



United Nations
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Cultural Organization

Conflict-Sensitive Reporting:

State of the Art

A Course for Journalists
and Journalism Educators

By Ross Howard

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Preface

Media play an increasingly important role in today's society. We know that freedom of expression and freedom of the press is having a clear bearing on development, democracy and dialogue. The free flow of information should not be hindered; on the contrary the media should have all the necessary space to contribute to disseminate information and knowledge with the objective of developing inclusive knowledge societies.

At the same time journalists and editors must demonstrate their professionalism. Ethical and professional standards are required to make the best out of the pivotal role good journalism plays in today's societies. A key issue in this context is the way the media deal with conflicts. Unfortunately our world is still marked by a high number of conflicts and by the consequences of natural disasters. The media must report on these and their reporting should comply with high ethical and professional standards. In the past we have seen terrifying examples of how media have functioned in an inciting and inflammatory manner contributing to fuel conflict and civil war.

It is with the objective to strengthen the capacity of media professionals to report in a well researched, factual and non-biased way, and without contributing to conflict that UNESCO has asked Ross Howard to develop this curriculum for Conflict-Sensitive Reporting. It is intended to strengthen media's capacity to contribute to dialogue, mutual understanding and eventually reconciliation and peace.

I hope that this book will be used by journalism educators and by journalists all over the world. For the sake of peace, for development, and for the sake of democracy this is imperative.

Abdul Waheed Khan
Assistant Director-General
for Communication and Information
UNESCO

1. Introduction: About this study

In much of the world, the violent conflict that the media must report on has changed. It is increasingly not traditional warfare between nations but now is violent strife among people within common or rough borders, often between communities and tribes and other interests. Violent conflict is increasingly a lawless and terrifying exploitation of civilians and resources by poorly-trained soldiers or paramilitary forces or private armies engaged in crime to sustain their violence. State authority and the rule of law are weak or collapsed. The low-intensity violence recurs erratically. The news media, with its new technologies and wider reach, is increasingly a target for misinformation, manipulation or suppression by interests seeking to profit from the violent conflict.

Nothing more clearly confirms the relationship between the news media and violent conflict than the contradiction between two current trends. The number of acute violent conflicts around the world fortunately is declining.¹ But the number of journalists killed in those conflict-stressed places and elsewhere has sharply risen.² Journalists are increasingly targets of war-mongers because of the media's potential to influence the course of conflict resolution.

Much of the news media's approach to reporting on conflict, however, has not changed. Conflict is a curious blind spot in journalism

education and training. Traditional journalism skills development has not included study of how best to cover violent conflict, and has ignored any understanding of violent conflict as a social process. Other subjects demand that journalists have knowledge and expertise and experience, such as reporting on business and economics, public health, music, sports, or other topics. But the dynamics of violent conflict – its instigation, development and resolution – are not much understood by most journalists nor proficiently reported on. In today's increasingly changed environment of conflict more and more journalists find themselves ill-equipped to address the issue which demands so much of their attention and is devastating their community. Too much, the news media is accused of being part of the problem of conflict.

Working journalists in conflict-stressed countries are more acutely aware than colleagues in established democracies that as journalists and as citizens their work may seem insufficient, superficial and possibly harmful. "We cover it (conflict) simplistically, vividly, incessantly but we do not cover it with sophistication. We don't cover causes, only consequences, and we don't cover solutions," says media development specialist Marie-Soleil Frere,³ quoting journalists in Africa.

The need for some new approaches to reporting on violent conflict seems clear, especially to journalists in the most conflict-stressed places. Among journalism trainers consulted for this study several said that when the opportunity

1 Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report*, University of British Columbia. Vancouver. 2005. Available at: <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=112>.

2 International News Safety Institute, *Journalists targeted*. January 2009. Available at: http://www.newssafety.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11176&catid=314&Itemid=100077.

See also: Puddephatt, Andrew, *Conflict and the Role of the Media*, International Media Support. Copenhagen. 2006.

3 Frere, Marie-Soleil, Research Associate, Department of Information and Communication Sciences, Free University of Brussels. Interview. 2008.

for reflection arises, journalism trainees often request techniques for reporting on conflict in their community.

The news media's traditional role is often said to be to serve the public interest by being a reliable information provider, a forum for free speech and a watchdog of government.⁴ In their hearts many journalists believe their work can help make the world a better place. But in environments where such roles seem to make little difference to the perpetual cycle of violence, there is understandable frustration and disillusionment among journalists and their supporters.

In response, some well-intentioned journalists, academics and peace researchers propose a new practice of reporting that consciously works for peace and engages reporters in the roles of advocacy. But that response puts at risk those traditional roles and first principles that assure journalism any legitimacy among most citizens. It is news media's independence and objectivity that gives journalists' work its credibility and its influence in informing people who must make changes themselves towards peaceful resolution of their conflicts.

Instead of taking on more roles, journalism in conflict-stressed zones must strengthen its original roles. What is needed is some of that sophistication in reporting that Marie-Soleil Frere's colleagues spoke of. With some understanding of conflict – why it turns violent, what are common causes, what motivates war-mongers and peace-makers and ordinary citizens, how societies resolve their conflicts without violence, who speaks of such things, and how

to report on conflict without inflaming it – journalists can more confidently report on conflict without compromising their principles. Part of being a reliable provider of information is not to advocate what should happen but to reveal what can happen, including peace.

For more than a decade some journalism trainers, instructors and researchers have attempted to develop training methodologies and content that responds to the need for more sophistication among journalists reporting on conflict, especially in conflict-stressed states. A handful of course outlines, training modules and pamphlets and books on conflict reporting have emerged, alongside the more rapid recognition in the wider world of peacebuilding research that the quality of journalism is integral to the process of conflict resolution.

This study begins with an examination of that recognition of journalism's role in peacebuilding. The study then examines attempts to define journalism's role and appropriate practices related to conflict resolution. And it presents a curriculum or course outline for an adaptable training programme to respond, as best possible, to the expressed and perceived needs of journalists reporting on violent conflict, especially within their own communities, countries and regions.

This study also includes Field Notes or observations and recommendations for any trainers or course leaders presenting the course in Conflict-Sensitive Reporting in a conflict-stressed environment.

It also includes Case Histories, describing two very recent initiatives to present conflict-

⁴ Puddephatt, Andrew, *Defining Indicators of Media Development*, UNESCO. Paris. 2007. Available at: <http://www.ifap.ru/library/book247.pdf>.

sensitive reporting training in violence-stressed states, Kenya and Somalia.

And it includes a Resources List of several essential documents for course leaders to refer to in search of further guidance in both concepts and practices, examples of training modules and other resources in developing Conflict-Sensitive Reporting training initiatives.

The concepts and techniques described in the curriculum are intended to provide

guides to a rudimentary understanding of conflict and conflict resolution and the news media's role. The curriculum is a preliminary sensitization, an introduction to the substantive field of conflict analysis and conflict resolution that has developed over more than a half-century. The intention is to make reporting on conflict more insightful, more comprehensive and thus more influential, since being comprehensive includes making clearer the possibilities of resolving conflict rather than perpetuating it.

2. Recognizing the media role in conflict

For more than 30 years agencies of development and peace such as UNESCO and individual countries have dedicated attention and funding to capacity-building among journalists and news media outlets in states in transition. Much of the underlying rationale for the training reflected the Western libertarian view of the news media as a non-partisan and independent institution that enables well-informed citizen decision-making by providing information, serving as a forum for free expression, and keeping government accountable.

Many of these capacity-building initiatives were motivated by the belief that a reliable news media – meaning accurate, neutral and responsible in its reporting and methods – would contribute to achieving good governance⁵ and democratic development, and be an indirect support for human development.⁶ As part of their neutrality or objectivity, media workers were considered professionally disengaged from the outcome of their work. It was assumed that the strengthened local media would broaden and deepen the information and the debate that citizens need to live their lives and make important decisions about who governs for them.

Many of these assumptions and assertions have been proven well-founded.⁷ Hundreds of millions of dollars (US) cumulatively have been devoted to international aid for news media development,⁸ most of it for training and education and in some cases for material and equipment. An early example is the large effort of USAID in Latin America in the 1980s, followed later by USAID initiatives in the former Soviet Union.⁹

Support for media development accelerated with the decline of Cold War structures and attitudes.¹⁰ Success in integrating media-based programmes into humanitarian relief and health, agriculture and education programmes increased interest in what media could do for democratization. The removal of Cold War barriers enabled greater dissemination of news to previously inaccessible audiences. It also allowed media development initiatives in previously totalitarian countries.

Technological advances gave the electronic media an almost global ubiquity and capacity to reach most remote places with economically affordable reception.

5 Graves, Peter, *Independent Media's Vital Role in Development*, Centre for International Media Assistance. Washington. 2007.

6 Norris, Pippa and Dieter Zinnbauer, *Giving Voice to the Voiceless: Good Governance, Human Development & Mass Communications*, UNDP Human Development Report Office. 2002. (available at: http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/background_papers/2002/Norris-Zinnbauer_2002.pdf). And: Abbott, Susan, *Media Development: The Case for Research*, in *Media Matters*, *ibid*.

7 Norris, Pippa, *The Role of the Free Press in Promoting Democratization, Good Governance and Human Development*, in *Media Matters. Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development from the Global Forum for Media Development*. Internews Europe. Paris. 2007.

8 Puddephatt, Andrew, citing Ellen Hume, in *Defining Indicators of Media Development*, UNESCO. Paris. 2007. Available at: <http://www.ifap.ru/library/book247.pdf>.

9 See: Krishna, Kumar, *Promoting Independent media, strategies for democracy assistance*. Lynne Rienner. Boulder. 2006.

10 See: Howard, Ross, *International Media Assistance. A Review of Donor Activities and Lessons Learned*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations. The Hague. 2003.

The words peacebuilding or conflict resolution rarely came into descriptions of the early media development initiatives. Accelerated democratization was the commonly stated objective, as in the United Nations' first inclusion of a major media development initiative in its support of the democratic transition of Cambodia in 1992. On occasion, news media development was included within multi-faceted and multi-lateral responses to conflict in certain states, including the former Yugoslavia. But news media development was generally not seen as a specific and integral element of multilateral conflict resolution.

Non-governmental organizations with a specialization in media development emerged including Fondation Hironnelle, the Baltic Media Centre, Internews, IREX, the Media Institute of Southern Africa, International Media Support, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, the International Centre for Journalism, the Panos Institutes, and charitable arms of media corporations such as the Thomson Foundation and Reuters Foundation and philanthropists such as Soros Foundation and the Knight Foundation. In addition, some state media corporations such as Radio Netherlands and BBC World Service Trust and Deutsche Welle included independent media development initiatives within their mandate. Today the media development community numbers at least several hundred organizations.¹¹

A number of Western countries began including specified funding for media development within their international aid strategies. Conferences, alliances and task forces of states such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe and the

11 See: Global Forum for Media development, at: http://70.87.64.34/~intint/gfmd_info/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=64.

European Union included media development within their strategies for regional development. UNESCO became a leading multinational supporter of media development in a myriad of forms.

Most media developers today are independent non-governmental organizations with state, international institutions' or foundation funding. Most of them distance their journalism development from their funders' political or peacebuilding policies to avoid journalistic conflict of interest with what may be involved in those programs. As reiterated recently in a United States Institute of Peace paper on developing media in stabilization and reconstruction operations, "efforts to develop local media institutions should be undertaken separately from attempts to develop (foreign policy) strategic communications."¹²

In the mid 1990s new considerations emerged about media development that specifically directed attention to the news media's role in latent or overt conflict and in conflict resolution. One impetus for this new focus was the clearly negative role of the media in major social catastrophes, such as the incitement and direction played by indigenous media in the genocidal killings in Rwanda in 1994,¹³ and in policies and acts of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁴ It was realized that states with authoritarian governments and proliferating media could make untrained or irresponsible journalists more liable to participate in manipu-

12 Bajaktari, Yll and Hsu, Emily, *Developing Media in Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, USIP. Washington. 2007.

13 Des Forges, Alison, *Call to Genocide. Radio in Rwanda 1994*, International Research Development Centre. Downloaded Nov. 2008 at: http://www.idrc.ca/rwandagenocide/ev-108178-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.

14 Thompson, Mark, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1999).

lating public opinion for gross abuse of human rights and the reversal of democratization.

Attention turned to exploring an opposite potential of the news media, that is, to influence public opinion and behaviour towards non-violent conflict resolution. The influence was not necessarily defined as direct, or was expressed informally and as an indirect benefit. But independent media development NGOs began to deliver media development initiatives which focused on skills development but included the issues of conflict, reporters' responses and responsibilities, and possible influences on conflict resolution. An early example is the Reporting for Peace program, developed by Peter du Toit and Alison Campbell for Internews in Rwanda in 1995. The programme was repeated in Indonesia beginning in 1998, and elsewhere later. Its central point as defined by du Toit is that "while the media does not independently direct the course a conflict will take, journalists can play a meaningful role in creating conducive conditions for conflict resolution. In doing so they will necessarily perform the most widely recognized roles of a journalist in providing people with information, enabling them to make informed decisions and educating them about the different processes involved in resolving conflict."¹⁵

Donors and media intervenors with an interest in media and peacebuilding initially focused on post-conflict environments of countries damaged by civil wars or other intensive conflict.¹⁶ And that remains the dominant mode of media development initiatives related to peacebuilding. As Marie-Soleil Frere observes

15 Du Toit, Peter, *African Media and Conflict: a view from South Africa* by Peter du Toit. Conciliation Resources. Annual Report 1999.

16 De Zeeuw, Jeroen and Krishna, Kumar, *Promoting democracy in post-conflict societies*. Lynne Rienner. Boulder/London. 2006.

with reference to Africa,¹⁷ many of the conflicts today do not involve professionalized and institutionalized armies but a multiplicity of factions and ill-assorted militias recruited to exploit a country's resources and people. Few NGOs or international actors feel secure in introducing a news media initiative directly into such violent environments, and prefer to await at least a truce or the end of the conflict.

But media development initiatives *have* been launched in a number of states suffering ongoing, intermittent or extended deadly conflict including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Timor Leste, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Usually but not always the work is conducted among media workers and outlets within government-held areas rather than among media under the control of insurgents. In Iraq, for example, media development initiatives have been hampered by factional violence, insurgency and censorship by numerous interests including the occupying foreign forces. There are also media developments initiatives underway in countries with an overt hostility to democratization, such as some states in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Many media development initiatives today refer in their programme descriptions to at least their indirect benefits for conflict avoidance and resolution, or peacebuilding. It is a logical enough assertion: a reliable, independent and diverse media assuredly enables societies to better resolve their conflicts without violence. However, most programmes do not assert conflict resolution is the direct outcome of media development, and instead emphasize capacity-building.

On at least two occasions, however, the relationship between the working journalist and

17 Frere, Marie-Soleil, *The media and conflicts in Central Africa*, Lynne Rienner. Boulder/London. 2007.

conflict resolution was expressed in terms which some took to be normative, or obligatory responsibilities of the job. In 1978 the Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO, Article 3, spoke of the mass media having “an important contribution to the strengthening of peace.”¹⁸ The International Principles of Ethics in Journalism adopted in the 1983 UNESCO consultative meeting of journalism organizations further stated that a “true journalist stands for ... peace, democracy, human rights ... and participates actively and contributes through dialogue to a climate ... conducive of peace and justice everywhere.”¹⁹ A number of professional associations or unions of journalists have incorporated versions of these principles in their codes of conduct or ethical guidelines for journalists.

Other media workers however, particularly in the West, considered those declarations to be at best descriptive of unintended consequences of good journalism practice rather than daily requirements or objectives for the conduct of journalism. Western professional journalists and media managers, asserting dedication to the traditional principle of neutrality in their work, argue they were obliged to remain disengaged. In framing their stories they were not to contemplate the outcome of their reporting and thus not alter their attempted truthful depictions of reality to further any outcome they might personally seek, such as peace.

However, by the turn of the 20th century, additional journalists and academics and conflict analysts had begun seriously revisiting the question of whether the news media should consciously seek to have a positive or peacebuilding effect on conflict, through its reporting. These

18 http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_media.htm Downloaded Nov. 14, 2008.

19 http://ethicnet.uta.fi/international/international_principles_of_professional_ethics_in_journalism Downloaded Nov. 14, 2008.

considerations reached wider circulation following assertions from some Western journalists returned from reporting on widespread ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, who argued professional disengagement was ill-serving humanity. As a consequence of the atrocities they witnessed “some felt it would be irresponsible not to use the influence they might possess [through their reporting] to secure a particular outcome for the war.”²⁰

One such journalist, Martin Bell of the BBC, called for a “journalism of attachment”²¹ which goes beyond dispassionate neutral reporting on the scene of obvious gross inhumanity. Instead, Bell argued, the reporting should frame the report from the victims’ perspective to evoke greater public awareness and wider reaction to end the abuses. Another journalist, Todd Gjelten, argued “journalists can best serve victims by balancing humanity and professionalism.”²²

Simultaneously, an academic peace researcher, John Galtung, presented a new categorization²³ of conventional news reporting as “war journalism.” Galtung argued that most regular journalism inherently or intentionally emphasizes and encourages violent conflict by its treatment of the issues. Galtung identified many troubling characteristics, including journalists’ reliance on elites and their one-sided explanations for conflicts and responses to conflict, a reliance on stereotypes, and an absence of reference to root causes and to alternative solutions to the conflict. Galtung and others advocated

20 Puddephatt, Andrew, *Conflict and the role of the media*, International Media Support. Copenhagen. 2008.

21 Bell, Martin, *The Journalism of Attachment*, in Kieran (ed.) *Media Ethics*, Routledge. London. 1998.

22 Gjelten, Todd, *Finding the right moral attitude*, in *Media Studies Journal* 15 (1.) 2001.

23 Galtung, John, *The Task of Peace Journalism*, in *Ethical Perspectives*. 7. And: Galtung, John, *Peace Journalism – A Challenge*. In Kempf, Wilhelm & Heikki Loustarinen (eds.) *Journalism and the New World Order, Vol. 2. Studying the War and the Media*. Nordicom, Gothenburg. 2002.

a new genre or practice of journalism that placed peacebuilding as an essential value and defined it as the lens through which to see and to report events and to frame information. "The media should be involved in peace," according to the argument.²⁴

This perspective of dissatisfaction with the way news media conventionally reported on conflict "quickly developed into a movement that united under the slogan of 'peace journalism'", according to Wilhelm Kempf in 2007, one of many researchers who have now essayed on peace journalism.²⁵ Early leaders of the movement were British journalists Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick who attempted to put Galtung's analysis into applicable practices for professional reporters and editors.²⁶ Others introduced structural media reform into the discussion, arguing market forces, ownership structure, and regulation first must be addressed if peace journalism is to succeed.²⁷ Other advocates argued for peace journalism to become the new norm of reporting: peace journalism is a better and more responsible way of reporting and serving society and it is what journalists should do, they said.²⁸

As defined at its broadest, "Peace journalism combines journalism with an external aim. It understands itself as a normative mode of responsible and conscientious media coverage of conflict that aims at contributing to peacemaking, peacekeeping and changing

the attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals and audiences towards war and peace."²⁹

However, such assertions have promoted wide and increasingly sharp debate in academic and Western journalistic circles.³⁰ Critics argued that "additional tasks in advocacy hinder quality journalism in practice ... Journalism approaches which include conflict transformation tasks are confronted with two objectives to serve – the goals set by the public interest and those of conflict transformation ... Some topics might remain uncovered because they do not fit into the conflict transformation frame ... The more additional tasks towards conflict transformation that journalism has to carry the more its credibility [as impartial and balanced] is weakened," says researcher Christoph Spurk.³¹

Critic-analyst Thomas Hanitzch argues peace journalism as defined is also naive and impractical. "To have any impact on the way the news is being made ... the advocates of peace jour-

24 Shinar, Dov. *Media Peace Discourse: constraints, concepts and building blocks*, 13 (1/2) 2004.

25 Kempf, William, Peace journalism, a tightrope walk between advocacy journalism and constructive conflict coverage., *Conflict and Communications Online*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007.

26 Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, *Peace Journalism*, Hawthorne Press. Stroud, UK. 2005.

27 Hackett, Robert, Is peace journalism possible? Three frameworks for assessing structure and agency in news media. *Conflict and Communication Online* Vol. 5 (2). 2006.

28 Shinar, Dov, Epilogue: Peace Journalism, The State of the Art, *Conflict and Communications Online*, Vol. 7 (7), 2007.

29 Ibid.

30 See: Hanitzch, Thomas, Situating peace journalism in journalism studies: a critical appraisal, in *Conflict and Communication Online*, Vol. 6 (2) 2007, downloaded 11-08 at: <http://www.cco.regener-online.de/>

And: Bratic, Vladimir and Ross, Susan and Kang-Graham, Hyeonjin for a particularly contemporary survey of the literature, from a pro-peace journalism perspective, in: Bosnia's Open Broadcast network, a brief but illustrative foray into peace journalism practice, in *Global Media Journal*, Vol. 7 (13) 2008, downloaded 11-08 at <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/fa08/gmj-fa08-bratic-ross-graham.htm>

And: Shinar, Dov, Epilogue: Peace Journalism – the state of the art, in *Conflict and Communication Online*, Vol. 6 (2) 2007, downloaded 11-08 at: <http://www.cco.regener-online.de/>

And: Lyon, David, Good journalism or peace journalism? in *Conflict and Communication Online*, Vol. 6 (2) 2007, downloaded 11-08 at: <http://www.cco.regener-online.de/>

And: Lynch, Jake, A reply to the replies – Counterplea, in *Conflict and Communication Online*, Vol. 6 (2) 2007, downloaded 11-08 at: <http://www.cco.regener-online.de/>

And: Kempf, op cit.

31 Spurk, Christoph, Media, Peacebuilding and Civil Society, Paper presented to the International Studies Association, San Francisco, 2008. Downloaded at: http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/5/1/8/9/p251895_index.html Nov. 2008.

nalism must address the structural constraints of news production” ranging from professional objectivity training to the industry’s news values and competitive demands, and must recognize journalism’s limitations in conflict-acclimated societies.

But the criticism of peace journalism is sharpest and most categorical amongst some journalists who call it a heretical abandonment of the integrity of journalism and its professional norms.³² Peace journalism “is simply not the role of a journalist and is based on the flawed notion ... The idea that reporters currently only look for the epicenter of violence or are somehow addicted to conflict is absurd,” argues BBC journalist David Loyn.³³

As early as 2003 it was evident that the debate about journalists’ relationship to conflict resolution, while healthy, was not going to be resolved easily. A number of media development NGOs and analysts began exploring how to define media practice that contributes to a community’s conflict resolution while adhering to the media’s core role of providing accurate unbiased information.³⁴ A Copenhagen round table organized in 2003 by the media developer and non-governmental organization International Media Support to examine conflict reporting concluded there was no consensus among media professionals.

Since then, the number of media capacity-building initiatives that specifically refer to journalism and conflict has increased substantially. It has now become commonplace to write into

any news media development initiative that it will benefit peacebuilding. In truth, project evaluations that confirm specifically how this was accomplished are still rare, partially because such evaluations are difficult and time-consuming to conduct, and also rarely commissioned. Nonetheless, it is now widely accepted that news media development has benefits for peacebuilding as well as democratization.

The specific application of journalism development in areas of conflict now appears to follow identifiable paths. A 2004 study and compendium of media development initiatives self-described as supporting, however indirectly, conflict resolution, presented case studies in five categories of activity. The categories ranged from conventional journalism training, to strengthening journalists’ sensitivity to their influence on conflict, to more overt journalistic advocacy for peace, to less journalistic but intentional use of media techniques to specifically influence audiences towards peace, and finally to addressing pro-war media or hate speech, by force or by other means. The study noted more than 60 local and international organizations working in media development for conflict prevention or peacebuilding.³⁵ An extensive Deutsche Welle 2007 examination of media initiatives addressing conflict prevention and peacebuilding considered more than 25 case studies of strategies adapted to five different conditions of conflict.³⁶ A 2008 World Bank research paper on policies of media development in post-conflict and fragile states included almost 20 evaluations of one country’s media development initiatives it

32 Loyn, David, Witnessing the truth, Open democracy.net, 2003. Downloaded at: http://www.opendemocracy.net/media-journalismwar/article_993.jsp. Nov 2008.

33 Loyn, David, Good journalism or peace journalism, *Conflict and Communication Online*, Vol 6 (2). 2007.

34 Howard, Ross, *An Operational Framework for Media and Peacebuilding*, IMPACS/CIDA. Vancouver, 2002.

35 Howard, Ross, Rolt, Francis, van de Veen, Hans and Verhoeven, Juliette, *The Power of Media*, European Centre for Conflict Prevention. Utrecht. 2003.

36 Lowenberg, Shira and Bonde, Bent Norby, *Media in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Strategies*, Deutsche Welle, Bonn. 2007.

termed supportive of conflict resolution and peace continuity.³⁷

The exploration of media and conflict continues to expand. A more recent 2008 review³⁸ suggests that policy-makers and states seeking to positively influence conflict resolution through the media have at least four opportunities: professional journalism capacity-building; citizen-driven and community-based media development especially utilizing new technologies and grass-roots interests; intentional peace-promoting media, particularly using entertainment formats; and advertising, commercial messaging and other overt attempts to influence public attitudes.

While the exploration of the media's relationship to conflict and conflict resolution continues, some certainties seem now well-established. The first is that in media development initiatives, conflict resolution is no longer a secondary consideration. In fragile and post-conflict environments a reliable, responsible news media is a critical part of preventing and resolving violent conflict. Media workers, managers and owners and regulators deserve and require an understanding of this distinct reality,

as much as funders and initiative developers. Additional media-use initiatives, going beyond traditional news-gathering-and-distributing techniques, may be appropriate or even more effective. But the original use of the media – as the source of news, as a forum and a watchdog – still remains a critical influence on conflict and conflict resolution.

The area of focus in this study – conflict-sensitive reporting – reflects a modernization of the original values of the news media. It is rooted in the belief that the news media in many societies can be a powerful force to reduce the causes of conflict and to enable a conflict-stressed society to better pursue conflict resolution. The media can do this by training its journalists to better understand conflict and the media's role in it. The journalists can strengthen their reporting to avoid stereotypes and narrow perspectives on the causes and process of conflict. The media can contribute to a wider dialogue among disparate parts of the community in conflict, through improved reporting. It can explore and provide information about opportunities for resolution. And at the same time the media must maintain its essential standards of accuracy, fairness and balance, and responsible conduct.

37 Kalathif, Shanthi, *Towards a New Model. Media and Communication in Post-Conflict and Fragile States*, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank. Washington. 2008.

38 Media, Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: Mapping the Edges, Sheldon Himelfarb and Megan Chablowksi, United States Institute of Peace briefing, October, 2008. Downloadable at: http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2008/1008_media_prevention_peacebuilding.html.

3. Curriculum outline

This document represents a model curriculum for a training programme of strengthening the skills of professional journalists in reporting on violent conflict. It is particularly intended for presentation to small groups of relatively-inexperienced to mid-career reporters, editors and producers working in environments such as conflict-stressed states and emerging democracies. It is constructed in five parts which can be used as a core for more substantial and longer exploration of essential issues. In all parts, course leaders, instructors or trainers will develop their own examples and exercises to support key concepts.

The course emphasizes the critical importance of basic standards of practice in journalism, reflecting the libertarian value of free speech enabled through a reliable, independent news media. The training builds the capacity of journalists to explore and analyze the dynamics of violent conflict in their community. It encourages them to be aware of the influence their reporting can have on inflaming or moderating violent conflict. The training presents journalists with conflict-reporting techniques that avoid contributing to conflict and include exploration of conflict resolution possibilities for the community. It encourages them to recognize that reporting on conflict resolution is an integral part of objective reporting, a strengthening of reliable journalism, and does not require radically changed practices in journalism.

This curriculum is partially based on a guidebook for training and familiarization in conflict-sensitive reporting, entitled *Conflict Sensitive*

Journalism: A Handbook, published in 2003.³⁹ That document was derived from pioneering work by organizations and individuals such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Internews, Search for Common Ground, IMPACS, DFID, the Media Diversity Institute, and Peter du Toit, Alison Campbell, Fiona Lloyd, Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, and research and training experience in a number of conflict-stressed countries.

This curriculum benefits from additional research and experience in conflict-stressed environments, and consultation with individuals and representatives of media development organizations including Panos Paris, The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Media21, the BBC World Service Trust, Internews, and UNESCO. Additional insight was gratefully received from individuals including Marie-Soleil Frere, Francis Rolt, Ann Olsen, Christoph Spurk, Ivan Sigal, Sheldon Himmelfarb, John Keating, Krishna Kumar, Vladimir Bratic and Lisa Schirch. Also valuable was the work of International Media Support and the Kenyan adaptations to the 2003 handbook and reports on the application of those versions.

Course description

The central concept of Conflict-Sensitive Reporting is that violent conflict attracts intense news media attention that requires greater analytical depth and skills to report on it without contributing to further violence nor

³⁹ Howard, Ross, *Conflict Sensitive Journalism: A Handbook for Reporters*, IMPACS-International Media Support. Vancouver and Copenhagen. 2003.

overlooking peacebuilding opportunities. This sensitization to the role and responsibility of reporting on conflict represents an expansion of journalism practice but not a radical change. It is better reporting. It is a socially responsible approach, enabling citizens to make better-informed choices in their own best interests.

Conflict-Sensitive Reporting is based on rigorous adherence to the essential core standards of journalism, which are often cited as accuracy in truth-seeking, objectivity or fair balance, and responsibility or ethical conduct. Combined, these attributes plus media independence and diversity constitute what can be called a reliable news media. While there are significant variations in the expression of these standards, partially reflecting cultural and political and other influences, in almost all cases where independent organizations of working journalists are able to freely express their ambitions and ideals they include these three standards as among the most important.

This curriculum begins with introductions and enabling participants to describe their interests and their perception of local conflicts, and then moves to reiteration of essential standards of journalism practice.

The course then explores the nature and dynamics of conflict and conflict resolution. This section, Understanding Conflict, presents one of the two central objectives of the course: to provide reporters with a rudimentary capacity to analyze the process of violent conflict, including potential possibilities of conflict resolution. This includes an examination of the most recurrent sources of violent conflict, and cultural and structural traditions that contribute to those sources, originally described

by Norwegian researcher John Galtung.⁴⁰ The course traces some common patterns of conflict resolution, from forceful imposition of one side's interests, through collaboration to transformation of the issue into a shared solution. The course examines how to distinguish between expressed demands and real needs, and how to see possibilities of shared interests, reflecting the analytical approach of the Search for Common Ground organization.⁴¹

The second central objective follows, in the Journalism and Conflict section: to demonstrate the influence of reliable journalism on conflict and conflict mediation, and to also note journalism's limitations. Reliable journalism bears similarities to conflict mediation and can play an innate or unintended role in peacebuilding, by providing information essential to the process of conflict resolution. The curriculum continues to reinforce the essential standards of professional journalism, by distinguishing between sensitive reporting and advocacy. It explores how reporting on conflict solutions is part of journalistic objectivity.

The course then examines and demonstrates more specific aspects of delivering a more conflict-sensitive style of reporting. It also examines techniques for improved reporting on conflict, pitfalls to avoid, and specific challenges facing journalists reporting on violent conflict, such as reflecting gender sensitivity, dealing with hate speech, and recognizing trauma.

The course alternates between theory and practice, or concepts and techniques. **Course**

40 Galtung, J. and Vincent, R, *Global Glasnost: Towards a new world information and communication order?* Hampton Press. Cresskill Creek, New Jersey. 1992.

41 See: *Radio Talkshows for Peacebuilding: A Guide*, Search for Common Ground/Radio for Peacebuilding Africa, downloaded at <http://www.roadiopeaceafrica.org>.

leaders, instructors and others using this curriculum as a teaching tool are recommended to study it, and refer to particular resources to create detailed teaching notes for each module of the course and to develop practical media-based examples to apply in demonstration of the specific modules. Journalists, it is said, learn by doing and learn best from each other, so it is recommended that reporting exercises of issue

analysis, story critiquing and reporting assignments be included in group format and individual assignments.

Course leaders, trainers and others presenting this course should make reference to the Trainers' Notes, Case Histories and Resources documents following the course modules. These materials are directly applicable to Conflict-Sensitive Reporting.

Learning objectives

- » Confirm a basic understanding of news media roles and generally-recognized essential standards of practice for professional journalists.
- » Understand how violent conflict most commonly begins, and recognize social structures that can channel conflict to violence.
- » Understand several different patterns of conflict resolution and recognize elements of the process such as demands and needs and shared interests.
- » Understand parallels between reliable journalism and conflict mediation.
- » Understand the essential role of objectivity and truth-seeking in reporting on conflict.
- » Appreciate journalism's opportunities and constraints in reporting comprehensively on conflict.
- » Understand techniques such as appropriate language, framing, spin avoidance.
- » Recognize specific problems and possible solutions confronting conflict-sensitive journalists.

Outcomes

- » Increased appreciation of essential standards in professional reporting on conflict.
- » Strengthened capacity to analyze conflict.
- » Strengthened capacity to make conflict sources, processes and possible solutions more transparent to society.
- » Increased awareness of the influence of reporting techniques upon increasing or resolving conflict.
- » Strengthened reporting skills in use of imagery and language, responding to hate speech, censorship and intimidation and facing similar media challenges in conflict-stressed states.
- » Strengthened awareness of gender issues and establishing gender balance in reporting on conflict.

Curriculum outline

Part 1 Media basics

- 1.1 Introductions
- 1.2 Exercise: Mapping local conflict
- 1.3 Standards of journalism

Part 2 Understanding conflict

- 2.1. How conflict starts
- 2.2 Sources of violence
- 2.3. How conflict ends
- 2.4 Interests and needs and common ground

Part 3 Journalism and conflict

- 3.1 Journalism's automatic, unintended influence
- 3.2 Journalism's limitations
- 3.3 Objectivity
- 3.4 Reporting on peacebuilding

Part 4 Conflict-sensitive reporting

- 4.1 Expanding the agenda: framing
- 4.2 Avoiding spin
- 4.3. Conflict-sensitive words and images
- 4.4 Realities and responsibilities

Part 5 Special considerations

- 5.1 Hate speech
- 5.2 Gender
- 5.3. Safety
- 5.4 Journalists as victims: trauma
- 5.5 Conclusion

4. Detailed curriculum

Course leaders or trainers are advised to first read Chapter 2. Recognizing the media role in conflict, and Chapter 3. Curriculum outline.

<h2>Conflict-sensitive reporting</h2>	
<h3>Day 1 Media basics</h3>	
<h4>Activity 1.1 Introduction</h4>	
<p>Objectives: Introduce participants, describe course intentions, establish overview context</p> <p>Method of delivery: Lecture style and group discussion and presentation</p> <p>Materials: Flip charts Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar) Markers/pens/tape</p> <p>Room setup: U-shape seating area Course leader in open section Group work areas</p> <p>Time: Two+ hours (depending on numbers) A rough sketch or diagram on display to demonstrate the media tree concept, including one example each of a root and a fruit</p>	<p>Activity 1.1a Introductions</p> <p>1. Each participant briefly interviews and then introduces a partner participant they did not previously know well.</p> <p><i>Activity Note:</i> The introduction by partnered interviewers replicates the news-gathering process and affirms the news media's values of accurate, essential and interesting news.</p> <p>Activity 1.1b Explain the goals of this course to the participants. The course objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to confirm the underpinnings of reliable professional news-gathering: the media's essential standards of practice and values; • to present a basic description of the dynamics of violent conflict and conflict resolution in modern societies; • to demonstrate to journalists the influence the news media can have on violent conflict, and conflict resolution, particularly noting the unintended mediating role of the media in conflict resolution; • to understand the role of the professional journalist and the news media related to conflict and conflict resolution; • to consider responses to particular challenges that confront the news media in reporting on conflict and conflict resolution; • to develop skill in applying this new knowledge through examination of case studies and contemporary examples and simulations. <p>Activity 1.1c Participants' ambitions</p> <p>1. Each participant briefly describes one specific strategy or skill concerning conflict reporting that they would like to explore, during the course.</p> <p>Topics should be noted as presented and any not contained within the course contents should be added to a flip-chart list called The Parking Lot for listing unresolved subjects that must be emptied (addressed) before the end of the course.</p> <p><i>Activity Note:</i> This activity encourages participants to note shared concerns, enables trainers to indicate where some interests fit into the course goals, adds new topics to be covered during the workshop where they exist.</p> <p>Activity 1.1d The media tree In small groups, participants consider and discuss and present a group description of the risks and benefits to having a functioning news media. The media itself is the tree trunk. It bears fruits such as public education and free speech. However, it faces risks at its root level such as corruption and censorship which can kill the tree's benefits. Each group is asked to conceptualize fruits and root-risks as widely as possible, assemble list/illustration and represent to the larger group.</p> <p><i>Activity Note:</i> This activity briefly establishes a larger context of social structures and environments within which to examine and study the news media and conflict-sensitive reporting.</p>

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 1 Media basics

Activity 1.2 Mapping local conflict

Objectives:

Develop awareness of differing perceptions of local conflict

Method of delivery:

Individual presentation by participants
Facilitated discussion of comparison of highlighted points in presentations

Materials:

Flip charts
Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area
Group leader in open section
Group work areas

Time:

One-two hours (depending on numbers)

Activity 1.2 Mapping local conflict

2. Participants individually write very brief description of local or regional conflict as they perceive its main actors, causes, actors' objectives, outcomes, and very briefly report this to the group. Common themes are noted. Individuals' descriptions and responses should be non-judgmental. Participants retain their report for later reconsideration.

Questions to stimulate this discussion might include: what is the most significant violent conflict or threat that affects your country, is it political, criminal or other, is it local or country-wide, is it between identifiable groups, what is the issue that makes them resort to violence? Describe how the media reports the violence: accurately, partisan, different in print versus broadcast, etc. What impact does media coverage have on the conflict? Has the media been criticized? By whom?

Activity Note: *The introduction of individuals' perceptions of one or more conflict situations allows a facilitated non-judgmental comparison of perceived key segments of conflict analysis including conflict sources and resolution processes. The possibilities of deeper and wider analysis are suggested, for later consideration.*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 1 Media basics

Activity 1.3 Standards of journalism

Objectives:

Establish/confirm awareness of essential standards of professional journalism practice

Establish familiarity with role of independent and diverse news media ("free media") in service of public interests

Method of delivery:

Course leader facilitates discussion establishing standards

Course leader presents role of media in society

Materials:

Flip charts

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area.

Course leader in open section

Time:

a: 2-4 hours with assignment

b: 1 hour

Activity 1.3a Establish essential standards of professional journalism

3. The course leader presents a very brief survey of professional codes of conduct demonstrating wide consensus on the core values of:

- accuracy,
- objectivity or impartiality and fair balance,
- and ethical responsibility, such as avoiding illegality, malice, plagiarism, betraying sources.

4. The standards are explained and demonstrated through examples of accomplishment and failure of these standards, illustrated in printed, broadcast or online material.

5. The connection between media reliability and the benefits of independence and diversity among media outlets should also be explored.

Activity note: *The confirmation of basic understanding of standards can be facilitated through a reporting assignment now or at the end of the day, in which members individually prepare written/broadcast report, and compare with each other and with course leader's example.*

Activity 1.3b Establish a consensus on idealized role of media in society

Beginning with facilitated response to the question: "Why do we do it? What is our role?" course leader presents news-gathering as messenger, forum and watchdog -- a process of serving society's best interests as an impartial conduit for information for citizens, as a public forum for free speech, and as a monitor of government. It is important to note that a functioning free media neither supports nor overtly opposes government or other interests, except in editorial/opinion segments. The role of state-owned media which is independent or controlled, versus private media, should be noted.

Media as potential actor or facilitator in community affairs, including in conflict resolution, is raised as a possible additional role, but not extensively defined yet.

Activity note. *The concepts presented here reflect roles of news media in an idealized democratic capitalist economy. These presumptions of conditions need to be continuously acknowledged by the course leader, and participants should be encouraged to note and discuss variations of local-regional political and economic structures, and perceived roles of the news media in their society.*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 2 Understanding conflict

Activity 2.1 How conflict starts

Objectives:

- Develop awareness of conflict as a field of study
- Develop awareness of common causes of violent conflict

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

- Flip charts
- Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar) Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

- U-shape seating area
- Facilitator in open section

Time:

One hour-90 minutes

Activity 2.1a:

Course leader introduces concept of conflict as a field of study highly appropriate to journalism but previously ignored. Leader facilitates a basic definition of conflict similar to: two or more individuals or groups pursuing goals they believe they cannot share.

Course leader presents distinctions between conflict and violence, discusses transitory nature of violent conflict and notes early warning sign for journalists: change and resistance is a common precursor to conflict.

Activity 2.1b:

Course leader presents a description of the most common or root causes of violent conflict, such as poverty (unequal access to essential resource such as food and housing,) little communication between competing groups, groups hold incorrect ideas about each other, unresolved grievances remain alive, and power is unevenly distributed.

Specific examples from past conflicts are provided. Participants are invited to revisit and discuss their 1.2 presentations on sources of local conflict to establish if root causes are common or unique.

Activity note: *It is important to distinguish between conflict meaning disagreement between parties debating change, for example, and parties whose disagreement becomes unmanageable and resorts to physical violence. Simple conflict or disagreement can be useful, where it is properly managed. It is how change is determined in democratic societies What is not useful is unmanaged conflict. "It is preferable to have conflicts fought in the media rather than in the streets."*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 2 Understanding conflict

Activity 2.2 Violence

Objectives:

Develop understanding of concepts for analysing conflict

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:**Flip charts**

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Facilitator in open section

Time:

Two hours

Activity 2.2

Course leader introduces the concept of violence as curtailment or abuse of fundamental human rights in several forms.

- Physical violence
- Other categories of violence, often ignored, tolerated or endorsed by empowered interests.
 - Cultural violence. Cultural violence can be long-tolerated community talk and beliefs about another community, expressed in terms such as hate speech, religious intolerance as justification for war, and gender discrimination which permits practices against women that are not accepted against men.
 - Institutional violence. Abuse of human rights that has been written into law or tradition, such as legal racism and sexism, extreme exploitation through slavery or caste, and corruption through nepotism, are examples of institutional violence.

The introduction of multiple forms of violence is effective in encouraging journalists in conflict-stressed communities to expand beyond a narrow emphasis only on physical impacts of violence and begin to include reference to cultural and institutional forms of violence as possible contributors to the violent physical conflict.

Course leader invites participants in groups to revisit their descriptions of local or regional conflicts and using one conflict as an example, develop and present a group analysis of any forms of violence underlying the conflict. Participants are also invited to identify and describe particularly dominant forms of violence in their personal community.

Activity Note: Course leaders and instructors are recommended to consult Chapter 1 of *Radio Talkshows for Peacebuilding: A Guide. Edition 2*, downloadable at: www.sfcg.org and www.radiopeaceafrica.org for preliminary descriptions of these concepts and for reference to academic source material. A more extensive source is the *Typology of Violence* at P. 60-63 in Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, *Peace Journalism*, Hawthorn Press. Stroud (UK). 2005.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 2 Understanding conflict

Activity 2.3 How conflict ends

Objectives:

Develop an understanding of categories of conflict resolution ranging from conquest to common ground

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Material containing case studies

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area.

Facilitator in open section

Time:

One hour

Activity 2.3a:

Course leader uses role play and two participants to demonstrate and discuss different strategies for ending a violent conflict between them.

- The strategies are: One-party dominance
- Withdrawal
- Compromise
- Achieving common ground and transcendence of the conflict to a shared acceptable outcome.

Activity note: *These categorizations are often demonstrated by the role play dispute over an orange on a branch overhanging one property but on a tree growing on adjacent property. The resolution possibilities are described on P. 10 of Conflict-Sensitive Journalism, op cit. For details on conflict resolution, see Galtung, John, Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means. 2000. Available at: <http://www.transcend.org>.*

Activity 2.3b:

The course leader presents case studies of contemporary conflicts resolved by these strategies and invites participants to present their own examples. The 1992 peace accord ending conflict in Mozambique is an excellent case study. See: Reychler and Paffenholz (eds), *Peacebuilding, a field guide*. Lynne Reiner. Boulder. 2001.

Activity note: *Examples of conflict resolution cases should be selected to include demonstrating the benefit of bringing multiple approaches, interests and perspectives to a conflict in aid of resolution, and noting the media as a vehicle and forum for doing this. The importance of introducing additional perspectives and interests in conflict resolution rather than relying exclusively on traditional elites, should be emphasized.*

The exercise can also be discussed in terms of revealing to journalists what professional conflict mediators may be attempting behind the scenes, and thus suggest additional sources and perspectives for journalists to seek out and report.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 2 Understanding conflict

Activity 2.4 Demands and needs and common ground

Objectives:

Develop an understanding of forces motivating opposing sides in a conflict, to more accurately report them

Introduce participants to more sophisticated mapping of a conflict to better report it, including opportunities for possible resolution

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Material containing case studies.

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Facilitator in open section

Time:

Two hours

Activity 2.4a:

Course leader presents the concept of positions or demands as expressed by parties in a conflict versus the more fundamental interests or real needs of those parties. Fundamental needs often go unstated but deserve examination by the media to accurately portray the factors contributing to the conflict. Course leader presents examples of expressed demands and fundamental needs. The simplest example is one group invading another's territory and resources claiming to prevent disorder but seeking to exploit those resources. Participants are invited to present their own examples.

Activity 2.4b:

The course leader presents the argument that media reporting that examines fundamental needs beneath expressed demands of opposed parties to a conflict may reveal aspects of need which are shared by the parties, or common ground, which can also be reported. The simplest example is groups in violent conflict over an area of land but who share need for improved access to the land's water resource.

Using hypothetical conflict case studies the course leader invites participants in groups to assemble a more comprehensive mapping of the conflict case study including identifying root causes and forms of violence, demands and needs of the conflicting parties, identifying multiple interests and multiple approaches to resolving the conflict including possible non-violent resolutions based on common ground or transformation.

Activity note: *Journalists need to be able to distinguish between demands and needs, and recognize that only needs can be shared. A relevant basic explanation of positions, needs and common ground, particularly useful for radio talk-show hosts dealing with conflict issues but relevant to all journalists, is available at [Radio Talkshows for Peacebuilding: A Guide, Edition 2](http://RadioTalkshowsforPeacebuilding:AGuide, Edition2), downloadable at: www.sfcg.org and www.radiopeaceafrica.org*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 3 Journalism and conflict

Activity 3.1 Journalism's unintended influence

Objectives:

Reinforce basic standards of journalism by citing consequences of failure to uphold standards

Develop understanding of unintended and innate influence of reliable media on conflict mediation and resolution

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Material containing examples of inflammatory media in Rwanda, Serbia; post-violence analyses of Kenya media role

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room Setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

Two hours

Activity 3.1a:

Course leader briefly cites infamous examples of media inciting or inflaming violent conflict: such as Rwanda, Serbia and Kenya 2007 post-election. Participants are invited to briefly present their own examples.

Activity notes: *If the ideals and daily reliability of the news media are not upheld, then the media can significantly fuel conflict. The examples demonstrate both intentional and more accidental (Kenya) abuse of media standards with resulting negative media impact.*

Activity 3.1b:

Participants are asked to brainstorm about specific ways that reliable news media reports can do the opposite to 3.1a, to reduce tensions or violence between disputing groups or tribes or nations. Real examples will be presented by the course leader to encourage discussion.

The course leader then introduces participants to the concept of media roles as similar to 11 initiatives of conflict mediators, and to an examination of those roles, as identified in Manoff, Robert, "Role Plays: Potential media roles in conflict prevention and management," Track Two 7:4, December 1998; and in Howard, Ross, Conflict-Sensitive Journalism: a Handbook. IMS-IMPACS. Vancouver. 2003.

- The roles include providing educating, providing an emotional outlet, correcting misperceptions, encouraging a balance of power, addressing myths and enabling face-saving and consensus-building.
- The consequences of reliable news reporting for conflict resolution are the result of regular, conventional adherence to standards of journalism. Journalists with conflict analysis skills (Part 2) will be more perceptive in reporting on issues and delivering information that serves these conflict mediating roles.

Activity Note: *Journalists should be made aware that these mediating consequences of reliable media reporting are unintended. Reliable reporting can have an innate or automatic influence on conflict resolution. As South African analyst Hans Baumann said, journalists mediate whether they intend to or not.*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 3 Journalism and conflict

Activity 3.2 Journalism's limitations

Objectives:

Gain understanding of media as instrument of social change (media effects theory)

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and group discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Markers/pens

Tape

Room setup:

U-shape chairs

Facilitator in open section

Time:

30 minutes-one hour

Activity 3.2:

Course leader presents a preliminary exploration of media effects theory to caution against unrealistic expectations of media influence, especially on conflict and conflict resolution.

- Knowledge, attitude and behaviour are a hierarchy of related stages in social change. Activators of change in each of these stages include compulsion, manipulation, and persuasion or a combination of these.
- In general, the media does not tell people what to think, but what to think about. For example, media reporting of conflict often places feared consequences of violence on the public's agenda (the effect of compulsion or manipulation.) This knowledge prompts attitudinal change precipitating behavioural action such as deciding to flee.

The course leader leads an exploration of examples of positive media-induced change. The subtle or indirect and gradual nature of the change is emphasized. A well-informed group's changed attitude may lead it to recognize common interest with former opponents, and to resist negative arguments presented by others.

Participants are asked to cite any experience in fields such as development, health, anti-AIDS initiatives and consider the indirect media influence on behaviour. The course leader responds with leading examples summarized in Feek, Warren, *Moving Media: The Case for the Role of Communications in Meeting the MDGs*, in *Media Matters*, Global Forum for Media Development. Internews. Paris. 2007.

Activity Note: For a preliminary description of media effects and social change, see Bratic, V, and Schirch, L, *Why and When to Use the Media for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*, European Centre for Conflict Prevention. The Hague. 2007.

Part of the intention here is to caution journalists against assuming immediate and direct influence on public behaviours as a result of their reporting.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 3 Journalism and conflict

Activity 3.3 Objectivity or advocacy

Objectives:

- To reinforce the value of objectivity in journalism
- To examine journalism's responsibility to report or support conflict resolution
- To assert the merits of better professional journalism, not advocacy

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

- Flip charts
- Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)
- Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

- U-shape seating area
- Course leader in open section

Time:

90 minutes

Activity 3.3a:

The course leader facilitates a discussion about the possibility of journalists intentionally using their conflict-sensitive influence to support or advocate conflict resolution. Pro-peace or advocacy reporting is compared with the meaning and value of objectivity in journalism. Conflict-sensitive reporting is described as the professional journalist's appropriate response to the contradiction between advocacy and objectivity.

- The standards of journalism, including objectivity or impartiality and fairness, are essential to media credibility and public support of the media. The first responsibility of the news media is to take no sides and report the truth as best ascertained.
- Objectivity is an ideal, an essential technique for removing bias in seeking truth. Objectivity, while not absolutely achievable, is a commitment by the journalist to set aside personal or other values that would shape the story differently.
- Journalists also have responsibility to not produce information or see their information be used to mislead the public, to inflame conflict.
- Sensational, biased, narrowly-defined, elite-sourced conflict reporting occurs for many reasons including media owners' imperatives, government censorship and intimidation.
- Abandoning the core values of journalism will not resolve these challenges but will weaken journalism's credibility in truth-seeking.
- Conflict sensitivity gives reporters more comprehensive insight into violent conflict, including providing news in a fuller context, including possibilities of resolving the conflict.
- The key to better reporting on violent conflict is to report peacebuilding as well as report conflict. "What we are talking about is not new tools but sharper traditional tools and new insights into using them."

Activity note: *The discussion includes a brief exploration of sensational or irresponsible journalism which can inflame conflict, and the temptation for journalists disillusioned with the influence of traditional journalism to adopt advocacy for peacebuilding.*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 3 Journalism and conflict

Activity 3.4 Reporting on peacebuilding

Objectives:

To demonstrate conflict resolution initiatives as part of balance and context in reliable reporting on conflict

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

30 minutes

Activity 3.4:

The course leader introduces an analogy between inclusion of conflict resolution initiatives in conflict reporting and inclusion of cures in health reporting. This session is intended to demonstrate that inclusion of information about conflict resolution opportunities or peacebuilding potential is a part of sophisticated comprehensive reporting which has too often been ignored and has provided incomplete information to citizens.

Objectivity is not compromised by reporting more comprehensively. It is as appropriate to report on possible solutions to a conflict as to report on a cure for a disease such as malaria. It does not make a reporter into a peace advocate, any more than it makes a health reporter into an anti-malaria crusader. Both kinds of reporters share a desire to see the public better informed.

Activity note: *As conflict analyst John Galtung observes, reporting on conflict without seeking and reporting information on the conflict's root causes, its forms of violence and potential awareness of how it can end is similar to a news report that describes an illness without reporting on what causes the illness and without reporting on the medicines that can cure it.*

Examples of incomplete reporting are examined.

Acknowledging these deeper and wider aspects of a conflict does not constitute endorsing any particular initiative or the concept of peacebuilding.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 4 Conflict-sensitive reporting

Activity 4.1 Framing conflict

Objectives:

To reinforce 3.3 Objectivity values

To demonstrate that conflict-sensitive journalism seeks additional frameworks for more comprehensive reporting

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

Two hours

Activity 4.1:

The course leader reviews the 3.3 discussion of objectivity or impartiality in reporting. The course leader introduces the concept of story framing which journalists engage in when researching and composing a news report. The influence of personal, cultural and other factors on framing is discussed. The course leader uses role play in composing a photograph, and other examples of media framing such as differing interpretations of conflicts such as the invasion of Iraq, to demonstrate framing and objectivity in reporting, and the influence on public perceptions. Participants are invited to contribute examples of their own influences on their framing. The influence of conflict sensitivity in framing is discussed. Examples are presented similar to Example #1, P. 20 of Howard, Ross, *Conflict-Sensitive Journalism: A Handbook*, *op cit*.

- Framing is an essential part of the journalistic process of making events and information understandable by the public. Framing involves journalists making choices about the significance of elements to include within the frame.
- Conflict-sensitive journalists need to be aware of conventional frameworks they use to compose their stories. Language and image use can also be part of the framing purpose.
- Conflict sensitivity enables a journalist to be aware of multiple frameworks which may be applicable to a story.

Activity note: An initial consideration of journalistic framing and multiple conventional frameworks is available at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=58&aid=81884>. Additional discussion material is available at <http://www.journalism.org/node/447>.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 4 Conflict-sensitive reporting

Activity 4.2 Avoiding spin

Objectives:

- To strengthen journalistic resistance to manipulation by information sources
- To recognize that journalism's presence has influence on events

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

- Flip charts
- Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)
- Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

- U-shape seating area
- Course leader in open section

Time:

One-two hours

Activity 4.2a:

The course leader facilitates a discussion of the attempts by information sources to subtly influence the media's reporting of events and issues to favour the source's perspective and interests. The persuasion and misinformation process is sometimes called "spin" for its attempts to cause the media to compose or broadcast the story a certain way, in a certain direction. The connection to demands and hidden needs is explored. The reality is that there are few facts presented to the media that do not have some hidden agenda.

- Spin has become an integral part of the providing of information by most interests in positions of authority.
- Conflict-sensitive journalists need to be aware of spin when receiving information.
- Conflict sensitivity enables a journalist to be aware of multiple frameworks which may be applicable to a story in order to set the spin in context rather than as the whole truth.

Activity 4.2b:

In addition to influence on public knowledge and attitudes which may change behaviour, the media also can have direct influence over events as they unfold, by the media's presence as a witness, a watchdog. The course leader presents examples of where the presence of journalists alters events such as a planned killing, and facilitates a discussion of similar events and occasions. The discussion is also directed to the ethical and social responsibility of direct intervention by journalists in events. Journalists do not normally intervene in news events.

- Journalists' first responsibility to the public is a truthful as possible an account of events without interfering in the event. This is part of the meaning of objectivity. However, personal intervention may be permissible in the exceptional case of immediate saving of a desperate individual's life when no other means is possible. The intervention must be disclosed, since it represents a change from the normal trust assumed by the public that the media report is an objective and disengaged eyewitness account.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 4 Conflict-sensitive reporting

Activity 4.3 Conflict sensitive language and images

Objectives:

To establish the application of conflict sensitivity at a practical level – in the words and images used

To establish some conflict sensitive principles used in framing news reports and choosing words

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

One-two hours

Activity 4.3a

The course leader reminds participants that words and sounds/images are the most fundamental tools journalists employ in their work. Conflict sensitivity enables reporters to choose words with greater understanding of their effect on the public and the public's understanding of a conflict. Examples of value-laden or controversial words and expressions are presented, such as example #1 p.17 and example #2 p.18 in Howard, Ross, *Conflict Sensitive Journalism: A Handbook*. The course leader invites contributions to a prepared list of emotive, victimizing, sensationalizing, demonizing etc words that inhibit understanding and may contribute to conflict by the perception the words create in the public mind.

Activity note: *Broadcast sound and imagery is increasingly the most influential source of public perceptions of conflict. Participants need to go beyond written and broadcast words to examine broadcast imagery.*

Activity 4.3b:

In addition to specific choices of words to reflect conflict sensitivity in reporting, a number of general principles for quick application in researching and framing stories, are proposed by the group leader. Components of such a list, including language use, are discussed in the 17-point Plan for Practical Peace Journalism in Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, *Peace Journalism*, Hawthorn Press. Stroud (UK). 2005.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 4 Conflict-sensitive reporting

Activity 4.4 Realities and responsibilities

Objectives:

To reinforce previous issues explored by examining and expanding issues and practices inhibiting conflict-sensitive reporting

To develop rudimentary strategies to respond to the issues and practices for the conflict-sensitive and professional reporter

Method of Delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip Charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room Setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

One-two hours

Activity 4.4a:

Using the Problems and Possible Solutions table developed in *Radio Talkshows for Peacebuilding: A Guide*, Edition 2, as a starting point, the course leader facilitates discussion of Structural, Cultural and Personal barriers to effective reliable reporting, and to conflict-sensitive reporting. The course leader invites participants to add to the three sections.

Activity note: *The Problems and Possible Solutions table was developed for radio talk-show broadcast hosts and producers but with modest adaptation is highly pertinent to all forms of journalism. Because of the increasingly dominant influence of radio talkshows in some conflict-stressed environments, participants should be directed to consider the radio talkshow genre specifically and while not necessarily engaged in it, consider its influence on other forms of reporting and on conflict.*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 5 Special considerations

Activity 5.1 Hate speech

Objectives:

To present strategies for dealing with the widespread problem of hate speech repeated in the media

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

One hour

Activity 5.1:

The course leader presents examples of hate speech and discusses how it should be dealt with by professional journalists with conflict sensitivity.

Participants are invited to provide additional examples, in particular searching for particular local metaphors and proverbs which are often used to avoid responsibility while indirectly conveying hate speech.

- Hate speech of all kinds must be challenged whenever its source is worth reporting. The words of important speakers' hate speech must be reported, but it can be immediately put in context by also quoting experts on hate speech and quoting those victimized by the hate speech. Hate speech is offensive, dangerous and potentially a human rights crime, and it should not go unchallenged by authorities and experts.
- Indirect hate speech can be initially challenged by journalists by publicly asking the meaning of the proverb to be explained, so its meaning can no longer be hidden and exposure places responsibility upon the source.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 5 Special considerations

Activity 5.2 Gender

Objectives:

To establish gender considerations within conflict-sensitive reporting

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

One-two hours

Activity 5.2:

The course leader introduces the concept that journalists need to expand the frame to include a gender perspective when reporting with conflict sensitivity.

Gender disparity is one of the most common sources of violence, in a cultural-structural sense, but it is rarely recognized as an essential focus point in conventional reporting on conflict sources, and is marginalized. The impact of conflict on women, and the role of women in peacebuilding, is rarely given prominent coverage in reporting on conflict. Framing, the use of language and imagery, and even the traditional male structure of news organizations need to be considered to avoid stereotypes in reporting. The course leader presents examples, such as traditional reporting on rape and sexual violence in conflict, domestic violence, health issues, the treatment of war widows and the impacts of conflict resolution (DDR) on women.

Activity Note: *Mainstreaming gender into conflict reporting is complex. A useful examination of gender blindness and how to overcome it in reporting on conflict is available in Lloyd, Fiona and Howard, Ross, Gender, Conflict and Journalism, UNESCO. Paris. 2004. The section on accessing women's voices, and interviewing gender violence survivors and interviewing trauma survivors is particularly useful.*

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 5 Special considerations

Activity 5.3 Safety

Objectives:

To secure recognition of journalists' personal safety considerations in conflict reporting

To identify sources of information and advice on safety considerations

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

U-shape seating area.

Course leader in open section

Time:

One hour

Activity 5.3:

The course leader facilitates a discussion of risk awareness in reporting on conflict, and presents a series of recommended safety tips, and seeks recommendations from participants.

The course leader presents examples of several recommended sources of additional information on personal safety including the International News Safety Institute, the International Federation of Journalists, and UNESCO.

Activity Note. A useful starting point for a list of safety steps is included at P. 76 in Lloyd, Fiona and Howard, Ross, *Gender, Conflict and Journalism*, UNESCO. Paris. 2004.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 5 Special considerations

Activity 5.4 Journalists and trauma

Objectives:

- To secure recognition of journalists' personal safety considerations in conflict reporting
- To identify sources of information and advice on safety considerations
- To increase reporters' sensitivity in interviewing other trauma victims and survivors

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

- Flip charts
- Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)
- Markers/pens/tape

Room setup:

- U-shape seating area
- Course leader in open section

Time:

One-two hours

Activity 5.4:

Complementing **5.3 Safety** awareness, the course leader facilitates a discussion of the influence of work-induced stress on reporters – the sources, symptoms and responses. No-one who reports extensively on violent conflict can remain entirely unaffected. The act of listening and reporting becomes an act of absorbing some of the distress and tension. The course leader presents recommendations for recognizing and relieving stress and trauma and provides information on more extensive sources.

- The pressure is significantly greater for those who report on conflict within their own community.
- Journalists themselves may be survivors of traumatic violent conflict, which adds to the burden of objectivity and appropriate framing when later reporting on the same conflict. The personal experience of journalists in conflict-stressed environments is often overlooked in training.
- There are also gender components to stress: male and female reporters may respond to their stress in different ways.
- An awareness of the effects of trauma and stress on journalists leads to greater sensitivity in news-gathering among traumatized survivors of violent conflict.

Activity Note: A useful starting point for discussing trauma is the section on Trauma, P. 249-253 in Lynch, Jake and McGoldrik, Annabel, **Conflict-Sensitive Journalism**, Hawthorn Press. Stroud (UK). 2005. Extensive resources are available online from the DART Centre for Journalism and Trauma.

Conflict-sensitive reporting

Day 5 Special considerations

Activity 5.5 Conclusions

Objectives:

To complete the conflict-sensitive reporting training by obtaining participants personal evaluations of the course

To identify sources of information and advice to continue conflict-sensitive reporting practices

Ideally, to establish the presence and availability of an ongoing online portal to resources, discussion and practice of conflict-sensitive reporting

Method of delivery:

Lecture style and facilitated discussion

Materials:

Flip charts

Display facility (overhead projector, Powerpoint or similar)

Markers/pens/tape

Printed copies of resource materials and evaluation questionnaire for distribution to participants

A computer access to the online portal or website to demonstrate

Room setup:

U-shape seating area

Course leader in open section

Time:

One-two hours

Activity 5.5:

Participants should be invited to respond in writing to a questionnaire seeking their evaluation of the course. The questionnaire can be completed anonymously.

Participants should be presented with a Resource List or similar document indicating selected resources widely available online or in print or elsewhere that reinforce issues and values presented in the course.

Ideally, the course leader should describe and invite participation in an online or email exchange of information and other potential resources relating to conflict-sensitive reporting. (See suggestions for online material in Field Notes, following.)

5. Notes for trainers

Notes and observations for trainers implementing Conflict-Sensitive Reporting curricula in conflict-stressed zones.

1. Recognize how much the lives of journalist participants in Conflict-Sensitive Reporting training have themselves been affected by violent conflict in their community. They may have suffered personal or family distress including tragedy and abuse and displacement and confinement, or witnessed it, or observed it as journalists. This reality of personal trauma should be addressed, respectfully, especially when discussing personal values versus journalistic objectivity and conflict sensitivity which may require journalists to meet with former oppressors.

2. The challenge for journalists working in severely constrained or censored newsrooms and jurisdictions needs to be addressed in Conflict-Sensitive Reporting training. Western trainers in particular should be acutely sensitive to different standards of practise that journalists follow by tradition or by authorities' compulsion. Cultural and other values impinging upon journalism standards must also be recognized. Training in conflict-sensitive reporting can make trainees more exposed than untrained colleagues to intimidation by interests, internal and external, who want biased or other forms of constrained reporting. Trainees deserve opportunities for facilitated discussion about how much of professional standards and conflict sensitivity can be applied in their reporting, with care for their personal safety and security.

3. Trainees deserve to appreciate that their difficult circumstances are not unique, and to find solidarity amongst colleagues and learn from their experiences. For example, trainees need to openly discuss issues such as how to deal with *gumbo, qua, transportation fees, brown paper envelopes* and other words referring to the widespread phenomenon of petty bribes, inducements and gifts that journalists are offered by vested interests to produce biased reporting. Although offensive, these small fees can be a necessary source of income for severely under-paid journalists.

4. At every opportunity, obtain buy-in from the editors, managers and owners. Their support for/tolerance of conflict-sensitive reporting can significantly determine its success. Trainers and programme managers and funders' representatives should specifically include strategies for explaining conflict-sensitive reporting and informing the real gate-keepers of the benefits of supporting their conflict-trained reporters. Benefits include greater accuracy and neutrality and thus greater credibility, which offers greater potential popularity and larger audiences.

5. Technology is no substitute for the fundamentals of journalism, but it is a tool of ever-increasing importance. Internet and web-powered online support for training both during and afterward is a major opportunity and is highly effective. It provides immediate reinforcement for learning. It creates a permanent resource accessible anytime. Later online access bypasses cultural barriers such as men and women working together.

- » Create an online portal for continued access to all printed and displayed material used during the training such as PDFs.
- » Create a sustained post-training dialogue amongst trainees.
- » Where a Train-the-Trainers process has been implemented, use the online site to support the local trainers.
- » In designing programs, consider creating a post-training process of providing long-distance mentoring to trainees.
- » In designing programs consider creating a post-training reporting assignment reflecting conflict sensitivity for each participant, to be later reported locally and also to the portal for shared critique.

The BBC World Service Trust's *ilearn* training service is an excellent example of technology and innovation powering media development. See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/whatwedo/how/2008/04/080307_how_we_work_ilearn_intro.shtml.

6. When possible, go beyond the off-site classroom or workshop format and take the capacity-building into the journalists' workplace. Training individuals or very small groups at their work location, using their work as training material, can change the trainer role into that of a mentor, or personal guide, which significantly intensifies the learning experience. Mentoring one-on-one or in very small groups is more expensive because it takes longer to train large numbers of individuals. But on-site training is much superior to training in unrelated environments such as classrooms.

7. Trainers and mentors should not assume direct media management roles as part of their capacity-building. Mentors and trainers should provide advice on the application of skills but not directly apply or deliver those

skills themselves, which interrupts the learning experience. It also risks the trainer becoming identified with news produced by one media outlet, jeopardizing the program's credibility and independence in the larger community.

8. If possible, avoid multiple languages in one group. Each translator, no matter how skilled, becomes another intervention between the trainer and the trainees. To be efficient, training sessions should be small and at least composed of similar-status communities of journalists.

9. Like all media development initiatives, a conflict-sensitive reporting curriculum must recognize the local media-enabling environment and reflect those realities in the training. While trainees deserve encouragement from trainers to apply professional standards and conflict-sensitive skills, they should be reminded not to jeopardize their personal security and safety because of their working environment realities.

» The media enabling environment includes legislation and jurisprudence governing freedom of speech and dissemination of news and opinion, respect for international covenants, and legislation governing access to information. It extends to regulation governing anything media-related from newsprint allocation to broadcasting frequencies.

» The media enabling environment also includes financial sustainability considerations, including the viability of a market of advertisers and consumers to sustain private media, and state or alternative funding for public media.

» The importance of the media-enabling environment cannot be under-estimated. Some capacity building can survive in a

strict authoritarian environment but it will be constrained to non-controversial areas such as business reporting or health and development reporting. The enabling environment needs to be acknowledged in every training programme and to influence both the curriculum approach and content.

10. Insist on gender-sensitivity in participation in the training and in training materials, examples and assignments.

11. Create local examples. Course leaders and trainers should prepare curriculum material with as many site-specific examples and assignments as possible. In particular, prepare specific print clippings, news footage and downloadable online material. Recent or current examples of insensitive reporting in local media make effective working material.

12. Training initiatives should be accompanied by a monitoring system to identify problems, refine training practices and ensure understanding. In short-term training initiatives this entails extensive opportunity for feedback from participants, as a minimum.

13. Evaluation of the effects of conflict-sensitive journalism is difficult, tenuous and time-consuming. The variables related to a decline or resolution of violent conflict in the presence of conflict-sensitive reporting are enormous. The effect of conflict-sensitive reporting on behaviour is indirect. Evaluation techniques of media development initiatives, including conflict sensitivity, are expanding. But journalism development and conflict-sensitive reporting should be recognized as having an undeniable benefit to conflict resolution and democratization regardless of currently quantified data.

6. Case studies

1. Kenya: Immediate post-conflict sensitivity among journalists

Background

The post-election violence that erupted in December 2007 in East Africa's prosperous and formerly stable democracy gave most Kenyan journalists their first experience in reporting on a devastating political crisis. The Electoral Commission of Kenya declared President Mwai Kibaki the winner over opposition leader Raila Odinga, despite widespread accusations by national and international election observers of vote rigging. Election resentment grew into widespread conflict.

By early February, the Kenyan Red Cross had estimated that at least 1,000 people had been killed and more than 300,000 driven from their homes by the violence. Journalists were among those targeted.

At the same time, there were accusations both from the government and from some journalists that the media contributed to this violence through irresponsible or inflammatory reporting and broadcasting. The government's immediate reaction on Dec. 30, 2007 was to ban live radio and TV news reports.

A new government based on a power-sharing arrangement was eventually established, although considered fragile.⁴²

42 Dorina Bekoe, Kenya: *Setting the Stage for Durable Peace?* US Institute for Peace briefing paper. Washington. 2008. Available at: http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2008/0415_kenya.html.

Within the media there was extensive self-censorship, government suppression of information and violent attacks on media personnel, and weak and sometimes inflammatory media coverage of the crisis. Growing pressure on freedom of expression and the media's own fear of exacerbating violence and ethnic divisions dominated the behaviour of editors and journalists and they firmly chose restraint.⁴³ Many Kenyan journalists later concluded that they were badly unprepared and made serious mistakes that inflamed and extended the violence.⁴⁴

The initiative

International Media Support, Article 19, and Reporters Without Borders conducted a joint mission to Kenya Jan. 7-11, 2008 to assess press freedom issues and determine what immediate help Kenyan journalists needed in the face of the crisis. A round table discussion among senior Kenyan media managers on Feb. 12

43 International Media Support (IMS) : *Kenyan Media Under Pressure*. IMS, Copenhagen. February 2008. Available at: <http://www.i-m-s.dk/files/publications/The%20Nairobi%20Round%20Table%20Recommendations%20-%20Brochure.pdf>.

44 *Kenyan Media Under Pressure*, Ibid. Also see: IMS, RSF and Article 19: *How far to go: Kenya's Media Caught in the turmoil*. February, 2008. Available at: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L06865375.htm>.

And: Internews analysis: *30 days in words and pictures. Reflections of journalists on reporting of violence in Kenya*. January 30, 2008. Personal document.

further confirmed deep concern among some managers and journalists that the media had failed the Kenyan people during the crisis.

With the objective of reducing inflammatory media reporting, a group of international media developers convened workshops among Kenyan journalists and managers to first address their trauma, and then provide journalism training sensitive to the violence-prone environment. The one-week rapid response mission was conducted between Feb. 11 and Feb. 15.

The activities were carried out in close cooperation with Kenyan media institutions and delivered by media organisations International Media Support of Denmark, London-based Article 19, the Paris-based International Federation of Journalists and the International News Safety Institute and Journalists Without Borders. The World Association of Newspapers and International Press Institute also provided support.

The rapid response mission provided safety training of 60 Kenyan media practitioners in three locations across the country, a Nairobi workshop in conflict-sensitive journalism for 25 reporters from across the country, and conflict trauma counselling for 150 journalists and photographers in five different locations in Kenya. Some 40 key media stakeholders in Kenya also gathered to set priorities for longer-term support for media in Kenya. A Kenya-specific edition of the 2003 handbook in conflict-sensitive reporting was later produced for additional training purposes.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ *Conflict Sensitive Journalism: My Tribe is Journalism*. Adapted from Ross Howard, op cit. Available at: <http://www.i-m-s.dk/files/publications/1312%20Conflict.v5.pdf>.

The programme

The programme structure enabled extensive identification and discussion of systemic failures within Kenyan media, including editorial interference in reporters' stories to reflect partisanship. Widespread payments and fees that amount to bribery of reporters by political interests, and ethnicity-based distrust within newsrooms and within society towards individual media outlets, were also explored. Also highlighted was recently-licensed local-language or vernacular radio stations of untrained and unqualified staff whose journalism and talk-shows were inaccurate, ethnically or tribally biased and subject to political inducements, bribes and intimidation. During the crisis, this tradition of journalism for hire was used by some unscrupulous figures to further inflame the situation.

The Conflict-Sensitive Reporting programme initially focused on emphasizing professional standards of reporting, followed by rudimentary conflict analysis and exploration of the deeper roots of the election-triggered violence, which include sharply unequal access to land and resources among different ethnicities. The course then dealt with framing the conflict more broadly and expanding voices beyond traditional elites, introducing possible resolutions to the violence as content for reports, avoiding advocacy, and using appropriate non-inflammatory language.

The agenda was as follows:

- » Global perspective: patterns of conflict giving the events in Kenya perspective through recent trends in conflicts around the world and trends in media coverage of conflict.
- » The Kenyan perspective: what went wrong with media coverage of the 2007

election and how did the coverage itself influence the conflict.

- » Going back to the basic standards of journalism – accuracy, impartiality and responsibility.
- » An introduction to the concept of conflict-sensitive journalism.
- » Conflict – why study it, how does it start. Types of violence.
- » Conflict – how it ends
- » Media and conflict: journalist's unconscious role.
- » The media as mediator: 11 roles of journalism.
- » New tools – framing stories.
- » Special challenges: hate speech.
- » Words to avoid – language checklist.

Outcome

Because of the rapid execution of the initiative, it did not include formal monitoring or evaluation of its effect. Informal evidence based on participants' evaluations and comments and volunteered assessments of various journalists and editors indicated the outcome was successful. Participants and observers stated that participants' reporting and editing had changed in tone and focus, and that there was a general reduction in the amount of inflammatory reporting, especially in Nairobi.

Among the participants' comments were the following: the training provided "great knowledge pumped into us through training and discussion," "openness in discussing issues on conflict made it easy for journalists to compare notes as well as express themselves easily" and "reminded me of the basic stuff that I had

forgotten." Further, the training came with "perfect timing that made it highly relevant".⁴⁶

According to several of the participants, the training provided insight in "how to report objectively, sensitively and balanced while at the same time saying the truth" as well as provided the basic knowledge "that journalists tend to overlook in their day to day work."

Commented reporter Mathews Ndanyi of Kiss FM Radio, Eldoret: "I have been extremely satisfied with this workshop. We have learned which words to apply when writing our stories. This is very important. At times, I would also use those harsh words such as militia men, massacre and ethnic cleansing without realizing the implications. Now I know better."⁴⁷

Reporter Duncan Mboya commented: "Thanks for the trainings last week. I must say that I gained what I previously did not think of in my 16 years of journalism. Is it possible you can recommend some websites where I could get further information on Conflict-Sensitive Journalism?"⁴⁸

A female journalist commented: "This workshop has been fantastic. I have learned a lot. Through the sessions, I have been able to pinpoint where I did wrong and where I did right. Most of the time, however, I think I was doing my job. But most of the time, you were being let down by your editors."⁴⁹

In addition, extensive recommendations for further training programs, regulatory and other reforms of Kenya's media system and more than

46 Keating, John, Final Mission Report, Conflict-Sensitive Reporting Training in Kenya. Media&Democracy Group. Vancouver, 2008

47 *Kenyan Media Under Pressure*, Op cit.

48 *Kenyan Media Under Pressure*, Op cit.

49 *Kenyan Media Under Pressure*, Op cit.

200 copies of the training handbook were provided by the IMS-led international mission.

Later in 2008 the international media development NGO Internews separately launched an extensive programme in Kenya to provide conflict-sensitive reporting training to media throughout parts of the country heavily involved in the 2007-2008 violent conflict.

2. Conflict-sensitive reporting in Somalia

In June 2007 the Danish NGO International Media Support in cooperation with the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) provided training in conflict-sensitive reporting for selected Somali journalists, to enhance professional skills and contribute to conflict resolution in Somalia. The training was conducted from June 19 to June 25 during a period of reduced conflict and potentially stabilizing conditions in Somalia. Seventeen Somali journalists participated in the program, When it was completed they proposed to sustain the learning through collaborative reporting exercises, known as Team Reporting, in the next several months. That plan was later abandoned due to resumption of full-scale violent conflict in Somalia.

Background

Somalia, one of the poorest countries in the world, has been without a functioning central administration since 1991. Clan-based regional entities led to political segregation and the localization of power and authority.

An emergent national United Islamic Courts government was militarily defeated by Ethiopian military intervention in December

2006 and a Transitional Federal Government relocated from semi-exile to Mogadishu. The TFG, supported by African Union peacekeepers, was committed to advance national reconciliation, achieve transition to a permanent government and provide parliamentary elections in 2009.

In Mogadishu intermittent fighting continued between TFG/Ethiopian and anti-government forces loyal to various interests including clans, the Islamic Courts, and local war-lords. More than 400,000 people had fled the city and over 800 were killed, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA May 2007.)

Because of the absence of government authority and regulation for the past decade, the Somalia media environment functioned without laws and institutions. Most of the commercial, state and community radio, and private television stations in Mogadishu, were severely influenced by owners' commercial or political interests and clan affiliations, rather than by professional standards. The TFG government, warlords, Islamist groups and other power-brokers continued to harass and threaten media workers and outlets. Dozens of media workers were subject to arrest, torture, injury and murder between 2006 and 2007 according to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ 2007).

The initiative

In April-May 2007, IMS in partnership with NUSOJ developed a programme for a short-term intensive training programme for professional journalists in conflict-sensitive reporting. The training was held from June 19 to 25 in the secure city of Djibouti Ville, in neighbouring Djibouti.

The training responded to needs of both the media community and the larger Somalia. The prolonged conflict had left a large number of media workers with no indigenous journalistic training. Clans and warlords exerted all local authority in most of Somali, and extreme insecurity prevailed for journalists. Most media workers demonstrated substantial bias in their reporting to satisfy owners' demands.

However, the introduction of the Transitional Federal Government backed by Ethiopian forces had comparatively reduced the insecurity and offered increased opportunity for some journalists to pursue more professional journalism. The possibility of strengthened media capacity and influence on the public understanding of the transitional governance process, reconciliation and conflict resolution made the media an essential element in any peace building effort⁵⁰. In addition to addressing low standards of journalism, there was a need to overcome conventional divisions among journalists along clan and regional identities which inhibit impartial reporting.

The programme

The 19 journalists selected from all regions of Somalia included five women. All participants had at least one year and some as many as 20 years experience as journalists. The ages ranged from 19 to 44 years. All but two of the participants were employed by radio stations or internet/online media sites or were freelancers working for radio stations and internet sites. Some participants had had previous short-term training from one or more international media development organizations. Only one partici-

pant had had formal educational training and certification in journalism, 20 years earlier.

The training sessions generally following the material in the IMS handbook *Conflict-Sensitive Journalism*, with substantial adaptation for local circumstances and local examples. Training participants were presented with reporting simulations, real experience and also toured the facilities of Radio-Television Djibouti.

A final half-day session was devoted to a facilitated discussion about the importance of reinforcing professional skills among colleague journalists, setting standards for other journalists, and achieving distinctively non-partisan public interest stories, through Team Reporting. Materials supporting a Team Reporting initiative were provided. Team Reporting involves selected individuals from competing (ideologically, financially or geographically) media outlets collaborating under a trainer's guidance to produce a major conflict-sensitive report on a selected issue regarding conflict in the community. The resultant report is simultaneously presented in all the participants' media outlets as a demonstration of superior public interest reporting.

As part of the training the participants probed the roots of violent conflict in Somalia, attributing most of it to power struggles, politics, or tribalism/clan competition. Further discussion emphasized lack of good governance, foreign/international interference, ambition for power/money, and lack of trust among clans.

In response to the clan identity issue, participants in the training were divided into three working teams composed of a diversity of members of various clans, regions and genders, for discussion sessions and work exercises requiring them to reach a common ground

⁵⁰ As an example, Horn Afrik radio, an independent Mogidishu broadcaster, had been running programs to inform the public about forthcoming reconciliation processes.

on specific approaches to reporting selected topics. The participants reached consensus on much of Somali media reporting as being sensational, unbalanced and clan-biased, and often destabilizing. The influence of clan loyalty on individual journalists, clan bias in media owners/managers operations of media outlets, and the clan identity mentality which is pervasive in much of Somali society, was noted and described by participants. Poverty/lack of economic opportunity, gender violence, and religious sectarianism were also cited as factors contributing to Somali conflict.

A recurrent issue and discussion point was how to conduct more reliable reporting and to seek conflict-sensitive perspectives within a media outlet whose owners/managers require partisanship and biased reporting which neglects or denigrates other voices or alternative viewpoints in a news story.

Outcomes

1. The strongest positive responses (most extensive discussion, most questions posed, most recurrent themes in discussions) to the training program's concepts and practices were to:
 - (a) reiteration of traditional standards of professionalism including citing sources for verification and accuracy;
 - (b) the essentiality of balanced or fair and impartial reporting including other, opposing or alternative viewpoints;
 - (c) the inclusion of conflict resolution as a valid subject for reporting on conflict;
 - (d) and the wider framing of conflict stories to include more perspectives and more non-elite players.
2. Work exercises and discussions indicated participants established better concepts of balanced reporting and conflict resolution, through the training. For example, a routine brief news report on an inter-clan conflict and eight dead in Mogidishu on June 22 was discussed and then reframed and rewritten as several different versions from a non-traditional-elite perspective with balanced themes to approach the same story with conflict sensitivity, including: interviews with equal numbers of mothers of the dead militiamen and soldiers; interviews with both sides' doctors involved in treating the dead and injured; a description of the economic cost of treating the injured; a description of two opposing neighborhood's renewed fear of more conflict; a description of economic losses suffered during the disruptive conflict disruption; interviews with religious leaders in the disrupted communities; a description of all sides efforts to end the actual violence; alternative proposals for avoiding deadly conflict in future collisions of two clans' interests, etc.
3. The issue of working in a compulsory partisan media outlet was discussed. This is a major reality in many active conflict or immediate post-conflict media environments, and it should be sensitively addressed. The importance of careful phrasing of balanced reporting to avoid censors' retaliation was discussed. It was acknowledged that balance was not always achievable in partisan/censored media environments. The importance of avoiding reckless commitment to impartiality, and the importance of journalists' personal safety and security also were discussed. The value of including other non-traditional elites' perspectives such as citizens, NGOs or non-partisan observers, was noted. The argument to managers that accuracy and impartial news can increase audiences and readership was discussed. The longer-term essential need for a media-supportive legal

infrastructure including courts, regulators and media self-discipline was noted.

4. The opportunity for mutual reinforcement of professionalism through the Team Reporting concept was endorsed by the participants following an extensive roundtable discussion.

A participants' evaluation⁵¹ showed the things they liked most about the training were: professional standards of journalism of accuracy, impartiality and responsibility, ways of contributing to conflict resolution, role of media in peace, how to report in conflict zones, relevant examples taken during the training for each topic.

The journalists' listing of the most important things that they learned:

1. AIR – Accuracy, Impartiality and Responsibility;
2. Framing Story;
3. Open-ended questions;
4. 5 Ws and H;
5. Dealing with hate speech;
6. Interviewing techniques;
7. All journalists are one clan called "journalists";
8. Reporting news in conflict.

Regrettably, recommendations to conduct the Team Conflict-Sensitive Reporting exercise, and to extend the conflict-sensitive reporting training in Somalia on a rapid basis, could not be pursued due to a return to widespread violent conflict and extreme insecurity for any journalists in Somalia attempting responsible reporting.

51 Available from International Media Support.

7. Practical resources for a curriculum in conflict-sensitive reporting

International Media Support, *How far to go: Kenya's Media Caught in the turmoil. February, 2008*. International Media Support. Copenhagen. 2008. The media's struggle to report the violent conflict in Kenya in 2007 is an important case study of the media being significantly unprepared, unprofessional and insensitive to the impact of its reporting. The results of an IMS-led fact-finding mission into the media's role in Kenya's deadly violence after the 2007 elections provide an excellent analysis of what Conflict-Sensitive Reporting training can address. Available with other Kenya media-related analysis at: <http://www.i-m-s.dk/?q=node/260>.

BBC World Service Trust, *The Kenyan 2007 elections and their aftermath: the role of the media*. BBC World Service Trust. London. 2008. An additionally valuable analysis of the Kenya media's role. Available at: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/kenya_policy_briefing_08.pdf.

Tuller, David, *Reporting Diversity Manual*, Media Diversity Institute & Samizdat B92, London. 2002. A manual for sensitive reporting on ethnicity, religion, gender, people with disabilities or disadvantaged, political dissidents, and photographs/images. It includes excellent explanation of conflict-inflaming language with case studies, examples of sensitive language use, and course modules. Available at: http://www.iwpr.net/docs/pdf/00_iwpr_training_manual.pdf.

C. Bickler et al, *Reporting for Change: A Handbook for Local Journalists in Crisis Areas*, Institute for

War and Peace Reporting. London. 2004. It outlines internationally recognized core standards of journalism and provides essential guidance on many aspects of reporting. It includes a chapter termed peace journalism which largely echoes conflict-sensitive reporting. Permission required for use. Available at: http://www.iwpr.net/docs/pdf/00_iwpr_training_manual.pdf.

Howze, Karen, *Reporting Ethnicity and other Diversity Issues, a Manual for Discussion Leaders*, European Centre for War, Peace and the News Media, London and Brussels. 1999. Available at: <http://www.media-diversity.org/pdfs/reporting%20ethnicity.pdf>.

While intended to focus on improving media coverage of minorities and other diversity issues, this brief handbook contains useful explanations, examples and training strategies relating to issues such as language use (p.14) and images (p.22) directly applicable to conflict-sensitive reporting training.

Lloyd, Fiona and Howard, Ross, *Gender, Conflict and Journalism*, UNESCO. Paris. 2005. A handbook for journalists on how to address gender in reporting on violent conflict, how to overcome obstacles to gender parity, and how to conduct conflict-sensitive reporting with gender in mind. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001439/143925e.pdf>.

Howard, Ross, *Conflict Sensitive Journalism*, International Media Support. Copenhagen 2003. A brief introduction for reporters in conflict stressed environments to conflict analysis

and sensitivity in reporting. Available at: http://www.i-m-s.dk/files/publications/IMS_CSJ_Handbook.pdf.

Also see: *Conflict Sensitive Journalism, Special Edition Kenya*, an adaptation of the original handbook to reflect 2007 examples specific to Kenya. Available at: <http://www.i-m-s.dk/files/publications/1312%20Conflict.v5.pdf>.

ILearn online learning system, BBC World Service Trust. London. UK. First developed in 2002, the World Service Trust's online learning system blends face-to-face training with extended online learning accessible with minimal computer and web connections. A general description of the learning experience is available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/whatwedo/how/2008/04/080307_how_we_work_ilearn_intro.shtml.

Howard, Ross and Rolt, Francis, *Radio Talkshows for Peacebuilding. A Guide, 2nd edition*, Search for Common Ground, Brussels-Washington. 2006. Although intended for radio talkshow hosts broadcasting in conflict-stressed zones, the explanations of conflict and conflict analysis and the role of media in peacebuilding are valuable to all forms of journalism. Available at: <http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org>.

Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, *Peace Journalism*, Hawthorn Press. Stroud (UK). 2005. Based on the controversial theory that criticizes most journalism as biased in favour of war and argues for a different journalism that consciously prioritizes making the public aware of non-violent resolution and peacebuilding options. Developed from numerous papers and courses in peace journalism given by Lynch and McGoldrick. Information available at: <http://www.peacejournalism.org>.

Also see: *Peace Journalism: How to do it*, and other material by Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch. Go to "Peace journalism" at: www.transcend.org.

Conflict Reporting Case Study. Nigeria 2002, produced by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, is an excellent extended case study with analysis questions. Permission required for use. Available at: http://www.iwpr.net/development/modules/conflictreporting/conflictreporting_nigeria.rtf.

Training Guidelines, by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, is an excellent overall summary of planning a training programme, identifying audience and their needs, running a workshop, classroom management, and resources management, and one example of evaluation material. Available at: Permission required for use. <http://www.iwpr.net/development/modules/trainingguidelines.rtf>.

Lowenberg, Shira and Bonde, Bent Norby (eds.) *Media in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Strategies*, Deutsche Welle. Bonne. 2007. A compendium of theory and more than 30 case studies of media development initiatives launched in conflict-stressed locations. Available at: http://www.dw-gmf.de/download/Media_In_Conflict_Prevention.pdf.

Puddephatt, Andrew, *Defining Indicators of Media Development*, UNESCO. Paris. 2007. A major examination of the various systems of measures used to calculate the extent of media development within any country. Excellent background for developing monitoring and evaluation. Available at: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/24288/11743196661media_development_indicators_background_paper.pdf/media_development_indicators_background_paper.pdf.

Media and conflict websites

A starting point for websites and organizations providing useful resources is the Resources section of *Gender, Conflict and Journalism*, cited above.

Also see the resource list in the Directory and Annex sections of *The Power of Media: a handbook for peacebuilders*, published in 2003 by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention. Available at: http://www.gppac.net/documents/Media_book_nieuw/a_b_contents.htm.

All downloads effective 2-2-09.

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