education - first as a projects co-ordinator at the University of Cape Town and currently as a Development Officer at Peninsula Technikon.

Mansoor Jaffer:

Deputy Editor, Cape Community newspapers. CCN is a division of Independent Newspapers, consisting of 14 papers with a combined circulation of 550 000 and a readership of 1.3 million. Has worked in the media field from 1980, first as a junior reporter for the Argus and then for a host of community media projects, including Grassroots, Saamstaan and South. Became Deputy Editor of CCN in 1997 after a short stint as media officer of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Cyril Madlala:

A leading KZN Editor and former journalist. He is the founder Editor of The Independent on Saturday, Durban. He is current Editor of the Zulu Language weekly newspaper UmAfrika.

Lucas Nemutanzhela:

Lecturer at the University of the North, specializing in Public Management and Local Government Management and Governance in general. He is a regular analyst in the SABC – Phalaphala FM current affairs programme.

Justin Arenstein:

Managing Editor of the African Eye News Service, an established sub-region; truly investigative news services. He has also won a number of investigative journalism awards including the 1998 MISA's Annual Press Freedom Award.

WORKSHOP EXPECTATIONS

Some of the participants' expectations of the elections reporting workshops are summarised below:

- To learn how to report from a community point of view;
- To learn from other colleagues and share ideas;
- To learn how to handle the elections;
- To learn how to deal with political parties, especially the ANC;
- To learn how to distinguish between electioneering and the real story;
- To learn how to be patient with reporters and to share newly-acquired skills with them;
- To learn new strategies for covering elections;
- To learn how to get ordinary people to understand the issues;
- To learn how to report ethically and combat voter apathy;
- To learn how to involve the youth in the electoral process;
- To gain a better understanding of the role of community radio.

MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: 67% of participants completed the media questionnaire.

NAME OF STATION / NEWSPAPER:

1. How many staff are in your office?

1-3 4-8 8-10 >10

22% of respondents have between 1 – 3 staff members.

41% of respondents have between 4-8 staff members.

19% of respondents have between 8-10 staff members.

16% of respondents have more than 10 staff members.

2% of respondents have 20 staff members.

2. What communication infrastructure does your office have?

Circle where appropriate.

Telephone Fax Computer with Internet and e-mail

94% of respondents have access to a telephone and fax machine.

91% of respondents have computers in their offices.

66% of respondents have access to the internet.

3. How long has your media organisation been in operation?

1 to 2 years 3 to 5 years 5 to 10 years Over ten years

9% of respondents have been in operation for 1 – 2 years.

25% of respondents have been in operation for 3 – 5 years.

44% of respondents have been in operation for 5 – 10 years.

22% of respondents have been in operation for more than 10 years.

4. Identify other media organizations that operate within your geographic area.

There appears to be a range of competing media organisations in the regions that the participants come from:

<i>POLOKWANE</i>	<i>DURBAN</i>	<i>CAPE TOWN</i>
Weekly mainstream press ,Ligwalagwala FM, Westrand Radio, Botlokwa/Mohodi; Motswedding FM.	Naledi FM,Ficksburg News, Kokstad Advertiser Eziko Production, SAFM, RSG, OFM, 702, KAYA-FM, Highveld.	Local and regional press, Die Son, KFM, Die Burger, Radio Mhlobowenene, Paarl Post, Vulani newspaper, Radio Tygerberg, City Vision, Bush Radio, KFM, Good Hope, Cape Times, 786, VOC, P4, Zibonele.

5. Do you publish or broadcast in vernacular (local) language? If so, indicate which.

<i>POLOKWANE</i>	<i>DURBAN</i>	<i>CAPE TOWN</i>
IsiSwati, Islam, English, isiZulu, Afrikaans, TshiVenda, SePedi, SeTswana.	Xhosa, English, Afrikaans, SeSotho, IsiZulu.	IsiXhosa, Afrikaans, English, French.

6. What kinds of information and skills does your media organisation need?

Circle the relevant options:

Local government elections reporting	47%
Media rights and the law	47%
Media ethics	34%
How to start and sustain community media	31%
Media management	44%
Coping with and reporting trauma in journalism	41%
Other (please indicate)	
Board/governance of community radio	3%
Management of financial resources and optimising existing resources	3%
Exchange programmes	
Basic journalism	3%
Programming / production skills management	3%

7. What resources does your organisation need to function optimally?

These are some of the comments we received from participants:

- Financial resources for printing (R9000p/m);
- Computers, field recorders, car;
- improved signal to increase coverage area.

8. What are the three biggest problems you have in your media context?

Some responses include:

- lack of money to go into rural areas for information;
- leaving of qualified people;
- juniorisation;
- competition/ rival stations;
- ICASA licencing process;
- funding;
- lack of unionisation;
- low number of trained staff;
- lack of integration with big media houses to access correspondents.

9. Would you be interested in training on the rights of the media in South Africa to contribute to our media advocacy network?

All participants replied yes.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

EVALUATION

Most participants indicated that they found the workshops quite informative and would like to attend more workshops in the future. They were also reasonably satisfied with the facilitators and training material.

The **suggestions made for improving workshops** in the future included:

- more group interaction;
- more focus on presenters from community media sector;
- invite political party representatives;
- pair local media with mainstream media for information exchanging;
- be more practical and include more case studies;
- run workshops more regularly and not just for elections;
- engage a lot more with community media;
- allocate more time;
- invite people who are good at doing presentations;
- focus also on the positive, what is being done properly;
- have less tea-breaks

The **most interesting topics** for participants were:

- How to access news stories;
- Ethics in elections reporting;
- Content and context in elections reporting;
- IEC Election timetable;
- community/rural reporting – challenges and obstacles;
- IEC Q&A;
- role of media during elections;
- planning your election coverage;
- broadcasting for the community and that elections are not all about politics

The topics that participants indicated they would like to see covered in the **future** include:

- Post-election reporting;
- accessing election results; censorship and copyright;
- investigative journalism;
- gender and HIV/AIDS;
- how do you improve as a journalist and how do you approach your sources;
- is the level of news reporting declining?;
- programming and production;
- general news reporting;
- balancing the agenda in rural areas;
- reporting in cultural areas;
- politics and corruption coverage;
- media management at community level;
- interviewing skills
- editing and sub-editing;

- local elections;
- working relations and communication amongst journalists

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