



Zimbabwe

Research findings and conclusions

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Acknowledgements

This report could not have been prepared without the generous contributions of many individuals and organisations.

The BBC World Service Trust is particularly grateful for the close collaboration with Vivien Marles and Kathy Lines of the Fuse Group. Recognition also goes to the following editors and reviewers for their expertise and guidance: Stephen King, Julia Moffett, Chris Armstrong, Hendrik Bussiek, Linda Coffey, Diane Cross, Steve Godfrey, Yvonne Kramer, Susannah Lear, Sam Mallac, Sheri Margolis, John McCormick, Mary McEntegart, Sina Odugbemi, Lelani Prevost, and Linda Stratmann. The team at Red Stone design also played an important role in this project.

A note of thanks goes to those individuals who provided additional background research and support to the project: Valeria Camia, Vivek Chandra, Alice Dashwood, Tim Dubois, Wanyana Lule, Leila Makki, Lisa Nuch Venbrux, Dominic Rustam and Simon Jackson.

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Published by the BBC World Service Trust, 2006

BBC World Service Trust

Room 310 NE

Bush House

PO Box 76

Strand

London

WC2B 4PH

UK

ISBN 1-906086-16-8



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About this report

In March 2005, the UK Government's Commission for Africa delivered a report entitled *"Our Common Interest"*, which represented a significant attempt to understand and recommend an action programme for Africa's social and economic development. A key component of the report focused on the importance of a strong media sector to support governance and development in Africa, and called for greater attention to, and resources for, a media sector development as a result. The BBC World Service Trust and a number of international and African partners have subsequently set out to help develop ideas for future Africa media development initiatives.

In order to inform these efforts, the BBC World Service Trust – in collaboration with Rhodes University (South Africa) and Ahmadu Bello University (Nigeria) – has undertaken an extensive, pan-African research effort in 17 African countries, of which Zimbabwe is one. Data presented in this report is based on both secondary research gathered by local researchers in Zimbabwe and on extensive interviews conducted locally among key media practitioners and leaders. It is presented here in three parts:

- Media Sector Developments: an examination of developments in the media sector in Zimbabwe over the past five years;
- Challenges for Future Media Development Activities: an analysis of the perspectives of a range of key informants on media development challenges in Zimbabwe;
- Case Study: a case study from Zimbabwe illustrating good practice in media development.

The research was funded by a generous grant from the UK Government's Department for International Development. The research was conducted by Rashweat Mukundu in association with the BBC World Service Trust Research and Learning Group.

The BBC World Service Trust is the independent international charity set up by the BBC, which uses media to advance development. The Trust works to: raise awareness of development issues among mass audiences and opinion formers; influence attitudes, awareness and behaviour among poorer communities through a wide range of educational programming on poverty-related topics; and, build capacity in the media sector in developing and transitional countries.

Acronyms

ACHPR African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

AIPPA Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

ANZ Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe

ATN Africa Tribune Newspapers

AU African Union

BAZ Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe

BBC British Broadcasting Corporation

BSA Broadcasting Services Act

CIO Central Intelligence Organisation

CSO Central Statistical Office

EKOWISA E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa

ESAP Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

EU European Union

FAMWZ Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe

IJAZ Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe

IMF International Monetary Fund

ISP Internet Service Providers

MDC Movement for Democratic Change

MDF Media Defence Fund

MIC Media and Information Commission

MISA Media Institute of Southern Africa

MMPZ Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe

MSU Midlands State University

NCA National Constitutional Assembly

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

NUST National University of Science and Technology

PCTC Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications
POSA Public Order and Security Act
POTRAZ Post and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe
RI Research International
SADC Southern African Development Community
SAHRIT Southern Africa Human Rights Trust
SBU Strategic Business Unit
UDI Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN United Nations
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UZ University of Zimbabwe
VOA Voice of America
VOP Voice of the People
ZAMPS Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey
ZANU-PF Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front
ZARF Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation
ZBC Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZBH Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings
ZLHR Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
ZOU Zimbabwe Open University
ZTV Zimbabwe Television
ZUJ Zimbabwe Union of Journalists
ZWRCN Zimbabwe Women’s Resource Centre and Network



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Zimbabwe

Country Report Context



1. Introduction

Gathering data for this research in Zimbabwe was constrained by the time limit, as a large amount of data had to be gathered and interpreted in a period of less than three weeks.

Information on media issues is scattered among various bodies in Zimbabwe – from NGOs to government agencies to universities and private bodies. Zimbabwe has a media research programme, the Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS), which is run by the Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (ZARF) with technical support from Research International (Zimbabwe office). The ZAMPS research process is initiated and owned (through a shareholding structure) by advertising agencies and marketing, public relations and business interests, hence its agenda to source information on audience response to media products for the benefit of advertisers and business. Quantitative research methodology is the principal research tool used in the ZAMPS process. Qualitative media research in Zimbabwe is confined mostly to NGOs working on media and freedom-of-expression issues, and the research is aimed at supporting advocacy to influence media-related policy.

Zimbabwe's media industry is facing significant challenges as a result of a collapsing economy, political tensions and controversial legislation, including legislation that requires journalists and media organisations to be registered. There is, therefore, always a certain suspicion of any research process, as research interviewees (whether in government, the private sector or NGOs) are concerned about what the information provided might be used for. Information on the operation of media workers is difficult to come by, as many journalists are concerned about being arrested or harassed should their work (some of it being done clandestinely) become known to the authorities. Tensions in Zimbabwe's political sphere also extend to fear (among some government employees and state media workers) of being seen talking to strangers or persons who are perceived to be of a certain political thinking. This research sought to overcome this fear by using assistants who could open as many doors as possible. Surprisingly and commendably, the research received considerable support from some government agency workers, such as those at the Central Statistical Office (CSO), who spent hours interpreting figures for the benefit of this research endeavour.

In some cases, where no empirical data could be found, the research process had to rely on unofficial insider information and estimates.



2. Country Overview

Zimbabwe has a mass area of 390,580 square kilometres, and shares borders with Zambia, Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique (CIA, 2006). The country is a constitutional democracy that has, however, been dominated since 1980 by one political party, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF), and one leader, President Robert Mugabe.

The southern African nation of Zimbabwe gained independence and majority rule in April 1980. Renamed Zimbabwe following the elections of 1980, the country had previously been known as Rhodesia, a British colony dominated politically and economically by a few white groups made up of immigrants from Britain and South Africa. This white minority broke away from Britain and declared independence in 1965 under what was known as the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). This led to a protracted liberation war that ended in 1980 with the adoption of a new constitution and internally-supervised elections, which were won by ZANU-PF.

Zimbabwe has a fairly well-developed infrastructure compared to many of its neighbours, but this infrastructure is deteriorating owing to a lack of investment. This is the result of six years of economic regression, a regression that has resulted in the economy shrinking by nearly 50% since 2000 (CIA, 2006). Zimbabwe relies on agriculture as its main economic activity, with some mining, tourism and limited manufacturing. However, agriculture has suffered as a result of the controversial land reform programme that the government embarked upon in 2000. This land reform programme is largely seen by the international community, Zimbabwe’s main opposition parties and civic groups, as a move by the ruling party to maintain political control.

The year 2000 is generally seen as a turning point for Zimbabwe’s social, economic and political situation. This year marked the first defeat of the ruling ZANU–PF in any national electoral process, as the party lost a constitutional referendum. In an apparent move to regain political control, the Mugabe ZANU-PF government embarked on an ill-conceived land reform programme, purportedly to address historic colonial injustices. However, in reality, the purpose was to shore up support from the majority peasant population. The land seizures were accompanied by repressive legislation undermining property rights, constraining the operations of both the private and state-owned media, and generally suppressing any dissent. Legislative measures to suppress protest have also been accompanied by state-sanctioned violence against dissenters. This violence of recent years has claimed an estimated 450 lives, mostly of opposition supporters (Crisis Coalition, 2004). Hundreds of journalists have been arrested and harassed, printing presses and newsrooms have been

bombed, newspapers have been closed, and hundreds of state media workers, who refused to toe the line, have been dismissed². Freedom of expression and media rights have been seriously impinged upon through legislation in the period from 2000 to 2006.

This has led to polarisation in society, with certain sections calling for the repeal of these laws, arguing that they are being used to suppress opposition groups and civil society movements. There is an environment of deep suspicion between the government, civic groups and opposition political parties. The deteriorating human rights and economic situation has also resulted in the EU and the governments of the US, New Zealand and Australia imposing sanctions on the leadership of the ruling party and its associates. The Mugabe government, however, argues that the West, New Zealand and Australia have a “regime change” agenda rooted in their opposition to the land reform programme.

Zimbabwe has an estimated population of 11,631,657 million (CSO, 2002)¹. More than three quarters of the population are under the age of 35 years, with 40% of the population aged 14 or under and 38% aged 15-35 years old (CSO, 2002). The country is governed through ten provinces (see Table 1), each with a provincial capital and government representatives that include, among others, a resident minister, a Member of Parliament for each constituency, and Senators.

Table 1: Total Population in Provinces

Provinces	Total Population
1. Harare	1,896,134
2. Bulawayo	676,650
3. Mashonaland East	1,127,413
4. Mashonaland West	1,224,670
5. Masvingo	1,320,438
6. Matebeleland North	704,948
7. Matebeleland South	653,054
8. Mashonaland Central	995,427
9. Manicaland	1,568,930
10. Midlands	1,463,993

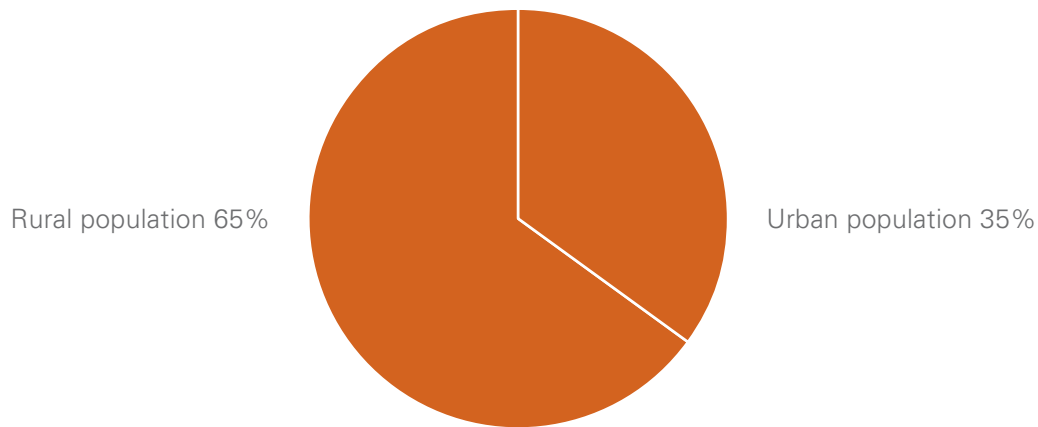
Source: CSO, 2005.

¹ This figure is based on a 2002 population census carried out by the Zimbabwe Government. Elsewhere, The *CIA World Factbook* (2006) lists the population at 12.2 million.

² For more on the media repression of recent years, see Mendel & Mukundu (2004), MISA-Zimbabwe (2002-2004; 2005) and MISA (2000-2005b).

The majority of Zimbabwe's population (65%) lives in rural areas (UNDP, 2003), as shown in Figure 1 below. The number of people living in poverty in Zimbabwe was estimated in 2004 to be over 80% of the total population (CIA, 2006).

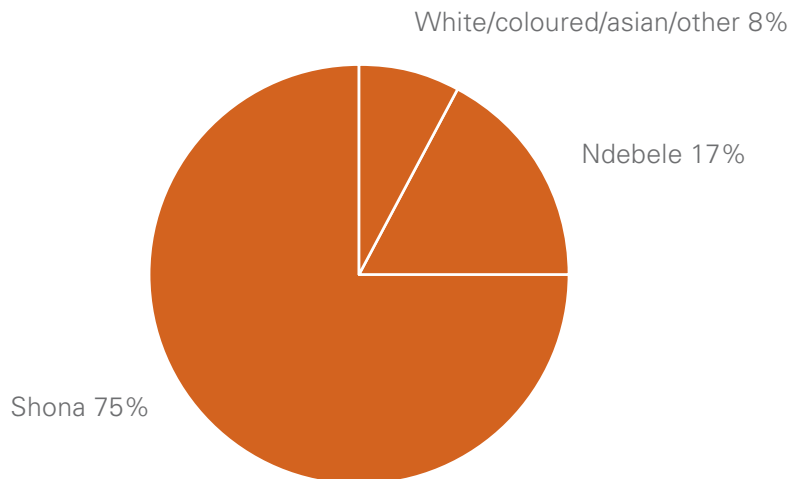
Figure 1: Urban vs Rural Population



Source: UNDP, 2003

The majority group in Zimbabwe are the Shona people, who make up 75% of the population, followed by the Ndebele who make up 17%. Other minority groups, including whites and Asians, make up 8% (CSO, 2005) (see Figure 2). The majority of the Shona ethnic group are found in seven provinces, the Ndebele in three provinces. Asians and whites are found in the urban areas of most provinces. It must be noted, however, that due to internal migration, most ethnic groups are found in almost all parts of Zimbabwe.

Figure 2: Ethnic Groups

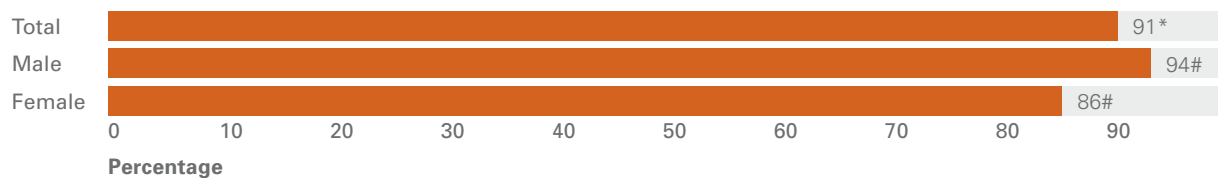


Source: CSO, 2005

Zimbabwe has a high average literacy level of 91 % (See Figure 3). This is largely due to the Zimbabwean government's immediate post-independence policy of promoting education for all school-age children. Education was spread across all areas (urban and rural), primary education was free, and a schools development programme was embarked upon that aimed to make educational facilities easily available.

Figure 3: Literacy Levels Age 15+

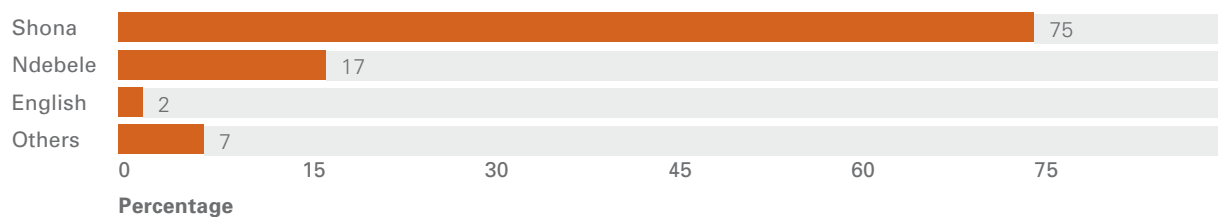
Literacy Levels Age 15+



Source: * CIA, 2006; #World Bank, 2003

Figure 4: Widely Spoken Languages

Languages



Source: CSO, 2005

The most widely spoken languages (see Figure 4) in Zimbabwe are Shona (75%) and Ndebele (17%). Other languages include Tonga, Chewa, Nambya and Venda, spoken by about 7% of the population. The rest (some 2%) either speak English or other languages (CSO, 2005).

Since 2000, Zimbabwe has remained stuck in an economic quagmire, characterised by high inflation, which has seen basic requirements for an average urban family rising to Z\$35 million per month (US\$350) (ZimRelief, 2006). Average salaries are below this figure, with a schoolteacher earning a net salary of Z\$30 million (US\$300). Zimbabwe's population has not increased, owing to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and emigration, with many people fleeing from the political and economic crisis. Emigration has cut across all sections of the population, with at least three million black Zimbabweans believed to be in South Africa, Britain, Botswana, the US and other countries. White Zimbabweans (mostly deposed white commercial farmers and some professionals) have emigrated and settled in Britain, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zambia, Australia and New Zealand.

As a result of human rights violations since 2000, the governments of the EU and the US have imposed travel restrictions and other personalised sanctions on the leadership of Zimbabwe. These restrictions extend to members of the security forces and business people who are perceived to be participating in human rights violations or simply conniving with the Zimbabwe ruling elite.

The unrelenting propaganda faced by Zimbabwe's ordinary citizens (who do not have access to alternative media) has resulted in a society that is not only misinformed but also increasingly uninterested in participating in national elections, as people fear being caught on the wrong side of the political divide. Opposition supporters are labelled "enemies of the state", allegedly bent on effecting an illegal regime change with sponsorship from Western governments (MMPZ, 2002). At least five ordinary citizens were arrested in 2004 and 2005 for allegedly "denigrating the name of the president" (MISA, 2004). The arrests, carried out under the Public Order and Security Act (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2002b), had the effect of silencing people, as the government demonstrated that no one was beyond its reach. On many occasions, the pro-constitutional reform body, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), has protested peacefully in urban centres in Zimbabwe, resulting in hundreds of its members being beaten, harassed or detained³.

One of many moments when the government's intolerance of scrutiny and criticism came under the international spotlight was when it ejected from a 13-member delegation from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) on 26 October 2004.

Efforts by the regional body, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), to rein Zimbabwe in by introducing regional guidelines on the conduct of free and fair elections, have failed, with the Zimbabwean government largely introducing mere technical changes to election procedures. Calls for equitable access to the media in election periods, the repeal of laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) that impede election gatherings, and the creation of an independent electoral body, have been ignored.

³ See <http://www.kubatana.net>

The determination of the current Zimbabwe regime to remain in power at any cost is aptly demonstrated by the passing into law of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Act, which gives the state the power to register, de-register, outlaw or control the various NGOs in Zimbabwe. The NGO sector is one of the few remaining entities that gives Zimbabweans a voice. Eventually, the President refused to sign the law after lobbying and threats of civil disobedience by church groups. Government ministers, however, say the law will be brought back. The Zimbabwean government has also made restrictive amendments to the constitution, such as the Constitutional (Amendment No 17) Act, which declared all land to be state land and allowed the government to confiscate the travel documents of those it deemed 'enemies of the state'. Apart from POSA, the attempted NGO law and the constitutional amendments, the government has introduced various several other laws since 2000 which directly restrict media freedom and freedom of expression

Key findings

- Zimbabwe has been dominated by one political party, ZANU-PF, and ruling elite, since independence in 1980.
- The majority of Zimbabweans live in rural areas.
- The country has a high literacy rate, with some 90% of the population able to read and write.
- Zimbabwe is currently facing serious political and economic problems, mainly as a result of unsound economic policies and poor governance.
- The Zimbabwe government has passed laws since 2000 that have resulted in increased power for the state, constrained democratic participation and the decline of the media sector.



3. Media Health

3.1 Status of the laws regarding rights and access to information

The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed by Zimbabwe's Constitution and all laws regulating the media are supposed to comply with this fundamental right. Chapter 3 of the Constitution proclaims the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. Section 20 guarantees the protection of freedom of expression, stating that "(1) Except with his own consent or by way of parental discipline, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, and freedom from interference with his correspondence" (Republic of Zimbabwe, 1979).

However, the Constitution contains no explicit guarantee of freedom of the press or media. It guarantees freedom of expression as an individual right, but there is no mention of this right extending to the media. The media fraternity and other legal experts have identified this as an omission, and have called for the explicit mentioning of the media in the Declaration of Rights, along the same lines as the Constitutions of South Africa and Namibia.

There are currently a number of laws that restrict the operations of the media and freedom of expression in Zimbabwe. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002:

- ❑ provides for the accreditation (licensing) of journalists annually;
- ❑ provides for the registration of media houses;
- ❑ provides for penalties for the non-registration and non-licensing of journalists and media houses, including arrest, the closure of media houses and the suspension of licences;
- ❑ establishes a body, the Media and Information Commission (MIC), to administer this law;
- ❑ sets out conditions under which foreign journalists can work in Zimbabwe;
- ❑ sets out conditions under which public information can be accessed; and,
- ❑ provides under Article 72 Section (3) that the MIC "may declare forfeited to the state any product, equipment or apparatus used for the purpose of or in connection with the offence". The same provision is also made under Article 74 (News Agencies) in Section (4) (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2002a).

The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002:

- ❑ provides for regulations to be followed in organising any political activity, protest or march – all such activities need police clearance/permission;
- ❑ gives power to the police to stop any “illegal” gatherings, such as political gatherings, marches and protests;
- ❑ lists criminal offences of defamation (Sections 15 and 16) against the head of state and security forces; and,
- ❑ provides general regulations on how threats to national security are to be dealt with (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2002b).

The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) of 2001:

- ❑ provides for the setting up of a broadcasting regulatory body, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), appointed by the Minister of Information and Publicity in consultation with the President;
- ❑ gives powers to BAZ to licence broadcasting players;
- ❑ bans foreign investment in the broadcasting industry;
- ❑ provides for the takeover of any private station by the government in the case of an emergency (possible scenarios are not defined);
- ❑ gives the government the power to use one hour of any station’s airtime every day to broadcast government policy;
- ❑ bans the broadcast of political news by private broadcasting players;
- ❑ bans the setting up of private signal transmission infrastructure;
- ❑ provides for the monopoly of the state-owned Transmedia as the only signal transmission carrier company;
- ❑ provides regulations on broadcast content, ie, all stations should broadcast 75% local content; and,
- ❑ bans the ownership of more than 10% of shares of a broadcasting organisation by any one individual (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2001a).

Access to information is limited in terms of the Official Secrets Act of 1970 (as amended in 2004), which bans civil servants from divulging any information to anyone, including the media, without authorisation. The Electoral Reform Act of 2004 neglects to guarantee media access for all political players or the right of the media to report freely on the electoral process. The Constitutional (Amendment No 17) Act of 2005 provides for the government to confiscate the travel documents of persons it deems to be engaging in activities that undermine “national interests”. Persons who might fall foul of this law include media workers whom the government accuse of working against its policies.

As a result of the repressive provisions of the laws just outlined, and draconian enforcement by the state of many of these provisions in recent years, the media environment has deteriorated significantly in Zimbabwe during the period 2000-2005. Among other things, the repressive legislation has resulted in four newspapers being shut down and hundreds of media workers rendered jobless. The operations of privately-owned print and broadcast media have become next to impossible.

These measures have come into being in spite of the fact that Zimbabwe is a signatory to:

- ❑ the Windhoek Declaration of 1991, Article 9 of which declares “African states should be encouraged to provide constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and freedom of association and expression” (UNESCO, 1991); and,
- ❑ the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, in which Article 19 specifically states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression: this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (UN, 1948).

The closure of *The Tribune* newspaper in July 2004, following that of *The Daily News* and *Daily News on Sunday* newspapers in 2003, and the closure of the *Weekly Times* newspaper in February 2005, ended the hope that the ruling ZANU–PF government would heed international calls to repeal repressive media laws.

The passing of the aforementioned laws has impacted negatively on the investigative skills of journalists working for the private press. With the aid of the Public Order and Security Act of 2002, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act of 2002, the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001 and some laws inherited from the colonial era, the government continues to retain its unfettered monopoly on the flow and exchange of information. The former Information Minister, Professor Jonathan Moyo, declared in March 2004 that the Zimbabwean government does not believe in press freedom (MISA, 2005a). The government has also quashed civic demonstrations and protests organised by the independent civic organisations, the ‘National Constitutional Assembly’ and ‘Women of Zimbabwe Arise’.

The few private media houses still in existence have remained under constant attack from the state; *The Financial Gazette*, *The Standard* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspapers were reprimanded over stories printed in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2004; 2005).

As the year 2005 drew to a close, the government of Zimbabwe demonstrated its increasing intolerance for opposing views by seizing the passport of Zimbabwean publisher Trevor Ncube. Immigration officials in Bulawayo seized Ncube’s passport on 8 December 2005, upon his arrival from South Africa. No reason was given for this unlawful action other than that Ncube, who is the Chairman of Zimind (publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Zimbabwe Standard* weekly newspapers), was on a list of Zimbabwean citizens whose passports were to be withdrawn. Under the Constitutional (Amendment No 17) Act of 2005, the government is empowered to seize the passports of citizens who undermine “national interests” during their travels abroad. Ncube’s passport was later released after the Attorney-General’s Office conceded that the seizure was unlawful. This followed an urgent application filed with the High Court in which the publisher argued that the action infringed his basic rights and freedoms.

In late 2005, the government also arrested staff and seized equipment from the Voice of the People (VOP) Communications Trust, a radio organisation based in Harare and broadcasting into the country via short wave from the Netherlands. In 2002, the VOP offices were bombed and much valuable property was destroyed.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002 may accurately be described as the principal weapon of the government and ruling ZANU–PF party in their ongoing campaign to stifle independent media. The Act has resulted in arrests, intimidation, harassment and measures of control directed at media workers of all sorts – journalists, photographers and vendors – as well as media outlets and, in particular, the private print media. The closure of the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), publishers of *The Daily News* and *The Daily News on Sunday*, in 2003, ranks as the AIPPA's severest blow against freedom of the press in Zimbabwe. The government closed *The Daily News* and *The Daily News on Sunday* on 12 September 2003. Police armed with automatic rifles burst into the newspapers' offices in central Harare at about 5pm and ordered all staff to leave. Ngobile Nyathi, the Editor, and Simon Ngena, the Production Manager, were arrested and taken to Harare Central Police Station. They were later released without charge. The closure of the *Daily News* was for operating without a licence. A bomb had destroyed its offices in 2001; its printing press was also destroyed by a bomb in February 2002.

The closure of *The Tribune* followed in July 2004. The Media and Information Commission (MIC) said that, in terms of Section 67 of AIPPA, Africa Tribune Newspapers (ATN) should have notified the Commission of the changes in ownership when its management and senior editors bought the publishing company from Africa Media Group. Following the change in ownership, the company's registered newspapers, *The Business Tribune* and *Weekend Tribune*, folded into one publication, *The Tribune*. This resulted in a change of publication frequency, with the new paper being published on Thursdays. The paper was closed down on the grounds that it failed to notify the MIC of the changes in its operations.

A new law, the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, was passed in 2005. This law replaced and tightened Sections 15 and 16 of POSA. Clause 31 of the Act increased the five-year prison term previously imposed under Section 15 of POSA to 20 years for publication and communication of a statement prejudicial to the state.

Section 79 of AIPPA states that the Media and Information Commission (MIC) may accredit journalists and issue press cards to those it has accredited. Accreditation is required annually. The Commission determines whether someone is qualified to practice as a journalist or not. In other words, there are no established criteria as to the nature of the qualifications. Accreditation is at the discretion of the Commission, which is answerable to the Minister of Information and Publicity and the government executive. Among other requirements, journalists wishing to be accredited have to submit several documents, references, email addresses and residential addresses to the MIC. Section 79 of AIPPA contradicts Section 20 of the Constitution in that it restricts the exercise of the right to freedom of expression to those whom the responsible minister decides to accredit or register. In other words, it is the MIC that decides who can work as a journalist in Zimbabwe, and not the media houses themselves.

The bias of the MIC came to the fore following the acquittal of Kelvin Jakachira⁴ (a journalist with the closed *Daily News*) on charges of practising journalism without being registered. In his evidence, MIC Executive Chairperson, Tafataona Mahoso, said that he had totally rejected the applications filed by the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) journalists because the publishing company was not registered with the MIC as required under AIPPA. Mahoso did not confirm whether or not he had received Jakachira's application, let alone considered it as an individual application as required under the terms of the law in question. The magistrate, however, ruled that Jakachira did submit his application in time and had thus complied with the application procedures as stipulated under AIPPA. The trial magistrate said that the state, through Mahoso, had given unreliable evidence as to whether it had received Jakachira's application, and whether a determination had been made and communicated to him as an individual applicant in terms of the law.

The Zimbabwe branch of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zimbabwe), working with the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), the Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe (IJAZ), the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) and the National Editors' Forum, is pushing for the endorsement of a national media Code of Ethics, which would pave the way for the establishment of a voluntary, self-regulatory media council as a parallel structure to the government-appointed MIC. Submissions have already been made to the Minister of Information and Publicity and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications⁵. MISA-Zimbabwe has also lobbied (through submission of position papers) for Parliament to revisit restrictive legislation such as the AIPPA, BSA and POSA with a view to having them amended or repealed in order to create an enabling environment for media freedom and freedom of expression. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications has adopted MISA-Zimbabwe's position on media reform. This legislative body, however, has no leverage to force the executive branch of government to implement these reforms.

MISA-Zimbabwe, working with Article 19 of London (an international media and freedom of expression NGO) and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, has challenged Zimbabwe's media laws at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in the Gambia, and this work is bearing fruit. The ACHPR has already stated its opposition to Zimbabwe's media laws in previous enquiries, and was expected to make its findings on current challenges to these laws known during 2006.

The government, through the Minister of Information and Publicity, continues to pay lip service to its commitment to open up the broadcasting industry. In fact, more restrictions on the entry of new players have been made, including restrictive licensing fees. As a result, the broadcasting arena continues to be dominated by the government and ruling party ZANU–PF officials, who are given space to denigrate any opposing views (MMPZ, 2001; 2002). Statutory Instrument 185 of the 2004 Broadcasting Services (Licensing and Content) Regulations provides for licence fees for community, commercial and public-service broadcasters, technical standards for radio frequencies and procedures for broadcasting licences. The regulations impose restrictive conditions for licences and licence fees that are out of the reach of ordinary Zimbabweans. This is compounded by the prohibition of foreign funding in the broadcasting sector. This reveals government reluctance to relinquish its stranglehold on the radio and TV monopoly it currently holds in the country via the channels of state-owned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH).

⁴ The magistrate's court in Harare acquitted Kelvin Jakachira on 31 August 2005.

⁵ On 20 September 2005, ZUJ, MISA-Zimbabwe and MMPZ presented their submissions to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications as part of efforts to press for the repeal/amendment of the AIPPA, BSA and POSA.

The government has not relented in its determination to maintain its grip on all facets of the country's multimedia sector, as it issued threats in 2004 and 2006 to monitor electronic communication. This would be done under a new proposed law, the Interception of Communications Bill, which is before Parliament and likely to be passed in late 2006. The government had indicated that it would come up with regulations to compel all Internet service providers (ISPs) operating in Zimbabwe to monitor and block all email messages passing through their systems that the government considered to be "prejudicial to the state". The Interception of Communications Bill would, if it becomes law, compel ISPs to supply information to the government on demand.

In an environment where traditional media outlets such as newspapers and broadcasting stations are under the firm control of the government, the importance of electronic communications has become paramount. It is against this background that a number of on-line publications have come on stream since 2004, namely *Zim-Online*, *Daily News Online*, *Zimbabwe Situation*, *Zimnews* and *New Zimbabwe*, all aiming to fill the void created by the closure of *The Daily News*, *The Daily News on Sunday* and *The Tribune*.

3.2 Status of the laws regarding criminal defamation and insult

Zimbabwean law provides for the common law offence of criminal defamation. The offence consists of the unlawful and intentional publication of matter that tends to injure another person's reputation. Other insult laws include the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002, which provides for criminal sanction in the event of defamation of the head of state or the security arms of the state.

3.3. Status of the laws that exist to enable media regulatory bodies to function independently

Zimbabwe has no laws that guarantee the independence of its media regulatory bodies. The two main bodies are the Media and Information Commission (MIC), set up through the AIPPA of 2002, and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), set up through the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001. These bodies are appointed by the Minister of Information and Publicity and they report directly to the Minister.

3.4 Current provisions that aim to secure the independence of publicly-owned media

There are no laws securing the independence of the state-owned radio and TV services controlled by the state ZBH group.

3.5 Current provisions to support community or alternative media

There are no laws to support the development of community or alternative media.

3.6 Regulatory obligations for public or state broadcasters to fulfil a public-service broadcasting remit

The state broadcaster, ZBH, does not have a true public-service broadcasting remit, in spite of the fact that the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Commercialisation Act of 2001 (which established ZBH), states that, "All state and government controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public-service broadcasters that are accountable to all strata of people (as represented by an independent board) and that serve the overall public interest,

avoiding one-sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender” (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2001b). At the same time, the ZBC Commercialisation Act mandates the ZBH to be a profit-making entity.

The ZBH is obligated under the Broadcasting Services Act to use 75% local content, and to source 25% of that local content from local independent content producers. The station has, however, failed to fulfil this requirement for a number of reasons, including a lack of financial resources.

The ZBH remains primarily a propaganda tool of the ruling ZANU–PF party.

3.7 Regulatory obligations for private broadcasters to fulfil a public-service broadcasting remit

Zimbabwe currently has no private broadcasters, but should these come into being in the future, they would be required under the Broadcasting Services Act to devote one hour of each day’s broadcasting time to explaining government policies, and to allocate 75% of their programming to local content.

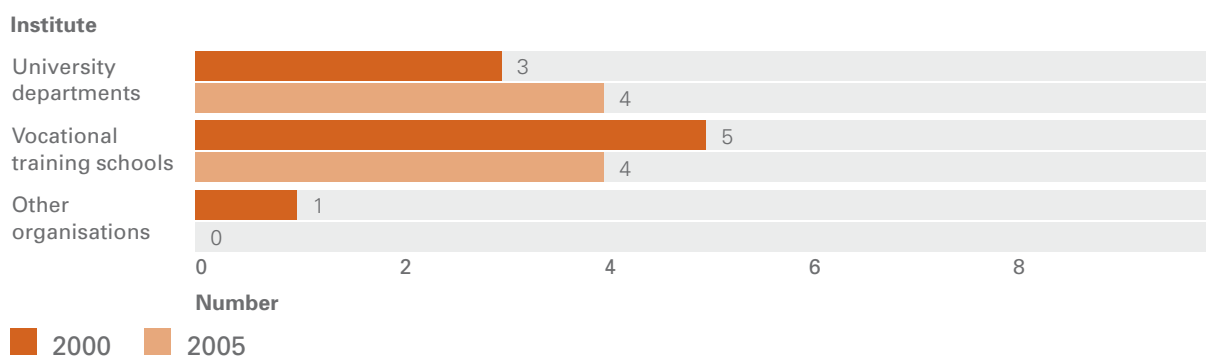
3.8 Journalism

On top of the restrictive legislative environment, the plight of Zimbabwean journalists is exacerbated by unfavourable working conditions, including poor salaries and a low skills base due to a lack of training and poor infrastructure. This has affected morale and the quality of stories, with most journalists preferring to sell their investigative pieces to foreign media houses, or to receive “consultancy” or “settlement” fees to protect certain corrupt business people from negative publicity. The Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) is working towards establishing a National Employment Council, which will specifically look into the working conditions of journalists, with the aim of at least standardising salaries and perks.

There has been a decline in the number of practising journalists due to the closure of media houses and the lack of new players in the broadcasting industry (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2004; 2005). Some journalists work clandestinely to avoid the strict registration requirements. Many work under false names for foreign media organisations that are banned in Zimbabwe.

There are four vocational journalism schools in the country, and four university departments offering journalism programmes (See Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of Journalism Training Institutes



Source: MISA, 2000-2005a; 2005b

Key findings

- ❑ Several legal measures have been introduced since 2000 that have had the effect of limiting media freedom and freedom of expression.
- ❑ Several print outlets have closed down since 2000 because of state action taken in terms of the new repressive legal instruments.
- ❑ Insult laws still exist in statutes and these have been used to arrest journalists and ordinary members of society for allegedly insulting the head of state or other government representatives.
- ❑ There are no provisions for the media regulatory bodies – BAZ and MIC – to operate independently from the state, and they both fall directly under the control of the Ministry of Information and Publicity.
- ❑ The state broadcaster ZBH does not follow a public-service remit and its radio and TV services are primarily organs of state propaganda.



4. State of the Media – Literature Review

4.1 Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) (2001)

This report by the MMPZ on media coverage of the 2000 Parliamentary elections concluded that:

- 99% of state media coverage was devoted to, and in support of, the ruling party ZANU–PF;
- there was a high prevalence of “hate” messages in the media, particularly from the state media targeting the opposition and civic groups; and,
- the private media generally reported in favour of the opposition.

4.2 Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) (2002)

Similarly this MMPZ report on coverage of the 2002 presidential elections found:

- abuse of the state media for the benefit of the ruling party ZANU–PF;
- the prevalence of “hate” messages; and,
- the failure of both the state and private media to present balanced information on the election.

4.3 Mendel & Mukundu (2004)

This report, a collaborative effort between Article 19 of London and MISA-Zimbabwe, covers the first two years of use of Zimbabwe’s controversial Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002. The report captures all the media and freedom of expression violations that took place through enforcement of the Act during the period under study.

4.4 Tapfumaneyi (2005)

This MISA-Zimbabwe publication examines coverage of Zimbabwe's women candidates in the March 2005 Parliamentary elections. The report quantifies the number of times women candidates were covered by the state-run ZBH radio and TV and the daily print media in Zimbabwe, and also gives a qualitative analysis of that coverage, focusing in particular on how patriarchal representations (especially the labelling of women and their confinement to family and domestic issues) persist. The report offers recommendations on how this situation can be corrected through gender awareness training for media and women politicians, and reveals that only 17% of media space/time was allocated to women parliamentarians (from either the ruling party or opposition).

4.5 Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) & Gender Links (2003)

The Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), carried out by MISA and Gender Links, is the first comprehensive study of the coverage of gender issues in Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe. The report notes that only 17% of voices heard in the print (newspapers) and electronic media (TV and radio) are female, and these are likely to be commenting on so-called "women's issues" such as family, cookery and health. The GMBS provided a platform to discuss the need for media reform in relation to gender representation, journalism training, newsroom policies around gender coverage, and employment policies.

4.6 Bibliography

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) & Gender Links (2002) *Gender and media baseline study*. Windhoek: MISA

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Tapfumaneyi, S. (2005) *So many rivers to cross: Coverage of female political candidates in the Zimbabwe March 2005 Parliamentary elections*. Harare: Artigenic Creative Boutique

Key findings

- ❑ The messages of the ruling ZANU-PF dominate both electronic and print media in the country at election times.
- ❑ Hate messages often find their way into the media during election periods.
- ❑ Only 17% of voices heard in the media are the voices of women.



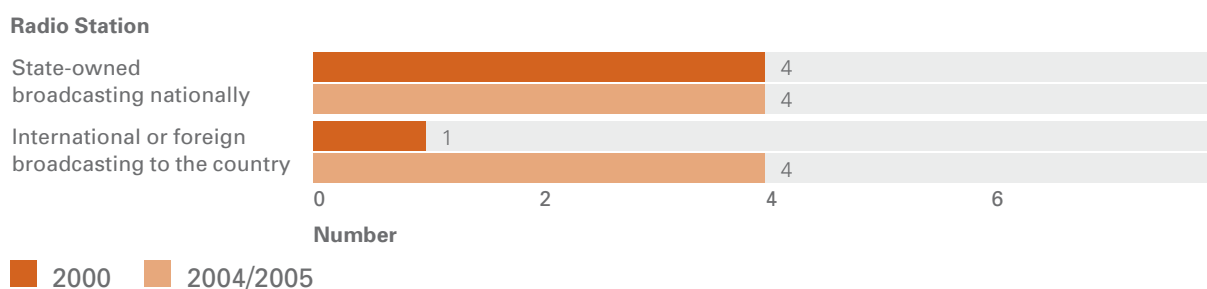
5. Radio

5.1 Key changes and developments in the radio marketplace in the past five years

Zimbabwe has only four licensed domestic radio stations (ZARF, 2000), all state-owned and part of the state's Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH). The four ZBH stations all use FM transmission. The radio market has remained stagnant since 2000. Radio is, however, the main medium through which the majority of people receive information, with a recent study finding that 85.3% of the population had listened to radio in the past 12 months, and of these 66.6% had listened to radio in the past week (Wooley, 2006).

The state radio channels are suffering as a result of the poor economic situation, in particular the declining advertising revenue due to company closures and political interference. This has seen a number of senior staff either being dismissed or leaving voluntarily. In 2001, over 500 senior media workers, including experienced radio staff, were fired from ZBH. Efforts to expand the reach of the radio stations have stalled as a result of lack of resources. The content of the services remains pro-government.

Figure 6: Broadcasting and Ownership Status of Radio Stations



Source: ZARF 2000-2005; 2005

No new Zimbabwean radio stations have been licensed in the past five years. However, since 2001, three radio stations operating from outside Zimbabwe have begun broadcasting news programmes into the country. These are SW Radio Africa, a short-wave service based in London and run by Zimbabweans; VOP Radio, based in Zimbabwe but broadcasting via short wave from the Netherlands; and the VOA affiliate Studio 7, broadcasting on short wave and medium wave. There are no radio stations based regionally or locally in the country.

5.2 Investment and growth in the radio sector in the past five years

There has been no growth in Zimbabwe's radio sector in the past five years. The country's economic problems have impacted negatively on advertising and sponsorship for ZBH as business grapples with a difficult economic environment characterised by hyperinflation.

5.3 Plurality, ownership and control

The state ZBH radio stations have diversified programming, but not when it comes to programmes expressing political views. There is more diversity in the coverage of gender, youth, religion, economic issues and entertainment. Political programming, however, is still dominated by the government and ruling party, with messages disguised either as entertainment or news. Ownership of radio stations is still the preserve of the state as no other player has been licensed.

5.4 Diversity

Studio 7, SW Radio Africa and VOP provide alternative views, but their reach is limited because their key transmission platform is short wave (Studio 7 is also on medium wave), and Zimbabwe has more FM radio sets than short wave sets. These radio stations, which the government considers to be "pirate" radio stations, broadcast news in the evenings. Since 2005, these three stations have complained of "jamming of their broadcasts" by the state, which is alleged to be using Chinese equipment acquired for that purpose.

5.5 Quality of radio output and programming

The quality of programming on the state channels has declined since 2000, as a result of the dismissal of senior staff, the continued use of obsolete equipment and continued political interference.

5.6 Specific challenges

Although there is no research available as to why the radio marketplace is stagnating, it can be assumed that the deteriorating economic environment has meant there is little investment in advertising. The fact that ZBH is under the tight grip of the ruling elite has also resulted in some listeners not trusting its programmes, especially its news component, which is largely favourable to the ruling party and government.

Key findings

- ❑ Zimbabwe has four licensed radio stations, which are owned by the state through Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH). These stations broadcast on FM.
- ❑ There are currently three short-wave radio stations broadcasting into Zimbabwe from outside the country. The government considers these to be "pirate" radio stations.
- ❑ Radio is the most popular and widely-used medium for accessing information.

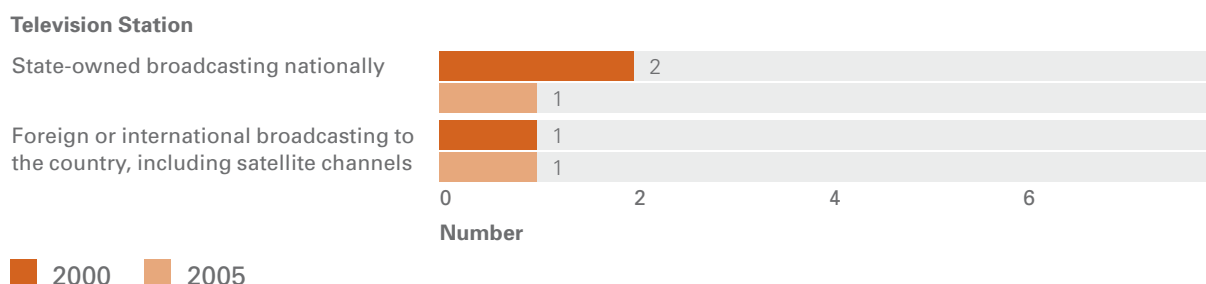


6. Television

6.1 Key changes and developments in the television marketplace in the past five years

The TV industry in Zimbabwe showed a decline in 2001 and has remained stagnant ever since. The state-owned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), now operating as Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH), operates the only station on air. The ZBC, which had two TV channels in the 1990s, rented one of them (TV 2) to private broadcasters who would broadcast their content at different times of the day and pay the ZBC. These were Munhumutapa African Broadcasting Corporation and Joy TV. This arrangement was stopped in 2001, when the Broadcasting Service Act came into force, and also when the ZBC was changed to ZBH through the ZBC Commercialisation Act 2001. ZBH now use one channel, formerly called TV 1 but now called ZTV. ZBH is divided into commercial units with ZTV and the four radio stations being separate business units under one holding company.

Figure 7: Broadcasting and Ownership Status of Television Stations



Source: ZARF 2000-2005

Apart from the one state-owned ZTV channel, the other service available nationally to Zimbabweans, but only on a subscription pay-TV basis, is the South African-based MultiChoice Africa DStv. DStv has expanded its subscriber base since 2000, owing to the poor programming at ZTV and the political interference that influences programmes. DStv's channels are all foreign and access is through monthly subscription paid for in foreign currency.

There are no regional or local TV services in Zimbabwe.

6.2 Investment and growth in the television sector in the past five years

There has been no growth in the TV industry in Zimbabwe over the past five years. All applications for licensing have been turned down by the broadcast regulator BAZ. State-run ZTV is struggling to pay its workers and source any new equipment. The Iranian government has, however, helped ZTV to digitalise. Unfortunately, the process is slow because ZBH cannot pay for some of the equipment and is incapacitated by the lack of skilled staff. Advertising revenue has declined owing to the economic problems and also concerns about the operations of ZTV, especially its open support for the ruling ZANU–PF party (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, 2006).

6.3 Plurality, ownership and control

The government wholly owns and controls ZTV, and no dissenting voices are aired. The governance structure of ZBH, including the appointment of the Board, is linked and controlled by the parent ministry, the Ministry of Information and Publicity. ZTV has endeavoured to increase the coverage of non-political or non-controversial voices through programmes targeting farmers, children, women and the disabled. But these programmes are created to support government policy through using predominantly government sources.

6.4 Diversity

Programming on ZTV covers a wide range of issues from health, politics and economics to entertainment and educational programmes. Most of the entertainment programmes are, however, foreign programmes, and ZTV has so far failed to meet the 75% local content quota set out in the Broadcasting Services Act. ZTV's news programmes predominantly use government sources, particularly for political issues (MMPZ, 2002). The ruling party dominates political news coverage. Female voices are minimal, with research indicating that just 17% of the voices used in stories are female (MISA & Gender Links, 2003).

The MultiChoice DStv satellite pay-TV service carries foreign channels, including news channels from the BBC and CNN, and entertainment services.

6.5 Quality of television output and programming

The quality of television programming has declined owing to lack of equipment, lack of skilled manpower and political interference. ZBH needs to be transformed into a truly independent public-service broadcaster, both in its governance structure and programming. To improve television quality, there is a need for:

- an independent broadcasting and telecommunications regulatory body;
- the repeal of the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001;
- the licensing of new players (especially commercial and community TV stations); and,
- improved access to training.

6.6 Specific challenges

The growth of the television marketplace in Zimbabwe is tied to the policy framework governing the industry. The continued stranglehold of the government on ZBH, and the lack of licensing of new players, has resulted in lack of trust in the programming of ZTV, especially its news programmes which are seen as public relations and propaganda exercises for the ruling party. This has put off advertisers. ZBH is saddled with financial problems and also a serious skills shortage, caused in part by the dismissal of senior staff and poor salaries. The growth of the industry can only be guaranteed if the government changes its attitude and policies towards opening up the industry to private players, and institutes changes that would make ZBH a public broadcaster with clear accountability and management structures.

Key findings

- Zimbabwe has one TV station, ZTV, owned and controlled by the state.
- There is one subscription TV service available via satellite, the MultiChoice DStv bouquet from South Africa.
- No private players have been licensed since 2001, when the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) was passed.
- ZBH's ZTV service is not representative of all voices; the Minister of Information and Publicity appoints its Board and its programming content is dictated from that same Ministry.



7. Newspapers

7.1 Key changes and developments in the newspaper marketplace in the past five years

The newspaper industry in Zimbabwe grew rapidly in the period from the mid-1990s to 2000, when a number of newspapers were established. This was partly a result of the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) instituted by the World Bank as part of conditions for balance of payments support by the Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The government embarked on a process of economic liberalisation that also resulted in a slight change of attitude towards the private media. The government shifted away from the “command and control” economic management of the 1980s to a liberal, market-based economy. It was in this period that new newspapers, including *The Sunday Mirror*, *The Daily News*, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Standard* and *The Sunday Gazette*, came on board.

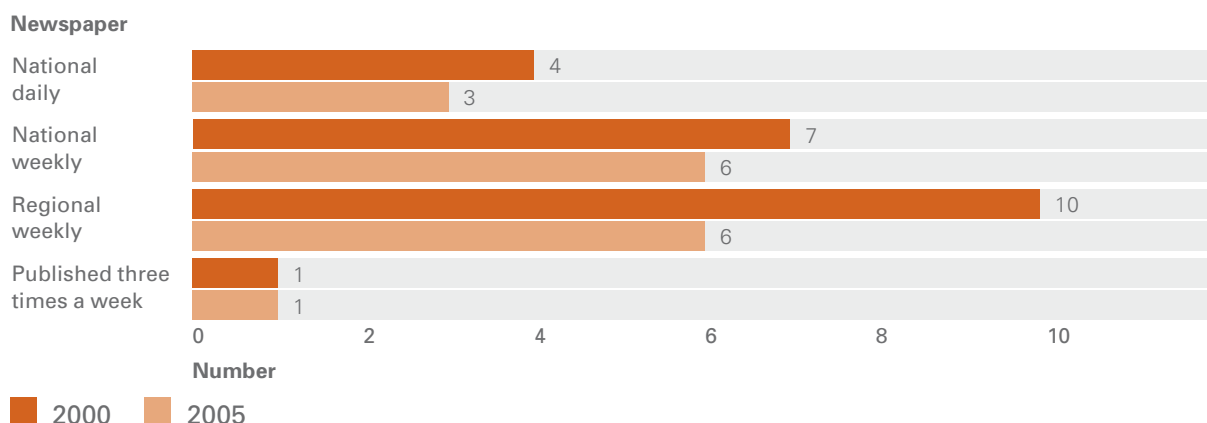
Problems began in 2000 with political violence, farm invasions and the enactment of restrictive media legislation. The ensuing economic difficulties and repressive media laws drastically curtailed the gains of the 1990s as four newspapers were shut down and media workers were left jobless or exiled. The economic difficulties have also meant that there are limited resources for advertising and sponsorship.

The use of legislation such as the AIPPA to shut down newspapers has also seen a number of journalists and other skilled media workers leave the industry, with some going into exile. The government has strengthened its stranglehold on the operations of state newspapers. Many experienced journalists have been fired from the state media and others have left of their own accord. Foreign correspondents have been all but banned from Zimbabwe, with the exception of a few international news agencies such as Reuters and Xinhua, which still have offices in Zimbabwe.

A number of magazines focusing on social and religious issues and sport have been launched in the past five years, but these do not tackle controversial political issues.

The closure of *The Daily News* marked a sad chapter in Zimbabwe’s media industry, as the paper was the most widely read and was popular with readers from different sections of society. At its peak, *The Daily News* sold over 100,000 copies a day and its closure marked the beginning of the decline of the private media. *The Daily News*’s biggest competitor, the state-owned *Herald*, is now the biggest-selling newspaper in Zimbabwe, followed by *The Chronicle* (also owned by the state).

Figure 8: Total Number of Newspapers



Sources: ZARF, 2005; MISA, 2005

Following the closure of the four newspapers in 2003 and 2004, no new newspapers have been launched. However, new magazines have come on board since 2000, including:

- *Breaking New Ground* – a privately-owned magazine focused on social and religious issues;
- *Trends* – a state-owned magazine focused on social stories such as health, religion, family and entertainment;
- *New Farmer* – a state-owned magazine focused on agriculture and rural development; and,
- *Every Zim* – a privately-owned entertainment magazine.

At regional level, the number of weeklies shrunk from ten to six between 2000 and 2005. The government has established what it calls “community newspapers” in all provinces. These community newspapers are wholly owned by the state through New Ziana, a government-owned news agency.

7.2 Investment and growth in the newspaper industry in the past five years

Following the closure of the four newspapers, no new newspapers have been launched. The majority of newspapers are now in government hands through Zimbabwe Newspapers Ltd (Zimpapers), publishers of *The Herald*, *Sunday Mail*, *The Sunday News* and *The Chronicle*. The government also owns and runs New Ziana, the parent company of all provincial newspapers, which the government calls “community newspapers”. New Ziana also runs a news agency, which collects information from all provinces for sale to the local and international media. New Ziana is, however, saddled with financial problems as a result of a lack of markets for its stories.

Private ownership in the newspaper industry has declined owing to the closure of four newspapers by the government and also the infiltration of the newspaper industry by the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), which secretly acquired the majority shareholding in *The Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* newspapers. The remaining leading private newspapers are weekly newspapers, and these have a limited circulation in that they are sold in a few urban areas and face a hostile operating environment.

7.3 Plurality, ownership and control

Newspaper reporting is affected by the political situation in Zimbabwe, where both private and state-owned publications have to adopt certain positions on almost every issue, including sport. Table 2 below shows newspapers currently available in Zimbabwe.

Table 2: Newspapers Currently Available in Zimbabwe

Name of Newspaper	Ownership	Year Established	Circulation
The Chronicle	State	1930	30,000
The Herald	State	1891	85,000
The Sunday Mail	State	1933	90,000
The Daily Mirror*	"Private"	1997	10,000
The Sunday Mirror*	"Private"	1997	10,000
The Financial Gazette	Private	1969	31,000
Manica Post****	State	1997	Data not available
The Southern Times***	State	2004	5,000
The Mail & Guardian***	Private	1985	4,500 (in Zimbabwe)
Sunday News	State	1930	Data not available
The Standard	Private	1998	25,000
Times**	State	Data not available	Data not available
Midlands Observer**	Private	Data not available	Data not available
Indosankusa**	State	2002	Data not available
Chaminuka**	State	2002	Data not available
Telegraph**	State	2002	Data not available
Nehanda Guardian**	State	2002	Data not available
The Zimbabwean	Private	2004	10,000 (in Zimbabwe)
The Sunday Times***	Private	1896	5,000 (in Zimbabwe)
The Independent	Private	1996	Data not available

* State Central Intelligence Organisation secretly bought majority shares in these publications (Muleya, 2005)

** Provincial newspapers *** Regional newspapers (Chuma, 2003)

**** This newspaper previously published under the name *Umtali*, the city where it was published. The original date of establishment was 1893.

7.4 Diversity

The diversity of voices and information in the newspaper industry in Zimbabwe has regressed as a result of the closure of four newspapers by the government. The government has in fact consolidated its presence in the media industry by starting what it calls “community newspapers” in all provinces. The newspaper industry is also suffering from reduced advertising revenue. Under these circumstances, the coverage of issues is confined to the so-called “topical” stories that involve politics, economic problems and corruption. While these issues are important, many of the stories have no direct relation to the day-to-day challenges the ordinary person is facing, such as unemployment, food shortages and HIV/AIDS.

That said, a number of South African magazines are available in Zimbabwe: *YOU*, *Bona*, *Drum*, *People*, *True Love* and *Your Family*. These magazines focus on light issues, including family, cookery, gardening, furniture, shopping, food and health. Data on the readership trends of these magazines is not available.

7.5 Quality of newspaper reporting

The quality of news reporting and journalism has declined in Zimbabwe, owing to the abuse of the state media for political gain. A number of unsubstantiated allegations are made in the media, mostly against opposition parties. While the state print media suffer from unprofessional reporting (as a result of political interference), the privately-owned print outlets operate in a restrictive environment which has meant that a lot of self-censorship is practised in order to avoid arrest and harassment.

7.6 Specific challenges

The newspaper industry in Zimbabwe has suffered from the absence of a supportive government media policy. Just like the broadcasting industry, newspapers are now a risky business that few are prepared to invest in. What is more, the media have lost a number of experienced personnel. Any attempt at developing the media has to look at the issues of skills development and infrastructure in the form of computers and equipment.

Key findings

- The newspaper industry in Zimbabwe has regressed in the past five years as a result of the enactment of AIPPA, which resulted in the closure of four newspapers.
- The government has invested in what it calls “community newspapers” at regional level.



8. Media Support

8.1 Key changes and developments in new media technologies in the past five years

Zimbabwe's telecommunications sector was liberalised in the late 1990s, and this period saw the arrival of new private players in the mobile telephone sector. Two players, Econet Wireless and Telecell, are now providing mobile services, as well as the state-owned Net One. Zimbabwe still has only one fixed-line telephone service provider, Telone, which is wholly owned by the state. The second fixed-line telephone service provider, Tele Access, has failed to roll out services, due to what it claims is a failure to access foreign currency. Around 7% of the total population has access to a mobile phone (ZAMPS, 2004). The growth of the wireless mobile phone industry has been hindered by government policy, which has restricted the number of mobile networks to three, despite pronouncements that a fourth network provider might be licensed. Zimbabwe has a total mobile phone subscriber base of 832,000 (Mutseyekwa, 2006).

Zimbabwe's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry has remained relatively stagnant, owing chiefly to the prevailing economic problems and a lack of clear policy on how the industry is to grow. The Internet remains an elitist tool and further growth is hampered by connectivity problems. Around 11% of the population has access to the Internet. Zimbabwe has three Internet access providers: Ecoweb, Telone and Telecontract. There are also three public data service providers: Africom, Powertel and Telone. There are more than ten Internet service providers registered with the Post and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) (Mutseyekwa, 2006). About 2.4% of the population has a personal computer (ZARF, 2004). The Internet service provider (ISP) industry has regressed, with private players such as Mango and Icon having withdrawn from Zimbabwe.

The media support sector is facing a new danger as the government is working on legislation to compel ISPs to release information on private Internet communication, especially communication by individuals or organisations perceived to be undermining government authority. This move is likely to further distance the people of Zimbabwe from the Internet.

8.2 Key changes in media support in the past five years

In tandem with the shrinkage of the media sector, there has not been any meaningful investment in media support over the past five years. The cumulative effect of skewed macro-economic policies, an economy in the grip of a recession and the intolerance of the Zimbabwean government to criticism has undoubtedly resulted in the stagnation of other media-related sectors such as advertising, film production and market research. Suffice to say, these sectors (as well as mainstream sectors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing) are all trapped in a vice of decline and have not developed or recorded any meaningful growth and expansion over the past five years.

8.3 Audience and readership research data

The Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (ZARF) carries out readership and consumer research via its Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS). The research adopts a quantitative approach intended to indicate the numbers of consumers accessing various media products (and how), for the benefit of advertisers. The data is presented mostly in terms of figures indicating the different demographics of persons accessing media products, for example, their region of location, income and age group. The research does not focus on the wider environment in which the media products are being accessed, such as government policy and the social/political situation. This research does not explore the causes of any decrease in media consumption. Neither is any qualitative research undertaken to tease out social, political and economic issues underlying the operations of the media.

NGOs working in Zimbabwe carry out their own research, which is mostly confined to a qualitative focus on advocacy and policy intervention issues.

8.4 Media support, ISPs and ownership

ZARF is an industry body controlled by advertising agencies and marketing, public relations and business interests. Two of the three mobile telephony providers – Econet Wireless and Telecell – are privately-owned, with the former being a public company quoted on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange.

Key findings

- Zimbabwe has three mobile phone providers, serving fewer than one million subscribers.
- Zimbabwe has one fixed-line telephone service provider.
- About 2.4% of the population has a personal computer.
- Around 11% of the population has access to the Internet.



9. NGO Activity

9.1 Key changes and developments in NGO activity in the past five years

Zimbabwe has a vibrant NGO sector that works around issues of media and human rights. This human rights and media freedom NGO sector is a phenomenon of the late 1990s and the period since 2000, a reaction to increasingly repressive measures from the state. NGOs are now one of the few remaining alternative voices in Zimbabwe on human rights issues.

In the 1990s, the Windhoek-based Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and its regional branches (one of them in Zimbabwe) helped put issues of media diversity, pluralism and independence onto the regional agenda. But before 2000, NGOs in Zimbabwe did not engage significantly in challenging the government to look into opening up the broadcasting industry or encouraging policies that would create a conducive environment for media development (such as access to information laws, broadcasting diversity laws, media policies and ICT policies). The repressive nature of the Zimbabwean government (particularly as it began to lose political ground from 2000 due to the emergence of a strong opposition party, the MDC) has resulted in NGOs realising the need to work on media policy issues and to lobby for an improved operating environment for the media.

However, funding for NGOs working on media issues has not been a priority for the donor community, with most funding channelled to humanitarian issues such as poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS.

Key NGOs working on media issues include MISA-Zimbabwe, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), the Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ) and the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ). Other NGOs, such as Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) and the Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRT), work on media and freedom of expression issues on an *ad hoc* basis.

The aforementioned NGOs face constraints in working with government, as government authorities perceive them to be hostile to the present regime. This hostility can be attributed to the tense political situation, in which the government is sensitive to any criticism, particularly criticism of its harsh treatment of media workers and repressive legislation such as AIPPA, POSA and BSA. Another challenge for NGOs working on media issues in Zimbabwe is that they sometimes lack the capacity to tackle the present challenges, as these developments have no precedent in the country. NGOs have had to learn “on the job”, taking note of experiences from other countries on how to react and work in a repressive environment.

There are also NGOs working on the production of educational media materials on subjects

such as children's rights, HIV/AIDS and other health issues, such as the Zimbabwe International Film Festival and the Media for Development Trust of Zimbabwe. But these organisations are facing serious viability problems as donors are not putting money into the development of films, documentaries or videos on topical social issues. This sector was vibrant and well-funded in the 1980s and 1990s, but is currently facing a decline. As many as four NGOs that worked on the production of educational materials have shut down. This decline is also partly attributed to the problems at the state broadcaster, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH), which has failed to put resources into the development of local content by independent producers and which has banned certain productions perceived to challenge the political status quo.

9.2 Key NGOs involved in media development activities

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)-Zimbabwe

MISA-Zimbabwe is part of the regional MISA, an NGO based in Namibia with branches in 11 countries in Southern Africa. MISA works on advocacy for media freedom, freedom of expression and freedom of information; media training; and, legal defence of media outlets and media workers.

Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ)

The MMPZ monitors the reporting of both broadcast and print media in Zimbabwe, issuing reports on the conduct of media organisations and addressing issues of balance and ethical reporting, and freedom of expression.

Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ)

FAMWZ works on promoting gender rights in the media, collaborating with female media workers and women in poor communities to address issues such as gender violence, gender in the media and HIV/AIDS.

Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ)

The ZUJ is the largest union of media workers in Zimbabwe, working to promote the interests of media workers with regards to their work environments and conditions of employment.

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)

ZLHR is a group of lawyers committed to promoting human rights in Zimbabwe. It offers legal services, in particular to victims of human rights abuses.

Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRIT)

SAHRIT is a regional organisation based in Harare that works on promoting human rights in Southern Africa through training, specialising in human rights training for NGOs, government, police and other stakeholders.

Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN)

The ZWRCN addresses development issues facing women, working on training, policy reform, advocacy and lobbying.

9.3 Climate of opportunity for media development activities

For NGOs to be able to engage effectively in media development activities, the following issues need to be addressed:

- transformation of the repressive legal environment in which media and NGOs operate, including constitutional reform;
- transformation of the state broadcaster into a public broadcaster;
- development of alternative forms of media free from political and economic controls, such as community-owned media;
- return of skilled workers to the media sector;
- civil society engagement with the media development possibilities offered by new ICTs;
- civil society engagement with international bodies such as the ACHPR, the NEPAD peer review mechanism, the SADC tribunal and the African Union Secretariat; and,
- civil society linkages with regional/international civil society organisations such, as the Media Foundation for West Africa, the West Africa Journalists Association and Article 19.

Key findings

- The development of NGO work on human rights, freedom of expression and media freedom is a phenomenon of the late 1990s and the post-2000 era, prompted in recent years by the increased repression of the media.
- NGOs are mostly regarded as opposed to the ruling elite, resulting in a conflictual relationship between NGOs and government.
- NGOs that work on creating educational media materials on social issues have suffered from under-funding.



10. Conclusions

Improving the situation of Zimbabwe's media is dependent upon policy reform and ending of the political and economic crisis. The view of civil society and private media is that repressive laws must be repealed and the Constitution reformed so that media rights (and the public's right of access to information) are *specifically* guaranteed. As well, it is felt that a new Access to Information Act needs to be drawn up.

Key issues to be addressed in order to move forward include:

- constitutional reform;
- media policy development that promotes growth and investment;
- the development of a democratically run, independent and representative public broadcaster;
- the development of community media (responsive to community needs);
- training of media workers; and,
- the development of an ICT policy that aims to make information not only affordable but accessible.

Key findings

- Improvement of the media sector in Zimbabwe will require a mix of political and economic reform, as well as reform of the legal context in which the media operate.
- Reform of the media legal environment needs to include constitutional amendments specifically guaranteeing media freedom and the public right of access to information.
- The Zimbabwean media sector needs growth and investment, an independent public broadcaster and community media.
- Journalism training and harnessing of new ICTs are also priorities.



11. Appendices

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Zimbabwe

Country Report

Way Forward



12. Introduction

The sampling for the interviews was guided by the output document developed specifically for the AMDI team researchers. The Zimbabwe Hub research team sampled a total of 30 potential interviewees, covering all sectors of media players in Zimbabwe, from journalists in the state, private media to NGOs, policy-makers, regulatory bodies and others. Some of the targeted interviewees included senior level individuals at the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Federation of Africa Media Women Zimbabwe (FAMWZ), *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper, the *Financial Gazette* newspaper, the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications (PCTC), the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), Ministry of Information and Publicity, Ministry of Interactive Affairs, Media and Information Commission (MIC), Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRIT), Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH), Radio Dialogue FM, National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Media Studies department, University of Zimbabwe (UZ) Media Studies Department, Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) Media Studies Department, Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN), Kubatana NGO Network, E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa (EKOWISA), and *The Chronicle* newspaper.

Fifteen interviewees were selected on the basis of their involvement with work related to the media, ie, advocacy for media and freedom of expression rights, media analysts, policy-makers and legislative bodies, media and telecommunications regulators, community media and media trainers. These categories included persons working for the government and legislative bodies (Members of Parliament), for state- and private-owned media, for media advocacy and watchdog non-governmental organisations (NGOs), media and gender organisations, journalists' unions and community media. Interviewees included human rights lawyers and political commentators as well as those involved in lobbying for the increased use of the new media, Information Communications Technologies (ICT). The sampling criteria were based on the seniority of the individuals targeted, and also on the role they played in the media sector in Zimbabwe.

The polarisation of Zimbabwean society along political lines has affected the work of the media to the extent that any media worker is defined either as for or against ZANU-PF. This current polarisation means that almost all interviewees see themselves either as allied or opposed to certain laws passed by the Zimbabwe government since the year 2000. While it was difficult to get senior government officials and state media personnel to agree to be interviewed, it was relatively easy to interview NGO leaders, private media journalists and other persons who are not employed or associated with the government. State media

employees in the print media and state broadcasters required a lot of persuasion to agree to be interviewed, as they were generally suspicious of anything that might result in them “getting into trouble” with their employers (the government). Senior government ministers, while not directly refusing to be interviewed, nonetheless failed to set aside time or stick to appointments. On occasion, the hub coordinator and his assistants were made to sit at ministers’ offices for as long as four hours, for interviews that never took place. In the end, one of the key ministers, a deputy minister in the Ministry of Information and Publicity, instructed us to direct our questions to a senior official of the government-appointed MIC.

The Zimbabwe hub team managed to interview senior government personnel, including the Chairman of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications (and ruling ZANU-PF Member of Parliament), the Hon. Leo Mugabe. It must be stated that Leo Mugabe was cooperative from the start, and was exceptional in that he set time aside for our research immediately, and was frank in his contributions.

While all interviewees endeavoured to articulate their concerns within the framework of their work, their responses were largely influenced by the current political environment in Zimbabwe, an environment in which if you belong to a certain political party, work for the state or private-owned media, or are in government, then your views are influenced by that position. While there was a general frankness, interviewees did not go beyond the confines of their political beliefs. Fourteen interviewees agreed to have their names and quotes used but one (a senior employee of a government regulatory agency) refused to have his name quoted as, in his words, he “might not know how his seniors would react to this research”.

It can be inferred that the interview process captures in graphic detail the challenges Zimbabwe society faces in defining what sort of media would best serve its interests. There are glaring gaps and variations among different social sectors, media houses, political and media experts, and political groups on the direction that the media should take, whom it should serve, how and for what purposes. All the interviewees are steeped in their own ideological beliefs about the role of the media in Zimbabwe.

Thirteen interviews for this project were conducted in Zimbabwe’s capital, Harare, and two were conducted in Zimbabwe’s second largest city, Bulawayo. The interview stage began on 17 March 2006 and ended on 5 June 2006. The research hub coordinator shared the process of interviewing with two assistants, journalist Obert Matahwa and media analyst, Ernest Mudzengi. Obert Matahwa is a reporter for the banned *Daily News* newspaper; he is currently unemployed. Ernest Mudzengi works for the civic group ‘National Constitutional Assembly’, and teaches media studies on a part-time basis at the Zimbabwean Open University (ZOU).

The selection of assistants was based on the realisation that there were certain interviewees who would not be comfortable talking to the research hub coordinator, primarily because (due to the polarised political environment) the research coordinator could be seen as belonging to a certain group. It became necessary to use these two assistants, who could open doors that others might find closed.



13. Media Development: an organisational perspective

As stated previously, media development is seen in different terms by the interviewees, depending on their political and ideological persuasion. The interviewees can be described as key media personnel in Zimbabwe, in both the private and state-owned media as well as the government and its regulatory agencies. Private media interviewees include senior persons such as Dumisani Muleya, who has worked in the NGO sector for over ten years. Others, in what can be described as the private media ‘camp’, include Kholiwe Nyoni, who works for Radio Dialogue (an aspiring community radio station yet to be licensed), and Brenda Burrell, who works for Kubatana NGO Network, an organisation supporting NGOs with Information and Communication Technology development and the dissemination of information using ICT. This private media group expressed more or less similar views on the state of the media in Zimbabwe, and what they see as the key challenges for media development in the country. This view is captured by Sinikiwe Msipa-Ndebele’s description of what have been the most significant changes in the media over the past five years (2000 to 2005).

“ First [for me], I would say that one of the most noticeable changes has been the promulgation of laws that hinder the operation of the media, like the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Public Order and Security Act and the Broadcasting Services Act. Secondly, I think that we have seen a contraction of the media industry, with the closure of two media houses. In a landscape where you have about seven media houses operating, if two go it is a cause for concern because it limits the representativeness of the voices that are heard in the media. But, thirdly (from my point of view), we have seen a decline in the funding available for initiatives aimed at media development, and this has seen the scaling down of most media organisations and (in some cases) the closure of organisations that have anything to do with media development. Even those organisations that currently have funding have scaled down their activities because really there is less funding for such initiatives [going forward]. This has changed the landscape. There is less noise being made out there, while there is more fear because of the restrictive environment. ”

(**Sinikiwe Msipa-Ndebele**, Director; NGO: Federation of Africa Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ), Zimbabwe)

State media workers, government agency workers and politicians working in the media (and

on media issues) in Zimbabwe share similar views on what they regard as the state of the media in Zimbabwe. These views are largely defined by what they see as the need to protect Zimbabwe's "sovereignty" and the present ruling elite, which they say is under attack from powerful Western countries over such issues as the land reform programme. During the course of these interviews, strong views (largely representing the government and ruling elite) were expressed by the Chairman of the Media and Information Commission (MIC), Dr Tafataona Mahoso; Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications and ZANU-PF MP, Leo Mugabe; and Chairman of the Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) Board, Tendai Chari. It is interesting to note that while some of the pro-government and ruling elite interviewees expressed strong political views on the role of the media, and the whole question of media development, others, including MP Leo Mugabe, a media lecturer, Moses Charedzera, and a senior officer with a government regulatory agency, talked positively about what they see as the challenges facing the media, and what needs to be done to develop it.

While all interviewees noted the promulgation of new media laws as an important change, the Hon. Leo Mugabe aptly summarised the various strands of opinion on these laws (while still giving his own interpretation):

“ I think the most notable change is the introduction of the AIPPA; some call it controversial, others call it repressive, still others look at it as a positive development in that now, for the first time since our independence [1980], the media are being governed in terms of falsehoods – [defamation and libel]. Previously, the media would just write any story, defame people, and it was up to the individual to sue the newspaper. Now there are some reasonable corrections that have been taken [creation of statutory criminal offences that can lead to a journalists being arrested for writing falsehoods]. More importantly, any stories that are written are checked for veracity before publication; I think this has been a very positive development in the media... There is also the issue of the distribution of materials printed both inside and outside the country. I have put the issue of whether we should govern the distribution of materials that come from abroad up for debate. A typical example given to me the other day by one journalist was the trouble, economic hardship and product boycotts caused by the publication of those cartoons in Denmark. Therefore, other people [government, state security agencies, regulators bodies] think that the distribution of such materials must be governed. Other people think that too much regulation will cause problems. For now, we are listening to what the public are saying. You see the letters that are being written... we are taking a cue from whatever materials are being written. ”

(Hon. Leo Mugabe, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe)

The interview process highlighted the polarised views in Zimbabwe society. While there is general agreement on the need to develop the media, interviewees disagreed on why this should be done, and how it should be done. The majority of media workers in the private media, and NGOs working on media issues, argue that without changes to the current media laws, and a change of government attitude, the media industry simply will not develop. Senior government officials and state media workers, on the other hand, argue that the media is already developing, and is serving the needs of society (as defined by the ruling elite). This development is described by the ruling elite, state media journalists and government regulatory agencies as seen through media training institutions that the government has set up and is supporting, the restructuring of the state broadcaster among other issues.

13.1 Key organisations

The AMDI Zimbabwe hub research process involved 15 interviews with leading individuals in both the private and state media, NGOs working with the media, journalists' unions, an NGO working on promoting the use of ICT, media training and government. These organisations were represented by personnel at the most senior level possible in the interview process. Targeted organisations included:

- a leading weekly private newspaper;
- the parliament of Zimbabwe;
- two government regulatory authorities for the media and telecommunications sectors;
- five NGOs working on media advocacy, media and gender, media rights and freedom of expression, and the promotion and the use of ICT;
- community media;
- the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ); and,
- a media and political analyst.

The level of interviewees' involvement in the management of their organisations varied. Apart from interviewees from the state and private media, and one media training institution, the remaining interviewees are individuals with decision-making powers and experience who have initiated media development projects in their work.

13.2 Impact of media development initiatives

Zimbabwe's current political and economic environment is a challenge to any meaningful media development. While it may be defined in terms of initiatives that promote the growth of the media, improve access to information and support the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, the media industry in Zimbabwe has diminished as a result of the closure of newspapers, the imposition of restrictive media laws and the generally unsupportive media environment.

Fourteen interviewees cite the closure of *The Daily News*, *The Tribune* and *Weekly Times* as negative developments, while 11 interviewees see these events as controversial and repressive.

The NGO personnel, private media employees and political commentators interviewed say the laws and the restrictive media and freedom of expression environment are the most notable changes over the past five years. Key laws that feature prominently in all interviews are AIPPA, POSA and the BSA. While the government argues that these laws were passed by a democratically elected parliament, this argument is dismissed by the NGOs and the private media, who counter that legislative authority has been subverted by a lack of debate and partisanship, which has seen legislators voting not on the merits of the issues under discussion but along party lines.

While the AIPPA, BSA and POSA were passed by the majority of parliamentarians (from the ruling ZANU-PF party), the opposition voted against these laws. It is further noted that the passing of these laws was done despite adverse and critical reports that were passed by the Parliamentary Legal Committee and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees, under whose jurisdiction these laws fall. Parliamentary reports on AIPPA noted that this law would stifle the enjoyment of media and the freedom of expression rights in Zimbabwe and also that the laws were in violation of section 20 of the Zimbabwe Constitution that guarantees the enjoyment of freedom of expression rights.

There was also strong resistance to these laws from journalists' unions and NGOs working on media rights issues. The reservations of all these groups were ignored, and even now, when the government says it is open to discussion on these laws, the position remains that nothing much will change. These laws have served the present government "well" in the sense that they closed platforms for public debate and outlets for critical voices. A point noted by ten NGO and media interviewees is that these laws are applied selectively, further strengthening the argument that the laws were in fact passed to target particular media houses, and not bring "sanity" to the media industry (as is argued by the government).

The impact of these laws (defined as repressive by NGOs working in the media and the private media) is captured by Dumisani Muleya:

"... over the past five years there has been a dramatic contraction of the private media in Zimbabwe as a result of the hostile political environment and legislative framework, which began in the mid-1990s. The media legislation had changed a lot following the founding of some private newspapers. They came into play in a situation where the environment was largely dominated by state-owned, print and broadcast media. So in 1996 we had the founding of the Zimbabwe Independent newspaper (which I work for), then came the Standard Newspaper, then, two years later, another new media group, the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), came onto the scene with about six titles, one of them national and the others regional. Later the ANZ founded another Sunday newspaper. As we know, some of these newspapers [ANZ Newspapers] have collapsed for economic reasons, and two of them have been closed as a result of the harsh media regulation and legislation in the country. So over the past five years we have seen a complete reversal of the gains we recorded between 1995 and 2000. We are back to the old situation whereby we have a very small private media sector versus a vast and expansive state media sector that kills the way the media in Zimbabwe generally functions, with a mass of information coming out of the government media and a small amount coming from the private media."

(Dumisani Muleya, News Editor; Media Practitioner, Private Sector: Zimbabwe Independent, Zimbabwe)

As a result of current legislative conditions, NGOs working on media development issues

have increased their advocacy work and put structures in place for human rights protection. Other NGOs and private media interviewees say there is now a decline in funding for media development work as donor partners focus on “political” issues. On the contrary, the state media and government assert that the media industry has in fact changed for the better. State media workers say the introduction of the BSA, as well as the 75% local content requirement, has actually assisted in developing local talent in areas such as film, music, drama and documentary-making. According to Tendai Chari (ZTV Board Chairman), changes to programming content were the result of the promulgation of progressive legislation such as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Commercialisation Act. For him, this law has meant that the state broadcaster has had to change its focus and mandate.

“ The Broadcasting Services Act brought in the 75% local content policy requirement. This has meant that TV and radio programming has changed significantly in so far as it now caters for local content (which was not the case before). We also saw the promulgation of the ZBC Commercialisation Act which set in motion the unbundling of the ZBC into several companies or SBUs (Strategic Business Units). This has been one of the major events we have witnessed in the broadcasting sector, as well as the decentralisation of the radio stations into different regions of the country – [such as to the cities of Gweru and Bulawayo where two radio stations are now located]. ”

(**Tendai Chari**, Chairman; Media Practitioner, Public Sector: Zimbabwe Television Board, Zimbabwe)

The unbundling and commercialisation of the ZBC into SBUs is currently the subject of parliamentary debate, with concerns being expressed that the new structure is unworkable and has created a bureaucratic nightmare for the state broadcaster. A parliamentary report released on 31 May 2006 argues that the new Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings should return to its former structure and streamline the SBUs that have been created. While some interviewees noted this as a strategic change influenced by external forces (ie, the legislation), other interviewees argued that the real benefits of the legislative change have not been realised. This, according to Moses Charedzera, a media lecturer at the Zimbabwe Open University, is because no steps have been taken to realise the benefits of laws such as the BSA, or licensing new and independent players. Other government agencies, including POTRAZ, say that they have done a lot to improve the telecommunications sector in Zimbabwe. A senior official with POTRAZ (who declined to be named) says the regulatory body has done much to transform the telecommunications industry, as a contribution to economic development. This, argues POTRAZ, is witnessed through the licensing of new players in the mobile telecommunications sector. Zimbabwe now has three wireless phone operators. POTRAZ argues that factors beyond their control have affected the growth of the telecommunications sector, including the suspension of donor support to the Zimbabwe government by international bodies such as the World Bank.

13.2.1 Strategic changes within the interviewees’ own area of work

All interviewees commented that they have had to change their strategies to suit the prevailing political and economic environment in Zimbabwe. Changes at a strategic level in the operations of media organisations, regulatory bodies and NGOs are varied as these are in different sectors, seeking to address different objectives. For the private media and NGOs, such changes include having to adapt to the existence operations and requirements of regulatory bodies, including the MIC.

“ ... we have undertaken a number of initiatives in order to survive under the harsh political and legal conditions we are operating in. The first was when the... (AIPPA) law

came into effect in 2002. We were advised by lawyers that, whilst the law was generally very repressive and there was a definite inclination across the media and civil society to defy it, we first had to register in order to be able to function; then we could try to fight the legislation from the right side of the law. So we adopted this strategy, recognising that in such an authoritarian environment it would not be easy to defy the laws and tackle the government head on. The law requires that journalists must be registered, so we did this, saying that we would continue to challenge the law whenever possible. The government remains hostile and takes every opportunity either to threaten to close newspapers or get journalists arrested. We have taken a pragmatic approach to this situation, choosing which fights to take on with the government. ”

(**Dumisani Muleya**, News Editor; Media Practitioner, Private Sector: Zimbabwe Independent, Zimbabwe)

While some private media houses have managed to survive the tough regulatory structures of the MIC, others have not been so lucky, being shut down under the same regime of media laws. Changes at a strategic level for NGOs have had to deal with an influx of legal cases, arrests and assaults directed at media workers and media houses. Irene Petras of ZLHR highlighted this as a major concern for NGOs, as did Thomas Deve of MISA-Zimbabwe, and Mathew Takaona of the ZUJ. In the case of Zimbabwe, these violations cannot be separated from the political tensions that were and are taking place in the country, particularly the stiff political contest between the ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition MDC. Media NGOs note that around election time there is a dramatic increase in violations against media houses. Considerable resources have been put into defending arrested media workers and assisting those assaulted, arrested and in need of protection after receiving threats of arrests over their media or human rights work. While NGOs working in the media say that their main thrust is to promote the development of the media, considerable resources have been diverted to defending media personnel under threat. Irene Petras notes:

“ ... we have had to respond to the repression of the independent media and the effect this has had on our own operations and the projects we have undertaken. We have had to take on a huge number of cases involving attacks on media practitioners. As human rights defenders, we have seen a lot of arrests and a lot of assaults; many of our members have had to respond to these incidents. ”

(**Irene Petras**, Programmes Coordinator; NGO: ZLHR, Zimbabwe)

Challenges that organisations such as ZLHR face are that the judiciary in Zimbabwe has been under severe stress as a result of the interference of the Zimbabwe government in its operations. Senior judges in the High Court and Supreme Court have left the bench after threats from the government. Some court judgements have been rejected by the government.

Organisations such as MISA responded to this situation by setting up a Media Defence Fund (MDF), which worked hand in glove with the ZLHR. These changes have also seen NGOs and the private media working increasingly closely with parliament, as a strategy to influence policy. According to Thomas Deve of MISA-Zimbabwe, considerable resources have also gone into advocacy work, as well as into using regional and international human rights charters, and international organisations such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, based in Banjul, the Gambia.

“ We have done quite a lot of advocacy; we have gone to the Parliamentary Portfolio

Committee on Transport and Communications to discuss issues relating to communications. On one occasion we protested in the streets, and although we did not really succeed – [in having the proposed law dropped] we did demonstrate our anger with the legislation when it was being launched in parliament. We have also travelled around the region trying to highlight issues of media repression. ”

(Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

Thomas Deve also says that Zimbabwe has in fact regressed in terms of media development. Deve says the closure of newspapers such as *The Daily News*, *The Tribune* and *Weekly Times* was a blow for media growth and freedom.

“ Unfortunately, Zimbabwe has not witnessed growth; indeed, it has seen a regression – the closure of one of the leading daily newspapers [The Daily News], which was published by Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe [ANZ], followed by the closure of the Tribune newspaper [also an independent initiative] and the loss of personnel...”

(Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

In addition, he sees that experienced manpower has been lost in both the state and private media due to the banning of private newspapers and the dismissal of veteran media workers who do not appear to be toeing the official line in the state media.

The Daily News, in particular, had presented a major challenge to the ruling elite through its exposés of corruption, human rights violations and general abuses of power. The paper became a rallying point for forces opposed to the ruling elite, and at the same time a target for numerous attacks, including bombings. NGOs and the private media, therefore, argue that media laws, which have stifled media development, were passed after attempts had failed to physically destroy the private media.

NGOs, the private media and political commentators believe that the success of media development can be measured through the diversity of players in the market, increased access to information by citizens and the repeal of repressive laws (including AIPPA, POSA and BSA). The BSA presents a contradiction in media policy-making in that, while the government argues that the law opens up the industry to other players, NGOs working on media advocacy point out that there are a number of restrictive conditions that make it virtually impossible for private players to broadcast. These conditions include the banning of foreign investment in the broadcasting industry, the compulsory 75% local content requirement (without the requisite production houses in Zimbabwe to support this) and the banning of the coverage of political news. Four interviewees, however, see the BSA as a progressive law, despite the criticism proffered by NGOs and the private media. According to NGOs and the private media, government policy on the media is driven more by political considerations (especially the need to retain power and promote government views) than by the need to develop the media for the benefit of all sectors of society. These views, however, run contrary to what the ruling elite and government see as the role of the media in Zimbabwean society. While all interviewees agree that media laws such as AIPPA are controversial, government officials and senior individuals working for government regulatory agencies argue that there have been some positive developments over the years.

“ I have observed that there are quite a number of newspapers that have been established or formed since 2000, and this has meant the broadening of the media sector, especially the newspaper industry, in Zimbabwe. We have seen newspapers like The Daily Mirror coming onto the scene. We also saw the introduction of The Tribune, which subsequently closed. The Weekly Times I think was also formed/established. In addition, we have witnessed the rejuvenation or revival of community newspapers under the Ziana or New Ziana stable and, of course, the restructuring that has been taking place at Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings. We have seen the promulgation of a number of laws that have significantly changed the climate in which the media is operating... We also witnessed the end – or the coming to the end – of the statutory monopoly of broadcasting by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and the promulgation of the law [BSA], which provided for the entry of new players into the sector. Although we do not have any new players at the moment... it paved the way for the entry of new players into the broadcasting sector. These are the key changes which [I would say] have taken place in the media industry between 2000 and 2005. ”

(**Tendai Chari**, Chairman; Media Practitioner, Public Sector: Zimbabwe Television Board, Zimbabwe)

The positive changes pointed out by Tendai Chari include the revival and expansion of what the government calls ‘community newspapers’, under the New Ziana stable. Three other interviewees note this as a positive development. It came at the same time as the government was shutting down critical newspapers, including *The Daily News* and *The Daily News on Sunday*, *The Weekly Times*, and *The Tribune*. As noted previously, there seems to be a total disjuncture between what NGOs working on media and freedom of expression issues see as positive media development and what government officials, state media employees and their agencies see as positive media development. The expansion of the state media is described by Irene Petras of ZLHR as simply the expansion of the government’s propaganda infrastructure.

“ I believe there is a desire to develop the media, but that it is motivated by the wrong reasons. There is perhaps a focus on giving the state-run media more support, assets and technology, but this is not being done with a view to the positive development of the industry as a whole. I believe it is being done for political reasons. ”

(**Irene Petras**, Programmes Coordinator; NGO: ZLHR, Zimbabwe)

These different interpretations of what is positive and negative media development are at the centre of the controversies and debates that surround the current media laws in Zimbabwe. While NGOs and the private media see the involvement of the government in the media as negative – indeed, an expansion of government propaganda – the government argues that it is under siege from powerful Western countries that are using the media to effect “regime change”. This, argues the government, is why laws such as the AIPPA, BSA and POSA were promulgated, in order to protect the present Zimbabwe government from undue external pressure (prompted, the government argues, by the controversial land reform programme). Dr Tafataona Mahoso captures the government attitude when he says that the private media in Zimbabwe, as well as foreign media (especially from the EU countries and the USA), have a “regime change” agenda, and the media is being used to push anti-Zimbabwe sentiment.

Further positive changes, noted by five interviewees involved with media training and government and regulatory bodies, are the increasing number of training institutions, which have meant that Zimbabwe has a sound media human resource base. The Zimbabwe government is noted as having invested in media training through the establishment of media studies departments at higher education institutions, including the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), the National University of Science and Technology (NUSA), and Midlands State University (MSU). Hitherto, journalist training was confined to the Harare Polytechnic and a few private institutions.

While acknowledging the increased training of media workers as a positive development, Stanford Matenda says this training is affected by the repressive environment, which has limited opportunities for employment.

“ From a training perspective, we have seen the closure of newspapers and other developments which affect opportunities for our students. The closures have limited the choice for student internships, whether in the broadcasting sector, the print media sector or in online media organisations; we are aware that online media organisations are based outside of the country and there is virtually none which is gathering and disseminating information locally... These developments have affected our work; we therefore continue to monitor developments on the ground closely, looking at how our operations are affected and potential roles we can play. ”

(**Stanford Matenda**, Lecture and Chairman of Department of Journalism; Academic: National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe)

Interviewees involved in training see issues around curriculum development as important, and as having had an impact in their work. The challenge, according to Stanford Matenda, is that there is a dearth of African intellectual material that can be used in media studies.

“ I would say that, right now, curriculum development in itself is a key component of our business. While the current training curriculum has weaknesses (which we are trying to close), by and large I think we are satisfied with it, as are our students. However, there is a challenge in building African textbooks and resources into the curriculum, so that when we train we are not just using materials informed by Western experience. The lecturers themselves also need to be aware of the African perspective. ”

(**Stanford Matenda**, Lecture and Chairman of Department of Journalism; Academic: National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Zimbabwe)



14. Media Development Initiatives

Media development initiatives in Zimbabwe have sought to address a diverse range of issues, depending on the priorities of the organisation carrying out such initiatives. In a depressed economic environment, the private media have come up with measures that seek to maximise profits (as a survival measure) as well as to increase reach. These measures include, for example, the introduction of online and digital newspapers. Both the private and state-owned media have come up with media development initiatives that include skills development or training of media workers in specialised areas, such as business reporting. Other media development initiatives carried out include ICT training for use by rural and urban women, and lobby work for policy reform.

As previously indicated, NGOs have worked on reforming legislation and also developing mechanisms to defend media workers and the right to freedom of expression. This has included human rights training, the development of alternative media structures, advocacy work and lobbying for balanced and fair coverage of female voices as well as helping media houses develop policies that guide the coverage of women's views, gender issues and HIV-AIDS policies, for journalists' (staff members) to use in their reporting. Policies such as HIV and gender policies are also needed for the benefit of media workers. That is protecting female and male employees from sexual harassment and assisting employees who are HIV positive.

14.1 Review

All 15 interviewees say they have been involved in media development initiatives. These initiatives vary depending on the organisation in question. Six interviewees from the NGO sector say most of their work seeks to transform the legislative or policy environment in Zimbabwe, especially the need to have current media laws changed. Both state and private media organisations say most of their work is targeted at improving the operations of organisations such as increasing sales of newspapers, increasing audiences and training of media workers.

Key projects carried out by NGOs, the government and private media players include the following:

- the restructuring of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH);
- developing and implementing programmes on the use of ICT in newsrooms and communities;
- gender and media advocacy and training; and,
- developing mechanisms for the defence of media workers using local, regional and international instruments.

Restructuring of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH)

As stated above, media development activities are largely defined by the objectives in question. Interviewees note that media development initiatives are guided by the need to achieve the organisation's mission and vision. What organisations, government, NGOs and other players call media development initiatives differ and, in some cases, are in conflict as a result of the polarised media environment. While the state broadcaster, ZBH, says restructuring into SBUs is a positive development, this is criticised by media NGOs, including MISA and MMPZ, which are pressing for wider reforms of the state broadcaster. In particular, NGOs are pressing for changes to ZBH's management structure as well as to its programming, to cater for a wider range of voices, including voices critical of the state.

Developing and implementing programmes on the use of ICT

In the case of private media players, one of the key media development initiatives was the use of ICT, such as website(s) development. Other forms of ICT usage include selling online digital newspapers. *The Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper's use of ICT in disseminating information digitally and via a website was described by Dumisani Muleya as a success.

“ Apart from people subscribing to the digital edition, thereby increasing our levels of income, we are also going to be able to market the newspaper far and wide. The real object is to expand the circulation horizons of the paper, and to get some income from it. We are targeting people in the diaspora; there are a lot of Zimbabweans in the UK, United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. ”

(**Dumisani Muleya**, News Editor; Media Practitioner, Private Sector: *Zimbabwe Independent*, Zimbabwe)

The telecommunications regulatory authority has continuously engaged with mobile phone players on the need to expand into rural areas. This expansion programme, argues POTRAZ, is affected by the general shortage of foreign currency needed to buy equipment. Other activities carried out by POTRAZ include helping mobile phone service providers establish an efficient system of network interconnectedness as well as a robust charging structure.

Gender and media advocacy and training

Related to the use of ICTs as tools to disseminate information were the training programmes on the use of ICTs carried out by E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa (EKOWISA). EKOWISA, an NGO, is targeting rural and urban township women with training on the use of mobile phones and the Internet to connect with potential buyers for their goods, such as horticultural products. The training also focuses on developing content that captures cultural aspects of rural communities. According to EKOWISA Director Margaret Zunguze, this is an attempt to capture aspects of Zimbabwean culture and ways of life for the benefit of future generations, and also to preserve such practices. EKOWISA is also using its training programmes to disseminate educational and awareness information on issues such as the need to combat domestic violence and HIV/AIDS using mobile phones, video production and other ICT tools.

The government-appointed MIC is working on a programme to improve journalism training curricula in all colleges. This initiative (says the MIC) is meant to create uniformity within the training programmes, and also to check on the quality of the training being offered by training institutions.

Developing mechanisms for the defence of media workers

Media NGOs in Zimbabwe say they have had to put more resources into defending the media and rights to freedom of expression, under threat from media laws promulgated from 2001. Prominent activities by NGOs have included the Africa Union and ACHPR challenging what they say are excesses of the Zimbabwe government in implementing media laws. The ACHPR has become a strategic agency which Zimbabwe media watchdog organisations are using to challenge laws, including the AIPPA and POSA, and also those cases that have been dismissed by the Superior Courts in Zimbabwe, but which NGOs feel should be reviewed. Related to this use of the ACHPR is the advocacy work carried out with parliament on the need to change Zimbabwe's media laws. This has taken the form of workshops with legislators and submission papers as well as litigation in the local and international courts.

Government officials, including the legislative body, say they have come up with media development activities that fall within the remit of their work. According to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, the Hon. Leo Mugabe, this includes conducting enquiries into the operations of state-owned media and government regulatory bodies. The Committee also looks into the implementation of legislation, convening public enquiries on the operation of the media as well as receiving submissions from the public and interested parties on new laws that parliament will be introducing.

14.1.1 Approaches to media development

All 15 interviewees say their organisations have overarching goals and objectives that they seek to achieve with their media development initiatives. These objectives are largely defined by what interviewees consider to be the mission or mandate of their organisations. NGOs involved in media advocacy and campaigning for a supportive media environment say their goal is to see a free, plural and diverse media that can contribute to the development of Zimbabwe – socially, politically and economically. Mathew Takaona captures the NGO position in stating his organisation's objectives:

“ We want to see freedom of speech, freedom of expression... as a union – this is enshrined in our constitution – we are a pro-democratic organisation, and we want to sustain democracy in our country. ”

(**Mathew Takaona**, President; Media Support: Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe)

The target constituency, as acknowledged by Margaret Zunguze, also defines objectives as:

“ Our main target constituency is women; as you know, women are disadvantaged by lower levels of education and lower levels of income, etc. We create programmes that encourage women to use various ICTs, cell [mobile] phones – and computers to find information/do research, using that information to support their sustainable livelihoods. Basically, our aim is to enable women to use technology with confidence, without having gone to school. ”

(**Margaret Zunguze**, Director; Media Support: E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe)

For the private media, the overarching goal seems to be maximising readership of newspapers and income as a way of guaranteeing the continued existence of their newspapers. Private media players see this goal as only possible if they continually review their work, seeking expert opinion on how their products are faring in the market and training their staff to improve the quality of reporting. It is important to note that, while all interviewees stated that their ultimate goal was the development of the media in Zimbabwe, there was little to show that these objectives could be achieved jointly, especially between government agencies, NGOs, and the private media. This lack of unity is detrimental to the development of the media in Zimbabwe, as organisations, government and other players work at cross-purposes (or parallel to one another), and do not seek to define a single agenda for media development.

14.1.2 Funding of media development

Individual priority areas determine the funding of media development. In the case of ZLHR, an NGO working on promoting a supportive media environment, the bulk of its funding (at least 70%) goes towards its Human Rights Defenders Fund. According to the ZLHR, this is unlikely to change as the government is introducing more legislation that is likely to prompt litigation. For organisations such as MISA-Zimbabwe, the bulk of funding is directed towards advocacy work, especially in poor urban communities. This advocacy work (says MISA) is going beyond seeking changes to media laws, to engaging communities in establishing their own media structures (such as community radio stations), as a direct challenge to the state broadcaster's de facto monopoly. Advocacy work in this area is likely to require more resources over the coming few years as communities need assistance to set up radio stations and training among other needs.

While parliament acknowledges that communications is a big portfolio, the Hon. Leo Mugabe says funding for communications has to be matched with funding for work on transport issues. Hence, at least 30% of the Committee's budget is devoted to communications. This, the Committee says, is likely to change if there is an improvement in the media sector, (ie, if their recommendations are followed through). For NGOs, the allocation of funding follows strategic plans that are designed as road maps for what an organisation wants to achieve. In the case of ZUJ and MISA, these plans span three and five years respectively, and are adjusted in line with the changing environment.

14.2 Success and impact

14.2.1 Evaluating the success of media development projects

In Zimbabwe's current circumstances, it is noted that media impact is measured in very modest terms – not as a complete overhaul of a system but as a series of small victories, which NGOs and the private media hope will build into a major success, (eg the repeal of anti-media laws and the establishment of a voluntary media council). In terms of the defence of the media and freedom of expression rights, impact is defined as being able to free an arrested media worker or freedom of expression activist from custody.

While most interviewees say their media development initiatives have had an impact, a major problem is the sustainability of these activities, as well as their appreciation across all sections of society. NGOs working on media advocacy issues measure impact in terms of the success of their court cases against the state and the defence of arrested media workers. Impact is also seen in terms of the success of litigation at such forums as the ACHPR.

Irene Petras of the ZLHR, Thomas Deve of MISA-Zimbabwe and Mathew Takaona of ZUJ say that the use of the ACHPR has been a huge success. The acceptance by government that journalists can initiate and run a voluntary media council (parallel to the government-appointed MIC) is seen as a major result for the NGOs. According to Thomas Deve, it represents a significant climb down by the government, although more still needs to be done to reform laws such as the AIPPA.

“ We are developing a code of conduct and advancing the cause of a media council. Such a body has to come in, self-regulation being a major requirement for any media development. If, at the end of the day, this project comes on board, it will be major contribution to media development initiatives in Zimbabwe. ”

(Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

The impact of media development is not only confined to the activities of organisations but also includes capacity-building that is assisting journalists unions to address issues of lobbying for improved working conditions and professional training for their membership. The establishment of a secretariat for the ZUJ (through its partnership with, and support from, MISA-Zimbabwe and the MMPZ) has enabled the ZUJ to play a useful role in defining the direction of the media industry in Zimbabwe. According to Mathew Takaona, the secretariat has enabled the union to participate meaningfully in media-related campaigns.

“... There is an impact in that, for the first time in the last four years, we have been able to engage government fruitfully – for the first time, the government has conceded that there is a need to have a voluntary media council. This came only after the establishment of the secretariat, which helped us do our work more easily and engage with parliament. I am sure the fruits of this engagement will be realised soon. We have seen positive results with the African Commission, which has condemned the actions of the government against the media. Coming from an African body, these comments have had a major impact on the media situation in Zimbabwe.”

(Mathew Takaona, President; Media Support: Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe)

Training and media laws

The government also says the proliferation of media training institutions has resulted in the improvement of media training and the production of quality media workers.

“ I think there was a push in the 1980s for a one-party state; although this objective was eventually abandoned, it was something that stayed with the politicians. The laws they have put in place are laws that are geared for a one-party state. The biggest hindrance to developing the media in Zimbabwe has, therefore, been its own laws and politics. These laws have had their own ripple effect. They have created monopolies, and these monopolies have affected the quality of product you find in the media. Product is poor because, when people are in a monopoly, they have no choice, and because they have no choice, the product (no matter how bad) will still be bought. There is no incentive, therefore, for media houses to supply quality products. The politics of the country, and the monopolies in the media, have been a big hindrance to media development.”

(Mathew Takaona, President; Media Support: Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe)

Other areas of impact noted by NGOs include public information and training. Such training includes awareness creation on the nature of law that impact on their human rights, such as the rights to freedom of association and expression and how communities can lobby their Members of Parliament for changes. This has created general awareness of the negative aspects of media laws, and what role communities can play in fighting for the repeal of these laws. This training and awareness in communities is directly related to the success NGOs have had in convincing parliament that these laws would stall positive development in the media.

Since 2001, the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications has come out with adverse reports on these laws. The fact that the Committee has members from both the ruling and opposition parties is seen as a positive development; the executive (Presidency) is isolated in its defence of these laws. The fact that parliament has no power to force the executive to implement its recommendations to media laws and policy has, however, meant that much of parliament's work has been ignored. Parliamentary reports, however, do provide

a rich source of background information that is used by NGOs in their international litigation, lobbying and advocacy work.

The Hon. Leo Mugabe insists that the Committee has made an impact in some areas, though not necessarily the repeal of media laws.

“... the impact is there; the way the Committee operates, we don’t just go out, collect data and produce a report for parliament, NO! We go out and find the problem, we ask for solutions and we walk through the solution with the organisation concerned. By the time we get to parliament to post a report we are, in fact, giving a progress report as to how we found the situation and what changes have been made. For example, ZBH have shelved the NTV [National Television] project and are now looking into how to amalgamate certain [loss-making] companies, with those that are making money so that we can reduce the number of companies from nine to perhaps four, or even three. We have had impact; we have seen the turnaround programme [The turnaround programme refers to the restructuring of the state broadcaster into a leaner structure which will result in expenditure cuts], and how far it has gone. We have been ticking what has been done, not only at ZBH but also at New Ziana. They [New Ziana] have produced what they call their turnaround programme and everyone is looking at that document in order to try and move forward... All the organisations we have visited, including Zimbabwe Newspapers, have taken corrective measures on issues that we had raised with them; the impact has been tremendous.”

(Hon. Leo Mugabe, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe)

Deregulation of the telecommunications industry

According to government regulatory agencies (including POTRAZ), impact was achieved in the deregulation of Zimbabwe’s telecommunications industry in the 1990s, which saw new players coming into the sector. According to POTRAZ, it has played a role in the development of the telecommunications industry and, ultimately, in the development of the Zimbabwe economy.

14.2.2 Factors contributing to the success of media development projects

In the case of Zimbabwe, the factors that work for and against media development cannot be separated; they are two sides of the same coin. While, as noted previously, media laws are identified as the main impediment to the development of the media, the repeal of such laws (and changes in the government's attitude towards the media) is seen as a positive move that would promote media development.

The issues affecting the development of the media can, therefore, be classified into a number of issues:

- ❑ constraints caused by a restrictive media regulatory environment;
- ❑ repressive government policies;
- ❑ economic challenges, especially the ever increasing costs of goods and services, including newsprint;
- ❑ power and fuel shortages; and,
- ❑ skills shortages, especially in the ICT areas.

14.3 Lessons learned

Depending on the interviewee and organisation in question, the lessons learned in carrying out media development initiatives vary. For NGOs in media advocacy, there is a realisation that activities and strategies have to be flexible in order to respond to the constantly changing environment. In Zimbabwe, this environment is primarily influenced by government policy, including:

- ❑ new laws and actions;
- ❑ closure of media houses; and,
- ❑ arrests of media workers.

The importance of networking is a critical lesson noted by media organisations. In Zimbabwe this has come out in the form of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe, which is a loose alliance of the MISA, ZUJ and MMPZ. This alliance seeks to find synergies in the work of the three organisations, pulling resources together for joint media development activities and also speaking with one voice on media issues. There is also a realisation that media development initiatives, which are not rooted in communities, are likely to fail when their supporters are no longer interested in them. It is for this reason that NGOs are working closely with communities on such projects as human rights training, ICT use and development, and community radio initiatives.

From 2002, Radio Dialogue (an aspiring community radio station yet to be licensed) has transformed itself into an outfit visible in the city of Bulawayo and the Matabeleland region. This visibility is due to its work, such as the production of cassettes on community issues including the need for clean water, refuse collection, human rights issues, HIV/AIDS and the running of road shows – strategies aimed at mobilising the residents of Bulawayo to demand a community radio licence from the authorities. Private media organisations note that the past few years have taught them to be self-sufficient and innovative in how they run their organisations. Such innovation includes coming up with new ways of distributing content.

Twelve interviewees say they have learnt lessons from carrying out media development activities. These lessons vary depending on the project and organisation in question. NGOs say they have learnt critical lessons through their relationships with funding partners, this has an effect on the sustainability of an activity. NGOs say the reliance on donor funding for activities has meant that when donor funding dries up their projects have collapsed. Sinikiwe-Msipi-Ndebele, Director of the Federation of African Media Women says that apart from problems with sustainability of activities, it is also important to carry out baseline research on the target group of any activity. She noted that initiating a project without a clear understanding of the target group has often resulted in her organisation failing to meet its objectives. This is because either they have targeted the wrong group or they face resistance from the target group which might feel that projects are being imposed by the NGOs. The critical lesson noted by all NGOs is that projects should be people or community-driven. That means that the project is initiated, planned and implemented with the participation and knowledge of the target group.

14.3.1 The importance of the cultural context in planning and designing initiatives

All 15 interviewees agree that there is a need to promote African cultural and traditional values in all media development initiatives. Interviewees, however, differ on why this should be done. For NGOs, cultural and traditional values should be preserved and recorded for the benefit of future generations and also as a way of assisting communities, especially in rural areas, to generate their own media products – this includes video recordings of cultural events. Government regulatory bodies and political leaders see the preservation of Africa cultures and traditions as a bulwark against the intrusion of global media broadcasts such as Western movies and news products which, they argue, include nothing beneficial to Africans and Zimbabweans.



15. Developing the Environment for Success

Identifying common areas that favour or hinder the development of the media in Zimbabwe is made difficult by the polarisation in the media industry. While all interviewees agreed on the need to develop the media, there are serious differences as to what “developing the media” means and who should lead that process. Two interviewees say that government is developing the media and that all government media policies are pro-media development. This position is, however, disputed by 11 interviewees who argue that government policies have stifled media development. Others factors cited as hindering media development include the lack of skilled media workers, and economic problems characterised by hyperinflation of over 1,000%.

15.1 Key factors

Thirteen interviewees identified a supportive legislative environment as the key determinant for successful media development. According to NGOs, the private media, political and media analysts and some government officials, such an environment is necessary as it gives confidence to both industry players and investors.

As previously noted, the issues affecting the development of the media can, therefore, be classified into a number of categories:

- ❑ constraints caused by a restrictive media regulatory environment;
- ❑ repressive government policies;
- ❑ economic challenges, especially the ever increasing cost of goods and services, including newsprint;
- ❑ power and fuel shortages; and,
- ❑ skills shortages, especially in ICT areas.

15.2. Political and economic influences

The current Zimbabwe media environment (which NGOs and the private media consider repressive) is seen as having adversely affected the development of the media, with newspapers having been shut down, journalists arrested and others going into exile.

Government officials and some NGOs also identified the deteriorating economic situation as a key factor working against media development. The deteriorating economic situation has meant that few citizens have access to newspapers (which cost slightly more than US\$1 a copy). The high rate of inflation has also meant that few have access to television and radio, which are equally high in terms of purchasing costs and maintenance. Thomas Deve identified access to the media as an issue hampering its development.

“ Zimbabwe has a highly literate population, and that is a major consideration for any media organisation. However, apart from radio, the media do not reach a large proportion of the population. Newspapers are still way below where they were 20 years ago. For example, The Sunday Mail used to hit 400,000 copies a week. I don’t think there is any daily newspaper right now which is printing 400,000 copies a day. So we really have not done well, and in a country where more than 50% of the population are literate, you have got five million people out there who have nothing to read every day; that is a very serious challenge for anybody trying to work in the media. ”

(Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

Six interviewees from state media, government regulatory agencies and one private media say that there is state media support for media development initiatives. These initiatives take the form of subsidising the state media with financial resources. Interviewees from the state media and training institutions also say that the government has played a major role in media training by supporting media training institutions with infrastructure development. Dr Tafataona Mahoso of the MIC says that the promulgation of media laws (such as the BSA and the AIPPA) shows support for media development by the government, as the laws have come up with many incentives for media development, such as the Media Fund being run by the Media and Information Commission, which has already started being used for training of media workers and research into media training curricula development.

15.3 Donor communities’ role

All interviewees appreciate the role of donors, but expressed a variety of views on whether the donors are in fact being helpful or not. Interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the approach of donors to the development of the media in Zimbabwe. Chief among the negative issues noted was their lack of understanding of the environment in which they are operating. Irene Petras noted that donors have remained stuck in their usual approach to “doing business” – that is seeking, NGOs to be run as corporations, writing proposals to donors and reporting in strict ways set by the donor, yet, according to Petras, the situation is very different:

“ I think donors need to think outside the box. They can be very traditional in the way they fund, and also the types of activities they fund. Looking at alternative forms of media, they need to be more innovative in the types of projects they consider. If they were to engage more with the players in this sector, they would perhaps gain a fresh perspective and some new ideas. ”

(Irene Petras, Programmes Coordinator; NGO: ZLHR, Zimbabwe)

The above sentiments ran across all those interviewed. Of major concern is that donors seem to want “quick fix” solutions to the challenges facing a developing country such as Zimbabwe. Donors are not prepared to stay the course, and are quick to change direction. Interviewees felt that the donor community has little appreciation of the commitment organisations have to their goals. The fact that most organisations rely on donor funds for survival means that there is a very unequal relationship: that of donor and receiver. According to interviewees, this means that the giving and receiving of resources (and not the set objectives or goals) defines the relationship between the donor and the receiver. This, according to organisations working in the NGO and private media, means that the interests of donors decide what is funded and what is not funded. Some NGOs say they have had to scale down their activities as a result of the sudden exit of donors.

“ I think the donor community is highly politicised, and you sometimes wonder at the criteria used to select projects. I speak of my own experiences in Zimbabwe. Whether you receive funding depends on who you are, and your relationship with the donor, as well as the actual strength of your project. So I basically think the donors in some ways have actually undone whatever initiatives that organisations like others and ourselves would have tried to do especially around this area because of the political situation that the country is in. Most donors give priority to governance and political issues, at the expense of things like media. ”

(**Sinikiwe Msipa-Ndebele**, Director; NGO: Federation of Africa Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ), Zimbabwe)

15.3.1 Donor agendas

Interviewees across the board feel that the donor community in Zimbabwe has been more interested in the politics of the country (issues of elections and leadership) than in building democratic structures that would influence how the country is governed. As a result, donors have on occasion demanded that activities undertaken by NGOs address the political questions in Zimbabwe. In some cases, as noted by Dumisani Muleya, donor support for media training has been directed towards theoretical workshops and seminars, when the media organisations themselves have no computers, no newsprint and no materials. Apart from a lack of understanding of the real challenges facing media development in Zimbabwe, there is a feeling within NGOs, the private media and journalists’ unions that donors tend to focus their funding on a few organisations, at the expense of spreading resources and also building the capacities of other organisations that can work in the media.

“ The donor community needs personnel who understand the particular media situation in Zimbabwe; however, most of them are not from this country. Frequently, donor organisations identify themselves with particular organisations, closing their doors to others. I think this is a flawed approach. Donor organisations need to engage with a range of organisations; if they discover the organisation is not committed, then they can withdraw from it. ”

(**Mathew Takaona**, President; Media Support: Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe)

While noting the important role played by the donor community, NGOs say the “ownership” of media development activities is sometimes questionable as donors might take over the project at some point, putting the legitimacy and ownership of that project into disarray.

“ It is a tricky dialogue because donors are not always open about their policies. They seem to choose projects they believe are linked to the development of democracy. However, definitions of democracy in Zimbabwe and Africa are generally contested, so the government attacks such support, saying it is a Western project. At the end of the day when donors support some of our programmes they make so much noise to the extent that you cannot distinguish whether it is them or us running the project and I think that is one of our biggest problems in the country where you are not really sure about whose agenda the product will stand for, given the strength of the donors when they put their money in terms of determining the agenda. ”

(**Thomas Deve**, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

In terms of the assistance that donors give to private or state media organisations, private media interviewees expressed caution, arguing that donor support for any media work should not influence or compromise the editorial policies of media houses. Dumisani Muleya of the *Zimbabwe Independent* argues that any donor support should not go towards paying salaries for journalists, or lead to interference with editorial policies. Support, he adds, should go into materials and infrastructure.

15.3.2 Donor understanding of cultural and economic realities

On the question of whether donors understand the environment they are operating in, Dumisani Muleya notes:

“ To be honest, donors have not been very helpful in directing support where it is most needed. For example, I don’t understand why the donors are unable to help the media organisations with things like computers. They have been quite active in training but not in capacity building. Donors are not looking at the broader issues; sometimes they are interested in particular issues, of their own interest, and not issues that journalists are interested in, or would find helpful. ”

(**Dumisani Muleya**, News Editor; Media Practitioner, Private Sector: Zimbabwe Independent, Zimbabwe)

15.3.3 A different donor approach

While the private media and NGOs query the current *modus operandi* of the donor community, and feel that donor support can be redirected to critical areas necessary for the development of the media in Zimbabwe, state media interviewees, government officials and regulatory agencies feel that the donor community has a political agenda, and hence are wary of promoting donor work in Zimbabwe. According to the Hon. Leo Mugabe, donors tend to be political in their selection of projects and also emphasise issues that the political leadership in Zimbabwe feel are not substantial. This, he says, is demonstrated by the insistence of the donor community in Zimbabwe that food shortages are a result of bad governance, while the government argue that food shortages were a result of droughts.

“ The donor community in this country has tended to support anti-government programmes, or programmes that put the government down instead of assisting it. Where government would say no, ‘keep your food’, it’s because perhaps the NGO is trying to prove to the international community that there is bad governance and therefore this is why we are taking food instead of saying there has been a drought so let’s go and feed the people. So the messages told on the type of assistance the NGO or a foreign government wants to give. ”

(Hon. Leo Mugabe, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe)

Despite this, the Zimbabwean government has been a recipient of donor support for media development, including financial and technical support from the Iranian and Chinese governments (2002, 2005 and 2006) for Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings’ digitalisation programme. Government officials and state media employees who argue that it comes with ‘no strings attached’ define this support as ‘politically correct’.

It is also important to note that, before the political fall out between the Zimbabwean government and the USA and EU, the Zimbabwean government was a major recipient of media development aid that included the training of its senior media staff and equipment used to launch Radio 4 (now National FM) in the 1980s. The acrimonious relationship between the Zimbabwean government, and its negative view of the donor community, is a recent phenomenon borne out of the political situation in Zimbabwe and not any fundamental differences on the need to support media development. It can then be assumed that, should relations between the Zimbabwe government and the USA/EU improve, the same support that was being granted in the 1980s could still be granted today. In this regard, Hon. Leo Mugabe says that donors, specifically the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme, can assist communities to launch community radio stations.

“... A community like the one I come from [Makonde] could never afford the radio station they need, let alone get hold of the necessary foreign currency. So there is a need to get support from somewhere and I believe that the legislation [has a role], in so far as it prohibits foreign funding of these projects as there is no way you can get US dollars in Zimbabwe. So its something that as a community we are also looking at it to see... do we assist those communities that want to have community radios for the people [because] it’s not owned by one person it’s owned by the community. So basically we want the law to be relaxed in so far as that area is concerned. ”

(Hon. Leo Mugabe, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe)

15.4 Other issues

Other factors noted as affecting the success of media development initiatives include a lack of access to foreign currency to purchase critical equipment, especially for the telecommunications sector. This has meant that Zimbabwe cannot access funding from such institutions as the World Bank and other donors. The economic problems being experienced by Zimbabwe are also noted as a concern, as not many people can afford to purchase media products, such as newspapers and magazines, and advertising revenue is declining as companies close down and others streamline activities to cut down on costs.



16. Future Strategies

All interviewees agreed that the media in Zimbabwe face serious challenges. According to them, future strategies for support need to look at the media in its broad sense. For 13 interviewees, this means looking at supporting community media, especially community radio. They agree that the sector should be opened up through a process of repealing the current restrictive Broadcasting Services Act, and also capacity building in the form of training for communities interested in community broadcasting. Donors would come in and support projects with equipment, much of which is not easily accessible in Zimbabwe.

16.1 Strategic priorities

Views on what activities a new donor-backed media initiative should sponsor vary, depending on the background of the interviewee and also the nature of the media work they do. It is clear from the views of the private and state media that the focus should be on the capacity-building of media organisations. This should involve training, assistance with the acquisition and utilisation of equipments such as computers, and the installation of ICT tools.

16.2 Focus of support

16.2.1 Transformation of the media sector

There is the need to start work on the transformation of the whole media sector in Zimbabwe, in particular the state broadcaster, state-owned newspapers and the setting up of independent regulatory structures in the broadcasting media and independent accountability structures, such as a voluntary media council for the print media. These institutions are necessary for the positive development of the media as they guarantee an environment conducive to media development.

16.2.2 Media frameworks

All 15 interviewees are agreed on the need to develop media frameworks to support media development. Eight interviewees in the NGOs, private media and training institutions say that media frameworks should come in the form of policies that support the capacity building of media through training, research and acquiring equipment such as computers. Two interviewees say media frameworks should be put in place to protect the country from hostile nations that, according to the interviewees, want to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. Such protection should be in the form of making sure that Zimbabwe has control of who works as a journalist, who owns the media and what content the media is churning out.

NGOs and the private media add that the present Zimbabwe media law regime is a challenge

that still needs to be confronted. This, they say, can only be done by maintaining their advocacy work. NGOs say that there is need for more work to be done in informing the population about the negative aspects of media laws in Zimbabwe, so that a wider spectrum of people can demand reform, rather than leaving these issues to a few NGOs and media workers in the private media.

16.2.3 Developing local content

All 15 Interviewees agree on the need to develop local content. While interviewees in the NGO and private media say local content should be developed with the active participation of communities as part of empowering communities to develop media and communication skills, Dr Tafataona Mahoso says local content should be developed as part of the process of countering dominant global media products, such as entertainment media products and news content from Western media organisations.

16.2.4 Supporting the growth of independent media

An area noted as important is supporting the growth of the independent media. While government officials and agencies question the whole concept of an independent media, at least 12 interviewees argue that, without alternative sources of information (and critical voices that can counter the state media), Zimbabwe's democratic growth is likely to suffer still further.

Twelve interviewees note support for community and independent media as being of prime importance. The dividing line between what is meant by community media and what is meant by independent media is very fine; interviewees tended to see community media as independent media initiated by the community and independent media as national media, owned by individuals or organisations who are not related by ownership to the state.

Interviewees are in agreement that community media, whether a newspaper or radio station, play a critical role in disseminating information. Not driven by profit, the community media also avoid the top-down communications model, where marginalised communities are 'communicated to' without their involvement. Communities in Zimbabwe are marginalised in terms of access to information, and the state has not done much to involve communities in developing relevant content and setting up a communications infrastructure. The NGOs interviewed noted that this could take the form of assisting communities with ICT skills that would enable them to use the media/ICTs for economic and social development. The use of ICTs, noted NGOs, can be tied to the promotion of communication on key social challenges, including HIV/AIDS, agriculture and natural resource management, education and gender equality. This could take the form of helping schools acquire computers and Internet access, which can then be used by the rest of the community, either at weekends or in the evenings.

16.2.5 Raising standards of journalism

Two interviewees note the importance of looking at Zimbabwe's present political challenges, especially the political polarisation, the climate of fear and challenges of partisan reporting in which the media openly takes sides with political groups, and how these issues can be resolved through media initiatives. How can the media promote national reconciliation, peace and development? Three interviewees noted that journalists in Zimbabwe see themselves as a part of political organisations, and their work reflects these partisan positions. Three interviewees say that media institutions should be capacitated to train professional media workers and be provided with equipment.

While noting the importance of journalism training as a form of capacity building, both the

private and state-owned media in Zimbabwe say that training should be more systematic and detailed. The workshop and seminar method of training, while useful in some instances, is criticised for having created a situation whereby journalists demand payment to attend workshops. Training workshops are therefore seen as a form of income generation process and are not appreciated for the educational value for which they are held. This has caused problems in that the motivation for attending training programmes has shifted from the benefit derived from the training to a desire for monetary gain.

16.2.6 Capacity building

Another important area of support is capacity building for media workers and organisations. At least three interviewees expressed strong views on the need to build the capacity of media institutions, whether private or state-owned. Interviewees noted that donor interventions in capacity building have neither been systematic nor sustainable, hence the need for a well-planned programme of capacity-building, whether in terms of training or assistance with equipment such as computers.

16.2.7 Any other areas

NGOs involved in advocacy note that the ICTs provide a ready and alternative platform from which to spread information on a number of issues, including political issues. The use of mobile phones, Internet and online publications can further spread the message on the need to democratise Zimbabwe, and keep citizens informed of developments in Zimbabwe.

16.3 Media sector focus

While state media employees, government officials and agencies argue for the inclusion of the state media in media development initiatives, the majority view of interviewees seems to be that support should be directed towards the independent and community media. NGO views on support to the state media are aptly captured by Brenda Burrell.

“ Personally, I don’t favour spending any money on the state media because I don’t believe there is any benefit to be derived from this as long as the propaganda element remains high, as it does to keep this particular regime comfortable. This is not to say that practitioners in the state media should not be availed of access to other opportunities [training and capacity building in ICT use]. I think we have also learnt that people wear many hats and speak with many voices. ”

(**Brenda Burrell**, IT Manager; NGO: Kubatana NGO: Network, Zimbabwe)

Government officials are clear that any support to state media should not come without strings attached. NGOs and the private media, on the other hand, note that current government laws make it difficult for donors to get involved in supporting the media in Zimbabwe. This is because foreign funding targeted at setting up media (newspapers, radio and TV) is banned in Zimbabwe.

16.4 Type of support most needed/useful

While there is no agreement on which sector should receive support, 14 interviewees say that community media should receive more support. Interviewees say that such support should come in the form of assistance to set up community media such as community radio stations and newspapers. This, however, has to be supported by advocacy work intended to create conducive legislative environments such as the repeal of the BSA, lobbying for an independent broadcasting licensing authority, as well as offering training to communities interested in community media initiatives.

Interviewees were generally suspicious of the role of the corporate sector, with 11 interviewees expressing concern as to whether commercial interests can genuinely partner the media in media development. Interviewees feel that, without any business or ultimate monetary incentive, the corporate sector would not be interested in participating in media activities. However, in terms of telecommunications, it is acknowledged that the corporate world (eg mobile wireless service providers) can participate in media development activities as a result of conditions that can be put in their operating licences. Such conditions, as explained by the POTRAZ senior executive, include requirements that service providers expand into rural and marginalised areas. Service providers should also direct part of their profits to a development fund that can support ICT in the areas of education, health and public awareness.

According to the POTRAZ executive, the problem is that Zimbabwe is now a pariah state, shunned by powerful Western and major donor countries; hence there is a serious shortage of the foreign currency required to purchase critical equipment. The view of POTRAZ is that developmental issues, such as assistance and donor support to develop telecommunications infrastructure, which benefit ordinary citizens, should not be subjected to blanket sanctions as, he claims, is the situation with Zimbabwe. This, says the POTRAZ senior officer, is a result of the political conflict between the USA, the EU and Zimbabwe:

“... I think things would have been different if the outside world had been more understanding of the situation in Zimbabwe. I don’t believe the foreign currency squeeze is quite genuine; it is just a way for the outside world to hit back at a small country that is asserting its rights. Yes, things have been done wrong, but at the end of the day people need to say international community are also now hitting back and say we [Zimbabwe] are the worst devil.”

(Senior Executive, Government, Zimbabwe)

16.5 Appropriate organisational framework

Interviewees expressed mixed views on the organisational frameworks that can be used to support media development initiatives. This question was largely tainted by the sectarian views of interviewees. Interviewees involved in training, and also those working for state and private media houses, say they desire direct interaction with donors in relation to issues of training and capacity building. They say this can be achieved through creating systematic and well-defined training programmes that address the challenges the media face regarding skills development. Training, argues this sector, should be complemented by capacity building for the media houses, for example, assistance with computers and other physical materials.

Other organisations involved in training, such as EKOWISA, say that frameworks for support should also include support for rural and poor communities in order to address issues that reduce poverty. This, argues EKOWISA, can take place by supporting such communities with,

for example, ICT training relevant to their needs. This might be the use of media and ICTs to create awareness around issues of gender violence, inheritance laws, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and cultural issues. EKOWISA and seven other interviewees argue for media initiative programmes that link with community needs, and which address the peculiar issues facing Zimbabwe, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic and political polarisation.

16.6 Pan-regional versus country-specific initiatives

All 15 interviewees believe that pan-regional initiatives are important in as far as they link Zimbabwe with the rest of the region, and in the process bring to light new experiences and ideas. Interviewees note the importance of pan-regional initiatives in relation to lobbying; it is easier to push for changes to government policy if the weight of the whole region is behind a particular activity or media initiative. This might also mean pushing for regional media policies and legislation, declarations and protocols that promote media rights and development. And push for timeframes and deadlines for the implementation of certain policies that promote media development (eg, telecommunications laws, independent and transparent public broadcasters and regulators, gender polices and ICT development policies).

Projects identified by interviewees that can run at a regional level include frequency spectrum planning – that is planning how broadcasting frequencies in the region can be allocated for different purposes that include media broadcasting, among others. POTRAZ cites this as an important project that could market the region as a whole. Interviewees working in media training also note the need to share research work and ideas on the development of media training curricula.

Private and state media interviewees comment that pan-regional media initiatives create capacity on a broader scale; this, they note, can involve training institutions and media houses partnering similar institutions and organisations in neighbouring countries to discuss issues of common interest and carry joint research work. NGOs and journalists' unions say that pan-regional media initiatives can increase the voices that demand change, and also unite people of a given region in demanding accountability from their governments and powerful private bodies.

NGOs argue that pan-regional initiatives would mean that solidarity is created across the whole region, and that the people of Zambia (for example) could speak out against the media situation in Zimbabwe, and also press their own government to deal at a regional level with issues in neighbouring countries. NGOs believe it is important to create similar media and freedom of expression standards across a region, and use peer pressure to demand change in neighbouring countries. In the words of Thomas Deve, pan-regional media initiatives help galvanise regional opinion on issues of common interest.

“ ... it has helped galvanise opinion around common issues so you can talk about state regulation and have a regional, as opposed to a purely national, view. They just think of their nation and forget that these things are also happening in Mozambique and South Africa. You gain perspective when you meet other global players where regional organisations are able to give a bird's-eye view of the whole picture and say these are common problems across the whole region. We have seen The Mail & Guardian newspaper grow and try to take a regional perspective. It shows that there is potential and relevance for those [media] organisations. ”

(Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

NGOs and private media interviewees see the benefits of pan-regional media initiatives in the form of regional state protocols and declarations that advance issues of media and freedom of expression. This would also mean that citizens of a given country can appeal to their government for the observance and implementation of such protocols in their respective countries. This sector argues that Zimbabweans feel that the southern African region has not done enough to respond to the situation in Zimbabwe. Pan-regional initiatives would mean that citizens of a given country could seek regional protection if they felt their rights were being trampled on by their own government.

16.7 Initiatives relating to developmental content

Interviewees noted that the coverage of developmental issues in Zimbabwe has been negligible, and has mostly been confined to supplements and the “inside” pages; such issues have not been regarded as “news”. According to the media trainers interviewed, this is because there is a lack of understanding of the value of covering such stories, as well as a lack of skills around covering complex issues. Mathew Takaona, ZUJ President, addresses the issue of capacity as requiring more collaboration between institutions working on developmental issues and the media.

Regarding the dearth of coverage of developmental issues, NGOs feel that there is no longer a platform (newspapers and broadcasting stations they can use to do this). Thomas Deve says a lot of information and work being done by NGOs on developmental issues is simply not covered.

“ Zimbabwe in particular, and Africa in general, has got too much stuff which is done by NGOs and this has not filtered through to the mainstream newspaper organisations... Zimbabwe used to have one [newspaper] called Development Dialogue, which used to cover NGO work, but a lot of this work is now going onto websites and not much is kept in the public domain. I think there is room for such a newspaper. ”

(Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: MISA, Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe government officials argue that there has been fair coverage of developmental issues, such as the land reform programme and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Hon. Leo Mugabe, however, says more needs to be done to improve investigative journalism, especially the investigative reporting of corruption. He adds that, in the 1980s, the state-owned media would report on corruption in government and the private sector, but this is no longer the case.

16.8 Initiatives to develop independent media

As stated previously, there is uneasiness within Zimbabwe’s media sector (private and independent as well as NGOs) on the role of sponsorship in the independent media. The major concern raised is that sponsorship of the media should not result in the funding partner dictating the editorial policy of the media organisation, or influencing how issues are covered.

Three interviewees cite the deteriorating economic environment in Zimbabwe as a major drawback to having a viable and sustainable independent media, apart from the restrictive legal environment. While the government is not in favour of sponsorship of the independent media, the participation of the corporate sector in supporting the independent media is, however, encouraged by the government, as stated by the Hon. Leo Mugabe:

“... no media business can survive without advertising. So I think their role is to support media houses through advertising and promotion etc. ”

(Hon. Leo Mugabe, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe)

A number of strategies to support the independent media were put forward by interviewees, including capacity building, both in the form of training and assistance with purchasing equipment.

16.9 The role of media development in the country's democratisation process

While noting the importance of the media in the democratisation of any given society, interviewees expressed a variety of opinions on what the concept of democracy itself meant, and what specific challenges the Zimbabwe media face in addressing issues of democracy. This polarisation is captured by Moses Charedzera.

“... speaking specifically from a Zimbabwean point of view, the problem is, first, the concept... democratisation is a word, and a loaded word at that; what kind of democratisation? Is it a further promotion of the democratic environment, which is already in existence? The official line on democracy is that there is democracy in Zimbabwe, and that democracy came in 1980. So anything which contradicts this gets into problems with the state apparatus. What are these projects going to be doing? Are they going to be coming and saying Zimbabwe is not democratic? Or are these programmes saying yes, there is democracy in Zimbabwe, but we want to improve different aspects of the people's lives, we want to improve the way they communicate? We need to enter into a debate on democratisation. Are we saying there is no democracy, or that we have to improve what is already there? ”

(Moses Charedzera, Media Lecturer; Academic: Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe)

The debate on the role of the media in promoting democracy is one of the key issues that has divided Zimbabwean society since 2000. NGOs and the private media (including journalists' unions) argue that there is no democracy in Zimbabwe, and that if Zimbabwe is to be called a democracy then the media should be free from state interference, and free from the shackles of restrictive and repressive legislation. Without a free and diverse media, NGOs and the private media say Zimbabwe will not develop.

“ The media are key to the development of any society as it is through the media that people can engage on different issues. If people don't exchange information they remain backward; for development to take place you need a diverse media. ”

(Mathew Takaona, President; Media Support: Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe)

The above view is countered by the Hon. Leo Mugabe, who says the concept of democracy is debatable, and that what the Zimbabwean government wants to see is responsible journalism.

“ I think the notion of democracy is subjective, because it depends on the type of democracy you are talking about. Perhaps in a guided democracy – you want a media

industry that is responsible, that does not seek to destroy the nation in which it exists, because if you carry an agenda which is not nationalistic, you carry an agenda which is a foreign, and which tries to destabilise the country. As a media house or media practitioner, you are not doing yourself any favours. I think we need to see responsible journalism, credible journalism. We are not saying that journalists must not criticise, yes, they must criticise, but the credibility of their stories must be there. ”

(**Hon. Leo Mugabe**, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe)

The view expressed by Hon. Leo Mugabe represents central ideological thinking, and is the basis upon which the Zimbabwean government seeks to control the media. NGOs and the private media, however, argue that the Zimbabwean ruling elite cannot, on its own, decide what is responsible journalism and what is nationalistic media – what the government calls ‘irresponsible journalism’ is in fact independent reporting critical of government actions.

Furthermore, the NGOs/private media argue that the government might as well be hiding behind a pan-African ideology in order to maintain its hold on political power. NGOs argue that in its so called defence of ‘national sovereignty’, which the government argues is threatened by former colonial master Britain, the European Union (EU) and the United States of America, media freedoms have been trampled upon, and those seen as collaborating with Britain, the EU and USA are harshly treated. Debate on the role of the media in the democratisation process is a critical issue that will determine the development and direction of the media in Zimbabwe, depending on which of the two opposing views ultimately prevails.



17. Summary & Conclusions

Key issues noted in this research are summarised below.

17.1 Media development: an organisational perspective

- There are a number of media players in Zimbabwe, in the private and state media, NGOs and training institutions, who have a keen interest in the development of the media in Zimbabwe.

17.2 Lessons learned

- The majority of interviewees see the enactment of Zimbabwe's media laws as the key change that has taken place over the past five years, although opinion differs as to whether these laws are progressive or not.
- While the government sees media laws as progressive, NGOs and the private media argue that these laws have diminished the democratic space through the closure of newspapers and the intimidation and arrest of media workers.
- Organisations in Zimbabwe have had to change strategy in line with the changing political and economic environment.

17.3 Developing the environment for success

- The impact of media development initiatives varies, depending on the organisation or sector in question. In terms of the transformation of the state media (in particular the public broadcaster), minimal impact has been recorded.
- NGOs and the private media evaluate impact in terms of their success in defending the remaining media voices and mobilising society to challenge the prevailing media environment.
- All media organisations in Zimbabwe have overarching objectives, which vary according to which sector they work in.
- Funding for media development has diminished as a result of Zimbabwe's political and economic situation.
- Organisations evaluate projects in terms of whether they have met desired objectives.

- Interviewees expressed mixed views on what factors contribute to successful media development. The majority, however, see a supportive media environment as the prerequisite for successful media development. By the same token, repressive media laws and the deteriorating economic environment are seen as factors hindering media growth.
- All interviewees are agreed that the Zimbabwe media must promote cultural aspects of the country.
- State support for media is desired, although interviewees differ on whether there is enough. NGOs and the private media argue that state support for the media is politically motivated, while the government says it has invested considerably in the training of media workers.
- All interviewees say the donor community has not done enough for the media in Zimbabwe. NGOs and the private media want to see more cooperation and more systematic planning. The government, however, argues that the donor community has a political agenda. The government welcomes support in other forms, such as research and training.

17.4 Strategic priorities

- The majority of interviewees say that media initiatives should support community media and capacity building for media houses.
- The participation of business and commercial interests in the media is questioned by interviewees who argue that business usually has only one interest: making money. However, support and cooperation through advertising is welcomed.
- The majority of interviewees support pan-regional media initiatives which, they say, give security to citizens and have more impact.
- Interviewees say the lack of capacity, both in terms of skills and materials, hinders the development of media messages/content on developmental issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Interviewees are split as to the role of the media in the democratisation of Zimbabwe. The government and state media argue that Zimbabwe is a democracy and questions on the democratic (or lack of democratic) practice by the Zimbabwe government are politically motivated. NGOs and the private media, on the other hand, point to the closure of media organisations and the government's stranglehold on the state media as clear examples of an undemocratic and repressive media environment.

As previously stated, media development in Zimbabwe is a contentious issue that has divided society right down the middle. While the government argues that there is nothing wrong with its laws, and that these laws are necessary to defend the sovereignty of Zimbabwean, other sectors argue that these laws are projects to maintain the ruling elite in power. The debate on media development is, therefore, not an innocent one, but is a serious and emotive political issue that has seen different groups expressing different and parallel views. This debate goes deep in Zimbabwe because of the political polarisation that has resulted in incidences of political violence, and Zimbabwe's isolation from the international community. Media development initiatives in Zimbabwe have to be looked at in the context of a collapsing economy with the highest inflation in the world, an unemployment rate of over 80% and a high incidence of HIV/AIDS.

In the circumstances that Zimbabwe finds itself, the true and meaningful development of the media is likely to be an outcome of a broader political settlement that includes government, civil society, opposition parties and the media. Media players, therefore, have to partner other players in the human rights sector in order to push for broader reforms, not only to media laws (and attitudes towards the media), but also to the national constitution. There is, therefore, a need to focus on transitional structures for a future media, free from political interference and representative of all voices. This includes transforming the legal environment and the state media (particularly the state broadcaster), establishing independent regulatory agencies and involving marginalised communities in media work.



18. Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviewees

Brenda Burrell, IT Manager; NGO: Kubatana NGO: Network, Zimbabwe

Moses Charedzera, Media Lecturer; Academic: Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

Tendai Chari, Chairman; Media Practitioner Public Sector: Zimbabwe Television Board (Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings), Zimbabwe

Thomas Deve, Chairman; NGO: Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Zimbabwe

Dr Tafataona Mahoso, Chairman; Government: Media and Information Commission, Zimbabwe

Charles Mangongera, Analyst, Independent Media and Political Analyst, Zimbabwe

Stanford Matenda, Lecture and Chairman of Department of Journalism; Academic: National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

Sinikiwe Msipa-Ndebele, Director; NGO: Federation of Africa Media Women of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

Hon. Leo Mugabe, ZANU-PF Member of Parliament (Makonde) and Chairman; Government: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications, Zimbabwe

Dumisani Muleya, News Editor; Media Practitioner, Private Sector: *Zimbabwe Independent*, Zimbabwe

Kholiwe Nyoni, Marketing and Advocacy Manager; Media Entrepreneur: Radio Dialogue FM, Zimbabwe

Irene Petras, Programmes Coordinator; NGO: Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), Zimbabwe

Mathew Takaona, President; Media Support: Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, Zimbabwe

Margaret Zunguze, Director; Media Support: E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe

One other interviewee, who asked not to be named, was:

Senior Executive, Government, Zimbabwe

Appendix 2: Media development projects/activities described in Section 14

Interviewee name and organisation	Specific media development project: title	Key purpose/aim of project/initiative/activity	Project time span (dates or length in months/years of project) and status (ongoing etc)	Outcome sought	Target audience	Evaluation method used (if any)	Result of evaluation	Is/was this project/activity considered by your organisation to be a success? On what basis?
Irene Petras, Programmes Coordinator Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights	Setting up the Human Rights Defenders Fund and carrying out lobby work at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul, The Gambia – on Zimbabwe's media and human rights violations	To seek the intervention of the ACHPR with positive recommendations on changes to Zimbabwe media law, as well as defend victims of human rights abuse	Ongoing	A favourable ruling by the ACHPR in cases on Zimbabwe's human rights violations brought before the court	Media workers, Zimbabwe government personnel, lawyers and general citizens	Assessment of success of cases and government responses to ACHPR rulings as well as the implementation of recommendations	The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights realises the need to continue with international litigation and seek ways to transform current Zimbabwean judicial structures	Project considered a success because the ACHPR has condemned Zimbabwe's media laws and has agreed to hear cases brought before it, which is an indication that Zimbabwe's judicial system is no longer fair and just
Thomas Deve, Chairman, Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe	Parliamentary advocacy on media laws	To seek the repeal of media laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) by working with parliament, conducting workshops and training on media and human rights, and tabling submissions to parliament	Ongoing	The repeal of current media laws (the AIPPA, POSA, BSA)	Parliament, government, citizens	Assessment of parliamentary reports and the reaction of government through statements, and any measures taken to address issues raised	There is still a need to continue engaging parliament and also mobilise citizens to fight for changes to media laws	Engagement with parliament has been a success as parliament has produced adverse reports on these laws, and has made positive recommendations for changes that need to be implemented. The laws, however, remain in place

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Appendix 2: Media development projects/activities described in Section 14 – continued

Tendai Chari, Chairman, Zimbabwe Television Board	The transformation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation into the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings and Strategic Business Units (SBU's)	To make the state broadcaster self-sufficient in its running as well as increase local content quota as required by law	2001 and ongoing	A self-sufficient state broadcaster as well as increased local content on national television	Citizens of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) staff and management; independent video, film drama and documentary producers	Ability to run state broadcaster from own funds as well as meeting the 75% local content requirement	The state broadcaster has so far failed to be self-sufficient and has also failed to meet the 75% local content requirement	A partial success with regard to local content as there is a big increase in such content, although not yet the 75% local content requirement. ZBH have so far failed to be self-sufficient
Dumisani Muleya, News Editor, Zimbabwe Independent	Newspaper redesign and website re-launch	To improve the image of the newspaper; to attract more readers and advertisers	2005-2006	An appealing newspaper and capacity to disseminate news stories to a wider readership via the web	Readers and advertisers	Review of newspaper sales, both print and digital copy whether they are going up or not and reasons thereof	Increases in subscriptions recorded	The project was a success as it resulted in more readers, both of the hard copy and electronic version, though other readers expressed reservations about the new design
Margaret Zunguze, Director, E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa	Information Communication Technologies (ICT) training for township and rural women	To equip rural and urban township women with skills to use ICTs for economic and social benefit	2004-2005	The training of over 100 women on the use of mobile phones to conduct business and basic computer skills (including Internet and e-mail)	Rural and township women	The use of ICT by women (for example in rural Murehwa) to sell their products/produce	More training needed as well as relevant software and programmes in local languages	The project was a success as the trained women are now using ICTs in their work
Mathew Takaona, President, Zimbabwe Union of Journalists	Setting up a secretariat for the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUU)	To strengthen journalists' unions and their voice in the media and society	2004-2005	Establish offices for the ZUU and hire professional staff to run the office	Media workers	The physical existence of ZUU offices and the hiring of staff	A ZUU secretariat set up though more fundraising is still needed	The project was a success as an office has been set up and two professional staff members hired

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Appendix 2: Media development projects/activities described in Section 14 – continued

Brenda Burrell, IT Coordinator, Kubatana NGO Network	Information communication technology (ICT) training for civil society and media	To create ICT awareness and use within civil society (NGOs)	2003-2005	ICT literate NGO workers able to disseminate information using ICTs	NGOs and media workers	NGOs now able to use e-mail, the Internet and disseminate information via websites, e-mail etc	Programme affected by the brain drain, though there is now an appreciation of the importance of ICTs	Activity a success, though more training is needed on the use of the latest technology
Hon. Leo Mugabe, Chairman, Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communications	Investigate the condition of the public and state media – whether it is playing its role or failing	To develop recommendations to improve the operation of the state-owned media	Ongoing	Changes to the governance and editorial policies of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings	Parliament, citizens of Zimbabwe, management and staff of state media	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) is now being changed into a leaner structure	Need to continue pushing for wider changes at Zimbabwe Newspapers company and also for ZBH to reach every part of the country	Activity a success but ongoing
Kholiwe Nyoni, Marketing and Advocacy Manager, Radio Dialogue	Formation of the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS)	To encourage a united voice on the need for licences for community radio stations in Zimbabwe, and support the establishment of such initiatives throughout the country	Ongoing	The licensing of community radio stations and development of a united front by community radio initiatives to demand licences and changes to the broadcasting law	Communities in Zimbabwe, legislative and regulatory bodies such as parliament and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe	Success in setting up ZACRAS and ongoing lobby and advocacy work that has seen parliament coming up with a report supporting community radio initiatives	Need to continue pushing for changes to the law as well as strengthening existing community radio initiatives and creating awareness in communities	Activity is still ongoing. Success has been achieved in the creation of more community radio initiatives now putting pressure on the government for licences

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Zimbabwe

Country Report

Case Study



19. Case Study

Development Through Radio

In most developing countries (Zimbabwe included), radio plays a critical informative and empowering role in reaching neglected and disadvantaged communities, especially in the rural areas (where the majority of people live). Realising the potential of radio in transcending barriers of illiteracy, and its wider audience reach, the Federation of Africa Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ) launched the Development Through Radio project (DTR) as part of efforts to increase the participation of disadvantaged rural women in the decision-making process around matters pertaining to their socio-economic and political life.

FAMWZ is a non-governmental organisation established in 1985 by women working in both the print and electronic media to push for the inclusion of marginalised media women in the mainstream media, and also to increase the number of female voices in the media. From 1985, FAMWZ's activities mainly focused on empowering media women as an exclusively targeted group through training and advocacy campaigns on issues affecting them, e.g. gender discrimination. These activities were later broadened to work with grassroots communities, giving birth to the DTR project.

The project was designed to provide rural women with a forum and media platform to articulate their needs and interests in their communities and also to seek responses from the relevant authorities, be it from the ministries of health or education. Issues discussed ranged from concerns on the need for health facilities, clean water, teachers at schools, among other issues.

Objectives, goals and aims

Launched in the rural areas of Matabeleland North and South, and Mashonaland East and West provinces in 1988, the DTR was initiated as a platform or medium to facilitate the dissemination of information to and from marginalised rural communities, at the same time empowering grassroots communities by providing a platform to exercise their right to freedom of expression through dialogue and debate.

Working closely with the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), now Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH), FAMWZ launched the programme as part of an effort to bridge the communication gap between those tasked with national governance issues and decision-making processes and the otherwise neglected rural communities. Radio was chosen as the most effective tool because it is accessible, it does not depend on electricity (which is mostly confined to urban areas), and it has an unassailable ability to transcend the barriers of illiteracy and distance.

The project targeted rural women following research by FAMWZ that revealed high illiteracy levels among this group. In Zimbabwe, as is the case in many other parts of Africa, women find themselves in disadvantaged situations of poverty, illiteracy and deprivation because of the prevailing social-cultural and political socialisation processes, where gender roles are culturally defined and stereotyped.

DTR was therefore launched to give rural women an opportunity to air their grievances, needs and priority development areas, be they social, economic or political. There was a particular focus on bringing these issues to the attention of local authorities and central government in a two-way communication process.

Structures and implementation

Having identified the need to increase rural women's participation in public discourse and access to information, FAMWZ organised the communities selected for the pilot project into Radio Listeners Clubs (RLCs).

A total of 50 such clubs (with an average membership of 20 women per group) were established in the pilot provinces of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Each group had local leaders who were responsible for the running of the clubs.

Working hand in glove with a DTR coordinator drawn from FAMWZ, and through its partnership arrangement with the ZBC, club members were provided with radios and cassette recorders. They were then trained on how to record their programmes on audio cassettes, and how to use the radio. The recorded tapes were then taken to the ZBC, where the programmes (DTR recordings) were broadcast on ZBC's then Radio 4 in the vernacular Ndebele and Shona languages used by the women. Funding for this project (as well as more than 200 radios) was provided by a German donor organisation, which also funded the implementation and administration of the project.

Decisions regarding the content and agenda of the recorded programmes were entirely the prerogative of the club members, who were empowered to speak in their own voices.

The idea behind recording the programmes was to increase the participation of women's 'live' issues, as opposed to the conventional practice where listeners are invited to write in to a certain programme where the presenter sets the agenda. Writing in to a certain programme has several disadvantages, for example, it hinders participation as not all the letters are read out by the presenter. Presenter-driven programmes offer limited opportunity for dialogue as listeners are usually expected to react or respond to issues framed and determined by the presenter. The other disadvantage noted by FAMWZ is that writing a letter is time-consuming and tends to restrict the privilege of interaction to the literate, and those able to afford the postage, a luxury which the majority of rural women can not afford. Under the DTR, participants were encouraged to take advantage of the multiplicity of voices offered by radio, that is their individuals and those of interviewees (government officials etc.) who would be asked to respond to their issues.

Successes and problems encountered

One of the major successes of the programme is that it effectively serves as a development intervention tool that is responsive to the needs of individual communities, but also gives them ultimate control over programme content.

The programme, also helped in eliciting a positive response from the authorities through the formulation of policies geared to address rural communities concerns.

One such response was the introduction of a national mobile birth and death registration service, which the government was forced to implement, as people in remote rural areas experienced problems accessing such facilities (which were located in the major urban areas).

The project also helped by providing the entry point in critically informing and adding value to FAMWZ's mission and vision as the programme co-ordinators also played an interventionist role on behalf of the respective communities by approaching the relevant authorities for responses and feedback on issues raised by the RLCs. Such issues included distribution of agricultural seeds, access to public transport, birth and death records. The DTR project not only enabled members of the RLCs to network with other interest groups in their various communities, but also empowered them to affiliate with a number of local, national and international organisations dealing with their specific areas of concern.

Present status and future activities

The programme came to a rather premature halt in 2001, before it had moved into the remaining provinces of Mashonaland Central, Manicaland, Masvingo and the Midlands. The DTR project fell victim to the massive structural changes at the ZBC, following the enactment of the Broadcasting Services Act in 2001. The structural changes had a negative impact on the programme content of Radio 4 (now National FM), forcing the suspension of the DTR programmes.

Although it was never officially verified, the project implementers suspect that the programme was taken off air under the guise of the structural changes at ZBC because certain politicians were becoming uncomfortable with the issues that were being raised. The politicians felt that their security of tenure was being challenged through the no-holds barred discussions that were emanating from the RLCs. Before reviving the project and expanding it into other areas, it is recommended that DTR training workshops are conducted in order to reintroduce the concept to members in a demonstrably participatory manner.

The workshops should also discuss issues of ownership of the project. This can be achieved by asking the club members to come up with a constitution which stipulates the membership criteria and the roles of monitors. Project members can also be encouraged to design and develop promotional materials such as posters, T-shirts, brochures and newsletters to market the programme.

Training club members in programme production and basic journalism would also help improve the quality of the programmes produced. The training could cover interviewing skills, for example. The ZBC/FAMWZ partnership's operational framework also needs to be reviewed in order to improve accountability among project members. This can be achieved by reviewing the management structures of the DTR by giving communities more autonomy and capacity to run the DTR project, as well as expanding the concept to other areas to give it a national outlook.

Conclusion

The long-term future and security of the DTR initiative lies in the establishment of community radio stations, as provided for under the BSA, and the need to mobilise communities to question the government's sincerity in freeing the airwaves.

The concept of community radio stations will give communities greater autonomy as they will not be beholden to the generosity of the ZBH. This was the case with FAMWZ's partnership with the ZBC. The results of which speak for themselves. Following the restructuring of the state-broadcaster in 2001, the ZBH unilaterally cancelled its partnership with FAMWZ. It is significant to note that the success of the DTR cannot be divorced from the legislative restrictions imposed by the BSA and the government-controlled Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe's reluctance to issue licences for community radio stations, some five years after the enactment of the enabling legislation.

Freeing the media will involve wholesale legislative reform measures aimed at repealing or amending sections of the BSA (which entrench the state broadcaster's de facto monopoly of the airwaves), in order to pave way for the free entry of private players into the broadcasting arena and the establishment of community radio stations.

The BSA bans foreign funding in the otherwise capital-intensive broadcasting sector. To ensure minimal government interference in the licensing of community radio stations, there is need to develop legislation that will enable the establishment of an independent communications regulatory authority.

While commendable, the DTR initiative can at best be described as having been a halfway house, whose concept can be broadened and given greater impetus and autonomy through community radio stations. FAMWZ can work closely with organisations such as MISA-Zimbabwe under its Community Radio Initiative (CRI) programmes, where committees have been established in Zimbabwe's small towns in order to raise awareness of the vital role played by radio in the exercise of the right to freedom of expression.

The long-term sustainability of the DTR projects depends on communities being licensed to run their own radio stations, independent of the state broadcaster.

African Media Development Initiative Research

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