



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY  
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT  
DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

# **MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY, INFORMED CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA:**

**A HANDBOOK FOR MEDIA/INFORMATION  
PRODUCERS AND USERS**

**Wisdom J. Tettey**

**MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY, INFORMED CITIZENSHIP  
AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: A HANDBOOK FOR  
MEDIA/INFORMATION PRODUCERS AND USERS**

**Wisdom J. Tettey**

© 2013 The African Capacity Building Foundation  
6th Floor, ZB Life Towers, Harare, Zimbabwe

Produced by the Knowledge and Learning Department  
The African Capacity Building Foundation

First printing August 2013  
All rights reserved

Citizens and media practitioners require critical skills to enable them effectively and efficaciously sift through the morass of information that is churned out continuously. The aim of this handbook is to provide the fundamental building blocs for developing and sustaining the necessary skills and capacities to be media and information literate. The booklet can allow citizens and institutions become independent, perceptive and critically-minded assayers of information and, thus, be in a position to help grow and sustain democratic societies that are caring, responsive and facilitative of socio-economic development for all segments of their populations.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this volume do not necessarily reflect the views of the ACBF Executive Board or Board of Governors.

For additional information on project and program operations and other activities of the African Capacity Building Foundation, please visit our website at the following address: <http://www.acbf-pact.org>.

**ISBN:** 978-1-77937-043-3

**EAN:** 9781779370433

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
TARGET AUDIENCES FOR THE HANDBOOK.....	3
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY – A DEFINITION.....	3
WHY THE NEED FOR MEDIA/INFORMATION LITERACY CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICA.....	5
PRE-REQUISITES FOR MEDIA/INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL).....	6
DEVELOPING MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS – A CRITICAL INTERROGATORY APPROACH.....	11
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, SOCIALIZATION, AND SCHOOL CURRICULA.....	31
NEW MEDIA LITERACY.....	32
POPULAR CULTURE AND INFORMATION LITERACY.....	34
KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE.....	36
CONCLUSION.....	37
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	39

## FOREWORD

A famous African proverb tweeted to millions on a given day says "What you cannot see during the day you cannot see at night". The dynamic processes of media liberalization and democratization that have spread across Africa, have made this proverb even more real in the sense that, while the continent's population has witnessed noteworthy changes in information production, dissemination and use, the quality and verity of that information remains a critical driver of change. The shifting media landscape has provided many citizens with access to information due to a wider range of media channels and information sources. The winds of change have coincided with a dynamic explosion of media capacity and the growth of access to public information in recent decades – a direct result of improvements in mobile telephony and the internet. Sadly, few governments kept up with the development, resulting in calls for African governments to radically restructure their information, media, and communications policies. More troubling, however, are some elements outside government who have had access to powerful channels of communication, yet have not always used them for good.

Today, the average African has access to more information than ever before by a variety of producers and purveyors, including interpersonal communicators, a growing array of traditional print and electronic media, and multiple new media sources. The challenge for many recipients of these messages is how to distill them into credible, accurate, and informative resources on the basis of which to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Many African media sources lack the requisite capacity to ensure the required quality control, are often partisan and skewed in their perspectives, and are motivated by pecuniary gain to an extent that undermines due diligence and professionalism. Consequently, the media themselves are constrained in their ability to generate the information resources that will enhance informed citizenship. ACBF, in recognizing this critical capacity gap has, strategically focused on joint interventions aimed at enhancing the capacity of the media across the continent. ACBF's collaborations with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and West Africa Journalists Association (WAJA) highlight an aspect of how ACBF is engendering capacity for media/information literacy and informed citizenship, aimed at achieving good governance and sustainable development. The Workshop on Media Literacy and Informed Citizenship, which resulted in this handbook, is one more attempt by ACBF to develop capacity in this pertinent sector.

As a Foundation, we deem media/information literacy a critical necessity for Africa as it goes through significant political and socio-economic transformations. And we concur with UNESCO and others that the empowerment of society through information/media literacy is an important prerequisite for fostering equitable access to information and ideas, and for building inclusive knowledge societies.

I am confident that media practitioners, students of journalism and the broader society at large, will find this manual very useful. I further encourage Africa's policy institutes, think-tanks and civil society organizations to use this resource. As information is at the heart of any political or social interaction, it is vital that Africa's citizenry have the ability to aptly assess and use the media to produce progressive outcomes. Such competence enables an understanding of the contexts, motivations, and impacts of messages that are produced and disseminated, thereby eliciting responses that are perceptive and apposite.

Frannie A. Léautier  
ACBF Executive Secretary  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
August 2013

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This handbook and a related workshop that took place in Accra, Ghana, in October 2012 have benefited from the tremendous support of many partners. First and foremost, I will like to thank the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) for seeing the value of a project on media and information literacy as an important catalyst for Africa's development, for organizing the Accra workshop, and for facilitating the production and publication of this handbook. The workshop helped to bring together a group of stakeholders from academia, civil society, the media, and state institutions to deliberate on how to cultivate a media and information literate citizenry and to promote access to, and dissemination of, quality information. I extend my profound appreciation to Frannie Léautier, Executive Secretary of ACBF, and all the staff of the organization who have supported this project in various ways at various times.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Kobena Hanson (Head – Knowledge and Learning at the ACBF) for his immense support for the project, his intimate involvement in the conceptualization and development of the ideas, and for his commitment to the development of this handbook as a resource to facilitate that project. Kobena, this journey would not have been possible without you.

An exceptional group of dedicated collaborators -- Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo, Last Moyo, Fred Mudhai, and Folu Ogundimu – deserve special mention and commendation. They made remarkable contributions to the planning and organization of the workshop and provided valuable feedback from the workshop and on earlier versions of this handbook. Folks, accept my ineffable appreciation for your partnership.

To all the participants who joined us at the Accra workshop, I say “many thanks” for your contributions. Your insights helped enrich the deliberations and your perspectives have been valuable in the process of developing this handbook. I hope this resource helps to facilitate your individual and collective efforts to develop, promote, and sustain media and information literacy on the continent.



## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of any successful democracy is the ability of citizens and state institutions to have access to accurate information, to freely express themselves, to contribute intelligently to public discourse, and to shape public policy on the basis of reliable information. As Wilson et al. (2011, p. 11) point out, "we live in a world where the quality of information we receive largely determines our choices and ensuing actions, including our capacity to enjoy fundamental freedoms and the ability for self-determination and development." In order to ensure that such an environment exists, various stakeholders, including state institutions, civil society organizations, and the family must facilitate access to appropriate and credible information and must not curtail the right of citizens to access that information or their right to express themselves. It is only when these conditions exist that we can enhance progressive change for the collective good.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." It must be noted, however, that while the fundamental importance and inviolability of this provision are imperatives for a functioning democracy they are not enough for ensuring the critical knowledge base that is necessary for fostering progressive development. In order for the provisions of Article 19 to generate transformative change through access to information and its proper use, it has to be supported by the critical requirement of information literacy, a concept which will be further explored below. The extent to which information resources are available to Africans, and the quality of the discourse that emanates when they use them in dialogue, are part of what will be analyzed in the ensuing analysis.

Germane to the preceding discussion of information access and use are mass media. This is because they are among the most important channels for information generation and dissemination available to many citizens. As the twin processes of media liberalization and democratization spread across Africa, the continent has experienced significant change in information production, dissemination and use. The shift from a media ecology characterized mainly by univocal state control and the strangulation of counter discourses to one of relative multiplicity, albeit not always free and diverse, means that many citizens now have access to a wider range of media channels and information sources.

A corollary to these developments is the fact that citizens are being bombarded with more information than ever before by a variety of producers and purveyors, including interpersonal communicators, a growing array of traditional print and electronic media, and multiple new media sources. The challenge for



many recipients of these messages is how to distill them into credible, accurate, and informative resources on the basis of which to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Unfortunately, an overwhelming proportion of Africans do not have the capacity to undertake this distillation exercise in a manner that is efficacious, as far as their contributions to socio-economic and political development, as informed citizens, is concerned.

Many of them, therefore, turn to professional journalists in the mass media for direction because of a belief that these individuals and their organizations have the skills, motivations, objectivity, and balance necessary to undertake and provide a rigorous and critical aggregation and synthesis of information for the consumer. An analysis of the mediascape in Africa suggests that this confidence is not justified by the reality in many instances. Many African media sources do not have the resources to ensure the kind of quality control that many members of the public assume, are deeply partisan and skewed in their perspectives because of the political context of media ownership, and/or are motivated by pecuniary gain to an extent that over-emphasizes market imperatives and undermines due diligence and professionalism. Consequently, the media themselves are constrained in their ability to generate the kind of information resources that will enhance informed citizenship.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis of existing media sources that citizens and media practitioners require critical skills to enable them to effectively and efficaciously sift through the morass of information that is churned out continually. It is also evident that these skills are not available to many ordinary citizens and professionals, thereby compromising their ability to critically analyze, and appropriately respond to and deploy information. In sum, they are not media literate.

Media/information literacy skills are, however, important in demystifying 'authoritative voices' within the media landscape and subjecting them to intellectually rigorous scrutiny and, hence, informed understanding. It is to facilitate the development of these skills that the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) has taken the initiative in commissioning this handbook. Its objective is not to present a cookie-cutter manual of what de-contextualized, specific, predetermined steps to take in order to be media literate. What it seeks to do, rather, is to provide a resource that triggers sophisticated, reflective engagement with information, thereby allowing users and producers to hone skills that promote critical inquiry in support of democratic citizenship. It is a readily available tool that can be consulted by, and can provide direction to, individuals and institutions seeking to effectively produce, disseminate and/or use information in a variety of contexts.

## **TARGET AUDIENCES FOR THE HANDBOOK**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the fundamental building blocs for developing and sustaining these skills. The target audience is broad and varied. It includes, educators, media owners and professionals, civil society activists and advocates, state officials, parents, and young people in Africa. In essence, all these target groups have a responsibility to enrich democratic discourse, practices and institutions through a qualitative improvement in the level of media and information literacy and competence.

As Wilson et al. (2011, p. 78) note, journalism has an important role in the "architecture of democracy ... [as] mirror, gatekeeper, watchdog, enabler, facilitator." The lack of media literacy among these professionals can, therefore, significantly undermine the growth of informed democratic citizenship and, by extension, progressive human development. Educators, on their part, control the incubators within which human capital and knowledge are developed, nurtured and transformed into catalysts for social change. They, therefore, have a crucial role in helping young citizens and their life-long learning compatriots acquire the necessary skills to be co-creators of democratic discourse and active, knowledgeable participants within the larger democratic architecture (see Frau-Meigs, 2006).

## **MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY – A DEFINITION**

Since the Grunwald Declaration of 1982, the concepts of media and information literacy have attracted the attention of analysts who are interested in the relationship between information and democratic citizenship. The Declaration highlights the importance of a critical perspective toward information production and consumption if knowledge systems are to enrich politics through engaged, active, informed and civic-minded citizenships. Rubin (1998, p. 3-4) defines media literacy as

the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages. ... as knowledge about how the media function in society ... understanding cultural, economic, political, and technological on the creation, production, and transmission of messages. Other definitions have included learning the formal features of media, critically processing media content, and comparing that content to reality ... all definitions emphasize specific knowledge, awareness, and rationality, that is, cognitive processing of information. Most focus on critical evaluation of messages, whereas some include the communication of messages. Media literacy, then, is about understanding the sources and technologies of communication, the codes that are used, the messages that are produced, and the selection, interpretation, and impact of those messages.

## Key Elements of Media and Information Literacy

For the purposes of this project, we adopt UNESCO's approach of integrating media and information literacy as related and mutually reinforcing concepts (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 18). The core abilities identified by each of these concepts are captured in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key Elements of Media and Information Literacy

<b>Information Literacy</b>	<b>Media Literacy</b>
Define and Articulate Information Needs	Understand the Roles and Functions of Media in Democratic Societies
Locate and Access Information	Understand the Conditions Under which Media can Fulfill their Functions
Assess Information	Critically Evaluate Media Content in the Light of Media Functions
Organize Information	Engage with Media for Self-Expression and Democratic Participation
Make Ethical Use of Information	Review Skills (including ICTs) Needed to Produce User-Generated Content
Communicate Information	
Use ICT Skills for Information Processing	

A key cross-cutting competence that is necessary for translating these elements into effective media and information literacy is the ability to bring a critical perspective to bear on each of them. In order to develop that perspective, there is a need to imbibe an interrogatory attitude to information as opposed to one characterized by passive, unquestioning absorption of whatever is presented or available. In the next section, we provide a range of key questions that constitute the building blocs for cultivating the competencies for media and information literacy.

In order to demonstrate a high level of media and information literacy, users have to go beyond knowledge of one media form or a particular issue or situation. They have to understand and exhibit knowledge of the effectiveness and appropriateness of multiple contexts, platforms, audiences and their intersections, thereby exhibiting transliteracy.

## WHY THE NEED FOR MEDIA/INFORMATION LITERACY CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICA

Jolls (2012, p. 1) points out that "today's global media promote values, behaviors and products through common television programs, music, film, websites, games, apps and social media, yet audiences are unprepared to filter this information with common tools for discernment that are widely taught and understood. Media literacy is well-suited to fill this void." Indeed, media/information literacy is a critical necessity for Africa as the continent goes through significant political and socio-economic transformations. For these transformations to inure to the benefit of all, citizens have to be engaged actors and diligent watchdogs within the public sphere. It is only when they demonstrate competence as knowledgeable and discerning processors and producers of information that they can contribute effectively to democratic consolidation, political accountability, good governance, peaceful co-existence, national unity, and equitable socio-economic development. As UNESCO notes,

Empowerment of people through information and media literacy is an important prerequisite for fostering equitable access to information and knowledge, and building inclusive knowledge societies.

Information and media enables people to interpret and make informed judgments as users of information and media, as well as to become skillful creators and producers of information and media messages in their own right (UNESCO, Retrieved June 23, 2012).

The lack of media/information literacy has contributed in significant ways to the endurance of despotism and demagoguery, preponderance of unaccountable governments, and propagation of ethnic violence in many African countries, as various actors control messages and manipulate information for parochial and self-serving purposes. Since information is at the heart of any political or social interaction, it is important that citizens have the ability to appropriately assess and use it if those interactions are to produce progressive outcomes for society. Such competence enables an understanding of the contexts, motivations, and impacts of messages that are produced and disseminated, thereby eliciting responses that are perceptive and apposite.

It is for this reason that various civil society groups and international organizations are pushing for media and information literacy as a core area of focus. UNESCO, for example, notes that its "mission in this area consists of fostering information and media literate societies by encouraging the development of national information and media literacy policies, including in education" (UNESCO, Retrieved June 23, 2012). This handbook allows the African Capacity Building Foundation to contribute toward the realization of this objective by helping to develop the primary capacity among citizens and media professionals that

undergird all other capacity building initiatives – that is, competence in understanding and using information. Without this kind of competence, any efforts at capacity building in any sectors will be severely compromised, flawed, and unlikely to succeed. In fact, a country which is unable to develop a media and information literate population that can competently take up the opportunities of a 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge society, comprehend its challenges, and address them appropriately will be unable to compete in a globalized world. Furthermore, as Catts and Lau (2008, p. 7) point out, "information literacy underpins many of the Millennium Development Goals."

## **PRE-REQUISITES FOR MEDIA/INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL)**

As Horton (2007, p. 6) notes, "leading scholars in the field often use the following trichotomy to define media literacy: media literacy implies having *access* to the media, *understanding* the media and *creating/expressing* oneself using the media." In view of our focus on both media and information literacy, we extend the relevance of this trichotomy beyond media and apply it to information resources in general – traditional and new mass media; library or online collections; museums and artifacts; games; information and data from governments, non-governmental organizations, community groups; etc.

To operationalize how the trichotomy may be reflected in concrete realities, we explore two main dimensions of media literacy in the following sections. These are 1) the basic, elementary foundations that equip one to access and interact with media and information; and 2) the higher order critical perspectives that one brings to bear on the information encountered so that he/she can competently decipher its origins, purpose, implications and nuances, and use it effectively.

### ***Education and Basic Literacy as Foundational MIL***

A fundamental requirement for MIL is basic literacy and numeracy. People cannot engage effectively with media and information if they cannot read, write, or have an understanding of basic arithmetic. While these skills can be acquired in informal settings, there is no doubt that formal education is necessary to provide them systematically to a wide spectrum of the population. Student enrolment, retention, and completion rates at the basic education level are, therefore, useful indicators of whether a country's population has even the lowest denominator of skills necessary for literacy and numeracy.

A review of these indicators in Africa reveals a troubling situation. While much of the world has made significant progress vis-à-vis the number of children of primary school age who are in school and the number of girls in school, statistics for Africa show a negative trend that is dragging global efforts. According to UNESCO (2012):

Much of this global stagnation is due to trends in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of children out of school has actually risen over the past three years, from 29 million in 2008 to 31 million in 2010. Although enrolment has continued to rise, it has not kept pace with the increase in population.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for one-half of all out-of-school children worldwide and has the highest out-of-school rate of all regions; almost one in four (23%) primary school-age children have either never attended school or left school without completing primary education. Out-of-school figures in sub-Saharan Africa have declined far less than in other regions, from 38 million in 1990 to 31 million in 2010. ... Nigeria alone was home to 10.5 million out-of-school children – 3.6 million more than in 2000 – or 42% of its primary school-age population. Ethiopia had 2.4 million children out of school, which represents 18% of the country's primary school-age population. ... In some countries, including Burkina Faso, Niger, Uganda and Zambia, children from the poorest 20% of households are more than twice as likely to drop out as children from the wealthiest households (<http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/fs-18-OOSC-2.pdf>).

Unless something transformative takes place, these realities will combine with a relatively low adult literacy rate to perpetuate Africa's position as a continent characterized by a significant proportion of people who are unable to cultivate the basic skills for MIL. With an adult literacy rate of only 63%, the continent is home to 22% of the world's illiterate adult population. UNESCO projections put adult and youth literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa at only 66% and 75% respectively, by 2015, compared to corresponding rates of 86% and 92% for the world (<http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/fs20-literacy-day-2012-en-v3.pdf>).

It is imperative that African countries translate their populations into efficacious human resources in support of democratic citizenship and human development. To succeed in this endeavor, they have to make concrete strides in support of Nelson Mandela's assertion that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Assar et al., 2010, p. 151 [<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02681102.2010.506051>]). Without a strong record of educational attainment by the broad mass of citizens, all other goals will be much more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. As UNESCO (2012), correctly notes,

Education has effects far beyond the classroom. Through education, societies foster values, spread ideas and equip their citizens with skills for participation in society. ... Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa shows that increasing access to primary school promotes citizen endorsement of democracy and rejection of non-democratic alternatives. People of voting age with a primary education were 1.5 times more likely to support democracy than people with no education – those who had completed secondary school were three times more likely. This evidence strongly suggests that investment in high-quality education may be among the most effective antidotes to autocracy and unaccountable governance. One reason for this is that education helps people make informed judgements (<http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/fs-18-OOSC-2.pdf>).

### ***Access to Information, Knowledge, and Quality of Citizen Engagement***

Before one can even talk about media and information literacy, it is important that a society has the capability to generate and disseminate information. The capacity of African countries to provide this basic foundation is compromised through various policies and practices that undermine the quality and integrity of information, with implications for socio-economic development. This section examines the information terrain with the goal of identifying deficits in, and obstacles to, quality information generation; offering suggestions for enabling policies, practices and legislation for enhancing the quality of, and access to, that information; and proposing effective channels for communicating and critiquing such information for capacity development for the common good.

Citizens, even those with the basic skills discussed above, can only engage with information if it is available. Unfortunately, many Africans have difficulty accessing information for a variety of reasons. One of the principal reasons for difficulty is a widespread culture of poor record keeping which constrains the ability of citizens and institutions to effectively use such information for the purpose of good governance. Related to this problem is the lack of transparency surrounding information from a variety of sources, both public and private. Many African institutions are not forthcoming about what information is available, how it came to be, what it reveals, what it is used for, etc. The conscious effort to keep information away from citizens is a major reason why many countries on the continent have not made progress on access to information legislation. Out of the 54 countries, only nine have access to information legislation of any kind. As UNESCO (2013) makes clear:

Freedom of information (FOI) is upheld as an integral part of the right of freedom of expression in the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, and guaranteed in the constitutions of seventeen African



countries. However, FOI is yet not fully realized in the region. Only nine African countries have passed national FOI laws (Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe), contrasting with other regions where the increasing adoption of these laws has characterized the past decade, while draft FOI laws in other African states are at different stages in the process towards their adoption. The implementation of FOI legislation in Africa has also faced important challenges (UNESCO, 2013: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/freedom-of-information/foi-in-africa/>).

It must be quickly pointed out that even though some countries, such as Zimbabwe, have FOI legislation, these tend to be more constraining of free expression than facilitating it. Moreover, many citizens do not have the requisite skills with which to avail themselves of the provisions of such legislation. African governments, citizens and civil society organizations have to work together to facilitate access to information that is in keeping with the spirit of the principles outlined in the African Platform on Access to Information (Campaign for African Platform on Access to Information, 2011: <http://michellehsolomon.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/apai-declaration-english.pdf>). Furthermore, the necessary training has to be provided so various stakeholders have the ability to effectively navigate the FOI legislation and related administrative protocols.

Another constraint on access has to do with socio-economic status. Many citizens lack the resources necessary for entering the knowledge economy. These constraints range from the lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills referred above to the absence of the financial wherewithal to access available media and information resources. It is interesting to note that, "typically, it is the marginalized, the poor, remote rural populations, those affected by conflict, and ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities who are denied an opportunity for schooling" (UNESCO, 2012: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/fs-18-OOSC-2.pdf>). These challenging characteristics correlate negatively with such citizens' ability to access information and knowledge and their capacity for informed participation in knowledge production. Much of the public information that is relevant for democratic citizenship is in official languages which a significant number of citizens do not understand or cannot adequately express themselves in, if at all. Consequently, they are shut off from the discourses that affect their lives and/or are unable to register their assessment of those discourses.

Even where information is available and accessible, its integrity and quality in many countries leaves much to be desired. This is partly due to poor data collection and collation as well as manipulation of data that is put in the public domain. Many countries lack credible, independent, and capable data collection

management institutions, thereby enabling data to be manipulated for self-serving political or economic purposes. In order to address these deficits in data management, African states have to improve their capacity for data management and integrity and various civil society organizations and citizens must demand high quality data and full disclosure of information, while recognizing the appropriate limitations on such disclosure. Evidence shows that many governments are unwilling to voluntarily promote these improvements because of self-serving reasons. For organizations and citizens to demand data integrity or accurate information, they have to have the skills for determining data and information quality, skills that can be gained through MIL.

### ***Culture of Respect for Freedom of Expression and Diversity of Opinion***

In order for citizens to contribute productively to democratic practice and to the consolidation and sustainability of democratic institutions, they have to be able to express themselves freely and to hold opinions that may not be shared by others. Unfortunately, many African leaders deny their citizens the basic right to express independent opinions, thereby limiting the public to only sycophantic viewpoints. According to the 2013 World Press Freedom Index,

Yahya Jammeh, King Mswati III, Paul Kagame, and Teodoro Obiang Nguema, together with other heads of state such as Issaias Afewerki (**Eritrea**) and Ismael Omar Guelleh (**Djibouti**) are members of an exclusive club of authoritarian African leaders, some eccentric others stern, who hold their countries in an iron grasp and keep a firm grip on news and information. Their countries, respectively **Gambia** (152nd), **Swaziland** (155th), **Rwanda** (161st) and **Equatorial Guinea** (166th), are all among the bottom 30 in the index. Media pluralism has been whittled away and criticism of the head of state discouraged (Reporters Without Borders, 2013: [http://fr.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/classement\\_2013\\_gb-bd.pdf](http://fr.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/classement_2013_gb-bd.pdf)).

The exercise of diverse and sometimes opposing perspectives is not inimical to the development of democratic development. In fact, it is at the heart of such development, as it allows ideas to be tested, challenged, refined, discredited or validated, thereby increasing the chances for the best ideas to endure and to inform action. As has been articulated elsewhere,

Freedom of expression is *an integral part* of civic responsibility, and essential for critical thinking. Restrictions to freedom of expression are allowed only when such restrictions are necessary to protect the freedoms of others. Limitations, such as the laws preventing 'hate speech', should be narrowly defined to avoid misuse" (Wilson et al., 2011, pp. 67-68).

To promote information pluralism and a culture of free expression, African legislatures must provide the legal mandates for genuine access to information and freedom of expression frameworks in their countries. Governments must demonstrate a commitment to upholding the spirit behind these frameworks, and the judiciary must exhibit the courage to protect these rights and freedoms. Responsibility for sustaining these important pre-requisites for media and information literacy also lies with ordinary citizens who must demand transparency and accountability of their leaders and of themselves. It is only through these collective and concerted efforts that Africans can advance critical pluralistic discourse, promote engaged participation, and consolidate an inclusive democratic culture.

### ***Shift from a Philosophy of Protectionism to a Philosophy of Informed Engagement***

Whether it is dictators censoring, or restricting access to, information or parents seeking to keep their children away from ostensibly dangerous information, a protectionist ethos has held sway over how we deal with information. Consequently, information users are denied the opportunity to actively engage with material and to develop the skills with which to critically and independently analyze that material. However, engagement and critical analysis offer the best tools for the exercise of autonomous, informed, self-aware agency, which is the best form of protection.

## **DEVELOPING MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS – A CRITICAL INTERROGATORY APPROACH**

Media and information literacy is a critical necessity for Africa as it goes through significant political and socio-economic transformations. When citizens demonstrate competence as knowledgeable and discerning processors and producers of information, they can contribute effectively to democratic consolidation, political accountability, good governance, peaceful co-existence, national unity, and equitable socio-economic development. This section provides insights into how information/media literacy and political engagement can be facilitated, and what intervening variables are critical to sustaining that link.

Contrary to popular assumptions, not everything that is written is objective and representative of reality, although 'objectivity' and what constitutes 'reality' are themselves problematic concepts. Consequently, media consumers must be aware that any form of textual, visual, or other form of representation comes from a particular place – e.g., a specific experience, motive, perspective, or value system. To help one understand and evaluate a piece of information or media product in proper context, it is necessary to get at the root of these latent factors. In the following discussion, we explore the tools that can help producers,

disseminators, and users decipher various dimensions of information and media products in order to determine their value, veracity, and implications.

We present these tools in the form of questions that help develop critical thinking skills and critical approaches to engaging media and information with respect to the following: i) information and media sources; 2) particular pieces of information or media product; iii) their ethical and democratic underpinnings and implications; and iv) the capacity of consumers to critically review information or media product. We then move on to focus on specific areas of special interest: i.e., new media and the novel and unique issues that they raise; popular culture and their preponderance, particularly relative to youth ; and the school curriculum and their foundational role in naturalizing critical thinking. The final section for MIL skills development sets out what is necessary from the perspective of understanding target audiences. Such skills are important for information producers and disseminators to have if their messages are to be effective and efficacious. As Jolls (2012, p. 1) asserts:

It is important to note that just producing media does not make a person media literate – although production/construction is an essential part of media literacy. It is the critical thinking APPLIED to production in a SYSTEMATIC way that makes a person media literate.

### **A) EVALUATING THE CAPABILITIES OF INFORMATION CONSUMERS**

A knowledgeable citizen is a pre-requisite for MIL. The path to knowledge starts with the individual consumer's ability to define his/her information needs, to develop the skills for accessing that information and for interpreting it correctly, and to demonstrate the aptitude for using it effectively. It is instructive to point out that while the generic skills addressed by the questions are fundamental to MIL, their effectiveness is anchored in how well they are suited to the specifics of individual situations. Citizens, therefore, have to ask themselves certain questions in each communication context to determine whether they are literate enough to effectively engage available information and if not what they need to do to address any deficits. Among the questions to explore are the following:

#### **1) *To what extent do consumers understand their information needs?***

- Consumers have to know what kinds of information are necessary for the specific activity they want to undertake. They, therefore, have to develop skills that allow them to appreciate the nature of the issues at stake, its various dimensions, and to focus appropriately on what to look for. This is the process that opens doors to knowledge with which to engage intelligently with those issues. Without a clear understanding of what the needs are, it is difficult to gain relevant knowledge.

**Example:** A victim of land-grabbing, who has lost his or her piece of land, may not be able to bring a viable legal action against the perpetrator if he/she does not know the kind of information needed to establish ownership of the property.

2) ***How equipped are they with the tools for information retrieval and assessment?***

- Identifying a need is not enough. Consumers have to have the skills for accessing, retrieving, and assessing information. Whether in an oral culture or a written culture, there are skills for information retrieval and evaluation. For oral cultures, it may require knowledge of the protocols for eliciting and verifying information from the elders. For much of contemporary society, there is a need to have reading skills and a critical mind in order to access the vast array of information available and to be able to determine which information sources are the most credible for a specific purpose. Users have to be conversant with how to access alternative sources of information in order to confirm the veracity or otherwise of what they are fed by any particular source. They must also demonstrate a capacity for accessing and assessing information in the most efficient manner, thereby avoiding spending inordinate amounts of time on those tasks.

**Example:** In 2003, the Vice-Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana claimed that his institution was the best technical university in Africa and the fifth best in the world (Ghanaweb, 2003:<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=43816>). Many matriculants accepted this claim as fact because it came from an authoritative source – the Vice-Chancellor. They did not exercise the critical inquiry necessary to interrogate the claim further and so were not inclined to explore other sources for corroborating or contradictory evidence. These defects in their information literacy stems partly from a lack of exposure to global higher education which could have alerted them to the fact that renowned 'technical universities' in Europe or North America alone could clear the top five list and that it was incredulous that a Ghanaian institution could have been so positioned.

3) ***How well are they able to organize and to use that information?***

- Having access to and gathering information does not necessarily make one media or information literate. The ability to use and to share that information in the context of democratic discourse and practice is critical as well. To do so effectively, a user must be able to organize the information in ways that are cogent and effective for relevant purposes and meaningful to target audiences. The information must pass critical scrutiny through verification. Without these qualities, the user will be unable to achieve his or her goals within the public sphere and could, in fact, undermine his/her credibility as a veritable source of reliable information and knowledge.

**Example:** The 2013 nomination of a human rights lawyer as Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection in Ghana generated a lot of controversy, because of her support for gay rights. Critics alleged that the President was compelled to nominate her because of pressure from gays and pro-gay activists who had supported his election campaign, including an American author whom the President knew. In a hurried reaction to the vile homophobia that had engulfed the country and to views that the president was promoting homosexuality, the Minister for Information issued a statement. The statement sought to distance the President from all but cursory association with this author, only for the Minister to make a *volte-face* when it was established that, indeed, the relationship was not fleeting (Myjoyonline, 2013: <http://politics.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201302/100879.php>). The Minister had obviously not checked all necessary sources, and verified all facts before issuing the statement.

#### **4) How engaged are they in, and respectful of, participatory democratic discourse and practice?**

- MIL does not thrive on apathy or disengagement from democratic practice and discourse, but on active participation in these arenas. To be a knowledgeable, critical, and problem solving citizen, one has to actively seek an understanding of issues and to be involved in the communicative practices that shape democratic political culture and society. A media and information literate citizen also respects the fact that integral to active democratic citizenship is the reality of diverse perspectives and opinions about how to achieve societal goals and the right to freely express them. A corollary to this is recognition and self-awareness of the extent to which differences in individual experiences and positions can lead to legitimate differences which must be respected, so long as they are not inimical to the very essence of a democratic society.

**Example:** Members of the Guinea Bissau military, who installed a transitional government after a coup d'etat in April 2012, have demonstrated that they do not recognize the right of others to hold and to share views that may be at variance with theirs. They have, thus, clamped down on coverage that they deem unfavorable or that may evoke memories of former political leaders. A report from Reporters Without Borders, following an order to expel Portuguese broadcaster RTP's bureau chief in the country, notes that:

A Portuguese national, Gomes was due to return to Lisbon today after being told he was no longer welcome and after a high-ranking military officer threatened to personally kill troublesome journalists at a news conference three days ago. ... RTP's bureau chief is accused of "hostile coverage" of the transition government ... *Agence France-Presse* quoted a fellow RTP journalist as saying: "Gomes just did his job. He was berated and insulted several times while out reporting." ... "We are sick with fear," a Bissau-based journalist told



Reporters Without Borders. During a news conference on 30 October at the armed forces high command, the chief of staff said: "Any journalist who asks questions about former President Nino Vieira's assassination will not leave this barracks alive. I will kill him. We are at war."

(Reporters Without Borders, 2013: <http://en.rsf.org/guinee-bissau-rtp-bureau-chief-deported-amid-02-11-2012,43630.html>).

## **B) EVALUATING MEDIA AND INFORMATION SOURCES**

Once the individual has developed the ability to engage introspectively about his/her own abilities to engage with information in a critical manner, the next step is to translate those skills into an interrogation of the sources from which information comes, the information itself, and the manner in which it is presented. As the twin processes of media liberalization and democratization spread across Africa, the continent has experienced significant change in the institutions of information production and dissemination. This change has seen a shift from a media ecology characterized mainly by univocal state control and the strangulation of counter discourses to one of relative plurality, albeit not always free and diverse. Many citizens now have access to a wider range of media channels and information sources.

These developments notwithstanding, the knowledge base of many African citizens and media organizations tends to be limited by an over-dependence on 'official' sources of information from state and non-state organizations, which are uncritically accorded authoritative voice, thereby allowing these actors to control messages and the national agenda, and to manipulate information for parochial and self-serving purposes. This situation has contributed in significant ways to the endurance of despotism and demagoguery, preponderance of unaccountable governments, sustaining of corruption, perpetration of various types of socio-economic and political divisiveness; and marginalization of minority voices and interests. This section will provide critical perspectives on skills and tools necessary for effectively interrogating 'official' information, incorporating non-official viewpoints, and enhancing the quality of the resulting public discourse.

The guiding questions help to critically assess the forces and motivations that are shaping the media landscape, with a particular focus on ownership, control, and market dynamics and the extent to which a wider range of media channels and information sources promotes key national developmental objectives and socio-economic inclusiveness. We examine these matters with respect to structures and cultures of information-producing institutions; the power dynamics that shape those structures; and the positionality of designated 'authoritative voices'.



## i) Interrogate Factors Driving Information-Producing and Media Institutions

### 1) *What is the Institutional Context?*

- Users need to know not just the content of the particular information or media story that is put out but also what occasioned it relative to the ideological/commercial/political inclinations of the organization producing it. That broad understanding is useful in determining how the information may have been colored by institutional culture and ideology and hence, how to interpret it, how to appropriately respond to it, and how much stock to put in it.

**Example:** Some media reports suggested that Cote d'Ivoire's Laurent Gbagbo and his relatives were physically assaulted by his captors, following his arrest (The Guardian, 2011: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/11/laurent-gbagbo-humiliating-fall>). However, the video of the arrest that was taken by a soldier who took part in the operation and which has been widely circulated seems to have edited out any form of reprisal or vengeance, with the soldiers presented as highly professional (Youtube, 2011: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwIKzHXtLZs>). A similar image of caring professionalism is shown by images released by a pro-Outtara television station (Al Jazeera, 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/04/201141113442914400.html>).

### 2) *What are the Imperatives and Objectives of the producers?*

- The point here is to first understand what is driving a piece of information. Is it in the public interest? Is it self-serving? Users should not take the information on face value but should question the purpose. That means going beyond an examination of the stated purpose to explore any other possible rationales that may be driving the story or information.

**Example:** South Africa's most widely read tabloid, *Daily Sun*, has carried stories about various episodes of xenophobic violence in South Africa in the last few years. The framing of these stories by the paper has led to critics accusing it of complicity in the violence because its reportage reinforces negative stereotypes about foreigners, it has failed to appropriately condemn the widespread violence meted out to non-South African Africans, and it distorts evidence in ways that fan xenophobia. (Media Monitoring Project, 2008: [http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/Daily\\_Sun\\_complaintv2\\_4.pdf](http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/Daily_Sun_complaintv2_4.pdf)).

### 3) *What Interests Influence their Choice of Sources?*

- Sources of information are a crucial part of the information production and dissemination process but how they came to be chosen may be as important as the contributions that they make. This is because a source may be presented as an 'expert', ostensibly providing a disinterested perspective

on an issue, when in fact he/she is a vehicle for propagating the agenda of unseen actors. It is, thus, important to review the background of information sources, assess how fair and balanced their contributions are, and examine whether their political inclinations and ideological biases influence their perspectives. This assessment, combined with an understanding of the organizational culture of the information producing and disseminating institution, might provide valuable insights about the role of particular sources and the range of perspectives and interests represented by those sources. The interests may be political (e.g., governments and other politicians) or economic (e.g., owners or commercial interests such as advertisers). It is valuable to examine what weight, if any, these interests bring to bear on the tone and framing of any information and the agenda that it may set.

**Example:** During political coverage in many countries, the media depend on experts to analyze issues of concern to the public. These experts are usually presented as disinterested analysts with impartial opinions on the matter. In reality, however, these experts may be advancing the agenda of a particular candidate or political party. In the lead-up to the 2012 elections in Ghana, for example, a political scientist who regularly appeared on radio stations, presumably as an objective analyst of the political scene, was revealed to be partisan (see Modern Ghana, 2012: <http://www.modernghana.com/news/370313/1/knust-lecturer-exposed.html>). While the media that use this individual may not be advancing a special interest, this example shows how important it is to interrogate the relationship between sources, backgrounds and possible hidden agendas.

#### 4) *What is the Level of Editorial Independence?*

- Aside from recognizing partisan inflections from media sources, as noted in no. 3 above, it is also valuable to examine the extent to which professionals in the organization are able to consistently exercise independent editorial discretion vis-à-vis those who may have political or economic influence over them. This assessment requires knowledge of how much independent judgment the professionals have exhibited in the past vis-à-vis those who hold political and economic power. The results of that assessment will determine the credibility of the organization or its professionals and, hence, the level of caution or skepticism and extra verification needed in relation to the information.

**Example:** African journalism is suffering from the "brown envelope" phenomenon whereby journalists' decisions on whether to cover a story or not, and how to cover it, is determined by how much those generating the story are willing to pay the journalist (see Warungu, 2012: <http://www.icfj.org/node/44001>; Oshunkeye, 2013: <http://themediaproject.org/sites/default/files/Shola%20Oshunkeye%20-%20African%20Journalism%20in%20a%20Culture%20of%20Brown%20Envelopes.pdf>; Skjerdal, 2010: [http://www.academia.edu/486564/Research\\_on\\_brown\\_envelope\\_journalism\\_in\\_the\\_African\\_media](http://www.academia.edu/486564/Research_on_brown_envelope_journalism_in_the_African_media)).

There is evidence to the effect that many African media houses are constrained in their coverage of extractive industries because of a variety of factors, including influences from the private sector, owners, and governments. For details on a study regarding these influences, see Canonge et al., 2013: [http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/download/fedora\\_content/download/ac:153751/COCONTENT/Watchdog\\_or\\_Lapdog.pdf](http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/download/fedora_content/download/ac:153751/COCONTENT/Watchdog_or_Lapdog.pdf).

The influence of money in editorial decisions not only compromises journalistic ethics, but also means that those who are not able to exercise such financial power may not find an outlet for their stories or their versions of stories. The media literate citizen should, therefore, interrogate why particular issues get or do not get coverage and what influences that coverage.

**5) What is the quality of the organization's professional capacity?**

- The operations of many information-producing organizations in Africa have been undermined by less-than-adequate infrastructural capacity and professional mediocrity. In this context, not every piece of information that is churned out meets the standards of acceptability or credibility. Consequently, it is necessary to examine how well an organization is positioned to generate good and credible information based on such factors as caliber of staff and their knowledge of the issues under consideration, the rigor of its information collection and processing architecture, and the robustness and extent of its technical infrastructure.

**Example:** In the following story about the future of the presidency, following Ghana's 2012 elections and subsequent petition at the Supreme Court, the *New Statesman* (2013) published the following story: <http://ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=264159>. Since the story makes a lot of claims without credible attribution or substantiation, it behooves the literate reader to evaluate its merit further by probing the organization's background, professional standing, track record, and the quality of its operations. A review of past stories from this publication leaves one with a history of poor quality journalism, political bias, and a shoestring operation.

**6) How credible is the information source?**

- An important consideration in evaluating information from a particular source is to investigate their track record over a period of time, as far as accuracy and commitment to democratic values are concerned. Information from a source that has a poor or inconsistent record on these counts has to be subjected to more scrutiny than will otherwise be the case. Where there is no track record to measure current information against, it is prudent to be extra cautious about the integrity of the information at hand and to take additional steps to verify and/or to find credible corroborating information.

**Example:** When rumours began circulating between July and August, 2012, that Prime Minister Meles Zenawi had died, many observers did not believe the official reaction that he was indeed alive and recovering well. See Africa Review, 2012: <http://www.africareview.com/News/Ethiopia-denies-fresh-rumours-of-Meles-Zenawi-death/-/979180/1468736/-/x7le8z/-/index.html>; <http://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00018079.html>. This is because the Ethiopian government has a reputation for lacking transparency and for manipulating information. Such healthy skepticism is useful if information consumers do not want to be gullible victims of propaganda. Source credibility questions should not be limited to government agencies. Indeed, some private media and information sources are guilty of the same machinations and so should be subjected to similar scrutiny. The following story by the *Al-Hajj* newspaper in Ghana, which makes serious allegations of subterfuge by the main opposition New Patriotic Party, warrants such scrutiny, to determine whether it is substantiated, verifiable, and, hence, merits belief: (Ghanaweb, 2013: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=263487>).

#### 7) *What is the level of diversity within particular information-producing institutions?*

- A media or information production institution that has limited diversity of perspectives or experiences that reflect the society as a whole is more likely to present a limited range of viewpoints and insights. Users of information should, therefore, make the effort to understand the extent of internal pluralism within an organization and to assess whether that influences the range, frame, and nature of information that it produces as well as the kinds of agenda that it sets. This exercise helps to see not only what is covered but also what is not covered. The understanding that comes from this exercise triggers critical questions about the forms and purposes of representation and their implications.

**Example:** There is evidence that women are underrepresented within media organizations, particularly at the highest decision making levels, and that this contributes to the marginalization of women's issues within the media (see GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services, 2013: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-media>).

#### 8) *What is the extent and implications of ownership concentration within the media landscape?*

- Another important consideration is the level of concentration in ownership, because while there may be multiple information outlets, they may not provide a plurality of viewpoints. Concentrated ownership might subordinate other views, particularly contrary ones, to the one favored by the owner(s). Whatever information is provided could, therefore, lack the necessary diversity and editorial independence might be constrained to such an extent that users have access only to a univocal perspective. This situation was very typical with state-owned media houses in much of

Africa, but it is also evident among private media conglomerates. In situations of media concentration, it is prudent to assess the possibility of censorship, incomplete information, omissions, distortions, narrow range of perspectives, silencing of contrary views, and skewed interpretation of facts.

**Example:** In its 2007 *State of the Media* report, the Media Council of Tanzania (2007) expressed concern about the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few powerful individuals, families, and politically connected groups. For details about these concerns, see pages 17-19 of the report at: <http://www.mct.or.tz/mediacouncil/images/stories/Publications/Books/State%20of%20Media%20Report%202007.pdf>.

## ii) Explore the Breadth and Biases of 'Authoritative' Voices (Including Institutions and Individuals)

### 1) How representative are the voices or perspectives presented?

- One of the strategies by which information providers support the credibility of their message is the use of 'authoritative voices'. These are individuals or institutions that, in the estimation of the information producer or disseminator, are seen as knowledgeable, capable, and trustworthy. It is important for the information and media literate person to critically approach the views of such voices with a critical mind, bearing in mind the fact that absolute truths are rare and that we interpret 'realities' from our subjective positions and experiences. The user, therefore, has to find out whether there are other authoritative voices, narratives or interpretations of the issue at stake. It is only through a critical juxtaposition and rigorous review of these various versions of the reality that we can gain confidence in a particular version of an incident, a story, knowledge, or other piece of information.

**Example:** An uncritical acceptance of one faction's version of atrocities in Cote d'Ivoire's post election violence might give the impression that there was only one group of perpetrators. However, a more critical assessment will show that there were victims and perpetrators on each side and that each faction sanitized its version of reality in order to curry favor with various target audiences (see Human Rights Watch, 2011: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/09/c-te-d-ivoire-ouattara-forces-kill-rape-civilians-during-offensive>; Human Right Watch, 2013: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/29/one-year-du-kou-massacre-belies-ouattara-government-s-promises-impartial-justice>). Similarly, at the time of the Libyan uprising against Gaddafi, he was adamant that he had the full support of his people and authoritatively claimed that they all loved him (Youtube, 2011b: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MPcpNaxEm8>). The reality was, however, that his view was not representative of the national mood, particularly among rebel forces.

## 2) *Who are accorded authoritative voices and why?*

- A media and information literate person should interrogate why particular individuals or groups are chosen to represent 'authoritative voices' and, by extension, which are not. Are they chosen because they will reinforce dominant discourses or were they left out because they will challenge the status quo? This engagement with voice and silence is important in ascertaining the representativeness and diversity of information that is presented. Exploring these issues is important in assessing who gets to participate in the public arena, what value is accorded different constituencies and what impact these decisions have on the integrity of the information and the ethos of democratic citizenship. Such exploration will also help to decipher the nature of the discourses that circulate and/or dominate the media landscape and the ideologies they represent. **Example:** Pair trawling continues to devastate fisheries in many countries to the detriment of the livelihoods of many marginalized communities. In the midst's of this situation, official discourses claiming that governments have taken action to curtail these activities drown the stories of vulnerable groups which continue to bear the brunt (Youtube, 2011c: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pvxQhN8aLk>). Part of the reason for the dominance of this skewed narrative, or the neglect of marginal voices in the discussion, is the fact that information producers and consumers are not strongly and visibly interrogating the official narrative. Consequently, there is no mobilization of a critical mass of support for the vulnerable groups to overturn the status quo.

## 3) *What are the silences within the message?*

- Silences that obtain within media and other sources of information are important corollaries to the authoritative voices that dominate those environments. It is not just enough to analyze what is said and who is represented but also what is not said and what/who is not represented. This broader analysis allows an appreciation of whose views get amplified or muffled; whose 'truth' gets projected and validated; which voices shape the public discourse and the national agenda; the level of inclusivity and representativeness of that discourse or agenda; and who benefits from that agenda. **Example:** As a result of some of the constraints to access referred to earlier and because of conscious efforts to silence them, many vulnerable individuals and groups do not have the opportunity to tell their stories. They become victims of regimes of justice imposed by the powerful and the dominant. There appears to be collective ignorance and/or neglect, resulting in a vicious cycle whereby the silence of marginalized voices perpetuates these regimes. These attitudes are seen when elderly women in Cameroon or Ghana, for example, are accused of, and punished for witchcraft with very few voices questioning the basis for the accusations and punishment.



(Africa News, 2010: [http://www.africanews.com/site/list\\_message/29237](http://www.africanews.com/site/list_message/29237);  
BBC 2012a: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-19437130>;  
Corouge, 2013: <http://corougemagali.photoshelter.com/gallery/GAMBAGA-WITCHES-CAMP-IN-GHANA/Goooo1oqlJosljQ/Cooooal4sfvlgWNQ>). The same lack of critical interrogation and of the opportunity for alternative voices to be heard, attend dominant rationales for homophobia in Uganda (NBC News, 2012: <http://video.msnbc.msn.com/nbc-news/49934366#49934366>;  
Examiner, 2010: <http://www.examiner.com/article/anti-gay-ugandan-pastor-s-perverted-poo-poo-speech-becomes-viral-video-hit>) or the killing of Albinos in Tanzania (Youtube, 2012: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOfpdmDPgfc>).

**4) How are sources' subjective experiences, preferences and positions influencing their perspectives and interpretations?**

- Perceptions, constructions and interpretations of reality are, by and large, subjective undertakings. Even seemingly 'objective' information such as statistical data or images reflect a particular articulation of reality, including value judgments about what is worth capturing or measuring; the scope of data gathering; how to collect and present the evidence; what to include and what not to; etc. Therefore, media and information literate citizens must weigh how value judgments shape media messages, images, and other content.

Furthermore, an assessment of the source's special interest in the issue at stake is valuable in putting any pronouncements or views into perspective. That assessment should open the doors to critical scrutiny of whether a conflict of interest exists as far as the relationship between source of the message and the issue at stake are concerned. While the existence of such a conflict does not necessarily render the views invalid, it behooves the reader to be more cautious and to seek additional information before accepting or rejecting the source's point of view.

**Example:** In a December 2012 interview with BBC's *Hardtalk* program, President Teodoro Obiang denies claims of poverty, corruption, cronyism, etc. (BBC, 2012b: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw-HY9FAZBs>). Evaluate that interview in terms of criteria for evaluating the subjectivity of sources (Discussed in Question no. 4). What are the key questions raised for you by the interview? How do they help you to determine the relative validity of the claims made by the interviewer and of the responses provided by the president?

**5) How inter-culturally competent are information sources, in terms of their understanding, evaluation and presentation of information?**

- While free speech is an inviolable democratic right, it has to be exercised responsibly and with respect for the rights and dignity of others. In evaluating information from various sources,



therefore, users have to recognize that context and culture matter, and they do shape meaning and interpretation. Intercultural communication competence is necessary to ensure that forms of expression are suitable for particular moments and contexts and that views, practices and observations by others are interpreted appropriately. It is, thus, important to assess how well or appropriately information sources are engaging with specific audiences; how sensitive and adaptable they are to particular contexts and the ramifications of certain messages; how self-aware they are of their own potential complicity in the issues at stake; how perceptive they are of others' perceptions and interpretations of such complicity; and how responsive they are to these assessments.

**Example:** Some stories carried by Kenyan media before, during, and after the 2007 elections that have been partly blamed for the extensive ethnic violence that engulfed the country (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJ7Hv4xjhUM>). According to Freedom House,

Kenya's media played a mixed role in the 2007–08 election and postelection violence, reflecting its growing diversity and uneven levels of maturity. Some outlets provided useful voter education before the polls, urged restraint in the postelection period, and mobilized assistance for victims of clashes. Others were accused of inciting people to violence. A Kenyan journalist, Joshua Arap Sang, is facing charges at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for allegedly disseminating coded messages calling for violence during radio broadcasts. Shortly after the 2007 presidential election results were announced, all live news broadcasting was temporarily banned, at least partially because some vernacular radio stations were goading their communities to bloodshed (Youtube, 2008: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2012/kenya>).

Explore how MIL could have helped media organizations and audiences avoid the violence by a) evaluating the ethnic agendas embedded in the coverage and viewpoints expressed; b) understanding (in)sensitivity of media practitioners and their sources to the implications of incitement to ethnicized violence; and c) being self aware of the impact of complicity and gullibility of an uncritical audience.

In 2012, some Nigerian media carried stories that suggested that Ghanaian authorities were selectively targeting Nigerian businesses for closure, ostensibly for violating the country's laws pertaining to commercial activities by foreign nationals. (See All Africa, 2012: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207040550.html>). The situation elicited a strong reaction from

Nigeria's House of Representatives, including a recommendation to break diplomatic relations if the Ghanaian authorities went ahead with their plan (Ghanaweb, 2012: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=242977>). Based on the issues raised in this story, how well did the story reflect a good understanding of the context? What sensibilities did it trigger, how justifiable are they, and what are their implications?

**7) What is the political context within which they are expressing themselves?**

- The fact that someone is the most knowledgeable person in relation to a particular issues does not necessarily mean that what he/she says is the truth. Circumstances may compel those individuals to present a different version of reality. It is, therefore, important for a media and information literate person to interrogate the context within which the person is speaking to, for example, determine whether they may be speaking freely or under duress. This is especially critical in conflict situations or in authoritarian contexts.

**Example:** An alleged victim of police brutality in Egypt, during early 2013 protests against the government, recanted an earlier statement he made while recovering at a police hospital, to the effect that he was stripped and beaten by protesters and that police were his saviors (see Voice of America, 2013: <http://www.voanews.com/content/egyptian-man-police-beating-morsi/1596773.html>).

**C) EVALUATING A PIECE OF INFORMATION OR NEWS ITEM**

Citizens and media practitioners require critical skills to enable them effectively and efficaciously sift through the morass of information that is churned out continually through various media. It is evident, however, that these skills are not available to many citizens, media professionals and decision-makers, thereby compromising their ability to critically analyze, and appropriately respond to and deploy information. This section enables us to critique "the sources and technologies of communication, the codes that are used, the messages that are produced, and the selection, interpretation, and impact of those messages" (Rubin, 1998). It provides guidelines for demystifying 'authoritative voices' within the media landscape and subjecting them to intellectually rigorous scrutiny and, hence, informed understanding.

In addition to an assessment of self and the institutions that produce information, the media and information literate individual has to have the skills to evaluate the material itself in relation to its source, its purpose, its latent and manifest messages, and the range of perspectives contained in it. Among the questions to be posed and answered in order to have an illuminated view of the information are the following:

1) **What is the import, what are the interests at stake, and what are the perspectives represented?**

- The import of the message or information has to be assessed to determine what it is meant to achieve. This analysis has to be situated within the context of the voices behind the information to understand what kind of interest is served and whether all those touched by the story have had the opportunity to have their perspectives represented. This exercise should explore the relevance of the information in terms of timing, tone, frame, analytical depth, (over)simplification, etc. Engaging these issues requires a healthy and critical skepticism about the message, the messenger, and their motivations that helps to determine whether further verification of the information is warranted in order to establish the integrity of the message.

**Example:** The African media landscape is full of sensational stories that are heavy on speculations and allegations that are attributed to anonymous sources or are without attribution at all. Review the following stories and identify the 'red flags' (see Ghanaweb, 2011a: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=202507>).

Other stories splash sensational headlines that are meant to vilify, humiliate, or damage persons without substantive proof of their veracity. Review the following examples and explore the key elements that stand out for a media and information literate citizen.

Figure 1



Source: (Ghanaweb, 2011b: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=221732>).

## 2) *What is the Latent Grammar behind the text or image?*

- In interrogating a piece of information, one needs to look beyond what is obvious, i.e., the manifest message. In many instances, the most evocative and intended message may not be that obvious. That subtle but powerful message is the latent content. In order to get at that subtle but significant aspect of the information (i.e., latent grammar), one needs to be able to identify the 'message behind the message' and why it is there. A piece of information can employ certain rhetorical devices that intentionally or unintentionally manipulate data or images such that users are left with a particular representation of reality that may be distorted or skewed in support of a certain point of view.

**Example:** A *Daily Sun* report about an incident of mob justice in South Africa is seen by some as infused with subtle codes that stoke the embers of xenophobia. While, on the surface, the story might come across as condemnatory of the violence and sympathetic to the Zimbabwean victim, deeper analysis suggests a sub-text that may be more insidious. A critique of the story by the *Daily Maverick* (Daily Maverick, 2012: <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-11-21-daily-suns-journalism-and-human-rights-betrayal>) raises some critical questions that provide useful assessment tools for media and information literate individuals. It is fair to note that the *Daily Sun* subsequently acknowledged its error (Dail Sun, 2012: <http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/dailysun/2012/11/22/DJ/1/p1says.html>).

Exploration of latent messages helps to critically interrogate the belief that an image speaks more than a thousand words. The following image shows President Mugabe and other African delegates, presumably, sleeping through an international meeting (see Nairaland, 2013: [http://www.nairaland.com/attachments/42565\\_African20leaders20snoring20away11\\_jpg935904\\_f8df17f3f37bead6e63b8bbc22](http://www.nairaland.com/attachments/42565_African20leaders20snoring20away11_jpg935904_f8df17f3f37bead6e63b8bbc22)).

It is critical to deconstruct the image to determine whether the picture being portrayed of Africa leaders is, indeed, accurate. Was a meeting, in fact, going on or was this picture taken during a break? Why are the surrounding chairs empty if the meeting was in session? The analysis will help determine whether the text that went with the image accurately captures the context in which it was taken. If it is determined that the image is less than an accurate representation, then a follow-up question should be posed as to why it was chosen in order to understand whether a subtle message is intended. Is an agenda being pursued? If yes, by whom and for what purpose? Are stereotypes, for example, being perpetuated?

A similar story about Mugabe's alleged tendency to sleep at meetings was carried by *The Telegraph* (2012) in the UK (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/9501976/Robert-Mugabe-unable-to-stay-awake-during-meetings.html>). Without questioning the veracity of the allegations, it is worth asking why the newspaper chose to use this image in its story. Is he, indeed, sleeping in this picture? Is it meant to reinforce a particular perception or promote a particular agenda that is given further exposition in the story?

### 3) **How accurate is the interpretation given to a piece of information?**

- Information sources or producers serve as filters and so what they put out is their interpretation of the raw information. Consumers must develop the skills for independent assessment of that interpretation against the original material to determine whether the interpretation from the source is tenable or sustainable.

**Example:** A section of Ghanaians are reported to have criticized President Mahama for saying that he was 'glad' that he was not in South Africa to see the national soccer team lose to its Burkinabe counterpart during AFCON 2013. While the President's comments seem to suggest that his heartbreak would have been more devastating if he had been at the game in person, others suggest that the comments were a scornful and unsympathetic rebuke of the national team. Review the following story and determine which interpretation of the President's statement is more tenable (see Peacefmonline, 2013: <http://elections.peacefmonline.com/politics/201302/155732.php>).

### 4) **How are media representations influenced by technical codes (sound, camera angles, types of shots, lighting, etc)?**

- Technical codes include sound, camera angles, types of shots and lighting. They may include, for example, ominous music to communicate danger in a feature film, or high-angle camera shots to create a feeling of power in a photograph. Symbolic codes include the language, dress or actions of characters, or iconic symbols that are easily understood (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 101). While these codes may look neutral on the surface, they can belie embedded insinuations and values that shape the perceptions, beliefs and inclinations of consumers toward individuals and contexts that are depicted.

**Example:** A few months ago, a couple of paintings depicting South African president Jacob Zuma generated a lot of controversy (see New Zimbabwe Forums, 2012: <http://forum.newzimbabwe.com/index.php?/topic/60819-new-zuma-painting-totally-out-of-order/>; Okayafrica, 2012: <http://www.okayafrica.com/stories/ayanda-mabulu-umshini-wam-weapon-of-mass-destruction/>).



The controversy stems from multiple interpretations of the images and what they denote. Review the images in the Zuma case and the one below of President Mugabe, identify technical codes embedded in them, and examine how they may influence how the images are received and interpreted.

Figure 2



(Source - ZimEye, 2010: <http://www.zimeye.org/?p=13542>)

- 5) **How rigorous is 'scientific' information and how valid and legitimate are claims based on it?**
- Many people tend to consume 'scientific' information as intrinsically incontestable, because of the presumed rigor that produces it. Such inviolability of science and statistical data should, however, not be swallowed hook, line, and sinker. Consumers should develop the skills to question and to assess the rigor of scientific claims, to examine the veracity of their interpretation, and to scrutinize the uses to which they are put. The scientific rigor of statistical data, for example, cannot be assumed. While some data may provide valid representations of reality, it is a known fact that

others have been manufactured or misrepresented for self-serving purposes. It is, therefore, valuable to adopt a critical approach and to develop the skills for assessing 'scientific' information.

**Example:** Various organizations – from government agencies, to non-governmental organizations and international institutions – support their claims, assessments and projections of different development processes with statistics. Many users of the data assume that these data are robust because they have been subjected to rigorous assessment. Unfortunately, the assumptions may be flawed as is shown by the following assessments of statistical data in and on Africa:

Good Governance Africa, 2013: <http://gga.org/analysis/africas-numbers-can-you-count-on-them>;

BBC, 2012: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20639775>; and

Voice of America, 2011: <http://www.voanews.com/content/new-research-confronts-africas-statistical-tragedy-135134213/159278.html>

The assertion by the Chief Psychiatrist at Ghana's main psychiatric hospital that homosexuality is a mental illness that can be cured is an example of how science is used to buttress different points of view (see Modern Ghana, 2011: <http://www.modernghana.com/news/341865/1/homosexuality-is-treatable-psychiatric-disorder-ch.html>).

#### **D) ANALYZING ETHICAL AND DEMOCRATIC ETHOSES OF INFORMATION**

There are ethical principles and professional codes of conduct that should inform the collection of information, its production and its dissemination. Scholars in many jurisdictions, for example, have to comply with ethical protocols regarding research involving human subjects, the analysis of such data and their publication. These protocols and principles are meant, among other considerations, to ensure that subjects are protected and that the integrity of the work is sound. Many journalists also operate with professional codes of conduct aimed at achieving the same objectives. These codes are premised on certain core principles: 1) seek the truth and report it as fully as possible; 2) minimize harm (in the public interest); 3) act independently; and 4) avoid conflicts of interest. All reporting should be evaluated against these core ethical standards.

In the process of consuming any piece of information, it is necessary to assess its ethical underpinnings to determine whether proper procedures and protocols were followed -- from data/information collection to publication. In essence, information consumers should not just be interested in the "what" of the product but also in the "how" of its production. This assessment is critical if consumers are to avoid becoming gullible pawns in the hands of sensationalist and unscrupulous publications or inadvertent supporters of activities whose only purpose is professional self-aggrandizement, unwarranted damage to the reputation of another, or pecuniary gain. To engage these issues, the consumer can pose the following questions:



- ***To what extent does the information conform to ethical principles and codes of conduct? How was it obtained, collated, manipulated, and/or disseminated, and with what purpose and impact?***

**Example:** The *Daily Guide* newspaper carried a story about the death of a Canadian public servant in Ghana. The newspaper chose a salacious and sensational headline that read, "Canadian Official Dies in Hotel After Hot Sex." (see Daily Guide, 2013a: <http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=74330>). A few days later, the paper followed up with a more tempered headline, "Heart Attack Killed Canadian", only tangentially referring to the alleged hedonistic activities that had caused the official's death (Daily Guide, 2013b: <http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=74523>). Review the two stories and evaluate the ethical and professional issues raised by the story.

In addition to ethics, a key consideration in evaluating information and media messages is the extent to which they strengthen or promote intercultural dialogue. Such dialogue is fundamental to a functioning democratic society, as it offers opportunities for understanding of the 'other', insights into other viewpoints, critical introspection, self-awareness and open-mindedness. Information or messages that undermine intercultural dialogue are inimical to the development and sustainability of a vibrant, inclusive democratic society. Media and information literacy in support of democratic governance and practice, thus, requires posing questions such as:

- ***Is the information or message promoting inclusive or exclusive citizenship? Does it accept the rights of the 'other'? Does it facilitate cooperation and dialogue or promote division and animosity?***

Consumers of information have to demonstrate the acumen for deciphering whether information that is provided to them undermines or enhances accountability. In many African countries, those in powerful positions operate with impunity and feel no obligation to be answerable to the citizenry. They also exhibit a tendency to sanitize information or unleash propaganda to shore up their interests. In such a context, it is imperative that information from individuals and groups such as government officials, corporate entities, chiefs, law enforcement officials, journalists, etc., are subjected to thorough scrutiny in support of accountability, transparency, and protection of the public interest. The following questions are valuable to pose for the sake of strengthening the foregoing values:

- ***To what extent does the information support or undermine democratic accountability? Does it hinder open scrutiny of public affairs? How justified are the constraints on openness and scrutiny?***

## CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, SOCIALIZATION, AND SCHOOL CURRICULA

In support of the critical perspectives that emanate from the questions posed above, there is a fundamental need for restructuring pedagogical approaches to learning in both formal and informal settings. From early childhood, citizens have to be encouraged and supported to imbibe the view that they have a fundamental right to knowledge, diversity of perspectives, and free expression. Parents and teachers should eschew the 'sage on the stage' mentality that tends to characterize the student/child-teacher/parent relationship and encourage the learner to question, to probe and to challenge the teacher/parent.

This learner-centered and critical approach should not be limited to particular subjects or issues, but should cut across all areas and fields of study. By being integrated into every aspect of the learning experience the approach sharpens and anchors inquiry-based learning skills and promotes a problem-solving orientation to information and knowledge. Furthermore, it helps to generate an appetite for, and devotion to, evidence-based, informed discourse and respect for other perspectives based on their merit. By nurturing these skills as early in life as possible and honing them throughout life, citizens come to appreciate critical discernment as a normal part of how one deals with information and gain confidence in the appropriateness of questioning, no matter what authority one is dealing with. They also see knowledge not as the prerogative of any one individual or group but as the product of participatory co-creation, through interaction, shared ideas, contestations, verification, and validation.

- **Example:** Students should be encouraged to interrogate particular versions of history, historical texts, 'conventional knowledge', taboos, and 'scientific knowledge' and not to accept them as given without critical review.

As a corollary to the development of this mindset, learners have to be made aware of how context and experiences shape particular realities and perceptions about them. They need to understand that their experiences and backgrounds are not the only ones, and hence their perceptions may not reflect those of others. This articulation of subjectivity is important in building self-awareness and other-centeredness as they engage with various kinds of information and media such as texts, films, radio and television programs, museum artifacts, etc. Learners, thus, cultivate the intercultural competence needed for dialogic discourses in support of inclusive democratic communities.

- **Example:** Students/children can undertake projects that enable them to engage with marginalized groups in their communities, in order to interrogate and to determine the extent to which mainstream explanations for poverty, homelessness, disability, and class inequality reflect the reality. Similar exercises can be pursued to address stereotypes about religion and ethnicity.

Making these approaches a natural part of the learning experience will help cultivate and sustain inquiring minds with an orientation to problem solving, not just information absorption.

## **NEW MEDIA LITERACY**

Some analysts have touted new media as a panacea to information deficit and information quality. They see the platforms made possible by these media as enabling not only the availability of multiple voices and perspectives in proximate spaces, but also subjecting them to critical review and rich synthesis, thereby producing credible, rich and refined information that helps to undergird democratic citizenship, transformative civic engagement, and accountable governance, among others. Contrary to the preceding view, other analysts argue that the reality of interactions within Internet spaces does not entirely support these utopian perspectives. They contend that, while there is no denying the presence of multiple and, indeed, diverse sources of information within these spaces, the fact is that they are more like arenas of information glut than unassailable repositories of exclusively accurate, informative, and rigorously generated information. This section engages with the opportunities and concerns articulated by these contrasting perspectives to help us understand their implications for media literacy and informed citizenship, and for the advancement of good governance.

New media platforms make it possible for citizens to express themselves with relatively less control by gate-keepers (e.g., media executives, censors, governments) who have traditionally filtered access to and information from traditional media (Tettey, 2009). Consequently, Africa has seen the emergence of its own crop of citizen-journalists producing and sharing user-generated content on the Internet. From Facebook, to Twitter, blogs and other social media Africans are expressing themselves without the constraints that have attended old media. This means that users of information have alternative or additional voices and viewpoints which can serve as sources from which the validity of official information can be tested (Global Voices, 2013a: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/01/07/technology-helps-kenyans-reveal-fraud-in-political-party-memberships/>). Furthermore, these platforms allow counter-narratives to find avenues for expression, thereby enabling marginalized or persecuted groups to be heard (see Global Voices, 2013b: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/02/12/video-of-brutal-beating-of-women-shocks-angola/>).

To be able to sift through the boundless information that is available, consumers need to complement the skills discussed in the previous sections with technical skills needed to access, understand, and navigate new media. This includes knowledge of key search words and search engines, appropriate databases, cross-referencing, digital manipulation, etc. Not only do these skills help to access credible information but

they also facilitate effective assessment of texts, images, voice, etc in order to determine their authenticity or manipulation. In essence, users have to demonstrate multimodal literacy that allows them to apply appropriate techniques as they traverse the range of media platforms available both within new media and across new and traditional media.

Notwithstanding the enabling qualities of new media, citizens have to subject information on these platforms to the same scrutiny discussed in the preceding sections. Democratization of new media spaces is laudable for opening up access to, and enabling voice for, many who would otherwise not have them. It is, nevertheless, still unavailable to many more who do not have the skills or resources to access and participate within these platforms. Furthermore, the very opportunity of an open architecture means that the quality control mechanisms that come with traditional platforms are not always in place. The absence of quality control in the midst of information overload presents a challenge to information users that require additional skills that are specific to new media.

One of the important skills is an understanding of the new media universe, including its capacities and limitations, its vulnerabilities, and its hazards. It is worth knowing, for example, that the fact that something is on the Internet is not, *ipso facto*, reliable evidence of its authenticity. This is evidenced by the preponderance of phishing sites, viruses, spyware, violations of privacy, and other forms of cyber fraud. For some ideas on how to avoid falling victim to these schemes, see:

Fraud Center, 2013: [http://fraudcenter.freedom.net/html/phishing\\_site\\_example.html](http://fraudcenter.freedom.net/html/phishing_site_example.html)

Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013: [http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/internet\\_fraud](http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/internet_fraud)

Microsoft, 2013: <http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/phishing-symptoms.aspx>

New media also bring unique dimensions to issues such as plagiarism, copyright, and fair use that the media literate citizen has to be aware of, both as an information producer and as an information consumer. The fact that information is readily available does not necessarily take away the rights of producers to the protection of their intellectual property and to legal recourse to protect those rights. Users and producers, therefore, have to be conversant with relevant legislation and regulations regarding the reproduction of online material to determine, for example, how they may be used under creative commons or open content regimes.

- **Example:** As new media facilitate an unending 24-hour news cycle, there is a tendency to put speed before critical verification, as information producers hasten to beat the competition by being the first to break the news. Consequently, information has been published on social media sites that have later been found to be inaccurate. This is what happened with *The Times* of South Africa which, in December 2011, tweeted a story claiming that Nelson Mandela had been hospitalized

when, in fact, that was not the case (see Media Ethics, 2011: [http://www.imediaethics.org/News/2509/Times\\_of\\_south\\_africa\\_tweets\\_fake\\_news\\_deletes\\_tweet\\_apologizes.php](http://www.imediaethics.org/News/2509/Times_of_south_africa_tweets_fake_news_deletes_tweet_apologizes.php)).

The need to recognize the hazards of an open information architecture, and the importance of verification, is brought to the fore in the following example. Many Ghanaians were victims of a text message that was sent to cell phones in January 2010, claiming that an imminent earthquake was expected to hit. The message, which caused significant trepidation among the population, turned out to be a hoax (see BBC, 2010: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8465619.stm>).

An example of digital manipulation is provided by a 2012 image that was used by South Africa's *The Citizen* newspaper to show the aftermath of a suicide bomb attack in Afghanistan. It turned out that the newspaper had doctored the original photograph from Agence France-Presse by removing two dead bodies. See the following sites for a comparison of the doctored and original images, respectively:

- o Imedia Ethics, 2012: [http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3462/South\\_africas\\_the\\_citizen\\_newspaper\\_fires\\_photographer\\_for\\_disparaging\\_tweets\\_about\\_doctored\\_photo.php](http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3462/South_africas_the_citizen_newspaper_fires_photographer_for_disparaging_tweets_about_doctored_photo.php)
- o Strait Times, 2012: <http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/world/story/female-bomber-kills-12-kabul-avenge-anti-islam-film-20120918>

## POPULAR CULTURE AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Many Africans get a significant part of their knowledge of the world through popular cultural forms such as music, films, fashion, theatre, video games, religious programming, and advertisements. Unfortunately, only few of them bring a critical perspective to bear on their consumption of popular culture, thereby allowing their worldviews, behaviors, and attitudes to be shaped by literal manifestations of these cultural artifacts. Where there is a critique of these cultural forms, it tends to be skewed largely towards a protectionist philosophy, with a tendency to denigrate certain types of popular culture and to erode their value as legitimate forms of free expression and citizen engagement. The result is a slippery slope of censorship, moral rebuke, or prosecution.

In many instances, the form of the artistic expression, instead of its substance, is used as a straw target to garner support for suppression, ostensibly to protect moral rectitude and public decency. However, arrogating to some authority the power to determine what Africans can see, read, or listen to, instead of empowering them to be independent, critically-minded assayers of information, only leads to uncritical

consumption of these artifacts. This approach to popular culture constrains people's worldviews and their sense of civic responsibility within a democratic culture, with dire implications for enlightened citizenship. It should be up to citizens to judge the value of such expressions. The best protection governments and moral authorities can give to their people is to facilitate initiatives that endow them with the critical thinking skills to make informed choices with regard to these cultural forms.

- **Example:** It is worth noting that musical forms that were seen as corrupting to the youth (e.g., rap) provided conduits for articulating the voices of oppressed people in several North African countries in the lead-up to the Arab Spring. They also served as rallying cries for mobilizing anti-government protesters in the region. (see Movements.Org, 2011: <http://www.movements.org/blog/entry/music-of-the-revolution-how-songs-of-protest-have-rallied-demonstrators/>). Their success stems from the fact that the messages contained in them resonated with the real life experience of citizens as opposed to the distance between those experiences and the propaganda that came from the state machinery.

Theatrical performances have also provided a means for alternative voices to be heard, and for popular mobilization in support of those voices, when the information landscape is hostile to those views or is unbalanced in terms of the kinds of perspectives available to citizens. This is the role that Rooftop Promotions plays in Zimbabwe (see CNN, 2011: <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLDAfrica/06/09/zimbabwe.protest.theater/index.html>). In the context of strident homophobia in Uganda, a play was written and staged in 2012 to address the challenges that gays face. Through the main character, a successful businessman, the play also sought to contest the notion that gay people are not normal.

While the authorities contended that the play was banned and the playwright was incarcerated for "disobeying lawful orders", the fact is that the play touched on a very complex web of issues from homophobia, to religion, human rights, foreign influences, etc., all of which may not be immediately obvious to the non-critical eye. It is, thus, useful to understand the context for the ban, beyond the play and the official rationale for the ban, in order to see the agenda that is being pursued by all parties in the dispute (see The Star, 2012:

[http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/09/20/uganda\\_jails\\_british\\_man\\_for\\_staging\\_play\\_ab\\_out\\_homosexuality.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/09/20/uganda_jails_british_man_for_staging_play_ab_out_homosexuality.html);

Channel 4, 2013: <http://www.channel4.com/news/deportation-crazy-says-uganda-gay-play-producer-video>).

## KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

Understanding the audience is part of what makes an information producer media and information literate. Among questions that an information producer should ask are: a) how well and appropriately is he/she/it able to engage with specific audiences or a mix of audiences; b) how knowledgeable is he/she/it about appropriate communication formats and platforms; c) how effectively and efficiently is he/she/it able to deploy the information via those formats and platforms; and d) what is his/her/its understanding of how well the information is being accessed and assessed?

Irrespective of whether that information producer is a government agency, community based organization, a private company, or a media house, its success in reaching audiences will be significantly facilitated by exhibiting the ability to:

- Pitch information at appropriate levels for different audiences. However, because audiences are not always an undifferentiated mass, it is important that conscious efforts are made to ensure that messages are presented in a manner that allows them to be received as intended and to be correctly decoded. This requires intercultural communication competence on the part of message producers and disseminators that not only enables them to adapt to particular contexts but also be responsive to the information needs of their audience.
- Be cognizant of the larger context while targeting messages to particular audiences. Credibility can be damaged if there are incongruities and inconsistencies in messaging across different groups.
- Understand and identify the best platform for reaching particular audiences. For example, while Internet connectivity in Africa continues to improve, the penetration rate is still too low to be an effective means of reaching many citizens. In addition to the limits of geographical spread, there is also the fact of low literacy levels, especially in the dominant language of the technology that makes it inaccessible to many Africans. Radio, thus, continues to be an effective tool for many rural populations because of its ability to transcend language and distance. It needs to be borne in mind, however, that the inclination to use "official languages" or to be driven by commercial imperatives may limit the value of radio. One of the ways to address these impediments to accessible information is community radio. It will be useful to develop, support and effectively use community radio to communicate local issues that reflect, engage, and respond to issues of relevance to particular communities.
- Express oneself clearly, with a clear thesis or argument. The producer of a message has to be able to determine how much information is too much, necessary, superfluous, or overwhelming. Information needs to be organized in a manner that coherently integrates relevant elements (e.g., images, text, sound, etc) and makes for effective absorption.



- Anticipate and address audience interpretation, responses and reactions, based on a good understanding of the issues, the audiences, and their particular circumstances vis-à-vis the issue. Effective MIL requires other-centeredness, which means that information producers and disseminators should not only learn how to exercise voice but should also develop the skills for listening to and hearing others.

## CONCLUSION

This handbook is intended to be a living document that is adaptable to different spatial and temporal contexts and provides a forum for engaging with, improving, and enriching what is contained in this original version. While it serves as a resource for media/information literacy programs that can be adopted by media houses, civil society groups, and educational institutions across Africa, it is also meant to be a catalyst for continuing dialogue among all stakeholders about how they can work together to advance media-literacy across the broad spectrum of society.

This is because all Africans can derive mutual benefits from individually and collectively committing to micro-, meso- and macro-level initiatives that strengthen the pre-requisites and skills for media and information literacy. Citizens and institutions can become independent, perceptive and critically-minded assayers of information and, thus, be in a position to help grow and sustain democratic societies that are caring, responsive and facilitative of socio-economic development for all segments of their populations.

One of the ways in which they can help to build such a society is through engagement with public policies which shape the development agenda. It is, therefore, important that citizens have the ability to appropriately assess these policies, contribute to them, and use them effectively if these policies are to produce progressive outcomes for society. State institutions, international organizations, policy institutes, think-tanks, and civil society organizations have a crucial role not just as generators of policy, but also mediators between policies and citizens, by developing, disseminating, and/or critiquing one another's policies and offering valuable insights and alternatives.

Feedback from representatives of these organizations who participated in the Accra workshop indicates that many of them do not have the skills and capacity to effectively use the media and to engage the public. Hopefully, this handbook has provided some valuable guidelines on how to develop skills and to build capacity needed to generate information that is credible, efficient and effective, from the producer's perspective, as well as capable of eliciting perceptive and appropriate responses from the public.

As far as the media are concerned, it is also our hope that they will use these guidelines as tools for introspection so that they may become better at appropriately evaluating, contextualizing, and sharing information from and about state and non-state actors. The process should also help them to provide effective channels and tools for meaningful public education and for engagement with claims of policy impact and their ramifications.

The role of educators, both formal and informal, is critical to the success of any media and information literacy project. For them to be able to contribute to the project, however, parents, teachers, and instructors of various types should first develop their own skills as laid out above. It is only when they are knowledgeable about MIL that they can be effective channels for developing them in others. They also have to be champions for a new pedagogy that integrates media literacy into every aspect of the curriculum from pre-school to tertiary levels.

Of course, for MIL to develop into one of the pillars for consolidating and sustaining democratic and socio-economic development, it is critical that all institutions of government provide the enabling environment within which information can be accessed, critiqued and effectively deployed. The onus is on governments to provide the pre-requisites for MIL. That will be their palpable contribution to an enriched and enriching public sphere where knowledge can be shared in an unfettered manner and hence mobilized for the collective benefit of society as a whole.

## Bibliography

Africa News. 2010. "Cameroon: 6 Women Jailed for Witchcraft."

[http://www.africanews.com/site/list\\_message/29237](http://www.africanews.com/site/list_message/29237); <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-19437130>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Africa Review. 2012. "Ethiopia Denies Fresh Rumours of Meles Zenawi Death."

<http://www.africareview.com/News/Ethiopia-denies-fresh-rumours-of-Meles-Zenawi-death-/979180/1468736/-/x7le8z/-/index.html>;  
<http://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00018079.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Al Jazeera. 2011. "Gbagbo Being Held by Ouattara Forces."

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/04/201141113442914400.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

AllAfrica. 2012. "Nigeria: Ghana Government Chasing Us Out, Lament Nigerian Bizmen."

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201207040550.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Assar S. El Amrani S., and Watson R.T. 2010. ICT and Education: A Critical Role in Human and Social Development, *Information Technology for Development*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 151-158.

BBC. 2010. "Ghana Text Hoax Predicting Earthquake Prompts Panic."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8465619.stm>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

BBC. 2012a. "Ghana Witch Camps: Widows' Lives in Exile." <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-19437130>.

[Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

BBC. 2012b. "Hard Talk on the Road: Teodoro Obian – President, Equatorial Guinea."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw-HY9FAZBs>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

BBC. 2012b. "How to Boost GDP Stats by 60%." <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20639775>.

[Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Campaign for African Platform on Access to Information. 2013. "African Platform for Access to

Information, 2011." <http://michellehsolomon.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/apai-declaration-english.pdf>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

- Canonge J.C., Purcell M., and Behrman M. 2013. "Watchdog or Lapdog: Limits of African Media Coverage of the Extractive Sector." [http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/download/fedora\\_content/download/ac:153751/CONTENT/Watchdog\\_or\\_Lapdog.pdf](http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/download/fedora_content/download/ac:153751/CONTENT/Watchdog_or_Lapdog.pdf). [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Catts R. and Lau J. 2008. *Towards Information Literacy Indicators*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Channel 4. 2013. "Deportation 'Crazy' Says Uganda Gay Plan Producer – Video." <http://www.channel4.com/news/deportation-crazy-says-uganda-gay-play-producer-video>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- CNN. 2011. "Protest Theater Puts Free Speech Center Stage." <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/06/09/zimbabwe.protest.theater/index.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Corouge M. 2013. "Gambaga – Witches Camp in Ghana." <http://corougemagali.photoshelter.com/gallery/GAMBAGA-WITCHES-CAMP-IN-GHANA/G0000d10qJosljQ/Co000a14sfvlgWNQ>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Daily Guide. 2013a. "Canadian Official Dies in Hotel After Hot Sex." <http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=74330>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Daily Guide 2013b. "Heart Attack Killed Canadian." <http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=74523>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Daily Maverick. 2012. "Daily Sun's 'Journalism' and Human Rights Betrayal." <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-11-21-daily-suns-journalism-and-human-rights-betrayal>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Daily Sun. 2012. "Zimbos Hunted and Killed." <http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/dailysun/2012/11/22/DJ/1/p1says.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Examiner. 2010. "Anti-Gay Uganda Pastor's Perverted 'Poo Poo' Speech Becomes Viral Video Hit." <http://video.msnbc.msn.com/nbc-news/49934366#49934366>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2013. "Common Fraud Schemes." [http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/internet\\_fraud](http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/internet_fraud). [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].

Fraud Center. 2013. "Phishing Site Example." [http://fraudcenter.freedom.net/html/phishing\\_site\\_example.html](http://fraudcenter.freedom.net/html/phishing_site_example.html). [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].

Frau-Meigs D (ed.). 2006. *Media Education: A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals*. Paris: UNESCO.

Ghanaweb. 2003. "KNUST: World's 5th Best University –Andam." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=43816>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Ghanaweb. 2011a. "President Kufuor's House to be Demolished." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=202507>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Ghanaweb. 2011b. "NPP Has Dossier on Veep's Sex Escapades." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=221732>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Ghanaweb. 2012. "Nigeria Threatens to Break Diplomatic Ties with Ghana." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=242977>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

Ghanaweb. 2013. "NPP to Make Ghana Ungovernable." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=263487>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].

Global Voices. 2013. "Technology Helps Kenyans Reveal Electoral Registration Fraud." <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/01/07/technology-helps-kenyans-reveal-fraud-in-political-party-memberships/>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].

Global Voices. 2013b. "Video of Brutal Beating of Women Shocks Angola." <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/02/12/video-of-brutal-beating-of-women-shocks-angola/>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].

- Good Governance Africa. 2013. "Africa's Numbers: Can You Count on Them?" <http://gga.org/analysis/africas-numbers-can-you-count-on-them>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services. 2013. "Gender". <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-media>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Horton F.W. 2007. *Understanding Information Literacy: A Primer*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Human Rights Watch. 2011. "Côte d'Ivoire: Ouattara Forces Kill, Rape Civilians During Offensive." <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/09/c-te-d-ivoire-ouattara-forces-kill-rape-civilians-during-offensive>; <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/29/one-year-du-kou-massacre-belies-ouattara-government-s-promises-impartial-justice>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Human Rights Watch. 2012. "One Year On, Duékoué Massacre Belies Ouattara Governments Promises of Impartial Justice." <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/29/one-year-du-kou-massacre-belies-ouattara-government-s-promises-impartial-justice>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- IMediaEthics. 2011. "Time of South Africa Tweets Fake News, Deletes Tweet, Apologizes." [http://www.imediaethics.org/News/2509/Times\\_of\\_south\\_africa\\_tweets\\_fake\\_news\\_deletes\\_tweet\\_apologizes.php](http://www.imediaethics.org/News/2509/Times_of_south_africa_tweets_fake_news_deletes_tweet_apologizes.php). [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- IMediaEthics. 2012. "South Africa's The Citizen Newspaper Fires Photographer for Disparaging Tweets About Doctored Photo." [http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3462/South\\_africas\\_the\\_citizen\\_newspaper\\_fires\\_photographer\\_for\\_disparaging\\_tweets\\_about\\_doctored\\_photo.php](http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3462/South_africas_the_citizen_newspaper_fires_photographer_for_disparaging_tweets_about_doctored_photo.php). [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Jolls T. 2012. Media Literacy: "The Foundation for Anywhere, Anytime Learning." Presented at the UNESCO International Conference on Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies, Moscow, Russian Federation, June 24-28.
- Media Council of Tanzania. 2007. State of the Media. <http://www.mct.or.tz/mediacouncil/images/stories/Publications/Books/State%20of%20Media%20Report%202007.pdf>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

- Media Monitoring Project. 2008: "Complaint About Daily Sun."  
[http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/Daily\\_Sun\\_complaintv2\\_4.pdf](http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/Daily_Sun_complaintv2_4.pdf). [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Modern Ghana. 2011. "Homosexuality is Treatable Psychiatric Disorder."  
<http://www.modernghana.com/news/341865/1/homosexuality-is-treatable-psychiatric-disorder-ch.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Microsoft. 2013. "How to Recognize Phishing Email Messages, Links of Phone Calls."  
<http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/phishing-symptoms.aspx>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Modern Ghana. 2012. "KNUST Lecturer Exposed!" <http://www.modernghana.com/news/370313/1/knust-lecturer-exposed.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Movements.Org. 2011. "Music of the Revolution: How Songs of Protest Have Rallied Demonstrators."  
<http://www.movements.org/blog/entry/music-of-the-revolution-how-songs-of-protest-have-rallied-demonstrators/>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Myjoyonline. 2013: "Ayariga makes U-turn; Mahama knew gay activist Andrew Solomon."  
<http://politics.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201302/100879.php>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Nairaland. 2013. "African Leaders Snoring Away."  
[http://www.nairaland.com/attachments/42565\\_African2oleaders2osnoring2oaway11\\_jpg935904f8df17f3f37bead6e63b8bbc22](http://www.nairaland.com/attachments/42565_African2oleaders2osnoring2oaway11_jpg935904f8df17f3f37bead6e63b8bbc22). [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- NBC News. 2012. "Crackdown on Homosexuality Sweeps Across Uganda."  
<http://video.msnbc.msn.com/nbc-news/49934366#49934366>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- New Statesman. 2013. "Who Could Replace Mahama in 2012 Re-run?"  
<http://ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=264159>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].



- New Zimbabwe Forums. 2012. "New Zuma Painting Totally Out of Order."  
<http://forum.newzimbabwe.com/index.php?/topic/60819-new-zuma-painting-totally-out-of-order/>.  
 [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Okayafrica. 2012. Zuma's 'Spear' Makes a Comeback." <http://www.okayafrica.com/stories/ayanda-mabulu-umshini-wam-weapon-of-mass-destruction/>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Oshunkeye S. 2013. "African Journalism in a Culture of 'Brown Envelope: The Nigerian Perspective."  
<http://themediaproject.org/sites/default/files/Shola%20Oshunkeye%20-%20African%20Journalism%20in%20a%20Culture%20of%20Brown%20Envelopes.pdf>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Peacefmonline. 2013. Prez Mahama has Disrespected the Black Stars."  
<http://elections.peacefmonline.com/politics/201302/155732.php>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Reporters Without Borders. 2013. World Press Freedom Index 2013.  
[http://fr.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/classement\\_2013\\_gb-bd.pdf](http://fr.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/classement_2013_gb-bd.pdf). [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Rubin Alan M. 1998. "Media Literacy." *Journal of Communication*, vol. 48, no. 1.pp. 3-4.
- Skjerdal T.S. 2010. "Review Article:Research on brown envelope journalism in the African media."  
*African Communication Research* 3(3): *Bribery and corruption in African journalism*, Volume 3, Number 3, December 2010, pp. 367-406.
- Strait Times. 2012. "Female Bomber Kills 12 in Kabul to Avenge Anti-Islam Film."  
<http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/world/story/female-bomber-kills-12-kabul-avenge-anti-islam-film-20120918>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Tettey Wisdom J. (2009). "Transnationalism, the African Diaspora and the Deterritorialized Politics of the Internet." In O. Mudhai, W. Tettey and F. Banda (eds.), *African Media and the Digital Public Sphere*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- The Guardian. 2011. "Laurent Gbagbo's Humiliating Fall."  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/11/laurent-gbagbo-humiliating-fall>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

- The Star. 2012. "Uganda Jails British Man for Staging Play About Homosexuality." [http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/09/20/uganda\\_jails\\_british\\_man\\_for\\_staging\\_play\\_about\\_homosexuality.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/09/20/uganda_jails_british_man_for_staging_play_about_homosexuality.html). [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- The Telegraph. 2012. "Robert Mugabe 'Unable to Stay Awake During Meetings.'" <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/9501976/Robert-Mugabe-unable-to-stay-awake-during-meetings.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- UNESCO. 2012b. "Reaching Out-of-School Children is Crucial for Development." *USIS Fact Sheet* 2012, No. 20, September.
- UNESCO. 2013. "Freedom of Information in Africa." <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/freedom-of-information/foi-in-africa/>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- UNESCO. 2013. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/freedom-of-information/foi-in-africa>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Voice of America. 2013. "Egyptian Man's Police Beating Re-Ignites Outrage." <http://www.voanews.com/content/egyptian-man-police-beating-morsi/1596773.html>. [Accessed date: August 14, 2013].
- Voice of America. 2011. "New Research Confronts Africa's 'Statistical Tragedy'." <http://www.voanews.com/content/new-research-confronts-africas-statistical-tragedy-135134213/159278.html>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Warungu J. 2012. "African Journalists Face the Corrupting Influence of 'Brown Envelopes'." <http://www.icfj.org/node/44001>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Wilson C., Grizzle A., Akyeampong K., and Cheung C. 2011. *Media and Information Literacy: Curriculum for Teachers*. Paris:UNESCO.
- Youtube. 2008. "Post-Election Violence Continuing Across Kenya." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJ7Hv4xjhUM>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].

- Youtube. 2011a. "Dramatic Video of Gbagbo Arrest." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwIKzHXtLZs>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Youtube. 2011b. "All my People Love Me." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MPcpNaxEm8>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Youtube. 2011c. "African Voices UK tour: speaking out against the plunder of Africa's Oceans." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pvxQhN8aLk>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- Youtube. 2012. "African Investigate – The Spell of the Albino." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOfpdmDPgfc>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].
- ZimEye. 2010. "Mugabe Falls Asleep During Investment Conference." <http://www.zimeye.org/?p=13542>. [Accessed date: November 11, 2012].



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY  
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT  
DES CAPACITÉS EN AFRIQUE

The African Capacity Building Foundation  
7th Floor, ZB Life Towers  
Cnr. Jason Moyo Avenue/Sam Nujoma Street  
P.O. Box 1562  
Harare, ZIMBABWE

Tel: (+263 4) 702931/2, 790398/9, 700210/11

Fax: (+263 4) 702915, 700215, 792894

Email: [root@acbf-pact.org](mailto:root@acbf-pact.org)

Web site: [www.acbf-pact.org](http://www.acbf-pact.org)

ISBN: 978-1-77937-043-3

EAN: 9781779370433

