PUBLISHED VERSION

Skuse AJ. **Working with the media in conflicts and other emergencies.** UK Department for International Development. 2000 (Working paper)

Published version:
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128103201/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/chad-media.pdf

Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

http://hdl.handle.net/2440/91049

Working with the Media in Conflicts and other Emergencies

ACRONYMS

AEP	Afghan Education Projects
AM	Amplitude Modulation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CHAD	Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
FM	Frequency Modulation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiancy Syndrome
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAGAD	People Against Gangsterism and Drugs
RTLM	Radio-télévision libre des mille collines
SDD	Social Development Department
UN	United Nations
US	United States (of America)
UXO	Unexploded Ordinance

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

For people who are caught up in conflict and other emergencies, the need for information is often acute. Frequently, they are separated from their families, lack shelter and adequate food, and are scared and confused by the events occurring around them. Media programming tailored to the needs of such people can provide an essential information lifeline. At the same time, the media can play a role in efforts to actively prevent and resolve conflicts, and support post conflict peace-building.

This guide has been produced by DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department and Social Development Department to serve as a reference point for DFID staff and partner bilateral and multilateral development agencies. It aims to provide geographical desk officers and sectoral advisers with a resource to strengthen both their understanding of the role media can play in conflict and other emergency situations and the options open to them for supporting practical initiatives.

DFID's Governance Department is producing guidance on longer-term assistance to the media. Provisionally entitled "The Media in Good Governance: Developing Free and Effective Media to serve the Interests of the Poor" this is expected to be published later in 2000.

1. INTRODUCTION: WHY SUPPORT MEDIA IN CONFLICTS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES?

1.1   MEDIA AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

DFID's humanitarian assistance policy aims to save lives and relieve suffering; protect and rebuild livelihoods and communities; and reduce risks and vulnerability to future crises.

Support to media initiatives can play an important role in meeting these aims. DFID can support initiatives that provide humanitarian information for the many. Societies experiencing conflict and other emergencies tend to be 'information poor' and initiatives that provide information on relief activities, health, hygiene, sanitation, landmines and reconstruction, play an important role in helping communities to help themselves.

1.2   MEDIA AND CONFLICT REDUCTION

DFID's conflict reduction policy aims to build the political and social means to enable the equitable representation of different interest groups, promotion of all human rights, and resolution of disputes and grievances without recourse to violence.

DFID can support the mass media to play an enhanced role in conflict reduction. Media initiatives can help build peace in certain situations, by using their wide appeal and popularity in a mediating role, by strengthening civil society or by actively targeting the causes of conflict, such as misunderstanding of 'the enemy'.

Local and national media can also play an extremely negative role in inciting people to violence, hatred and ethnic intolerance. Here, DFID and other donors have a part to play in supporting more positive, accurate and tolerant media approaches.

1.3   AIM OF THE GUIDE

The main purpose of this guide is to highlight some of the benefits, challenges and options when considering funding of media and communication interventions. This publication is not designed to be a 'how to' guide for designing and implementing such programmes. Rather, it aims to guide DFID staff, responding to conflicts and other emergencies, on:

- When to support media initiatives.
- What types of assistance to provide to media organisations.
- How to appraise and monitor media based interventions.

Thematically, most attention is given to the role of media in conflict situations as this is where most experience has been gained to date. However, sections on natural and man-made disasters are also included. Furthermore, the main focus is on electronic media, such as local, national and international radio and TV broadcasting. This focus has been adopted because the bulk of media initiatives undertaken in areas of conflict fall within these categories.

Non-electronic forms of communication such as posters, theatre groups, oral performance and dance are not considered here, but are recognised as performing a no-less valuable role in certain conflict situations. Likewise, little attention is paid to new technologies such as the Internet because existing technologies such as radio and the printed press clearly remain the dominant means of communication in poor, conflict ridden countries.

1.4   SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Key points highlighted in the guide include:

- Communications may be disrupted during conflicts and other emergencies and using media is often the only way to reach large numbers of civilians.

- Those in the greatest need depend on the most traditional and universal means of receiving information, usually radio. The challenge is to facilitate the making of radio programmes (and other print/video media interventions) which closely reflect the target populations' needs during times of conflict or other emergency.

- Different forms of humanitarian emergency can require very different kinds of media intervention. Media initiatives can play an important role in conflict reduction, imparting essential humanitarian information and in building a stronger civil society.

- Media based initiatives in conflicts and other emergency situations can best be achieved by creating partnerships between donors, humanitarian agencies and both local and international media practitioners.

- The mass media has the ability to reach large numbers of people effectively and cheaply. The cost of single projects can vary from £10,000 to £500,000+ per annum depending on their focus and scope.

1.5   USING THE GUIDE

This guide is laid out in a simple manner that follows three main steps. Following this brief introduction, the question of when media should be used in support of meeting humanitarian needs or conflict reduction is tackled within **Section 2**. Clear intervention frameworks are supplied that address four common conflict and humanitarian situations. These frameworks can be used to quickly identify the type of media interventions that are of most relevance to the situation at hand and some of the risks and assumptions surrounding such activities.

In **Section 3**, an examination of the types of assistance DFID can provide to media in conflict and other emergency situations is undertaken. This looks at supporting balanced and objective reporting, provision of humanitarian information, targeted peace-building initiatives through media and wider development of free and independent media in conflict prone countries. **Section 4** looks at how to appraise and monitor media interventions within these areas.

Sections 5-7 provide case studies and more detailed discussion of key issues. There is also a glossary of media formats relevant to conflict and humanitarian related programming. **Section 8** of the guide provides a resource of contact organisations that can be drawn upon for further advice, as well as a list of current DFID positions working in the fields of media and communications, conflict and humanitarian assistance. References and further reading are listed in **Section 9**.

The DFID 'Intranet' version of the guide will be periodically updated to take account of new case studies and emerging lessons.

2. WHEN SHOULD DFID SUPPORT MEDIA IN CONFLICTS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES?

For the purpose of this guide, four broad areas are considered which often require very different types of media intervention. These are latent conflict, open conflict, post-conflict and non-conflict related disasters. For each of these four scenarios an intervention framework is supplied that highlights key warning signs, the information needs that are likely to exist within this type of situation, the types of interventions that could be undertaken and finally, the risks and assumptions associated with such activities. The frameworks are ideal types to illustrate the range of interventions which are possible. They are not exhaustive but designed for quick and easy reference and to guide readers to other relevant sections.

2.1   LATENT CONFLICT

Political, religious, economic or ethnic tensions are a feature of many societies in the developed and developing world. Such tensions are increasingly being focused on by the media and peace-building organisations because they often ignite more acute forms of conflict.

In Macedonia, where ethnic tensions resulting from the Kosovo crisis remain acute, creative children's' television drama produced by Search for Common Ground has been used to draw young people from ethnic groups together so as to begin a positive inter-ethnic dialogue.

INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK 1: LATENT CONFLICT

Warning signs
- Political, economic and ethnic tensions
- Local civil unrest
- Weak state and local authorities
- Rights infringements
- Press censorship
- Harassment of journalists

Needs
- Access to accurate and impartial news
- Communication between rival factions
- Dialogue between government and people
- Human rights based information
- Awareness of conflict mediation and resolution mechanisms

Interventions
- Research and analysis of existing news and information sources: objectivity, role etc.
- Research information needs of people in conflict areas and their sources of news
- Support balanced news programming via local and/or trans-national media
- Support grassroots involvement and training in peace-orientated programming in community radio, TV and press
- Support programming aimed at promoting inter-ethnic understanding and tolerance
- Establish mechanisms to monitor media

Risks and assumptions
- Ability to research information sources of at-risk populations
- Willingness of credible local and/or international media to disseminate humanitarian information
- Qualified technical assistance available
- Viable partnerships with NGOs and CBOs
- An appreciation by funders of the value of media-based projects

2.2 OPEN CONFLICT

Violent conflict in developing countries is often characterised by use of light weapons and a blurring of the distinction between combatants and civilians. Such conflicts are increasingly waged by opposing groups through civilian populations such as in the Liberian and Sierra Leone conflicts.

Open conflict can pass through both acute phases, with high levels of violence, and chronic phases of lower intensity conflict with generalised insecurity. Interventions which are possible vary accordingly. During more acute phases, media initiatives may be limited to provision of humanitarian information and supporting objective reporting. Lower intensity conflict may provide more opportunities for peace-building initiatives through the media.

For the past six years, the DFID-funded BBC World Service Afghan Education Projects unit has been broadcasting a popular radio drama to Afghanistan that covers issues such as landmine awareness, hygiene, sanitation, conflict reduction, reducing violence against women, small enterprise initiatives and agricultural productivity. Aside from radio drama, BBC AEP produce factual broadcasts and a cartoon journal based upon the drama's storylines. Their multi-media approach to informing and disseminating crucial messages is one that is especially powerful given the low capacity of the Afghan media environment and the high levels of state censorship and media regulation.

INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK 2: OPEN CONFLICT

Warning signs
- Open conflict between combatants driven by specific causes and goals
- Widespread human rights atrocities
- Forced migration, internal displacement
- Infrastructure destruction, food insecurity
- Deterioration in public health
- High media regulation and censorship

Needs - *As 'Latent Conflict' framework plus:*
- Impartial and accurate news
- Targeted information on health, food, shelter, mines awareness, international humanitarian law, NGO activities
- Development of sound understanding of media uses and preferences
- Peace building strategies at community level and peace-orientated programming

Interventions - *As 'Latent Conflict' plus:*
- Support to local and international media for dissemination of balanced news and humanitarian information
- Training in objective reporting, humanitarian reporting and Peace-orientated programming
- Support for development of peace-orientated programming
- on local radio/TV
- Provision of radios, broadcasting equipment etc.

Risks and assumptions - *As 'Latent Conflict' plus:*
- Willingness of local broadcasters and NGOs to co-operate
- Security situation allows distribution & monitoring to occur
- Journalists and peace-building organisations prepared to collaborate

2.3   POST-CONFLICT

When peace agreements are reached, efforts to sustain peace-building and enhance reconciliation and reconstruction are crucial. Media interventions can take the form of:

•   Media training, especially in the fields of impartial or inter-ethnic news reporting. This is news reporting that adequately reflects the ethnic make-up of a country and the true diversity of opinions.

•   Programming aimed at sustaining peace through building support for peace agreements and focusing on reconciliation.

- Supporting development of free media through policy and legislative reform and other measures.

In 1997 Common Ground Productions began producing radio programmes for national and community radio stations, such as Star Radio, at its Talking Drum Studio in Monrovia, Liberia. Its programming has supported the electoral process and has sought to strengthen civil society and democratisation by promoting peace, conflict mediation and reconciliation. In support of these goals it produces programmes on women's issues, traditional storytelling, rural society, traditional music, talk shows, radio dramas, children and refugees and returnees.

INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK 3: POST-CONFLICT

Warning signs
- Transitional status
- Relaxing regulation of media
- Easing of censorship
- Expanding infrastructure and developing media capacity
- NGO's and civil society expanding

Needs - *As 'Open Conflict' plus:*
- Development of local media capacity
- Consolidation of peace building strategies involving media
- to facilitate dialogue between the authorities and civilians

Interventions - *As 'Open Conflict' plus:*
- Increased emphasis on training media workers in conflict
- areas in news reporting, the media's role in reconstruction
- of society and in use of media for peace building
- Support to development of a new media environment and
- regulatory framework
- Development of local media development agency to build local and national media pluralism

Risks and assumptions - *As 'Open Conflict' plus:*
- Appropriate training expertise available
- International community able to influence new media regulations and frameworks
- Funders recognise that quality, as well as diversity of media output, is critical in rebuilding civil society

2.4 NON CONFLICT RELATED DISASTERS

Media interventions can also play an important role in non-conflict related disasters. Humanitarian information plays a critical role because it can help communities respond to emergencies and thus reduce their impact. For example, humanitarian information programmes can help to prevent the spread of disease and provide advice regarding emergency relief activities in the post-emergency phase.

Both local and national radio broadcasters in the developing world play an important role in the immediate and post-disaster phases, providing self-help information designed to assist people in rebuilding their communities and economic activities.

In Bangladesh flooding is a seasonal feature of life. This is often devastating, causing many fatalities, leaving crops and homes destroyed, spreads disease and society struggling to rebuild itself. During recent severe flooding the national radio broadcasting station, Bangladesh Betar, played an important role in raising awareness of the dangers of water-borne disease and in promoting information on water purification and oral rehydration for those suffering from diarrhoea. During the emergency, Bangladesh Betar's output was modified, with news, factual and public service programmes increased to meet the high public demand for information on emergency relief operations and rehabilitation.

INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK 4: RAPID ONSET DISASTERS

Warning signs
- Disruptions to traditional coping mechanisms, declines in agricultural production and food stocks, displacement from the land, congregation at feeding centres and camps
- Disease vectors and mortality rates increase

Needs
- Need for rapidly deployed information concerning impending emergencies, evacuation strategies, humanitarian information and relief activities

Interventions
- Dissemination of humanitarian information
- Changes in normal broadcast schedules to increase news and public announcements, information on disaster mitigation, relief activities, sanitation, disease and rehabilitation
- Provision of radios and broadcasting infrastructure
- Scientific data can be used to warn of rapid onset disasters

Risks and assumptions

- Inability of developing world media systems to respond to rapid onset disasters
- Inability to effectively implement evacuation and rapid assistance plans
- Reliance on developed world for scientific data concerning disasters
- Existence of rapid broadcasting deployment units

3. WHAT TYPES OF ASSISTANCE CAN DFID PROVIDE TO THE MEDIA IN CONFLICTS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES?

The purpose of this section is to describe types of media intervention which DFID can fund. Four broad areas of activity are defined which include supporting:

- objective and balanced reporting
- provision of humanitarian information
- targeted peace-building initiatives through media
- development of free, independent and responsible media in conflict prone countries

Examples of practical support DFID can provide in each of these areas are given below, along with advantages and risks of intervening.

3.1 SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE AND BALANCED REPORTING

Mass media can help to deliver a flow of objective and accurate news and comment to people caught up in conflicts. This provides communities with a basis on which to take decisions in response to the crisis affecting them. Objective reporting can also counter propaganda and hate messages which fuel conflict. Access to objective and balanced reporting can be enhanced through support to both local and international media.

3.1.1 LOCAL MEDIA

The rationale for supporting local media is that local news programming may be more informed and receive a wider audience than international broadcasters. Though local news outlets are likely to come under severe pressure to toe the line of the ruling faction who are in control during conflicts, local news coverage tends to be more attuned to the subtleties of local politics. In addition, where the freedoms exist to do so, local journalism can play a critical role in placing pressure upon combatants by exposing human rights atrocities and in defending marginalised or threatened groups.

Examples of practical support:

- Training of local journalists in both standard journalism skills and in issues of editorial balance.

- Seminars, exchange visits etc. to reflect on the role of local media.

- Provision of equipment/other support to enhance quality of production and extent of coverage of radio/TV/newspaper output.

Advantages:

- Building up the skills of local journalists.

- Editorial standards monitored by expatriates without a stake in the local political situation.

- A degree of expatriate 'protection' available to local journalists who would otherwise be liable to pressure from local vested interests.

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE AND BALANCED REPORTING:
THE LOCAL MEDIA APPROACH

In Liberia, Fondation Hirondelle set up Star Radio broadcasting on FM in the election year of 1997. Because the station was popular and editorially independent, it incurred harassment from the newly elected government of Charles Taylor, and was forced off the air for a while. It has never been able to gain the planned short wave frequencies, therefore its broadcasts cannot be heard throughout the country. However, Star Radio has provided a benchmark against which President Taylor's commitment to basic human rights and building a civil society in Liberia can be measured.

Risks:

- The radio station management is vulnerable to a range of bureaucratic pressure - visas, frequencies, taxation, employment restrictions - should the broadcasts displease the authorities.

- In the absence of high editorial standards - particularly in local languages whose nuances are often difficult to monitor - the station can fall foul of local biases which will leave it open to pressure from the authorities.

- Loss of equipment.

- National and community radio stations can easily change hands and be used as negative media channels during times of conflict.

3.1.2 INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Impartial locally produced information can be 'the first casualty' of war. It is often international radio broadcasters such as the BBC World Service that people turn to during times of crisis for reliable news coverage. Research shows that BBC World Service foreign language audiences increase substantially during times of conflict. Also, the BBC World Service extends its news-based broadcasts in the relevant languages when war breaks out (e.g. Arabic at the time of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, Albanian during the Kosovo campaign in 1999). Usually, this is paid for via the core funding mechanisms of the international broadcasters (in the case of the BBC World Service this is a grant-in-aid from the UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

Examples of practical support:

• Seminars for international journalists to reflect on coverage of conflicts and other emergencies.

• Funding to international broadcasters to extend news and information programming to particular regions during crises (e.g. DFID funded the BBC Albania Service to broadcast an additional information programme aimed at refugee children during the Kosovo crisis).

Advantages:

• International broadcasters have good news gathering capacity and the infrastructure to deliver radio broadcasts in over 40 languages. In recent years, they have developed many partnerships to re-broadcast locally.

• International broadcasters can react to crises quickly, often extending their radio and TV programming during times of conflict. Where access is freely given, governments and aid organisations are held more accountable than before.

• International broadcasters have greater freedom to address sensitive issues such as gender, ethnicity, inequality and human rights. International journalism can be of high quality, is more likely to be unbiased and of better technical quality.

Risks:

- Reporters for international news organisations may not be based in the conflict region and TV crews in particular are likely to be parachuted in, and to report in a superficial and dramatic way.

3.2   SUPPORTING PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION

People caught up in conflicts and other emergencies have special information needs. These may include information on:

- Displacement, food and water, health, shelter, security and missing family members.

- The activities of the relief agencies.

- Ways to make their views heard to the international community about their priority needs and to find out how they are being met.

- International humanitarian law and human rights.

Many media interventions that fall within this remit specifically target refugee populations who have been displaced because of conflict or natural disaster. Advances in technology mean that a complete digital radio production studio can now be contained within the files of a portable computer. This provides the means to broadcast to affected populations and reduces the cost, time frame and logistics of such interventions. Increasingly, rapid response information systems are being considered by international agencies in support of their humanitarian assistance programmes.

Examples of practical support:

- Setting up temporary radio production and transmission facilities for affected populations.

- Provision of radios to affected populations.

- Support for production and broadcast of humanitarian information programmes on local and international media.

- Training in the production of humanitarian information programmes.

Advantages:

• Many people can be reached with vital information at low cost.

• Media obtain regular feedback from the victims of conflict.

• Media partnerships with NGOs and INGOs can strengthen the impact of humanitarian operations and ensure that broadcast and print topics are relevant.

• Media projection of humanitarian assistance efforts can reduce misunderstandings and increase support from target populations.

PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION:
RAPID RESPONSE RADIO INTERVENTION

Operation Spear was mounted by Media Action International in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo with DFID and other donor funding. Within three weeks of the Nato Alliance action in Kosovo, a team of Albanian journalists with expatriate assistance had a daily programme of humanitarian information broadcasts running on the state broadcaster, Radio Tirana. The journalists were trained and the programmes made at a production centre made available by the Albanian Media Institute in Tirana. The topics broadcast were all non-political and non-military and dealt with issues relating to the welfare of the displaced Kosovar population which other broadcasters ignored or covered very sparingly. Before the transmission, a rapid (one week) needs assessment was carried out amongst recently arrived Kosovar refugees via focus group discussions. Their priority information needs were ascertained - news of Kosovo, news of missing relations, children's health, information about their immediate future as refugees and so on - as well as their access to radio and newspapers. Subsequent radio programming focused on these information needs. The Albanian model was subsequently replicated in both Macedonia and Kosovo.

Risks:

• Important to understand the culture and the context of the conflict, as well as the genuine priority needs of the people prior to the broadcasts. The necessary research may delay programming.

• Finding reliable local journalists and setting up editorial checking systems in local languages can be time consuming and difficult.

- Striking the right balance of editorial guidance can be difficult: too much editorial control can be resented by local journalists, too little can lead to inaccuracies or boring programmes and publications.

3.3   TARGETED PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES

The media can play an important role as part of broader efforts aimed at peace-building. Peace-building is the generic term that encompasses conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation and post-war reconstruction. Longer term peace-building can be supported by more balanced and objective reporting (see 3.1) and by development of a free and independent media (see 3.4). In addition, specific peace focused media programmes can underpin wider peace initiatives. New York University's Center for War, Peace and News Media, for example, sees the potential peace-building role for media to:

- Counter misconceptions of the 'enemy' and help reduce the level of rumour in society.

- Build confidence amongst warring parties, build consensus and allow 'face saving'.

- Facilitate communication between conflicting parties and provide an outlet for emotional expression.

- Analyse the conflict and educate on the process of conflict resolution.

- Propose options and solutions to the conflict and influence the balance of power in a conflict.

- Promoting dialogue through video: Simunye project, Thokoza township, South Africa.

Simunye translates as 'we are one' and is a project that has drawn political adversaries together through the use of video. Thokoza has a very violent political history and between 1990-94 more than 2,000 people died there, chiefly because of political violence between the ANC and Inkatha. The two main peace builders within the process are two commanders who were former rivals, Thabo Kwaza of the ANC and Wiseman Ndebele of Inkatha. After consulting with the community it was decided to use video as a tool to open a space for dialogue between those in conflict. Thabo and Wiseman each took a video camera and made a film of their interpretation of the

conflict, its causes, and the suffering that both sides had endured. Though the reconciliation process was initially fraught, the Thokoza community came to the conclusion that it was only political rhetoric that was dividing their community and that everyone longed for peace. After this process, cross community groups were set up to mediate on some of the key problems that had divided them.

Examples of practical support:

• Training for journalists on reporting conflict situations and production of peace focused programmes.

• Support for production of peace focused programmes (magazine programmes, dramas etc.) which promote:

  • Inter-ethnic understanding and tolerance.
  • Understanding of peace agreements and conflict root causes.
  • Awareness of international humanitarian law and human rights.

• Seminars and exchange visits for journalists on 'reporting diversity', human rights and other issues.

Advantages:

• The mass media has an unrivalled ability to reach people in conflict areas - it can reach people who are otherwise isolated.

• Media workers trained in conflict resolution skills can help develop the basis for post-conflict civil society.

Risks:

• Difficulties in establishing editorial freedom in conflict areas.

• Careful research and understanding of the local culture and conflict is needed to make useful peace-building media interventions.

• High production standards required to ensure 'required listening/viewing/reading'.

• Constant monitoring required to ensure that the media intervention is being perceived by the target population in a positive way.

- Verifying impact is a problem owing to the difficulty in setting measurable indicators.

- In practice, the journalist and creative media producer may be threatened, perceived as being biased and may have real difficulties in understanding dynamics of conflict.

- It is unclear whether mass media-based peace-building models can tackle the deep rooted structural inequalities which lie at the heart of many conflicts. The distrust may be so deeply rooted that improved media-led communications aimed at resolving misconceptions may make little difference.

Use of creative media:

Humanitarian information and peace orientated programmes, described above, can be carried via entertaining programmes such as radio soap operas or mini-dramas (see Section 7).

SUPPORTING PEACE-BUILDING AND PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION THROUGH RADIO DRAMA

Radio drama is becoming a popular vehicle for imparting information on a very diverse range of issues. Since new storylines are continually being added and developed there is wide scope for the incorporation of many different issues connected with conflict, mediation and reconciliation, as well as a large amount of humanitarian information. For the past six years the BBC World Service has been producing a radio soap opera called New Home, New Life from its Afghan Education Projects (AEP) offices in northern Pakistan. Using Afghan drama writers, producers, technicians, actors and actresses, the production represents a radical and novel intervention within the Afghan media environment. The writers carefully craft dramatic storylines from the broad themes contributed by the production's funders, which cover issues such as clean births, safe motherhood, children in conflict, awareness of landmines, conflict resolution and community participation.

One of the drama's most popular storylines featured the killing of a village elder during a conflict between the drama's two villages over the discovery of valuable artefacts. The story highlighted the inappropriate use of weapons, in this instance that firing an automatic weapon into the air to scare off an enemy can have tragic consequences for others. The storyline raised awareness of the socially responsible handling of automatic weapons and of the tragedy that can surround conflict more generally.

Creative approaches to supporting peace-building and provision of humanitarian information can be useful because:

- Fictional media such as soap opera, drama and mini-dramas can provide combatants and civilians with a safe neutral 'space' through which conflict, human rights, mediation and sensitive humanitarian information can be discussed free from local reference points and therefore recrimination.

- They are usually free from references to specific political, ethnic or religious groups and affiliations and concentrate mainly on key social issues.

- Fictional generalisations enable the maximum number of listeners or viewers to meaningfully engage because there are no specific political, ethnic or religious references to cause offence and the generalisation is broad enough to seem culturally familiar.

- Creative broadcasting is more enjoyable for listeners and captures a high audience if well produced.

They use local writers to translate into local terms very sensitive issues surrounding conflict mediation and reconciliation, as well as international humanitarian law and other human rights conventions.

3.4 SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT OF FREE, INDEPENDENT AND RESPONSIBLE MEDIA IN CONFLICT PRONE COUNTRIES

An independent, lively and widely accessible media is a key part of longer term peace-building and post conflict reconstruction efforts. Independent media can place pressure upon governments by broadcasting news items and features that question the 'official line' or existing government practices. Providing civil society with information on such aspects of governance allows poor people and civil society organisations (CSOs) to advocate on their own behalf in pursuit of better services, such as health and education. Pressuring governments into 'good governance' is an essential long term function of an independent media sector.

This is particularly the case in newly democratic countries emerging from periods of conflict, where institutions may be weak and divided. If the media has a track record in providing news, humanitarian information, features and peace-building

programming, then it is much more likely to develop into a watchdog of civil society in the post-conflict period.

International support in establishing pluralism in media is useful, but it cannot be assumed that an independent media sector will be effective or command widespread credibility. Weak judicial systems, underdeveloped regulatory frameworks for the media, and poor standards of journalism often combine to weaken the effectiveness of the media in emerging democracies. Assistance packages for the media have to identify all these weaknesses and tackle them in an integrated way. Furthermore, in post-conflict societies that are not democratic, there may be little scope to develop an independent media sector, as monopoly of the media by the state is still widely perceived as an essential tool in the exercise of state power. In such cases, donors and CSOs have a role to play in advocating for media sector deregulation and change.

INDEPENDENT RADIO IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa radio has also been used extensively for civic education. But the politicisation of society has had an impact on community broadcasting which has been taken one stage further in a civic and peace building role, and is often an effective voice for community concerns. Bush Radio in Cape Town, for instance, takes an active part in combating the vigilante group PAGAD (People against Gangsterism and Drugs). The station management has successfully avoided local faction leaders using the radio as a platform; it has also taken the bold editorial decision not to report every single instance of street violence to help prevent copycat or revenge killings. They justify this editorial 'censorship' on the grounds that this is what the listeners tell them is in the best interests of the community. Bush radio management also takes part in mediation efforts aimed at decreasing the level of community violence.

Examples of practical support:

• Support for development of appropriate media regulatory framework, legislation, independent ombudsman to monitor free media activities.

• Support for establishing a community media development agency.

• Media training on role and responsibilities of an independent media, creative programming etc.

• Financial/other support to print and broadcast media to re-establish following conflict.

Advantages:

- Dissemination of vital information (news, civic rights, health, post-war reconstruction).

- Strengthen government accountability and democratic institutions.

- Give a voice to diversity and minority groups.

- Provide a forum for social education on issues such as HIV/AIDS, war trauma and post-war reconstruction efforts.

Risks:

- Media ownership falling into the hands of vested business interests with little or poor public service awareness.

- Tough competition results in the failure of non-commercial media, and the need to strengthen public service broadcasters.

- Airtime charges too high for NGOs to access local radio and television with pro-social broadcasts.

- Increasingly fragmented audiences mean greater difficulty in influencing public opinion through a mass media channel.

4. HOW TO APPRAISE AND MONITOR MEDIA INITIATIVES IN CONFLICTS AND OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

This section aims to provide basic information to assist DFID staff in appraising and monitoring media initiatives in conflicts and other emergencies. Three main areas are covered. These analyses are required for planning media initiatives, appraisal of initiatives for funding, and monitoring and evaluation.

4.1 ANALYSIS

In deciding whether and what type of media initiatives to fund, it is important to ensure that adequate information exists on the media environment, information needs of affected populations and on the context in which the conflict or other emergency is occurring. This information can be collected by DFID staff in some circumstances. However, it is more likely that this will be the role of agencies funded by DFID to implement media initiatives.

It is important to bear in mind that many crises happen with little warning and people affected by emergencies require access to relevant information as soon as possible. Information should be considered part of emergency response, which requires rapid decisions being made on funding, and access to experienced media organisations able to react rapidly to the crisis. DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department has set up a call down Resource Centre Arrangement to access media services in an emergency.

4.1.1 INITIAL RESEARCH

Time can be saved if there is background data already prepared on information sources in countries where there are early warning signs of crisis. This work involves:

- Mapping the most common sources of news for different sections of the population - rich, poor, women, men, children , old people and different ethnic groups.

- Finding the most popular type of newspaper/radio/TV programming/personalities for these groups.

- Recording the prime listening/viewing times.

- Mapping the different media outlets - radio, TV, print and media training organisations to identify possible local partners.

- Identify suitable locations for low cost FM transmitters in case a radio station has to be set up from scratch.

- An assessment of the quality of news in terms of fairness, impartiality, thoroughness, and presentational style.

- A broad assessment of the key information needs of the population groups.

If no prior assessment is available, this information will have to be collected at the outset. A detailed information needs assessment will also have to be carried out at the time of the emergency.

4.1.2   IDENTIFYING INFORMATION NEEDS OF AFFECTED POPULATIONS

In emergency situations information needs of affected populations must be quickly defined, acted upon and channelled through media to ensure maximum impact and ensure that the maximum number of affected people are reached. Many such information needs are common to conflicts and other emergency situations, and include:

- Where and how to obtain emergency relief.

- News of the conflict, its location and intensity. This information enables people to prepare to face the disruption or to evacuate an area under threat.

- News of pending natural disasters. This information enables people to engage in disaster preparedness activities such as ensuring food supplies are safe and that infrastructural damage is minimised.

- Information on the rights of civilians and responsibilities of combatants under the Geneva Conventions.

- The dangers of unexploded landmines.

- The risk of disease occurring due to high concentrations of displaced civilians living in refugee camps and due to natural disasters such as earthquakes and flooding.

While such information is of clear relevance to all civilians in emergency situations it cannot be assumed that information needs are uniform and it must be recognised that men, women and children may have very different information needs that are further complicated by factors of age, status, ethnicity, religious practice and culture. Often media interventions may be highly specific and require careful assessment of information needs which must then be matched to the most suitable format of programming.

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES IN AFGHANISTAN

Children are often killed or injured by landmines when they play or conduct routine household duties such as collecting firewood. Also, landmines can look like toys. In Afghanistan tens of thousands of small anti-personnel 'butterfly' mines which were blanket dropped from aircraft during the Soviet-Afghan war have caused many deaths and amputations because Afghan children think that they look like butterflies or toy birds.

Faced with such a problem funders, NGOs and media producers must decide which type of media-based approach would most successfully raise awareness of the danger. Evidence suggests that child-centred media programming, which uses children to address issues that affect children, is a far more powerful medium than strategies such as more formal and general public service announcements.

RAISING AWARENESS OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES

In Afghanistan, the BBC's New Home, New Life radio soap opera uses child characters to discuss and often, tragically, problematise this issue. For example, one storyline warned of the risks of collecting scrap metal due to the dangers of UXO and another showed how one of the production's young and very popular characters coped with life after his lower leg was blown off in an incident when ploughing the family fields. Evaluation has shown that many young disabled listeners were encouraged by the example.

4.1.3 ANALYSING THE CONTEXT: POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

Consideration of the political, economic, social and cultural context is important in deciding whether and what types of media initiative to support.

POLITICAL: Politics and power play important roles in defining who listens, watches or reads various media. Often, for narrow political reasons, the media environment may be heavily regulated so as to ensure that the national government has monopoly over the means of national broadcasting and therefore information. In many poor countries, propaganda is spread through the mass media as a way of bolstering weak states - the media becomes an extension of the state and is used to try and legitimate its activities. In its most insidious form propaganda takes the form of hate speech.

ECONOMIC: Poor economic conditions can make it difficult for people to access media. Batteries for radios are generally expensive and during times of financial stress such items are either not purchased or are used sparingly. Despite this, a widespread thirst for news reporting tends to ensure that minimum levels of media use are maintained. Where media is rationed, for example, battery power is preserved for the main daily news or for a discrete period of time such as half an hour in the evenings, this may have a direct impact on who accesses information.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL: In many developing countries, reading, listening or watching the national and international news tends to be considered to be a male activity. Engaging with other programming, such as soap operas, may be considered a more 'female' media activity. Radio may be monopolised and its use prioritised by men for men. This often leaves women and children in a weaker position in terms of accessing information flows than men. When considering issues of economy, society, culture and media it is important to:

• Recognise that culturally defined gender constructions affect access to and use of media.

• Recognise that poverty may constrain people's ability to listen, watch or read media.

• Think about how practical support (battery distribution, clockwork radios, solar powered radios) can increase media engagement during times of conflict and especially women's and children's participation in access to and use of media.

> **SOCIAL DISLOCATION AND THE NEED FOR INFORMATION**
>
> A Media Action International needs assessment in Albania and Macedonia in April 1999 discovered that Kosovar refugees lacked information as most refugees had no radios and could not hear important information-based programmes. DFID took the initiative in providing Freeplay (clockwork) radios to at least some of the refugees in the camps. The lucky recipients said they felt far less isolated than before. There is an ongoing debate about the value of distributing the comparatively expensive clockwork radios (about $40 each when bought in bulk) as opposed to standard battery operated radios which can cost less than $5. In acute emergencies, however, refugees who are destitute find it very difficult to buy radios and batteries, hence the usefulness of the 'clockwork' radio or a solar powered equivalent.

4.2   DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

This section examines key appraisal issues when making funding decisions on media initiatives.

4.2.1   KEY ISSUES IN SELECTING AND WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

- International partners are likely to be broadcasting organisations such as the BBC World Service or Voice of America; organisations specialising in media interventions in humanitarian crises such as Media Action International and Search for Common Ground, or organisations specialising in media training such as The BBC World Service Trust (see Section 9 for list of contacts).

When working with international broadcasters, key qualities to consider are whether:

- Broadcasts are audible in the target area and whether the population has access to them - for instance many are broadcast in short wave, so short wave radio receivers need to be in common use.

- Broadcasters' news is credible with the target population; if they regard it as propaganda, then this will not be a credible channel for humanitarian information.

- Partner broadcaster's own local correspondents are active and well regarded by the host country.

When working with other international organisations, such as trainers and journalism institutes, key qualities to consider are:

- A track record in humanitarian journalism and work experience in humanitarian crises.

- Considerable experience in broadcast or print journalism.

- Experience in researching audience information needs and translating this into programming and print suitable for the target population.

- Experience of overseas training.

- Sensitivity to different cultures and working practices.

4.2.2 KEY ISSUES IN SELECTING AND WORKING WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

The local partner could be a local broadcaster or a journalism training centre, or even a respected individual journalist.

Qualities required from local partners include:

- A close understanding of the local media environment.

- Good contacts with senior managers of radio and TV stations and newspaper editors.

- Good contacts with the information and other relevant ministries of the host government.

- Access to expert translators, who are able to act as interpreters between locals and expatriates, and as monitors of the broadcasts or newspaper coverage.

- Professionally uninvolved (not heavily involved) in local party politics.

- A sound reputation amongst respected foreign organisations.

- Fair charges for studio rent and air time.

Other issues in working with local partners:

• Recruiting local staff is always difficult, especially in an acute emergency where time is short and obtaining necessary references is difficult. Finding broadcasters who are respected for their integrity and their impartiality is essential if news and other programmes are to be credible. At the same time, it is important to limit the extent to which recruitment of staff in an emergency phase poaches from and undermines other local media.

• Fixing local salaries is another difficulty for incoming organisations and they need to take into account the local salaries of journalists and of workers for other international NGOs. In an emergency situation a degree of disruption in the local salary market is inevitable. What is also important to take into consideration is the sustainability factor: if the project is long term, what level of local salaries can be sustained in the non-emergency phase?

• Negotiating with radio and TV stations is fraught with problems: the media project manager is anxious to have prime time output so that the maximum number of people will listen to or view the programme. The manager of the radio or TV station is often anxious to extract the maximum concessions for the airtime, in terms of equipment, staff training or most often just money. This can be prohibitively expensive - $250 per minute for TV airtime is not unusual. One way of avoiding these charges can be to create a partnership with the local broadcaster, and use the station's journalists. But this can also be a very difficult option given the issues of motivation, jealousies over pay incentives for the project work, and the skills level of the staff.

• Partnerships should be developed between peace-building organisations, the media, communities, and donors. There is a need for more time to be spent on building trust between these different constituencies.

4.2.3   KEY ISSUES IN APPRAISING AND MONITORING MEDIA INTERVENTIONS

Section 3 set out types of assistance DFID can provide in order to support objective reporting, provision of humanitarian information, peace-building and development of free media. The most common types of practical assistance to achieve these aims are:

• Establishing radio production and transmission facilities.

- Provision of equipment and other support to existing local media.

- Funding for specific radio/TV programmes.

- Distribution of radios.

- Training and seminars for media practitioners.

Key issues to consider in appraising funding requests for these types of intervention are set out below.

A.   SETTING UP A RADIO PRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION FACILITY

Due to the disruption to press and media infrastructure during conflicts and rapid onset emergencies, provision of radio production and transmission facilities is increasingly being recognised as an important area of humanitarian assistance. Radio dominates such activities due to its relatively low cost and its ability to reach a mass audience.

Technical advances have made FM broadcasting (a radius of up to 50kms) cheap and simple. Several organisations offer radio stations 'in a suitcase'. Digital editing techniques now allow portable computers to take the place of tape recorders and mixing desks. The overall cost of a complete radio broadcasting package (digital recording/editing and transmission) with a 30km radius can be under £10,000.

Key appraisal issues:

- It is quickest and easiest to work with existing radio transmission and programming infrastructure, whether this is local FM or AM broadcasting, or short wave broadcasts from international broadcasters. Wherever possible efforts should be made to support and strengthen existing local media rather than establish new media organisations.

- In the event of there being no transmitter capacity to reach the target population, it may be appropriate to set up a radio transmission facility. This form of media intervention assumes the co-operation of partner governments and care should be taken to make sure the intervention remains legal.

- The implementing organisation should conduct a technical survey of the target area and decide on the best location for the transmitter. Hilly or mountainous terrain could severely limit the range of audibility, and transmitter positioning becomes very important.

- Consideration should be given to power sources: if the transmitter can be placed close to mains electricity, that will often be sufficient to power the transmitter (but beware of power cuts). Otherwise it will be necessary to invest in a generator to supply both the transmitter and the studio equipment. A solar powered generator may be an option.

- Any new production or transmission facilities should be planned from the outset with an exit strategy for handing over the media initiative to reputable community or NGO representatives.

B   PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT FOR EXISTING MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

Support to existing local print media and radio/TV stations is often preferable to establishing new stations. This builds local capacity and has greater longer term impact.

Key appraisal issues:

- Analyse existing output of media organisations before providing support and continue to monitor after support provided.

- Provision of equipment should usually be accompanied with appropriate training.

- Issues of balance should be considered: eg if support is being provided to media organisations serving one ethnic group, then support to media serving other groups should also be considered.

- Assistance to local media organisations to sustain themselves during a crisis can be appropriate but long term subsidies which undermine commercial viability should be avoided.

C   FUNDING OF SPECIFIC RADIO/TV PROGRAMMES OR NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

Key appraisal issues:

- Capacity of the media organisation to produce quality programmes/ need for additional capacity building in this respect.
- Needs to be based on proper information needs assessment.

D   PROVISION OF RADIOS

Provision of radios provides the means of accessing information for communities that lack them due to displacement or because they cannot afford them.

Key appraisal issues:

•   A needs assessment should be carried out to determine current level of access to radios and means of powering them, prior to any provision of radios.

•   Effective means for distributing radios to the target population need to be devised.

•   Radios provided need to have bands appropriate to current listenership preferences - AM, FM or Short Wave.

•   'Freeplay' (Wind-up) radios are appropriate if affected populations cannot access batteries. They can carry all 3 bands but are expensive and need to be internationally procured and shipped in.

•   Cheap battery operated radios can often be procured locally but often do not carry Short Wave.

E   TRAINING AND SEMINARS

Key appraisal issues:

•   In country training is cheaper and more appropriate where available.

•   Consideration should be given to how the implementing organisation selects participants.

•   In particular, balance between participants should be ensured: gender, ethnic, political and between different media organisations.

4.3   EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Close monitoring and evaluation of DFID funded media initiatives is required both by the implementing organisation and by DFID staff.

4.3.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION BY IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION

It is important to ensure that funded organisations effectively monitor broadcasts and readerships and set up systems to obtain regular feedback from the listeners/viewers/readers. Key questions are:

• Is the information useful?

• Is it having the anticipated impact?

• If not, why not?

This is a labour intensive and time consuming process, which requires very competent translators, as language nuances can be important in broadcasting. Needs-based humanitarian media interventions differ from 'news based' media activities: constant contact with the audience, to determine needs and assess impact, is a key part of media work in humanitarian crises, but it is rarely a significant part of straight journalism. There are three main phases in media monitoring and evaluation:

• The needs assessment - priority information needs, population's access to the media etc.

• Programme pre-testing: this allows programme makers to take a pilot product or idea for a product, for example, an episode of a radio soap opera, a newspaper or a storyline for a TV film, to focus groups for comments and reaction. Where a pilot has been made, audience panels are used to establish whether it has appeal, conveys its informational content clearly and concisely in an entertaining manner. Pre-testing allows for 'fine-tuning' of interventions to occur and is most applicable to latent, chronic and post-conflict scenarios.

• Monitoring and Evaluation of output: to ensure that both quality and strength of purpose are maintained, and to ensure that key information is not being misunderstood or misinterpreted by the audience. Broadcasters are all too aware that at times 'the message received is not the message broadcast'. In the case of health, for instance, it is vital that instructions are clearly understood, and monitoring allows any confusion to be rapidly corrected in subsequent broadcasts. Remaining relevant helps to maintain popularity and being popular ensures that mass audiences/readerships are achieved and maximum impact is maintained through the media intervention.

- Monitoring can be conducted by the agency funded for the intervention or by specialist media monitoring agencies. There are several advantages to monitoring being carried out by in-house teams of evaluators, provided they are carefully trained by people with experience of participatory appraisal techniques. It is a great deal less expensive than employing specialist agencies, and they can be deployed to provide regular feedback for the programme makers.

MEDIA INTERVENTION PROJECT CYCLE

1. ANALYSIS - listen to your potential audience, assess their needs and identify information gaps. Assess existing programmes, policies, resources, strengths and weaknesses. Analyse communication resources. Draw up action plan and design monitoring, evaluation and consultation systems.

2. DESIGN - decide on objectives, identify audience segments, position the concept for the audience, clarify behaviour change model, select channels of communications, plan for interpersonal discussion.

3. THE PRODUCTION PHASE - ensure that the quality of outputs is maintained and that outputs correspond with stated objectives, that staff training continues, that any external pressures that are placed upon the project are negotiated and mediated.

4. EVALUATION, IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ADJUSTMENT - must occur regularly and be a part of a cycle that feeds information back in to production processes so that production remains relevant and focused on real needs.
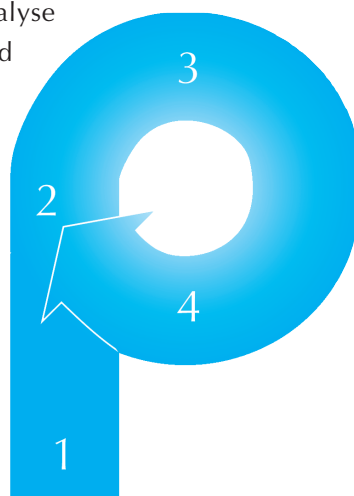
4.3.2   MONITORING AND EVALUATION BY DFID

It is important for DFID project officers to closely monitor media and communications initiatives funded in conflicts and other emergencies. This is not because they are any more prone to problems than other emergency projects. Rather, it is because the nature of what is produced, i.e. foreign language radio, television and press outputs are very hard to keep track of and their content is equally hard to understand unless frequent

efforts are made by project implementers and donors.

INCREASING ACCESS TO BALANCED AND OBJECTIVE REPORTING:
BBC WORLD SERVICE GREAT LAKES LIFELINE SERVICE

In response to the conflict in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, the BBC World Service established its Great Lakes Lifeline Service in 1994, broadcasting news and factual material from the United Kingdom gathered by its locally situated reporters in Rwanda, Burundi and the Great Lakes region. The service, which is currently being supported by DFID, has a mixed format that comprises news, sports, human rights issues, tracing messages, music and a drama produced in Kigali by the NGO Health Unlimited. The service was commenced in light of the clear need within the region for fair and accurate news and factual broadcasting. Biased local broadcasters have been widely implicated in the genocide of the Tutsi that occurred in Rwanda, with the Hutu-run Radio-télévision libre des mille collines (RTLM) being particularly active.

To counter hate radio of this kind funding is increasingly being channelled towards media activities that promote free, fair and accurate reporting. Many such interventions are international in scope due to the absence of suitable partner organisations in country. However, since it does not rely upon local broadcasting partners, the BBC is able to exercise its policy of impartiality effectively with little or no interference from external sources. The quality of its news is high. Despite this, there are concerns associated with this type of international media response to conflict because little local capacity tends to be built through such interventions and they are generally not sustainable in the long term.

PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION: A MULTI-MEDIA RESPONSE TO A RAPID ONSET DISASTER

Following the earthquake that hit the Colombian town of Armenia in January 1999, a local NGO, Viva la Ciudadanía, has started a multi-media project to aid the reconstruction, involving radio, TV and newspapers. Radio is the major component with news and magazine programming, plus a soap opera called Los Nuevos Vecinos (Our New Neighbours). The soap's writers are a creative group of five people living in the camps or temporary housing. Focus groups are being created in different parts of the affected area to discuss what needs to be said by the characters in the soap opera. The actors are also people of the affected community. In addition, there are community correspondents who have been trained in radio and writing workshops so they can provide copy for the radio magazine and the newspaper. These correspondents are drawn from a wide range of society - youth groups, senior citizens' clubs and

community leaders. Phone-ins encourage listeners to comment on what they have heard. The project was started to counter the lack of information about the reconstruction process, with the national media concentrating only in corruption and other dramatic events. The project organisers have succeeded on enlisting commercial and community radio's co-operation in broadcasting the programmes at the same time, so the entire affected area is being reached. The plan is to use this project as a model for the peace-building process elsewhere in the country.

PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH MEDIA: THE AKRON BEACON JOURNAL'S 'COMING TOGETHER' PROJECT

In the wake of the Rodney King's case and the riots in Los Angeles, Akron Beakon, a town in Ohio, began to appreciate that it too had serious race relations problems. The editors of the local quality paper, The Akron Beacon Journal hired consultants to run focus groups to clarify exactly what the two communities - African-Americans and Caucasians - were really thinking. It quickly became clear that simply covering a wide spectrum of views was not going to be enough. There was a real need - and desire - for direct communication between the two communities. The paper also discovered that the groups which might have been expected to facilitate this contact did not have the credibility or capacity to undertake the task. The editors therefore hired two experienced facilitators to lead a dialogue between representatives invited from a broad spectrum of community groups. The Project became a separate non-profit foundation. 165 organisations - including religious, youth, business, community and other groups - became involved. 22,000 readers endorsed the project - about 10% of the circulation and 4% of the population of Akron. The project has also won the paper the 1994 Pulitzer Award for Public Service Reporting. The Akron Beacon Journal is not an isolated example: The New York University's Department of Journalism has identified at least 40 similar public or civic journalism ventures covering issues ranging from crime problems to 'kids in chaos'.

PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH MEDIA: OPENING DIALOGUE - A RADIO APPROACH

Common Ground Productions has sought to reduce political and ethnic violence in countries such as Liberia and Burundi by promoting dialogue between polarised groups via radio and television programming. In Liberia, Talking Drum Studio run by Common Ground Productions, has people from different ethnic groups working on a broad spectrum of programming, that ranges from news and humanitarian information to a radio soap opera, on the problems and dilemmas faced by a Liberian refugee family. The Common Ground approach is used to identify and tackle local disputes and

conflicts in the form of talk shows, in which people representing different sides of an issue are brought together to explore the common understanding between them. Topics have included conflicts between local NGOs, ethnic groups and political rivals. The objective of such programmes is to show that even contentious issues can be examined in ways that inform and entertain and at the same time promote the search for solutions. The programmes are made in a Liberian-based production centre in Monrovia with two fully equipped studios.

PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH MEDIA: OPENING DIALOGUE - A TELEVISION APPROACH

Using a creative television format that mixes film and animation, Search for Common Ground Macedonia and the Children's Television Workshop, known for their Sesame Street production, have established a project that focuses on strengthening inter-ethnic relations and reducing social tension. The production called Nashe Maalo (Our Neighbourhood) features five children from different ethnic backgrounds who live in the same apartment block. The children are drawn together because they are the only ones that know of the apartment block's secret, namely that it can talk. The apartment block is affectionately known as Karmen and gives the children encouragement to be tolerant, generous and kind towards each other. The children in the drama become friends and are quickly drawn in to numerous adventures and learning opportunities. Common Ground's own evaluation of the series found that children saw the 'kid-centred world' of the drama series as authentic and that its young viewers identified with its characters, their troubles and concerns. More importantly they enjoyed the humour, the way that the production found solutions to these problems and mediated the conflicts that emerged.

DEVELOPING FREE, INDEPENDENT AND RESPONSIBLE MEDIA: SOUL CITY'S MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH TO POPULAR EMPOWERMENT

Soul City is the name of not only of a popular television soap opera in South Africa, but also of a multi-media strategy that is having a clear impact on key issues surrounding conflict and violence. Because South Africa has a well developed media environment, relying upon a single medium to get messages across is generally insufficient, especially when targeting urban or peri-urban areas. The Soul City strategy uses five key elements within its 'edutainment' approach, which advocates that one should inform and entertain at the same time. The five elements are:

- A television drama of 13 episodes.
- A radio drama of 45 episodes.
- Booklets and newspaper output that build on TV and radio messages.
- Public relations and advertising in the form of competitions in which the audience responds to various questions about Soul City's main themes.
- Education packages that consist of audio tapes, posters, comics.

In a recent evaluation (1997) it was found that 61% of respondents were exposed to at least one of the Soul City media and the ability to reach a mass audience with important messages has been critical to the project's longevity. Running since 1994 and currently in the process of planning Series 5, the project has tackled issues such as child abuse, HIV/AIDS, land and housing, violence and more specifically, violence against women.

For transition states such as South Africa, and for poor countries more generally, a key problem is the effective dissemination of information regarding policy, law and reform to poor people. Tackling the issue of land and housing in the post-apartheid period has been difficult, though Soul City have played a role in promoting messages that include:

- All South Africans have equal right of access to land.
- Accessing land and housing can be a lengthy process.
- Land reform is a demand-driven process, and communities can organise and work together to access land.
- Land is not only for men.
- There are laws protecting security of tenure.
- A government subsidy scheme and other forms of financial assistance are available.
- Land redistribution and restitution schemes.

Soul City has helped people to help themselves by making them aware of some of the difficulties and forms of assistance that surround land and housing. Evaluation has shown that in areas such as government subsidies and redistribution schemes awareness rose by 20-30% for people exposed to Soul City media.

SUPPORTING LOCAL MEDIA IN POST CONFLICT AREAS: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

It is important to realise that the influence of an independent media has its limits: in Bosnia following the Dayton Accords of 1996, the prime objective of Western assistance to the indigenous media was to create pluralism: as a result a great deal of money was made available through the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the bilateral donors for independent radio and television stations. The result was disappointing: most people still relied on the state run ethnocentric media of the Bosnian, Republica Srpska and Croatian governments. The reasons? The new stations had little journalistic or programming expertise, essentially, their programmes were not worth tuning-in to. Much foreign money went into broadcasting hardware such as transmitters, but training in journalism and programme making - especially of entertaining programmes - came a long way behind. What the audiences had to be sure of was that the news was comprehensive, reliable and impartial, and that the programming was relevant, entertaining and well produced. Only then did new radio and TV stations have any real chance of challenging the established ethnocentric broadcasters. The potential role of community radio to educate, enhance democracy and empower listeners is considerable, but it is not often realised in practice. As in Bosnia, the presence of many different radio stations does not necessarily mean a multiplicity of credible information sources. Unless there are trained, courageous and talented broadcasters who establish close links with a wide spectrum of community organisations, there is a danger that programmes will be boring or biased or both.

CONFLICT AND THE CHALLENGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

The Internet is the fastest growing technology in history, and though its use and connection levels are highest in the North, both Asian and Latin American markets are rapidly expanding and advances in telecommunications systems may soon allow the majority of the African continent to make a large technological leap towards wider Internet connectivity. Increasingly, the Internet, as well as e-mail communications, are being used by groups engaged in sub-national and international conflicts. The various crises that erupted in the Balkans in the 1990s have been accompanied by a flourish of often negative computer-based activity. This includes Internet sites that promote hate speech, the corruption of computer systems through implanting viruses sent through e-mails and the mass sending of e-mails to jam systems.

Internet hate sites, cyber-terrorism and cyber-warfare are becoming more commonplace. The US State Department notes that 12 of the 30 groups on its

'designated foreign terrorist organisations' run Internet sites that promote propaganda and hate speech. Other sites that are recognised as being potentially harmful include a welter of white supremacist sites and sites that provide information on weapons and bomb-making. Organisations such as the Anti-defamation league and Association for Progressive Communications are actively engaged in monitoring and countering hate Internet sites.

On a more positive note, new technologies are enabling community radio broadcasters, as well as ordinary computer users, the ability to access hundreds of international radio stations via digital radio streaming technology through the Internet. This allows broadcasters to download news items recorded by regional or international broadcasters for broadcast locally.

E-mail is also being used in very positive ways, as a form of protest instrument to warn against human rights abuses. Likewise, the Internet is being widely used to promote free and fair news reporting. The Internet also has huge potential for civil society in that it allows for peace activists and advocates to engage in networking and lobbying both nationally and globally.

WHEN MEDIA PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES GO WRONG

Like all efforts to mediate, successes have their counterparts in occasional failures. For example, when the ICRC and the BBC World Service's Somali Section collaborated on an imaginative drama series emphasising the need for humanitarian values in war and exploring ways of resolving the conflict, there was a mixed audience reaction. This case illustrates the potential pitfalls of broadcasting to a highly factionalised society.

Some listeners were positive and appreciated the emphasis towards peace in the BBC drama series. But in an ICRC survey, other listeners saw the drama as a plot by one sub-clan to criticise their rivals. The problem was the choice of actors - their accent gave away their clan, and the name of their imaginary village, which turned out to be a real village, added to their suspicions that the drama was a veiled attack by one clan on another. If the humanitarian messages were to stand any chance of being influential, they had to be perceived as being non-judgmental and non-partisan.

It is instructive to note how small details in programming planning can undermine a series' educational objectives. To be educationally effective, there can be no substitute for high programme quality based on up to date research in the target area and close attention to cultural and linguistic details.

MEDIA INTERVENTIONS: DOING THE 'DO-ABLE'

The ability of the media to help build peace depends, critically, on 'doing the do-able'. In other words, tackling a dispute which is neither too embedded in society nor too large scale to be realistically influenced by mass media intervention.

A good example comes from Radio Dowanza, near Timbuktu in Mali: the radio station chose not to become involved in the regional Tuarag Rebellion, but in the smaller scale conflicts between farmers and herders which had intensified because of drought and population pressures. The role of the community radio station in Dowanza was three-fold:

•   To publicise incidents which had taken place so that the authorities had early warning to intervene.

•   To prevent conflict by creating a forum for communication, so that farmers could 'post notices' by means of announcements on the radio that their lands will be cleared of crops by such-and-such a date, after which the herders are welcome to come and graze their animals on the stubble. Premature grazing on unharvested fields was a major cause of conflict.

•   Conflict prevention by means of publicising lessons from the past: the radio station generated short sketches which illustrated the problem and possible solutions, which were broadcast repeatedly at harvest time, again to help prevent conflict. The introduction to the spots was this catchphrase 'If the yolk and the white of an egg do not agree, the eggshell breaks! Farmers and herders are both worried.'

The example clearly shows the advantage of pitching media interventions at community level where they have the very real potential to add value by reducing conflict and building peace.

7.   GLOSSARY OF RADIO PROGRAMME FORMATS

The different types of radio formats which can be used to convey conflict reduction and humanitarian information messages are listed below.

Spots and public service announcements - duration 30secs - 1 minute

•   Usually a single message read from a script.

Mini-dialogues - duration 1 - 2 minutes

•   A more lively way of conveying information than reading from a script.
•   Usually two voices and good for repeating key information.

Mini-dramas - duration 1 min - 3 minutes

•   One main message, one secondary one.
•   Scripted sketch or maybe a comedy for two or three characters.
•   Different from mini-dialogues in that it tells a story in addition to conveying information.
•   Has to be well written and acted; shouldn't include too much information.
•   Is meant to be broadcast a number of times and should be thought of as a kind of radio advertisement that relies on entertainment to remain interesting and make an impact.

Songs - duration 2 - 5 minutes

•   Main message and one or two secondary ones.
•   Catchy tune and lyrics in popular idiom essential.
•   Care needed to avoid unintended distortion of the key messages.
•   Important to know the market well - what will sell or be played frequently on local radio.

Interviews - duration 2 - 5 minutes

•   Essential to have a good speaker who knows the subject and who is credible.

•   A maximum of two or three key messages.

Slogans - duration 30 seconds and packaged with a music jingle

- Needs to be clearly understandable to the target audience: a good slogan can sell an idea, but a bad one can damage a campaign.

- Works best if other organisations taking part in the campaign agree with it and will reinforce its impact by using it on posters, banners etc.

- Choose the jingle carefully: it has to create the right mood and also catch the attention of listener.

Magazine - duration 10-20 minutes, a varied factual programme including interviews and features (interviews linked with script).

- Could also include spots, songs and slogans.

- Can work well if the magazine reinforces a sister programme, maybe a health based soap opera, so that it can refer to recent storylines and explain the key messages further.

Oral testimony - duration 2-4 minutes

- Someone's real life war time experience can make powerful broadcasting; this need not be recounting brutality, but expressing the emotional impact of separation, death of a family member or unexpected kindness.

- Sensitive interviewing and editing needed. Also effective if edited and packaged into 'spots' and repeatedly broadcast.

Stories - duration 5-15 minutes

- Very effective on radio if well written and professionally read.

- Writer needs to be well briefed, and to be told that the story is what matters: if it is well written, the message will be clear to listeners.

- Avoid obvious propaganda stories: listeners can generally spot them easily and will lose interest.

Phone-ins - duration 15-60 minutes

• Lively broadcasters needed, studio guests who are gifted communicators.

• Effective at establishing dialogue with listeners and influencing their thinking.

Soap Operas - duration 15-30 minutes, a radio soap opera is a long running drama serial in which a number of plots develop simultaneously.

Advantages:
• The audience learns to identify with characters.
• It can carry a number of separate educational themes involving health or other issues.
• It can repeat key messages over a long period of time without boring the audience.
• As it reflects the everyday lives of the target audience, the listeners are more likely to identify with the soap's educational messages, discuss them, and perhaps act on them.
• A radio soap opera can depict virtually any situation and stimulates the imagination.
• Soap operas can be culturally sensitive, are entertaining and can have long term appeal to a mass audience over a wide age range.

Disadvantages:

• Cost is expensive by radio standards, particularly if top actors and writers are used.
• Time that is required for development and implementation means it is unsuitable for messages requiring immediate dissemination.
• Can be inflexible if all episodes are pre-recorded; it is better to have a rolling production process with recording a few weeks in advance of broadcasting, then measure audience reaction and amend accordingly, but this adds to the cost.
• Effectiveness depends on the talents of script writers and actors.

In short, a soap opera is probably the most effective means of bringing about social change, particularly if it is backed up with targeted publications and interpersonal communications (from health workers, for instance).

8.   RESOURCES

This resource provides details of both internal and external contacts for DFID staff. A host of further detail on specific issues relating to media and conflict can be found at the Internet addresses listed in the following pages. Most of the organisations listed are ones which work in a number of countries. They can assist with information regarding partners in the South and have been categorised to direct readers according to broad themes which include:

free speech; networking; conflict database; projects; research; journalism; clockwork radio; solar radio; etc.

DFID CONTACTS

Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department,
(Conflict Prevention Specialist, Rm. GH716)
94 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 5JL.
Tel: 020 7917 0697
Fax: 020 7917 0502

Social Development Department,
(Media and Communications Adviser, Rm. VS254)
94 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 5JL.
Tel: 020 7917 0910
Fax: 020 7917 0197

Anti-Defamation League (Free speech),

823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 100017, USA.

E-mail: webmaster@adl.org

Net: http://www.adl.org

Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department (Research & Projects),

3 Earley Gate, Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 6AL, UK.

Tel: 44 (0)118 9316514

Net: http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AERDD

AMARC World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (Networking & Projects), International Secretariat, 3525 Boulevard St Laurent, Bureau 611,

Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2X 2T7.

Tel: 514 982-0351

Net: http://www.amarc.com

Association for Progressive Communications (Free speech),

Presidio Building, 1012 Torney Avenue, PO Box 29904, San Francisco,

CA 94129, USA.

Tel: 01 415 561 6100

Net http://www.apc.org

BBC World Service Training Trust (Projects & Journalism),

Bush House, Strand, London, WC2B 4PH, UK.

Tel: 44 (0)20 7240 3456

Net: http://www.bbc.co.uk

BioDesign (Solar radios),

15 Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN25 4NS, UK.

Fax: 01233 626677

Net: http://members.tripod.co.uk/graham14

European Centre for War, Peace and the News Media (Research, Journalism & Projects), 4B Kemplay Road, London, NW3 1SY, UK.

Tel: 44 (0)20 7435 9282

http://www.nyu.edu/cwpnm

Communications Initiative (Networking & Conflict database),
5148 Polson Terrace, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, V8Y 2C4.
Tel: 1 250 658-6372
Net: http://www.comminit.com

Conciliation Resources (Conflict database),
PO Box 21067, London, N1 1ZJ, UK.
Tel: 44 (0)20 7359 7728
Net: http://www.c-r.org

FAIR (Free speech & Journalism),
130 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10001, USA.
Tel: 212-633-6700
Net: http://www.fair.org

Fondation Hirondelle (Projects),
3 Rue Traversière, CH 1018-Lausanne, Switzerland.
Tel: 41 21 647 28 05
Net: http://www.hirondelle.org

The Freedom Forum World Center (Free speech & Journalism),
1101 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22209, USA.
Tel: 703/528-0800
Net: http://www.freedomforum.org/

Freeplay Foundation (Clockwork radios),
56-58 Conduit Street, London, W1R 9FD, UK.
Tel: 44 (0)20 7851 2600
Net: http://www.freeplay.org.uk/

INCORE (Conflict database),
Aberfoyle House, Northland Road, Derry, BT48 7JA, Northern Ireland.
Tel: 44 (0)1504 375500
Net: http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk

IMPACS The Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (Research),
Suite 910, 207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6B 1H6, Canada.
Tel: 1-604-682-1953
 Net: http://www.impacs.org

Institute for War and Peace Reporting (Free speech & Journalism),
Lancaster House, 33 Islington High Street, London, N1 9LH, UK.
Tel: 44 (0)20 7713 7130
Net: http://www.iwpr.net

International Committee of the Red Cross (Conflict database),
Public Information Centre, 19 avenue de la Paix, CH 1202 Genève, Switzerland.
Tel: 41 (22) 734 60 01
Net: http://www.icrc.org

Inter. Federation of Journalists (Networking & Journalism),
Rue Royale, 266, 1210 Brussels, Belgium.
Tel: 32 2 223 2265
Net: http://www.ifj.org

Internews (Free Speech & Journalism),
73 Spring Street, Suite 607, New York, NY 10012, USA.
Tel: 212 966 4141
Net: http://www.internews.org

Johns Hopkins University (Projects & Research),
Centre for Communication Programs, 111 Market Place, Suite 310, Baltimore,
MD 21202, USA.
Tel: 410 659-6300
Net: http://www.jhuccp.org/

Media Action International (Projects & Research),
Villa de Grand Montfleury, CH-1290 Versoix/Geneva, Switzerland.
Tel: 41 22 950 0750
Net: http://mediaaction.org

Media Channel (Free speech & Journalism),
1600 Broadway, Suite 700, NY 10019, USA.
Tel: 212 246 0202
Net: http://www.mediachannel.org

oneworld.net (Conflict database),
Hedgerley Wood, Red Lane, Chinnor, X9 4BW, UK.
Tel: 44 1494 481629
Net: http://www.oneworld.net

Open Society Institute - Budapest (Projects),

Október 6. u. 12. H-1051 Budapest, Hungary.

Tel: 36 1 327 3100

Net: http://www.osi.hu

The Panos Institute (Research, & Journalism),

9 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PD, UK.

Tel: 44 (0)20 7278 1111

Net: http://www.oneworld.org/panos

Radio for Development (Projects),

Suite 26C5, Thames House, 140 Battersea Park Road, London, SW11 4NB, UK.

Tel: 44 (0)20 7498 6055

Net: http://www.rfd.freeuk.com

Reporters Sans Frontiers (Journalism),

5 Rue Geoffroy Marie, 75009 Paris, France.

Tel: 1 4483 8484

Net: http://www.calvacom.fr/rsf

Reuters Foundation (Journalism),

85 Fleet Street, London, ECAP 4AJ, UK.

E-mail: foundation@reuters.com

Net: http://www.foundation.reuters.com/

Soul City Institute (Projects & Research),

PO Box 1290, Houghton, 2041, South Africa.

Tel: 27 11 728 7440

Net: http://www.soulcity.org.za

Search for Common Ground & Common Ground Productions (Projects),

1601 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20009, USA.

Tel: 202 265 4300

Net: http://www.sfcg.org

9. REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Adam, G. & Hieber, L. 1998. Strengthening Lifeline Media in Regions of Conflict, Summary Report, Media Action International, Geneva.

Adam, G. 1999. The Media and Complex Humanitarian Emergencies, in Brassey's Defence Yearbook 1999, Brassey's , London, and in RRN Newsletter no. 13.

Adam, G. and Harford, N. 1997. Health on Air, Health Unlimited, London.

Adam, G. and Thamotheram, R. 1995. The Media's Role in Conflict, ODA.

Allen, R. 1995. Introduction. In R. Allen (ed.), to be continued...Soap Operas Around The World. Routledge, London.

Endresen, L. & Eknes, A. 1999. Local Media Support. Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, Oslo, Norway.

Galant, R. et al. 1998. So This is Democracy? Media Institute of Southern Africa.

Gowing, N. 1997. Media Coverage: Help or Hindrance in Conflict Prevention? Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, New York.

Hieber, L. 1998. Media as Intervention, in Track Two, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Rondebosch, South Africa.

Manoff, R. 1998. Role Plays; Potential media roles in conflict prevention and management in Track Two, December 1998 Centre for Conflict Resolution, Rondebosch, South Africa.

Myers, M. 1995. The Contribution of Local Radio to Democratisation in Mali and Burkina Faso, Disaster Preparedness Centre, Cranfield University.
Myers, M. et al. 1995. The Effective Use of Radio for mitigation of drought in the Sahel, (1995) Disaster Preparedness Centre, Cranfield University.

Mytton, G. 1999. Handbook on Radio and Television Audience Research. BBC World Service Training Trust/UNICEF/UNESCO.

Opoku-Mensah, A. 1998. Up in the Air? The State of Broadcasting in Southern Africa.

Panos, Zambia.

Peters, B. 1999. Reporting Diversity: Journalism and the challenge of ethnic conflict, The Courier, APC-EU no. 168.

Richards, P. 1994. Videos and Violence on the Periphery. IDS Bulletin 25(2): 88-93.

Skuse, A. 1998. Media in development: towards a tool-kit of communication monitoring and impact assessment methodologies. ICHR Radio Partnership & DFID.

Skuse, A. 2000. Radio Soap Opera and Social Development: A case study from Afghanistan. Social Development Department, Working paper.

Thompson, M. 1994. Forging War, Article 19, London.

10. INDEX

Department for International Development

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the British government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The government elected in May 1997 increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The policy of the government was set out in the White Paper on International Development, published in November 1997. The central focus of the policy is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with the associated targets including basic health care provision and universal access to primary education by the same date.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and also seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to encourage progress which will help reduce poverty. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, UN agencies and the European Commission. The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

We are also contributing to poverty elimination in middle income countries, and helping the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe to enable the widest number of people to benefit from the process of change.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride,

DFID has offices in New Delhi, Bangkok, Nairobi, Harare, Pretoria, Dhaka, Suva, Kathmandu and Bridgetown. In other parts of the world, DFID works through staff based in British Embassies and High Commissions.

The Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD) is a department within DFID, one of whose primary concerns is the responsibility for overseeing conflict and security issues.

Anyone wanting to discuss further any issues raised in this document should, in the first instance, contact CHAD on:

Telephone: 0207 917 0887
Fax: 0207 917 0502