



**swiss**  
**peace**

**2002**

**K O F F**

Media and Peacebuilding – Workshop Report  
Berne, 25th June 2002

# swisspeace

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**swisspeace** sees itself as a center of excellence and information platform in the area of conflict analysis and peacebuilding. We research the causes of wars and violent conflicts, develop tools for early recognition of tensions, and formulate conflict mitigation and peacebuilding strategies. **swisspeace** contributes to information exchange and networking on current issues of peace and security policy through its analyses and reports as well as meetings and conferences.

**swisspeace** was founded in 1988 as the "Swiss Peace Foundation" with the goal of promoting independent peace research in Switzerland. Today **swisspeace** engages about 25 staff members. Its most important clients include the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Swiss National Science Foundation. The Support Association enables additional peace-policy activities through its contributions. The supreme **swisspeace** body is the Foundation Council, which is comprised of representatives from politics, science, and the administration.

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The Center for Peacebuilding (KOFF) was founded in March 2001 within **swisspeace** and is sponsored by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and numerous Swiss non-governmental organizations. The Center aims to strengthen the conceptual and operational peacebuilding capacities of its members. It promotes a coherent peace policy between the Swiss authorities, aid agencies, and other NGOs involved in peacebuilding activities and international cooperation. KOFF creates networks and offers information as well as advisory service on strategies, programmes and methodologies.

Editor: swisspeace

Editorial staff: Ellen Bernhard, Tahir Cinar, Lorenz Jakob, Martin Kohli, Barbara Ruchti, Christopher Tütsch

Design: Leib&Gut, Visuelle Gestaltung, Bern

Print: Burkhardt AG, Satz und Druck, Bern

Copies: 300

Ordering information: swisspeace, Sonnenbergstrasse 17, Postfach, CH-3000 Bern 7, Switzerland.

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ISBN 3-908230-49-7

**Workshop Report**

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# 1 Introduction

In many violent conflicts of the past, the media have executed a destructive role and apparently contributed to hatred and inciting violence (Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, others). As a consequence, the media development has gained major attention in conflict situations, particularly its potential for playing a much more constructive role. Therefore, in international efforts to prevent violent conflicts and stress peacebuilding, the media are seen as an important tool in contributing to achieve these goals.

In order to get a sound base for its future decisions on the role of media for peacebuilding, the Political Department IV of the Swiss Foreign Ministry has asked the swisspeace Center for Peacebuilding (KOFF) to initiate a process for compiling the current knowledge, existing experiences, and future challenges in this field. This should support the decision process in the Ministry on how media assistance could play a major role in their endeavor to contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

The first step in this process was to commission a study on the state of the art in the field of media and peacebuilding. The second step was to convene a workshop, in which the first draft of the study was presented and discussed by experts and representatives of Swiss-based media NGOs.

In this workshop the media NGOs were also given the opportunity to present their view of the role and strategic position of media in peacebuilding and formulate the challenges they see for media projects in peacebuilding. The workshop participants also formulated common recommendations and open questions.

This report compiles all the workshop's input and presentations, and it summarizes its recommendations. In combination with the study "Media and peacebuilding: Concepts, actors, challenges" it hopefully contributes to the international debate on the role of the media and supports the ongoing process of reviewing their contribution to peacebuilding efforts.

## 2 Input by Experts

### 2.1 Media and Peacebuilding: Concepts, Actors and Challenges – Summary of report

*by Christoph Spurk, Berne*

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

As a preparation for this workshop and input for its future decision-making process on how media activities can play a major role in peacebuilding, Political Department IV of the Swiss Foreign Ministry has commissioned a study. The objective was to give an overview of concepts in media and peacebuilding, on the international activities and focus of major donors, as well as on the activities of Swiss-based organizations in this field, and to summarize the challenges this sector faces at the moment.

#### 2.1.2 Concepts

At first sight the picture of media projects aiming to prevent violent conflicts or peacebuilding is quite disperse. A lot of actors are involved, and a lot of activities are conducted. To clarify this picture, one has to distinguish between two different concepts in "media and peacebuilding":

1. Improving the coverage of peace and conflict by and in the Western media
2. Assisting the media and in the conflict region

#### Western media

Coverage of conflicts in Western media has been criticized widely as inappropriate, giving only information on waging of war, not enough background information, restricting airtime and space for reporting, and being restricted to bad news, neglecting good news. There are some organizations attempting to counter this "only factual" reporting by improving coverage in general.

#### Media in conflict region

However the focus of this study is the media in conflict regions, because they are supposed to offer direct opportunities to target peacebuilding via the media and to counter the media, which in many cases fuelled the conflict. Media activities generally have a two-fold approach to peacebuilding:

- free and independent media as such can make a positive contribution to peacebuilding by providing non-partisan information, gathering different views, promoting exchange of ideas, and countering hate messages.
- media with specialized peace- and conflict-related programs also have the potential to contribute to peacebuilding – provided the programs are made professionally and are perceived as credible by the audience.

### 2.1.3 Assistance and activities

It is useful to distinguish between the short-/medium-term perspective and the long-term perspective. The first refers to the conflict course with its "ideal" phases related to the intensity of violent actions: latent, open-conflict, and post-conflict phase. The latter turns into the "development" phase that has a long-term perspective.

#### **Short-/medium-term perspective**

Each phase of a conflict has its special needs and interventions; some activities can be continued in the next phase. The latent phase emphasizes prevention of further violent conflict and enhancement of non-partisan information services. In the open phase, the need for humanitarian information rises sharply, as does the need for neutral balanced news and reporting as well as media monitoring. In the post-conflict phase, activities can be strengthened and widened to cover not only peacebuilding issues (election, reform, war crimes) but also the media environment (transitional laws and regulation, supporting media structure, and local capacity). The table gives a summary of opportunities; however, the choice of appropriate activities depends on the specific situation of each conflict.

**Illustration 1: Needs and activities of media assistance in different conflict phases**

Latent conflict		Open conflict		Post-Conflict	
<i>Needs</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Needs</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Needs</i>	<i>Intervention</i>
<b>Access to non-partisan and accurate information</b>	<b>Support dissemination of balanced news programmes via local or trans-national media</b>	As in latent phase plus...	As in latent phase plus... (if possible)	As in open conflict plus...	As in open conflict plus...
	Analysis of existing news and sources, research of information needs of people in conflict areas	Targeted info on health, food, shelter, mines, NGO activities	<b>Disseminating Humanitarian information</b>		
Access to background information and analysis	<b>Training in professional reporting</b>		Provision of radios, broadcasting equipment	Full access to non-partisan and accurate information	<b>Intense support of balanced news programmes; hindering misuse of media for inciting conflict</b>
Dialogue between government and people; Communication between rival factions	Support programming aimed at public dialogue	Peacebuilding at community level	Support of peace and conflict issues programming; training in conflict reporting	<b>Development of local media capacity</b>	Support to build local media pluralism
Human rights based information Awareness	Support programming aimed at conflictive issues (tolerance, justice, poverty)		Intense Media monitoring		Support to development of a new media environment and regulatory framework
Support to local media	Research on media laws, associations			<b>Consolidation of Peace-building strategies</b>	Emphasis on training in peace and conflict issues <b>Wider Support for programming in conflictive issues</b>
Prevention of violent conflict	<b>Media monitoring</b>				Establishing Media monitoring

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### Long-term perspective

The post-conflict phase transfers to the long-term development phase. This phase stresses the full development of a pluralistic free media structure. The vision for this phase is quite clear: The media provide a free flow of information, ensure that citizens make informed choices, and take over the watchdog function to hold politicians accountable. The activities in this phase are in four areas:

- Shaping/improving the legal environment
- Strengthening the media sector
- Removing barriers to access
- Supporting individual media to be more effective
- Transforming state media into public-service media

In this long-term perspective only a few special peacebuilding elements seem necessary – for example, media monitoring (for an rise in hate messages) when there is suspicion that the country enters a new “latent” phase. Generally, a fully developed media system should have enough tools to cover contentious issues.

However, there are special requirements to make the short and the long-term perspective coherent; at least the short-term activities must not put long-term objectives at risk.

#### 2.1.4 Points of discussion

##### Role of journalists

There is an ongoing debate in the sector on the role of journalists. The common consensus only reaches the point that journalists should produce:

- news,
- background information,
- different views,
- specialized programs on peace and conflict.

Disagreement prevails on whether conventional professional journalists can fulfill these basic tasks, especially in war and conflict situations. Or does this need an alternative form of journalism (like self-styled “peace journalism”). According to the latter view, journalists must take responsibility for their reporting and work actively for an intended outcome like peace and conflict resolution. Others support even greater additional roles for journalists as mediators.

Supporters of professional journalism deny such a new role model. Good journalism can provide all these tasks, e.g. analyze the conflict, provide background information, cover the victims’ perspective. From this point of view, alternative forms of journalism jeopardize the credibility of journalists. Especially commitment to an intended outcome is beyond the role of journalists.

### **Need for more impact measurement**

Not enough is known about the impact of media projects on peacebuilding. Currently a very simple model of impact seems to dominate; this is the reverse assumption: As the media were apparently able to incite violent conflict (Rwanda), they may also foster peace and mutual understanding. This is apparently not enough to explain reality or predict the future effects of media projects. Only a few evaluations have been carried out and published in this field; up to now there are no approved tools to measure the impact of media projects. This seems necessary, as donors will require approved results.

#### **2.1.5 Actors**

As already mentioned, this field has many actors. All major donors and international organizations are involved as well as specialized media NGOs. As this is a new field, there is no strict classification between actors and different approaches to media. It was sometimes difficult to distinguish between short-term (peacebuilding) and long-term (good governance) assistance to media.

The respective section in the report generally describes the approach to media's role by major donors (United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, USA, Sweden, Netherlands, European Union, Worldbank, UNESCO, Stability Pact, Council of Europe) and tries to quantify projects and funding volume. It also provides information on implementing agencies (Institute of War and Peace Reporting, Search for Common Ground, Baltic Media Centre, Open Society Foundations) and Swiss-based NGOs (Media Action International, Medienhilfe, Fondation Hironnelle, Cimera).

From a Swiss perspective, it can be said that the Swiss government already dedicates substantial funds to media projects. However, other "small countries" are traditionally more involved in this field.

#### **2.1.6 Challenges**

The challenges for the sector are:

1. to prove its efficiency and impact as donors are requesting more and more approved results
2. to clarify its concepts and orientate media projects stricter to the overall peacebuilding strategy
3. to establish a clear priority from analysis of the conflict and the media sector to the design of media assistance in this field
4. to improve selection of partners, ensure viability of the supported media and improve monitoring of implementation and quality of projects

It is therefore recommended to launch a major effort to develop tools and indicators for monitoring media projects and measuring their impact. This would generate more knowledge and improve the efficiency of media assistance for peacebuilding.

## 2.2 Media as an instrument for managing conflicts and building peace – When is it most effective?

*by Michael Lund, Senior Associate, Management Systems International, Inc (MSI) and Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.*

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Development agencies have shown a great deal of interest recently in using the media as a technique for addressing conflicts. From the media practitioners themselves, one sometimes gets the impression that they believe their activities can have all kinds of beneficial impacts almost anywhere if only they could be expanded through more resources. But in the enthusiasm to apply this form of influence to conflicts, questions concerning whether and how the various forms of media can be most effective, and in what contexts, have not been examined in any systematic way. A crucial question that needs more attention is: Given the typical favorable or unfavorable conditions that are operating “on-the-ground” at different stages of intra-state conflicts, which forms of media are most likely to make the most difference in reducing conflicts and strengthening peace?

The aim of this brief commentary is to put some crucial questions on the table concerning media effectiveness in peacebuilding and to suggest some plausible hypotheses that might be pursued further. It will briefly touch on:

- The main features of intra-state conflicts at differing levels of hostility
- The range of instruments used for conflict management/peacebuilding, and the various kinds of influences they exert in conflict situations
- The kinds of influence that media in particular can apply as an instrument
- Some plausible hypotheses about when media is most effective, and which media roles are most effective
- Wider implications for deciding which instruments to use in which situations

### 2.2.2 Conflict and the Stages of Violent Conflict

To approach this subject usefully, we first need to back up and look at certain basic characteristics of the *problem* to which media is assumed to be at least a partial “*solution*.” That problem is conflict. In essence, „conflict” is the perceived or perceived incompatibility of interests in a society. Conflict can be avoided altogether (such as through separation). But if it occurs, it can be pursued through peaceful, constructive means or through violent, destructive conflict.

The main focus for media activities has been intra-state conflicts that have broken out into widespread violence or the use of militarized force. Although the usual connotation that arises when the word „conflict” is uttered in this context is full-blown internal wars, such as occurred recently in the Congo, such conflicts actually go through various rather different stages, as it has in the Congo. These stages are reflected mainly in the extent of hostility

that is openly expressed between major groups in society and other parties. One way to characterize the main stages of conflicts is as follows:

- *Stable peace* is ongoing communication and peaceful interaction among groups in society, who pursue their differing interests through accepted and institutionalized processes that follow formal or informal rules, including non-violent protests
- *Unstable peace* involves the emergence of tensions, divisions (e.g., walkouts, boycotts), and intensifying emotions, with occasional acts of low-level political violence (e.g., occasional assassinations, disappearances)
- *Crisis* is high levels of palpable tension, breakdown of regular political and policy mechanisms, intra-elite disengagement, political mobilization of opposed constituencies, public confrontations, suppression of opposition, and escalating political violence (e.g., bombings)
- *War* is the continuing use of organized mass violence or armed forces
- *Stalemate* occurs when none of the antagonists in the use of armed force can make significant headway over their opponents
- *De-escalation* involves the gradual cessation of the use of armed force and the waning of violence, although sporadic tensions and violence may continue during the next few stages
- *Negotiations* may ensue to reach some kind of agreement regarding the issues where competing interests are at stake
- *Settlement implementation* involves the fulfillment of the peace agreement
- *Post-settlement reconstruction and reconciliation* reflects the end of political violence, steps toward reintegration of contending parties and the unfettered resumption of government and economic activities

The differences between these stages are crucial for what media can accomplish. The amount of physical violence and resulting insecurity is perhaps the single factor that determines at what stage a conflict is operating, and it affects every other domestic and international factor. When it comes to media's possible impact, one of the most important conditions that is affected by the level of violence is the nature of the relationships between groups or other parties in the society. Key differences in these relationships concern the extent of:

- Hardening and polarization in views, attitudes and perceptions rather than inter-group toleration
- Physical separation and greater insularity instead of interactive contact and communications of different communities
- Active partisan mobilization/recruitment of opposed communities and of allies by elites versus the political activity by the general public
- disengagement of the political leaders of groups rather than their engagement in common, regular governing processes

For example, these differences can be seen as “unstable peace” escalates into “crisis” and other more coercive, violent conditions such as “war”. Typical social-psychological factors that can unleash the dogs of war through an escalatory spiral are:

- Consciousness-raising within the opposed sides that leads to an expansion of issues and the discovery of new grievances against the other side
- The numbers of participants increases of those joining in on each opposed side and new parties (e.g., diasporas)
- Emotional desire to obtain „payback,“ revenge
- Dehumanization of the opponent, negative stereotypes
- Narrowing of vision, limiting of options, fatalistic thinking
- Pressure to choose sides, coercive recruitment
- Throwing good money after bad; “waving the bloody shirt”
- Grandstanding to outside audiences
- Growing atmosphere of uncertainty, growing distrust
- Selective perception of an opponent’s actions (e.g., the fallacy of attribution)
- Conciliatory actions are seen as signs of weakness
- Sides feel emboldened in their cause when they experience initial gains
- Defensive moves are interpreted as offensive acts (the security dilemma)
- The more militant leaders ascend into leadership roles
- The managers of the means of coercion attain increased influence in decisionmaking
- Overly harsh responses result from following standard operating procedures and thus contribute to an escalation spiral
- Vested interests in conflict develop

Unsurprisingly, these kinds of conditions at different stages of conflict also affect the societal environment in which public information and communication, such as through the media, is produced, disseminated and interpreted.

### 2.2.3 Media among the instruments of conflict management and peacebuilding

Many different programs can be and are being used as instruments for conflict management/peacebuilding. Embodied in these programs are quite different capacities or potentials that third parties can use for exerting leverage on the parties in a conflict situation to induce them to take specific actions. The kinds of influence that third-party inducements can exert range from, at the negative extreme, compellance, through neutral engagement of the parties to the positive extreme, significant benefits.

Because they differ in the amount of negative or positive clout that they wield, these differing types of influence tend to differ also in their comparative effectiveness at different stages of conflict:

- By and large, the higher the level of violence (i.e., at the mid-stages of conflicts), the more *coercive negative pressure*, or the greater the amount of *positive inducement*, that is required to steer parties away from pursuing violent conflict, except when the parties face a perceived, mutually hurting stalemate.
- The comparatively *least* effective influences at this stage are *neutral instruments*, for they embody neither coercion nor benefit.

- The neutral kind of influence however may be more effective at low levels of violence (i.e. at the potential and post-violent conflict stages).

Where does media fit into this spectrum of instruments? We can identify the several possible roles that media can play in peacebuilding. In conflict contexts, media can provide:

- Objective, accurate, general *news* to inform citizens
- *Public service* information about aid availability and peacebuilding activities
- *A forum* to give a voice to the public and provide a venue for debate and dialogue between leaders about conflict or other public issues, thus providing a model of deliberative politics
- *“Early warning”* about societal problems that may be sources of conflicts
- *Public education* about societal sources of conflicts, ideas about governing, and so on
- *Special “peace messages”* to encourage tolerance and reconciliation, especially during periods of stress

Looked at as a form of leverage or inducement, these media roles tend to rely mainly on weak pressure or neutral kinds of inducements, such as the following:

- *Persuade*, admonish, exhort – e.g., U.N. Security Council resolutions urging armed restraint by India and Pakistan
- *Promulgate* international norms, setting international standards
- *Facilitate inter-party communications*, consultation (fostering of informal “track-two” dialogues)
- *Conciliation* (mutual party concessions, with minimal influence of third party)
- *Technical assistance, instruction, advice* – e.g., providing a plan for civil service reform
- *Build capacity* – e.g., training, human rights capacitybuilding
- *Disseminate information* – e.g., statistics on the economic and social costs of war

We can make several useful observations from this list:

- Media messages by themselves provide no compelling material benefits, or harms, to the recipient – although it may provide emotional or intellectual satisfaction. They are mainly a conduit.
- Accepting, much less acting on, media messages is not mandatory for the target recipient – these responses are discretionary and voluntary. The sender cannot impose a response.

This leads to a further point about what media messages require to lead to significant attitude or behavior change – i.e., to produce some results in a society:

- Media messages go to individual recipients –individual radio listeners, TV viewers or newspaper readers.
- The non-coercive, non-material influences of the media instrument are more likely to result in changes in an individual’s attitudes and behavior, including collective action they may undertake, when messages are reinforced by the individual’s environment (e.g., agreement among his/her peers) or messages have a ready-at-hand action opportunity or outlet (e.g., elections, political parties, other organized action).

- Thus, to be effective, the neutral inducements of the media instrument are especially in need of reinforcing environments.

#### 2.2.4 When is media most effective for conflict management and peacebuilding?

Some tentative conclusions seem to follow regarding *when* the media instrument's neutral type of influence is likely to be most effective in different conflict stages and environments. To stimulate discussion, some plausible hypotheses for further analysis are:

The reinforcing environments required for media to be effective for an individual media recipient are *least* likely to exist at escalating or high levels of violence, i.e., at the middle-stages of active, open, violent conflict. This is because of the polarizing and divisive tendencies that are at work in the society pulling the individual away from open-mindedness and tolerance and that are physically or psychologically blocking or "screening" the information he/she receives, such as:

- the physical segregation of contending groups,
- non-communication across elites and communities,
- mutual stereotyping and dehumanizing,
- political mobilization and even coercive recruitment,
- partisan biases,
- narrowing of options to respond to the situation.

The media instrument is *most* likely to be effective, and available for use in conflict management and peacebuilding, at the potential-preventive and the post-conflict stages of conflicts – before or after high violence.

These tendencies also apparently affect the behavior of the media itself, for journalists themselves are least likely to produce objective coverage or conciliatory messages. This commentary has relied mainly on a deductive argument, but a few studies have been done that appear to support this line of analysis. For example, one study of media in Northern Ireland and the Middle East of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

In other words, the very conditions that media is expected to promote are the least likely to be present or to be produced in a high conflict situation. Media may provide a useful supplement when the other environmental conditions are present; it is unlikely to be able to create those supportive environments on its own.

If media *is* nevertheless chosen for high levels of conflict, it needs to play a special role that targets "peace messages" specifically to the contending parties, and it needs very powerful reinforcements from other kinds of inducements as well.

#### 2.2.5 Wider implications for selecting peacebuilding instruments

Whether upon further investigation, the particular hypotheses above will hold or not, a broader point is that rigorous analysis is needed to match the most appropriate and effective policy instruments – involving the media or other programs – to the conditions and stages of conflict or peace that exist in specific country conflict situations.

The ideal steps of such a policymaking process are essentially as follows:

1. Conflict analysis ("What is the nature and scale of the problem?")
2. Capacities and needs analysis ("What conflict management or peacebuilding is already going on, by whom? What is missing?")
3. Identify possible instruments to fill the gaps ("What is appropriate to do?")
4. Prior appraisal (prospective evaluation) ("Will these instruments work in this context?")
5. Implementation ("Who does what, and when?")
6. Monitoring and evaluation (retrospective evaluation; "What are the actual results?")
7. Strategy modification or termination ("How can we do better?")

## 2.3 Media in Peacebuilding and Good Governance – Do immediate media peacebuilding activities ensure the prerequisites for the long-term objectives of free and independent media?

*by Mark Thompson, consultant, Oxford*

### 2.3.1 Part One

I have been asked to speak about the relationship between the immediate priorities and the longer-term or strategic objectives concerning media and information in conflict (or post-conflict) zones. I will discuss these activities in the context of *consensual peace operations*, rather than in the context of an *occupation* or an *ongoing conflict*. The great laboratories of media development in conflict or post-conflict zones during the past decade have taken place in a consensual context – notwithstanding that the nature of the consent in question has sometimes been legally controversial and operationally tenuous. For, consent can be merely formal; a regime of consent can mask very different ambitions on the part of a host government or other parties to an agreement. This has led to some hard thinking by scholars of international law as well as by diplomats and others in Western capitals and in the United Nations, up to and including Kofi Annan (viz., his interest in ideas of “coercive inducement”). Although the protectorate-type arrangements in Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor may sometimes resemble occupations, and are loosely spoken of as such, they are not occupations, and hence are subject to very different constraints regarding the legal and other standards that must be upheld.

Of course, working with local media for peace-making purposes is possible without the umbrella of a wider intergovernmental authority in the conflict zone. In Switzerland, you know that very well. Fondation Hirondelle has done excellent work in West Africa, for example, working closely with local journalists without the benefit – though also without the distraction and bureaucracy – of large intergovernmental missions. NGOs are doing this all the time: forging partnerships with local journalists and activists, dealing with officials and government when they must.

Now, media development work of that sort can do excellent work. Yet it cannot usually set itself the sort of objectives that are achievable in the context of an intergovernmental peacemaking effort, especially an engagement where intergovernmental organisations are mandated to wield executive and administrative authority. In such situations, media reformers can shape the drafting of laws and regulations, the establishment of journalists’ associations and so forth. They may also be able to put pressure directly on the local authorities, on behalf of local journalists, as and when those authorities violate accepted standards of media freedom.

Let us consider some of the likely immediate priorities in a post-conflict situation where the international community (IC) is heavily engaged in a peacekeeping, peacemaking capacity, and non-governmental organisations are also involved, or may come to be so. This

presupposes a cessation of hostilities, sometimes leading to a deployment of international forces.

Of course, work should have begun before the conflict has formally ended. Three major tasks in particular should have been completed.

1. Information about the media sector in the territory should already have been gathered and analysed. This would include a comprehensive log or inventory of media outlets – if need be, also in neighbouring or nearby territories in the region that have played some part in the conflict. This inventory should include as much detail about the technical resources and capacity as possible; also about the ownership structure; the financial situation and status; the size and profile of the audience; the distribution or dissemination (“footprint”); and the political profile and connections – meaning both the overt political content of the outlet, and also the relationship if any between its owners and / or the staff, and the political factions in the territory (plus, where appropriate, other territories in the region).
2. Forethought should have been given to the terms of both the peace agreement, and also of the mandate of whichever international organisations and agencies will deploy in the region after the conflict. During the 1990s, elaborate peace settlements ignored – or casually assumed – the significance of information and media (the Dayton and Rambouillet documents were prime offenders in this respect). Also, highly complex international missions, with sophisticated resources for research and analysis, and backed by powerful members of the international community, could be simply unmandated – and hence unprepared – to cope with the information and media challenges thrown up.

Now, this forethought does not necessarily have to lead to explicit language about information or media reform and development; it may be wiser to leave these elements implicit or latent within more general language about international standards of human rights, about the development of democratic institutions, and such like. What is necessary is that the IC should be clear in its own mind about what is at stake, and prepared to act and react decisively if the need arises to expand media reform and development in a particular place.

Experience in the 1990s, from Cambodia to East Timor, taught us that peace operations need explicitly authorised access to local media, both to protect their own security and to build credibility with the local population. The best way to obtain such authorisation may – or may not – be by enshrining in the mandate. Serious media reform and development are likely to be attempted only by complex missions with institution-building mandates. For, in practice, a substantial pro-active media operation is only achievable when conducted within a broader institution-building mandate. Such mandates may or may not need to spell out the media reform and development role. That said, it is better to err on the side of granting superfluous authority to the international mission, on a provisional basis, than to deprive it of means to take essential action.

3. The third task that should be more or less complete by the time the ink has dried on the peace agreement or the status of forces agreement is the preparation of an action plan, identifying both the reform objectives and the means to attain them. What should these objectives be?

First of all, any measures judged necessary to ensure the security of international personnel would and should be authorised. Preferably, such authorisation would be preceded by consultation with media NGOs and media professionals. In practice, however, this is unlikely to happen – not before we have seen some far-reaching changes in the relations between governmental and non-governmental actors.

Secondly, it is vital to try and prevent the [production and] dissemination of hate-speech and other forms of incendiary propaganda. The experience in Bosnia over the year following the Dayton Accords (November 1995) proved to anyone's satisfaction that – especially in a relatively sophisticated media environment like the Balkans – the uninterrupted flow of racist propaganda can neutralise other benefits of the peace and make a monkey of the international community (Richard Holbrooke says almost as much in his book, *To End A War*. His own checklist of "flaws" in Dayton make no mention of why media were omitted from the final document, yet by June 1996 – half a year later – he was calling for Bosnian Serb broadcasting to be shut down.).

Experience in Rwanda since the genocide likewise suggests that a policy of zero-tolerance of such propaganda should be adopted from the outset. (It is also worth mentioning that intervention against incendiary propaganda is relatively straightforward to justify under international law and instruments. Hence there is even less excuse for failing to tackle this problem than there might otherwise be.)

The third priority in this first phase is to try and prevent the most influential media outlets in the territory from falling under the control or the dominating influence of any political faction, especially of those with extremist ideologies and a partiality for violent means.

The fourth priority on this shortlist of four is the need to establish or assist information outlets that will enable the international agencies to reach as much of the local population as possible, providing citizens with a range of basic information both practical and political (current affairs, analysis). If there are no existing outlets capable of performing this vital service to society, by agreement with the international agencies, then they have to be established willy-nilly. It could be a single radio and television station; or a network; or a newspaper. It should include a website. Moreover, if some such suitable outlets do already exist when the peace agreement takes effect, they will almost certainly need international money and expertise to boost their quality and distribution – to the point, quite probably, of transforming them beyond recognition.

While other items could certainly be added, I think these should be the four priority elements in the action plan that should be ready by the time that the peace-building organisations deploy in the conflict zone.

### 2.3.2 Part Two

What then are the key elements of a longer-term strategy to establish a democratic media sphere in a conflict (or post-conflict) zone? – The objective here, to quote a member of the UN transitional authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992 and 1993, is always “to set up a [democratic] media order that would function outside of political or personal domination”. That postage-stamp description could apply equally well to the post-conflict efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo and elsewhere. In other words, the objective should not be perfection: not an ideally balanced and equitable media system which is universally accessible, proof against political abuse, harmonising public service criteria with private sector entrepreneurship, and so forth.

Rather the strategy must seek to lay the best possible foundations for a democratic and pluralist media sphere. To this end, it should – without losing sight of the priorities mentioned above, which do not, after all, expire or lapse after a given deadline – address the following five areas (not listed here in order of importance):

1. Laws and regulations
2. Professional standards (media ethics) and organisation (journalists’ associations)
3. Support for public service broadcasting (PSB) – when necessary by transforming the so-called “state media”
4. Support for private and independent media
5. Support for production and distribution of programming

I’ll say something about each of these:

#### **Laws and regulations**

The goal here is to erect a framework that is consistent with international norms and standards as defined most conveniently by the Council of Europe. The laws in question usually concern broadcasting, freedom of information, ownership (anti-concentration) and, in some cases, the press (often known as “public information laws”). The general principle should be: to pass the best laws you can, then defend them to the utmost. The quality of legislation should be *in advance* of the average professional, ethical performance by the local media outlets – and quite likely in advance of the capacity of the local judiciary to uphold it – and, also quite possibly, more ambitious and therefore troublesome to draft and get adopted than some international officials think is worthwhile. But not, however, in advance of the more enlightened and capable media professionals and public officials, both locally and internationally.

#### **Professional standards and organisation**

Again, the purpose is to introduce the mechanisms for oversight and accountability of standards that are now accepted as normal in Western democracies – the sort that are advocated by associations like the IFJ and by NGOs like ARTICLE 19 or “Press Now”. (Under this heading also come training, education and other professionalisation programs.)

### **Public Service Broadcasting and So-called “State Media”**

This has proven to be a highly controversial issue in the Balkans, which were – and still are – the laboratory of internationally-induced media reform in conflict zones. The furore has revived recently with the imposition of new legislation in Bosnia’s Serb-controlled entity. It is clear by this stage – indeed, it has been so for some time – that everyone would have gained by having a more open and less acrimonious debate on this centrally important subject. But, nobody was prepared to organise that debate in the 1990s. More remarkably, I’m not sure there is a readiness to have it today.

In the conflicts of the past decade where the International Community has ended up playing a large peacemaking role, media outlets that were openly or surreptitiously controlled by governments or other authorities played the most destructive role in crises, and have not found it difficult to preserve their role after the conflict was formally over.

I mentioned that an immediate priority for any peacemaking endeavour is the threat posed by media outlets falling under extremist political influence. You might object, however, that *this* threat is smaller than the threat posed by media outlets that have been controlled by political factions *during* the war (which they quite possibly helped to bring about), and now continue to be so during the peace, in which capacity they undermine the peace-building effort. I would heartily agree with that objection: this is *indeed* a fundamental problem, and it is caused above all by “state media”. This problem can only be addressed by a rather inclusive and multi-disciplinary, multi-layered program of media reform. In principle, reforming media outlets and institutions has proven to be much harder than starting up new media. No surprise there. However, we should not be too discouraged, for the rewards of success are far greater – and the penalties for failure are smaller.

### **Support for private and independent media**

No controversy here: this is a self-evident priority. The international community has scored some notable successes in supporting private media as part of wider peace-building projects. What perhaps needs more analysis is how and why vast amounts of donor money, and political energy, came to be *wasted* in backing private media rather than tackling the reform of state media. (Estimates for the sum squandered on the Open Broadcast Network [OBN] in Bosnia range from US\$ 20 to 30 million.)

### **Support for programming and distribution**

The poor quality of broadcast content, and the difficulty of reaching wider audiences make it important to help get good programming made.

### **2.3.3 Part Three**

Now, finally, I need to say if I believe there is a mismatch between immediate priorities and longer-term strategic objectives. I don’t think so. Of course, the emphasis is bound to change over time, as – one hopes – the security environment improves and the overall situation in the conflict zone normalises. Yet I don’t see any necessary incompatibility here.

What is important is not to confuse the two. It is not that the short-term and longer-term objectives are incompatible, but rather the *means* used to achieve immediate goals that

may militate against the achievement of the longer-term ones. It is important not to believe that ultimate standards or mechanisms of media freedom can be introduced at once. The exercise of virtually unaccountable power by an intervening authority very easily alienates the very people whose support is indispensable to achieving durable reforms – the media professionals themselves. If the peace-making authority acts as prosecuting lawyer, jury and sentencing judge upon the media, there will be trouble; and the peace-makers' credibility with local civil society (always a precious commodity) will be eroded. Mechanisms of accountability are needed that can convince local civil society. In some circumstances, there needs to be an international regulator who is directly accountable to an international body which can also be addressed by local journalists and NGOs. (UNMIK managed to establish a mechanism of this kind.)

One of the important roles that NGOs can play is precisely to bridge the gap of communication between international officials and local media professionals – explaining each to the other. In many situations, the media professionals need to be asked to deny themselves a measure of the self-regulating autonomy that their colleagues in stable societies take for granted. In return, they must be assured that this postponement will have a limit, and be rewarded by the creation of a more robustly democratic media sphere than they could otherwise hope for. If this unwritten contract is to be negotiated, a remarkable degree of mutual understanding and trust will have to be discovered. For this to occur, there has to be an unceasing four-way *conversation* among international officials, non-governmental activists, local political figures, and local media professionals.

However, there are points of genuine contention within the overall debate about media reform. Let me identify two of these neuralgic points:

### **1. Content regulation: more or less?**

The question of how to regulate content most appropriately in a post-conflict situation has provoked very different answers and aroused strong feelings. The dilemma has taken the following shape: is it best to install the accepted democratic mechanisms of content regulation as quickly as possible, in keeping with the overall attempt to introduce democratic norms to the media sector? Or is it wiser to install a more draconian regime of content oversight than would be acceptable in a normal, democratic society?

### **2. Private vs. public**

There is an important ideological or cultural difference in the European and US-American perception of the role public service institutions should play in the media sector. This has produced some lively disputes and misunderstandings. To be sure, it is extremely difficult to reform such institutions. Yet, what practical alternative is there to trying to reform the state sector? Leaving it alone is not an option, while privatisation is likely to make matters worse.

Behind the controversy over public service media are two other issues, or debates. There is an important debate about whether "liberalisation" or "institutionalisation" should take priority, in the administration of post-conflict zones. I take these terms from Roland Paris, and I agree with him when he wrote that "peace-builders should delay liberalisation until

they have constructed political and economic institutions that are capable of managing the societal tensions that naturally arise from the process of democratisation and marketisation.”<sup>1</sup> Applying this insight to the field of media reconstruction, it follows that “before liberalising popular media in war-shattered states, peace-builders should establish mechanisms to limit the promulgation of inflammatory propaganda.” So far, so good, I say – but we have to go further. The mechanisms needed do not only cover inflammatory propaganda, but other aspects of media activity as well.

Then there is the issue of “media markets”. It is almost certainly a mistake – one that can have serious consequences – to premise media reform in a peacemaking context upon *either* the existing “media market”, whatever that may look like – for the reason that this market is certain to be transformed as part of the post-conflict reconstruction; *or* upon the supposition that the creation of a viable market should be the guiding objective of media reform itself – and this for the reason that no amount of media reform can conjure capital investment, advertising budgets or consumer spending power into existence. To be sure, a viable market is one feature of the desired total outcome. Yet it does not lie within the gift of media reformers to get a market up and running. A desired outcome is exactly that, and not a lever – not a tool that can be used to achieve that outcome. Once the outcome has been achieved, then market accountability may indeed be a mechanism that balances different interests – though it will not necessarily be so.

<sup>1</sup> See Roland Paris, “Wilson’s Ghost. The Faulty Assumptions of Postconflict Peace-building”, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (eds.), *Turbulent Peace. The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001.

## 3 Input by NGOs

### 3.1 The challenges to work in media development field

*by André Loersch, Media Co-ordinator, CIMERA*

Almost all aspects of working in media support or media development field appear nowadays as a challenge: from the selection of partners to the question on how to measure the impact of particular projects, the difficult definition of "quality" of journalism and of the role media should or could play in a particular context, the necessity to find a common understanding on those concepts with partners and donor agencies. That is not only due to the fact that the interest towards media and its potential role in contributing to the democratisation of developing countries or so-called countries in transition is a relatively new field for many international agencies, which had long been so far focusing their co-operation effort in the field of economic or technical aid. That is also due to the fact that media itself is a moving field in our societies of reference, in the present case Western Europe. Sciences of communication and of information, which include knowledge on media, do constitute a young discipline, which is still lacking a comprehensive methodology. Particularly when the question of the power of the media and its impact over public opinion and the conduct of public affairs is in question, there appear to be, in Western countries, more assumptions than certainties.

There is a strong tendency among international actors involved in media field in countries in transition or developing countries to somehow put aside our own ignorance on some aspects of the media functioning when analysing other contexts, giving surprisingly categorical advice and recommendations on how the media in those contexts should develop. There is also a strong tendency to forget about the – frequent – dysfunctions which can be seen in Western media, and the permanent contradictions that characterise its structure and functioning. Without any model of reference, the impact of the media in the political development in those countries is often overemphasised and, as a result, partners are confronted with objectives they can hardly meet. From their side, donors, after being disappointed that their – sometimes unrealistic – expectations have not been fulfilled, are tempted to give up working in that field.

Because they have decided to ignore the lessons that could be learnt from the rapid changes the Western media went through, say, during the last twenty years, many international agencies have developed an "End of History" approach of the media in other contexts: the commercial media, receiving a significant part of its income from advertisement would be the unique model to ensure the democratisation of the concerned countries. The *present* situation in Western countries is taken as a definitive model for a *transitional* period in other contexts, and the role that, say, party press has played in the past decades in the pluralistic political debate in Western Europe, is purely ignored. So are the frequent deceptions, in terms of informational content and journalism, which resulted from the privatisation or both radio and television frequencies which were initiated in the eighties in Western Europe.

The problem is not that the commercial model of media, substantially financed by advertisement, is not to play an important role in democracy. The problem is more that the

possible disputable political consequences of a too business like orientated approach are rarely integrated when considering media in other contexts. If media living from advertisements is the main tool to guarantee the division of powers and transparency of public administration, then lessons from present Italy should at least be discussed. The prominent broadcast media owned by Mr Berlusconi, which might have contributed to his access to power were with no doubt "well managed" and do get most of their income from advertisement. But can they be considered as "independent" from politics? Shortly after the coming to power of Mr Berlusconi, a former Director of the public Italian television *RAI* expressed the conviction that Mr Berlusconi's political success was mostly the result of an "anthropological revolution" which would have taken place in Italy over the years, and which would have been strongly supported by his media. If correct, the fact that Mr Berlusconi not only still controls his own media, but has the power to influence the content of public service broadcast says a lot about the possible political consequences of a too-business like approach of the media. Those lessons are never discussed in international circles and international media experts considering the development of media in developing or transitional contexts.

The same, when promoting the "conflict prevention" role of media around the world, one could expect that the behaviour of the most prominent private US media after the 11 of September 2001 would be discussed and taken into consideration. After the terror attack, the largest US media adopted a purely "patriotic" stance which would probably have been mocked and sharply criticised by many international experts if observed in a "developing" country. It is doubtless that the uncritical approach of the major media outlets towards the official US policy and their reactions towards those events appear in absolute contradiction with some of the commitments of the American journalists ethic principles, be it the "*promise*" to "*Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so*", the one to "*Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant*", or to "*Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid*" (extracts of the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, adopted in September 1996).

In the most powerful State in the world, in a well established democracy as the US are, a vast majority of journalists, because they felt their "nation" was "in danger", considered it right to forget about ensuring a pluralistic debate, some of them even considering acceptable, from an ethical point of view, to appear on the screen of news programs with waging national flags. Such a lesson should, at least, force us to question the legitimacy of some of our expectations in terms of editorial independence and pluralism of opinion in countries which, from former Soviet Union to Africa, are often characterised by a high level of uncertainty and insecurity, with journalists belonging to communities permanently feeling endangered. But not only do we not draw the lessons from such events, but we continue to talk at length to our colleagues in those countries about their "moral responsibility", the necessary "editorial independence", without even trying to analyse the enabling environment which can make it possible for journalists to enjoy the necessary freedom they would need to meet our demands. We do also invoke elements like "ethic codes" for journalists, perfectly knowing, or perfectly ignoring that, without any implementation procedures – i.e. having a coercive character not only for the journalists, but, before all, for the *editors* – ethic codes are condemned to remain empty words. That is for example the rule among Western European countries, where, in most cases, ethic codes have been

written by professional associations of journalists, with no involvement of the editors. As a result, editors do not feel committed towards those declarations.

It is for us a challenge, in such a moving field, to maintain and defend the necessity to work with media in transitional context, when no one can guarantee any result. We know that a more or less independent and pluralistic media, an indispensable element of democracy, can be a main factor of social, political, or cultural development, and a major actor in a peace-building process. But we know, it is not sufficient: *necessary, indispensable, but not sufficient*, to ensure any significant impact in a given society, on a particular political process. We know and are convinced of the importance of media in society, in context of political and economical change. But we lack still the instruments to measure the impacts of our projects, and that is a challenge to find reliable indicators on how much a project can reach its objectives.

I am talking here about the sphere of socio-political media. The type of projects implemented, for example, by our colleagues from *Media Action International*, are not confronted with such problems: they work under the principle of giving "news that you can use", that is useful news for already well targeted categories of the population (for example the refugees in a conflict environment). Regular interviews among the target group, monitoring of the content of the news produced provide the tools to evaluate the impact of any such project. But when media related projects do address broader questions like democratisation or peace-building, the question of measuring the impact remains open. In his presentation, Mark Thompson has mentioned the NATO intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which closed by force Serb television. He said that such problems could have been anticipated during the international peace talks on Bosnia in Dayton, and that such action could have been thus avoided. We understand his point of view. But he was referring to a peace process with a clear framework, where parties to the conflict have committed themselves -at least formally- to a very clear list of engagements, among others the preservation of the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the right of return of displaced persons. The role of the international community has also been clearly mentioned in those agreements, and all actors – national or international agencies, governmental or non-governmental agencies and organisations – do have a precise framework and a precise political agenda they can refer to. And that is one thing to evaluate how the media does cover such a process, and what kind of impact such a coverage can have. In that case, I suppose, the methodology to evaluate the impact of certain media would be in-depth interviews with key actors of that process.

As for the rest, be it a pre-conflict or a democratisation process, we remain in need to find tools to measure the impact of our projects, and to answer the legitimate need and demand of the donors. The studies which have been done on the media in conflict situation, like in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are an indication on how difficult it is to precisely measure

the media impact. Two studies, both published by Article 19<sup>2</sup> do bring a useful nuance to the common belief that "media can make war happen". First of all, those studies do remind us, that the word goes not on any kind of media, but on media which were strictly controlled by the different parties to the conflict. In the case of Rwanda, the book reminds us that the genocide of around half a million of Tutsi was a huge operation which necessitated planing and could in no way depend on the broadcast of the *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM)*, no matter how its broadcast had been characterised by hate speech. *RTLM* did take part in the process, but that process could not have been initiated only by media. The point made in the study that "to some extent, discussion of the role of *RTLM* in Rwanda's genocide has been influenced by the international media's fascination with the potential impact of their own technology"<sup>3</sup> should also lead us to be careful when defining our expectations towards our partners in developing and transitional contexts.

In the chapter of his book on "Reflections on the media, the politics of fear and the fear of politics", Mark Thompson quotes an analyst from Belgrade as saying: "What is beyond question is that the journalists' profession was in the front line in *legitimizing the war (through political propaganda) as the only possible solution of the profound Yugoslav crisis*. In that sense one can claim decisively that media contributed very strongly to the war". Such an observation suggests the role media should play in a conflict-potential situation: providing a space of dialogue and stress the need of an institutional framework where conflicts can be discussed and solved in a political, legal and peaceful way. Such expected results can be measured, for example by content analysis of the information produced by the selected partners. In a democratisation context, justification for our intervention in different contexts, like other colleagues from other organisations present in this workshop, does lay in the universal right "to receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (part of art. 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

The possibility for an individual to take informed decision about his personal faith and about the faith of his community or country can be seen as an extension of this right. In a democratic context or a democratising process, that necessary information can only be obtained through the confrontation of different opinions. In the moving field of media development and media support, within my own organisation and towards external partners and donors I defend the idea that one of the main role media should play, lays in organising the confrontation of different ideas and opinion. That means pluralism, not at the scale of a national media system, but a certain level a pluralism within the media outlets we decide to work with. That is not ensuring the democratisation of a given country, but rather, by creating an important and necessary tool, giving its chance to democracy.

<sup>2</sup> *Broadcasting Genocide, Censorship, Propaganda & State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda 1990-1994*, Article 19, October 1996, and *Forging War, the Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Mark Thompson, Article 19, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> *Broadcasting Genocide*, op cit, p. 161.

## 3.2 Information as both: a crucial need and a right of populations affected by conflict

*by Edward Girardet, Media Action International (MAI), Geneva*

With regard to peacebuilding initiatives, Media Action International has been working in a number of conflict and post-conflict situations, notably Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, and now, most recently, Afghanistan. Our approach is to regard credible and independent information not only as a crucial need for conflict or post-conflict affected populations, but also as a right. This translates into the right to know what the international (but also local) community is up to with its actions (humanitarian, recovery but also security or peacekeeping) in a particular situation. MAI also considers public information as critical to more effective accountability and transparency for all concerned: local and international aid agencies, donors, journalists, the military and the general public.

In the southern Balkans, for example, we focused on working with locally available radio stations of which there were dozens. We provided editorially independent radio programmes produced in the local language by local journalists focusing first on humanitarian information, including information about KFOR, the OSCE etc., and then – once the crisis had subsided – youth information. These programmes were distributed to most of the local stations, many of which broadcast the programmes several times a day and without editorial interference. We also undertook Road Shows which proved to be one of the most effective ways of reaching out to the villages. In Afghanistan, we are focusing primarily on print media.

### 3.2.1 General Situation of MAI Projects in Afghanistan

As mentioned in my overview at the workshop, I have recently returned from Afghanistan and will be heading back again in August. MAI is currently involved in the training of experienced print journalists in Afghanistan in conjunction with the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Following the Afghanistan brainstorming which MAI held in Geneva in early October 2001, it was agreed that the BBC Trust, Internews and other similar organizations would focus primarily with the broadcast side of the recovery process, while IWPR and MAI would seek to assist the print sector.

While the literacy rate in Afghanistan is less than 20 percent and the print media still relatively small, both can be expected to grow rapidly over the next several years. (There are already some 100 monthly, weekly, and daily newspapers and magazines in the country and among the refugee community.) The Internet can also expect to be firmly established in a manner similar to that of neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. Many young refugees are already avid users – and readers – of the Internet. While many Afghans still listen to radio as their primary source in information, there is an incredible thirst, particularly among young people, for reading materials and other forms of information. This is one area where support for the print media can make an enormous difference while also conveying the information needs of the recovery and peacebuilding process. And after all, these young people are the key to Afghanistan's future.

As a heavily oral – but literary – society, Afghanistan can be expected to move rapidly toward a new society that will rely increasingly on the print media and publishing as a key form of expression and dissemination of information. Afghanistan's faces an enormous amount of problems, but an independent and critical press can make a significant difference in the way matters will evolve over the next several years. As a result, the international community urgently needs to invest in the print media if the recovery and peacebuilding process is to succeed, particularly with regard to the warlords and other political interests, who are more powerful than before since the Loya Jirga and who will probably find it easier to control the broadcast rather than the print media.

As part of the IWPR/MAI joint projects, we are currently operating a series of long-term training courses for experienced journalists in Kabul and in the field. IWPR has one trainer in Kabul focusing on political, peacekeeping and other forms of reporting with experienced journalists from various Afghan magazine and newspapers, while MAI has a trainer who is focusing on humanitarian and recovery reporting, which includes issues such as health, environment, peace building, human rights, and other related issues. The training is taking place both in Kabul (including Kabul University) as well as in the regions.

The articles (7-10 a week) produced by the journalists and which are considered of sufficient quality (considerable editorial assistance is provided) are placed on the IWPR/MAI Afghan Webset in English, Farsi and Pushto. These are made available free of charge to all local and international media wishing to use them. Over the past six weeks alone, local Afghan press have used nearly 20 IWPR/MAI produced articles with at least one critical piece provoking the wrath of one Afghan warlord.

MAI is now in the process of developing several new projects, including a Road Show, but the most crucial are the following and which will seek to make use of the facilities already in place.

The first is a joint project with our partners, the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). This focuses on the training of Afghan novice journalists. As part of their training, these novice journalists will produce a monthly magazine (newsletter) dealing with recovery and peacebuilding issues that will be distributed with the help of various educational or youth-oriented agencies to all secondary schools and colleges in the country.

The second project is the *Afghanistan Monitor*, a separate MAI project linked editorially to the current *Essential Field Guide to Afghanistan*, which is being updated for re-publishing in October 2002. The *Afghanistan Monitor* will be distributed both in print and on the net as an independent report seeking to enhance public accountability, transparency and coordination of the international aid and security process in Afghanistan.

### **1. Training Programme for Novice Afghan Journalists with the Recovery and Peacebuilding Magazine for Secondary Schools**

With the 'experienced' journalism courses now in place, MAI and IWPR are seeking to implement the novice journalism project as soon as possible, hopefully by September 2002. The idea is to select between 20-25 candidates, primarily young Afghans with secondary or some form of college education. There will be a calldown requesting candidates to write one essay explaining why they wish to become journalists and a

second essay focusing on a specific a subject, such as health, peacebuilding, or the environment.

Once chosen, candidates will receive basic journalism training with particular emphasis on recovery and peacebuilding issues. As part of their training, they will produce their own monthly magazine or newsletter in Farsi and Pashtu (with some English) which will then be distributed to all secondary schools in Afghanistan. The training process will also help them develop their editorial, layout and production skills. Teachers at the recipient schools will receive teaching aids on how to develop debate around the different subjects published in the magazine. (e.g. What does it mean to develop a fair and more balanced multi-ethnic/tribal society or how should a new Afghanistan be developed?) In this manner, the project will not only help train young Afghans in critical but balanced quality journalism but also provide relevant reading material about the recovery process to high school and university students written by their peers. The National Geographic Society is interested in working with this magazine project once up and running by linking it to their own educational websites for high schools.

MAI and IWPR see the novice project as a crucial media and information initiative for the future of Afghanistan and one which will clearly have a profound impact on young Afghans as an innovative but highly effective media project.

## **2. MAI/CROSSLINES AFGHANISTAN MONITOR: a fortnightly information newsletter in print and on the web promoting public accountability, transparency and coordination of the international aid and recovery process in Afghanistan**

In association with CROSSLINES, the co-publishers of the *Essential Field Guide to Afghanistan*, we are in the process of putting together a 16-page pilot issue. The purpose of this report, which will be based editorially on the Essential Field Guide, is to provide critical and independent information on the international humanitarian, recovery, and peacekeeping process in Afghanistan. As a means of helping to promote greater accountability but also coordination, it will seek to highlight both abuses or weaknesses in the recovery process but also highlight projects and initiatives that are helping make a difference.

The 16-page Monitor will have 3-5 articles written by journalists but also on an "op-ed" (tribune libre) basis by aid or peacebuilding representatives as well as 10 to 12 briefs focusing on everything from health and peacekeeping to drug trafficking, environmental destruction, and road construction. It will also provide pointers to useful reports by other organizations that have just come out for further follow up. Much of the information provided will probably already be in the public domain, but the editors will help 'filter' information in a manner that will enable international aid specialists, donors, journalists, and the Afghan government to have a better grasp of the situation. The report will be produced in English with an Afghan version to be produced in Farsi and Pushto once the international report is firmly established.

Clearly, MAI and CROSSLINES editors have enormous experience with regard to Afghanistan. It is already clear that numerous mistakes and abuses are being committed which urgently need greater public focus, particularly for the donors. For the moment, there is no real and independent public information organ (the UN, the NGOs etc. have accountability mechanisms but none which promote across-the-board transparency) that focuses on the monitoring of accountability and transparency, both issues stressed by

the new Afghan Finance Minister Ahsraf Ghani at the recent Afghan Support Group meeting in Geneva on 11 July 2002. As often happens, there are excellent accountability reports produced long after the fact when it is generally too late to do anything about it.

Once the Afghanistan Monitor is up and running, the editors also intend to produce longer-term monitoring reports on the humanitarian, recovery and peacebuilding sectors, possibly in conjunction with other organizations. We would present new budgets for these investigative reports once we are happy that the Monitor is operating as it should. The idea, however, is to ensure that the information reaches all concerned - aid workers, donors, government officials, journalists, etc. – as the public's – right to transparency by the international and local actors involved with Afghanistan.

If the *Afghanistan Monitor* succeeds as we intend, MAI and CROSSLINES hope to use this report as a template for the monitoring of future humanitarian crises, conflict and post-conflict situations. MAI/CROSSLINES would like to establish a Collegial Support Group for the Afghanistan Monitor consisting of donors, aid agencies, and foundations. The support group will recognize the need for such an editorially independent monitoring organ.

### 3.3 Strategic approach to the contribution of the media in peacebuilding

by Roland Brunner, Medienhilfe

#### 3.3.1 The contribution of Media in Peacebuilding

In a world of modern communication, media are the means and tools to understand our realities. Professional media dedicate themselves to raise the awareness about the complexity of life. The pluralism of opinion and analysis has to be reflected by a pluralism of media. Especially in situations of conflict or crisis, independent information and professional communication are crucial to address the problems and help to find a constructive way out of them. Media can facilitate conflict resolution by properly and responsibly reporting about events and by challenging interests and forces with arguments. Medienhilfe supports professional and independent media in this struggle with the aim of contributing to conflict resolution and peace building.

Illustration 2: The International Media Intervention

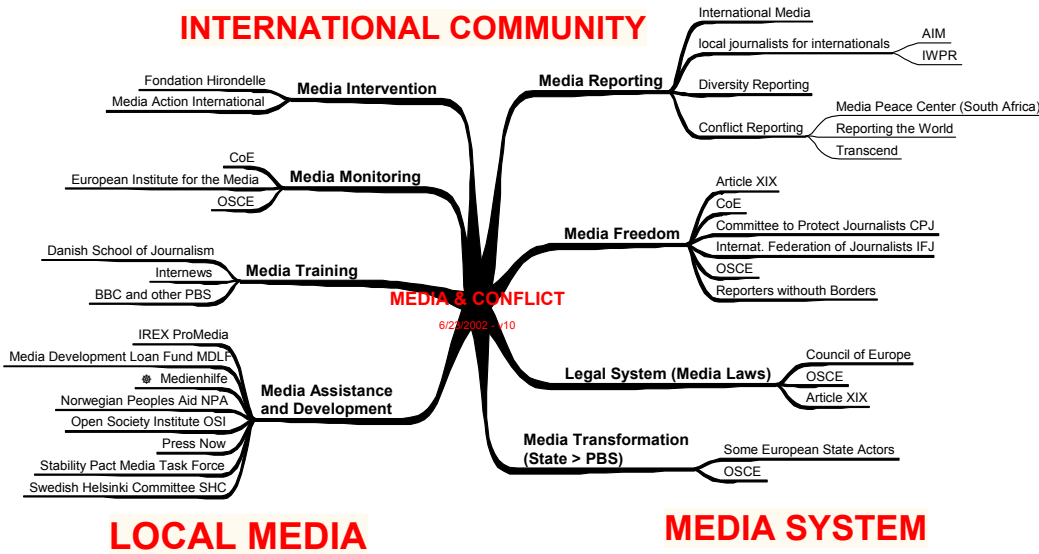
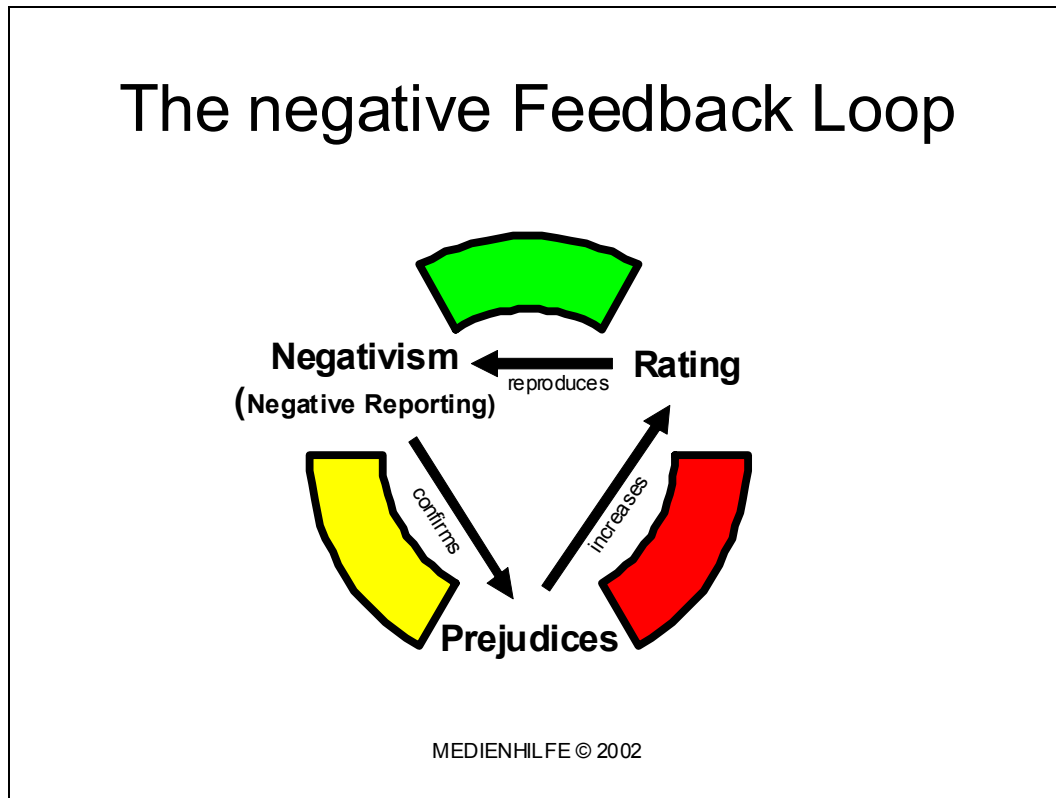


Illustration 3: Breaking the Negative Feedback Loop



### 3.3.2 Medienhilfe's Media assistance and development

#### Presentation of the organization

Medienhilfe was founded in 1992 as a Swiss non-governmental and non-profit organization, with the aim to support the independent media and freedom of press in the area of the former Yugoslavia. Medienhilfe has established permanent contacts and co-operation with a number of independent media organizations in the area. Over 80 media organizations have been supported, among them 4 networks composed of a number of particular media or infrastructure projects used by more media.

Fields of our activities include the following:

- Direct support to independent media organizations in the area of the former Yugoslavia, which includes Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina (both the Federation of B-H and Serb Republic), Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia.
- Research and analytical work: reports and analyses of media issues in the region as well as a position and a role of media in a broader social context; action research on specific issues related media; reports and analyses of alternative sector (NGOs).

- Strategy and policy papers and counseling on media issues in SEE for governmental (Swiss, German, Irish) and inter-governmental (EU, Stability Pact) structures as well as for Swiss NGOs.
- Public activities: a) Bulletin (quarterly); b) Website with a variety of information in regard to media in the region; c) Organizing special meetings with prominent media and NGO representatives from the area and representatives of the Swiss authorities; d) Organizing public events with media and NGO representatives from the area of the former Yugoslavia.

Medienhilfe is member of the Media Task Force of the Stability Pact. In 2000 as member of the pool of the implementing organizations for realization of the emergency support package for independent media in Serbia initiated by the Stability Pact we implemented the funds made available by the Swiss and the Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Medienhilfe Ex-Jugoslawien is member of the expert team who drafted a strategy and policy paper for the EC support program for independent media in SEE in the next 6 years. The team included representatives of NGOs, governments (e.g. USA and Denmark), private foundation (OSI), Stability Pact and EC. Our contribution consisted of designing strategies for two among several defined priority fields: 1. minority media and 2. (co-)productions. The paper served as the basis for designing a strategy paper for support in media field of the Stability Pact, adopted at the meeting of the Media Task Force in Brussels on October 10.

### **Our strategic approach**

Medienhilfe perceives its support as an offer for partnership with professional media in South East Europe, but also here in Switzerland. The building of professional bridges shall contribute to reduce prejudices and to provide information, which exceeds that offered by news agencies.

Medienhilfe Ex-Jugoslawien cooperates directly with the local media outlets to be granted. Even in periods when we do not have grants being realized we have permanent contact with the partners and regularly receive from them information on important developments (be it positive or negative) effecting their work, periodical progress reports, plans and projects for further development, etc. We provide them all other kind of support apart from funding: consulting, moral encouragement, assessment of their projects, inputs for their long-term plans, suggestions for solution of difficulties, contacts to other donors and alike. This cooperation becomes more intensive and strictly structured based on contract obligations for a period when concrete projects that we support are being realized.

Medienhilfe sees its engagement fully in line with the policy declared in the message to the parliament ("Botschaft über einen Rahmenkredit für Massnahmen zur zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung und Menschenrechtsförderung"): „Die Vorstellung, man könne Frieden von aussen in eine Konfliktregion importieren ist illusorisch. Beiträge zu Friedensprozessen sind nur dann nachhaltig, wenn sie von den Bedürfnissen der Menschen in der Konfliktregion ausgehen und die Verantwortung für den Friedensprozess bei den betroffenen Parteien belassen.“

Medienhilfe elaborates and implements all its projects in cooperation with its partners based on their needs and interests. Partners and projects are carefully assessed before being elected for support.

Besides direct financial and material support Medienhilfe offers its partners professional assistance and counseling (organizational development, media-monitoring, and publications) as well as access to Swiss media.

During crisis situations, when media and journalists are directly threatened, Medienhilfe intervenes on behalf of them at the responsible authorities and informs the international organizations in charge of these issues.

### **Criteria for the selection of our partners**

- Media who are not owned or controlled by state or para-state structures, by political parties or individual politicians
- Media whose editorial policy is independent
- Media whose coverage complies with the professional and ethical standards of a responsible journalism
- Media whose coverage and language takes a clear stand against nationalism and chauvinism
- Media who contribute to political understanding and dialogue, peaceful cohabitation and social tolerance
- Media who actively promote civil society and democratization processes
- Media who look for cooperation beyond the ethnical, religious and national borders
- Media who give minorities a voice

### **Cooperation and Support**

Medienhilfe relies on the following resources and networks for a successful implementation of its programs:

- advisory board consisting of personalities from the field of media, science and politics
- network of Swiss authorities and non-governmental organizations
- international institutions like the European Union and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (being a member of its Media Task Force)
- international coordination of media organizations which besides Medienhilfe include:
  - IREX ProMedia (USA)
  - Media Development Loan Fund MDLF (Prague)
  - Open Society Institute – Network Media Program (Budapest) as well as the Open Society's
  - Foundations in every country of the area
  - Press Now (Holland)
  - Norwegian People's Aid NPA
  - Swedish Helsinki Committee SHC

Medienhilfe receives financial support from:

- two sections of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, i.e. the Political Division IV and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Swiss cities and communities
- Swiss NGOs and foundations
- Individual contributions and donations
- Foreign governments through their MFAs and international foundations like the National Endowment for Democracy NED or the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation

### 3.3.3 Issues of concern / for discussion

Working with local partners on systemic issues for the high goal of peacebuilding needs a mid- to long-term approach and commitment. We have to deal with several challenges:

- As media can easily be defined as early warning mechanisms, we are often in the position to see a crisis coming up before the development is perceived also by the embassies or the MFA, as the flow of information here is more often based on official communication and information. In the past we were warning the upcoming conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia long ahead the armed clashes and intensive fighting. Nevertheless it was not possible to mobilize funds for preventive action, as our warnings were considered as painting in black while all was going fine.
- Once a conflict escalates to a crisis, the will to do something is immediately given and funds are made available. New players come in, not having any background and expertise about the particular conflict, but immediately offering their services and projects to solve the problems with some quick-fix solutions. Systemic analyze of the conflict and partner-based approaches to strengthen local capacities easily get lost if not carefully considered in the urgent action measures.
- As soon as the worst seems having gone, the conflict is declared ended and the funding disappears. Many organizations in that moment start talking about "exit strategies", but all too often local partners are left with exit only and no strategy at all. Peacebuilding and Media development is not about quick-fix interventions, but working on a sustainable peace, i.e. structures that sustain also without permanent international pressure. Building bridges of understanding, challenging social and political stereotypes, developing inter-cultural, inter-ethnic, cross-border cooperation needs a mid- to long-term strategy and funding.

In its message to the parliament ("Botschaft über einen Rahmenkredit für Massnahmen zur zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung und Menschenrechtsförderung"), the Swiss MFA states:

„Die bisherigen Mittel konnten zudem nur jeweils im Rahmen von Verpflichtungen verwendet werden, deren Laufzeit sich auf ein Jahr beschränkte. Dieser Modus hat sich als unpraktikabel erwiesen. Er widerspricht der Überzeugung, dass wirkungsvolle friedens- und menschenrechtsfördernde Massnahmen mindestens in einer mittelfristigen Perspektive geplant und umgesetzt werden müssen.“

Medienhilfe supports this statement and demand fully. If this is true for the MFA, it is even more so for the NGOs being carrier of the project work and the partners realizing them. We hope the new law will bring here a better situation for all sides involved – in the name of efficient and sustainable peace-building.

### 3.4 The media in crisis zones: intervention or backup?

*by Jean-Marie Etter, President of the Fondation Hironnelle*

For several years now, Fondation Hironnelle has been setting up non-partisan independent media in crisis or war zones.

Do these efforts contribute directly to peace-making? Should they be viewed as a full-fledged means – one among many – of bringing peace to a zone torn by war, or suffering the after-effects of armed conflict? Or should they be seen as targeted backup to other measures in a peace process - a program on anti-personnel mines to inform the population of how to deal with this hazard, for example?

Past experience teaches us that independent media are among the most effective and direct ways to restore or institute peace. I would like to outline several considerations that explain how this direct mechanism operates, before highlighting two or three points in greater detail, so as to dispel any possible misunderstandings.

*For warring parties, information control is a weapon.* Informing a population that finds itself the victim of armed conflict, or party to it, is a powerful instrument for the parties that actively foment this conflict. Authoritarian regimes habitually introduce a government monopoly on the electronic media.<sup>4</sup> In the event of war, the parties involved attempt to assume control over them. If and when they succeed, these become purely a means of propaganda. In extreme cases, a controlled radio – controlled directly or indirectly – may become a “hate radio”. A similar development may affect the press or television. The presence of a local<sup>5</sup>, independent, rigorous, trustworthy, professional information medium radically transforms the position of the other, controlled media. In our experience, even a population that rallies strongly around a national, ethnic or other cause, will spot the fact that a medium is credible, and turn to it for information. This in turn influences the controlled media. Let me give you an example. An army unit has fired at a group of displaced persons in a camp, killing five, and wounding a dozen others. When the group in power controls the media, the official radio station will not mention the event at all, or it will state that two persons were slightly wounded. Popular rumour, on the other hand, especially among the victims, will speak of dozens of dead and wounded. Such a rumoured massacre will become another “casus belli”, generating even greater aggression and thirst

<sup>4</sup> In many countries, the impact of the electronic media is still considerably greater than that of the print media, which unlike radio are relatively expensive for the average citizen and suffer from distribution problems. Moreover, certain countries continue to have a high illiteracy rate.

<sup>5</sup> Only a local radio station, in the local idiom, which devotes its entire program to the region, and offers comprehensive information on the targeted population, is able to play a significant role. Though short wave international stations have significant impact, the nature of this impact differs.

for revenge. An independent radio station that broadcasts true information – and this of course is no easy task – will force the controlled media to report events more adequately. It will also curtail rumour, by limiting the distortion of events to propagandistic ends.<sup>6</sup>

*An independent medium makes it possible for various groups to understand or at least take notice of their respective situations.* One of the effects of war and information control is that one part of the population involved in or subject to a conflict does not perceive the situation of the other or others. These populations are often not alien to each other; in fact they may have close historical links, ancient or recent, conflict-ridden as these may be.<sup>7</sup> Independent media – such as Radio OKAPI in the Democratic Republic of the Congo - enable them to rediscover what they have in common. Sadly enough, what they invariably share are their sufferings and hatred of war.

*An independent medium paves the way for other media.* In crisis situations where information is partially controlled, the main danger confronting local media is that they may risk retaliation by the powers that be if they disseminate information that these consider unfavourable. Intimidation, arrest, torture are frequently the result, as confirmed by the reports of such organisations in defence of free speech as the US “Committee to Protect Journalists” or “Reporters sans frontières”.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, an independent medium that enjoys international support is sometimes in a position to disseminate such information. Other local media follow suit: what has once been said is no longer a secret, and everyone may speak of it openly.

*An independent medium restores the dignity of the audience.* Populations caught up in an armed conflict often see their dignity trampled upon, and are denied such basic human rights as safety, housing, work, and free movement, to name just these. In fact, what war or armed conflict deprives them of is their human dignity. A radio program that obeys rigorous standards, which takes the audience into account, and is designed and realised for its benefit, is viewed as a mark of respect. This important factor, one of the main objectives of Fondation Hironnelle, is one of the main reasons for the popularity of the stations sponsored by it.

*A medium with maximum impact.* Regardless of what “direct” measures may be implemented for peace, it is likely that their direct impact will be smaller than that of a medium, provided that it reaches the population. A radio station, for example, reaches half

<sup>6</sup> Arbitrary, authoritarian and lawless structures as means of wielding power are factors that contribute to war. Independent media confront them head on. Crises of ethnic, national or religious identity, poverty, the economic or political interests of more powerful nations, may be other causes of armed conflict. Independent media contribute to peace in these areas, through magazines, forums, mediatory radio plays, publications that support international organisations or NGOs, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda.

<sup>8</sup> The problem is not the professional skills of local journalists, or their compliance with deontological principles such as rigour or truth: on the contrary, in all countries we have worked in, journalists often take risks we respect and admire. But no journalist can do rigorous independent work without an independent medium in which to make himself heard.

or more of the target population individually and without any go-betweens. Its audience trusts it – given of course that it is not being manipulated and is respected.

These considerations should make more than apparent how important media are as a direct tool to restore peace. I would nonetheless like to add a few supplementary comments.

As shown by the Fondation Hironnelle's 1978 Cartigny conference, the battle that journalists wage in conflict zones to protect or restore independent information is based on the *right to information*.<sup>9</sup>

The notion of "*direct contribution to peace*" seems to apply only to countries or zones where conflict is overt. In reality, we are usually confronted with situations that are not nearly as clear cut. A country that has just emerged from a conflict may remain highly volatile, accumulating a number of risk factors: poverty, bad governance, latent ethnic or social conflicts that have not been resolved, etc. The "post-conflict" situation may thus be very similar to the situation that preceded the conflict. In this case, the independent media may assume a fundamental role. Although the country or zone concerned may not be perceived as being at war at the time of the intervention, I consider this a direct contribution to peace.

Finally, according to our experience, one cannot always distinguish between *emergency and development interventions*. Acting to restore peace may be viewed as an emergency humanitarian intervention. In fact, the Fondation Hironnelle usually acts in situations in which few other media-related players intervene, the conditions for a "normal" intervention no longer being given: war, acute conflict and general insecurity make it impossible to implement more traditional media development projects. Such conditions may be chronic, however, with economic hardship, the external political environment, and bad infrastructure generating at least as many problems as armed conflict. In such cases, an independent radio station may fulfil a vital function, even when it is not based on a development approach alone, as might be the case of a community radio project in another country.<sup>10</sup> But regardless of how they are classified, projects involving radio broadcasts, which are vital to a functioning society, should be addressed and fostered.

<sup>9</sup> In this respect, it is important to note that the Fondation Hironnelle does not aim to create foreign media in crisis zones, but to meet the population's need for non-partisan information. To do so, local journalists must have access to stable and independent media. Where these do not exist, we work with the journalists to set them up.

<sup>10</sup> Radio Ndeke Luka, in Bangui, has already experienced two armed conflicts since it acquired the backing of the Fondation Hironnelle. But it also fills an immense need for information, media and – in a wider sense – respect, among a forgotten population.

## 4 Recommendations

The presentations of experts and the inputs of Media NGOs were intensively debated during the workshop. The discussion focused mainly on strategic questions of media assistance, funding procedures, the issue of impact and monitoring, and future needs. The following section summarizes these discussions and highlights the main recommendations of the workshop participants.

### 1. Strategic questions on media assistance for peacebuilding

#### Generally

It became quite clear that every conflict takes place in a specific context. Therefore media assistance has to be adapted to the specific country and conflict constellation. There are no ready-made tools of media for peacebuilding.

However the process of conceptualizing media assistance for peacebuilding has to follow a clear priority and comprises the following steps:

- *Proper analysis of the conflict setting*  
It is of high priority to analyze the conflict, its root and proximate causes, the actors and to assess the opportunities for reducing violent conflict and strengthening peace
- *Analysis of media situation/Media inventory*  
This analysis of the whole media sector needs to be done, to have a complete picture of shortcomings and problems of the media situation
- *Decision on opportunities of intervention*  
On the base of these analyses a decision on media assistance and its specific activities can be taken
- *Selection of partners*  
The analyses also provide support for the appropriate selection of local or international partners for media assistance

#### Economic viability

The requirement for economic viability plays a growing role in international media assistance projects. Projects have to keep this in mind. However it cannot be the only and paramount objective. It depends on the specific situation of the country and the media sector how much external support is needed for a longer time.

#### Exit strategies

In countries where media assistance will be reduced, an exit strategy is necessary. If donors just exit without having a strategy much of the rehabilitation of the media already done will be left too fast and maybe destroyed.

#### Need for long-term commitment

Any donor commitment should have a longer time-frame, as media assistance normally doesn't produce quick results, but generates its effects in the long run.

## 2. Practical questions

### Funding procedures

Financial support for media projects should be adapted to this longer time perspective. Only short-term funding often distracts NGOs work, absorbs too much capacity and impedes effective implementation of project activities.

The *selection of partners* in the countries of question is sometimes quite difficult. It would be helpful to exchange different experiences and to generate lessons learned.

## 3. Impact of media assistance for peacebuilding

### Further research

The measurement of the impact of media activities on peacebuilding needs further research. The challenge is to concretely define the impact of media activities and to develop tools to assess it. Workshop participants mentioned the need to know more about the results of media activities and to have more case studies on its effects on the population.

### Formulating milestones and indicators

Furthermore it was brought up the idea to formulate some "milestones" in the long way to the overall objective "contribution to peacebuilding" These could be simple issues to reach, that are relevant to the peacebuilding process. (for example: increase of audience, increase in specific content broadcasted, audience's knowledge of specific issue has been extended).

The necessity was mentioned to review intensively the impact chain and to distinguish between various media tools, as different activities are acting on different paths: a non-partisan news service has probably other effects than a soap opera, intending better inter-ethnic understanding; or background war crimes series works in a different way and other audiences as "phone-in radio programmes".

## 4. Need

Out of these challenges a clear need evolves to

- have more case studies examined, in order to gain better understanding of processes around media projects and generate lessons learnt,
- put extra effort into developing indicators and support implementing impact measurement, at least in some strategic projects.

This effort should help the media sector to improve its impact on peacebuilding.

## 5. Open questions

It has been left unclear, if generally too much emphasis has been put to the post-conflict situation and far too less to the pre-conflict, latent conflict situation.

The contribution/preference of media assistance for peacebuilding in comparison to other peacebuilding activities has not been touched by the discussion. Apparently, the question can hardly be discussed before better understanding of media's impact has been acquired.

Also the coherence between short-term and long-term requirements needs further discussion.

## 5 List of Participants

- André Loersch, Cimera
- Anne Gloor, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
- Christoph Spurk, Strategieberatung für Medien
- Dario Baroni, Fondation Hirondelle
- Edward Girardet, Media Action International
- Edouard Markiewiez, Media Action International
- Jean-Marie Etter, Fondation Hirondelle
- Marielu D'Onofrio, Media Action International
- Mark Thompson, Consultant, Oxford
- Markus Heiniger, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
- Michael Lund, Management Systems International and Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.
- Nena Skopljanac, Medienhilfe
- Roland Brunner, Medienhilfe
- Roland Salvisberg, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
- Thania Paffenholz, Center for Peacebuilding (KOFF) / swisspeace
- Thomas Greminger, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)

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