

African Media  
Development  
Initiative



# Democratic Republic of Congo

Research findings and conclusions

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# Democratic Republic of Congo

## About this report

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

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

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

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

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

## Acronyms

**ACSIS** African Civil Society for Information Society

**AFEMEK** Association des Femmes des médias du Katanga (Women's Association of the Katanga Media)

**AFEMSK** Association des Femmes des médias du Sud-Kivu (Women's Association of Media in South Kivu)

**AJPF** Association des Journalistes de la Presse Féminine au Congo (Women's Press Journalist's Association)

**AMI** African Media Institute

**ANEAP** National Association of Private Audiovisual Companies (ANEAP)

**ANECO** L'Association Nationale des éditeurs du Congo (National Association of Congolese Newspaper Editors)

**ARCO** Association of Community Radios in Congo

**CAFEC** Centre Africain d'Echange Culturel (Centre for African Cultural Exchange)

**CEDESURK** Centre de Documentation de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire et de la Recherche de Kinshasa (Documentation Centre of Kinshasa for Further and Higher Education)

**CNONGD** Conseil National des Organisation Non Gouvernementales et à la Participation Populaire de Développement du Congo (National Council for Development NGOs in DRC)

**DfID** Department for International Development (UK)

**DMTIC** Dynamique Multisectorielle des Technologies de l'Information et de Communication (Multisector Dynamic of Information and Communication Technology)

**DRC** Democratic Republic of Congo

**DRIM** Rights and Institutional Strengthening of the Media Programme

**FOPROMEDIAS** Federation of Professional Media Organisations

**GDP** Gross Domestic Product

**GRET** Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques (Research and Technology Exchange Group)

**HAM** High Authority for Media

**HDJ** Héritier de Justice (Heir of Justice)

**ICT** Information Communication Technology

**IEC** Independent Electoral Commission

**IFASIC** Institute Facultaire des Sciences de l'Information (Institute for Information and Communication Science)

**IRC** International Refugee Committee

**ISP** Internet Service Providers

**ISPA** Internet Service Providers' Association

**JED** Journaliste en Danger (Journalist in danger)

**JPHR** Journalists for the Promotion of Human Rights

**MONUC** United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

**NGO** Non-Governmental Organisation

**OHADA** Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa

**OIF** Organisation of Francophone Countries

**OMAC** Central African Media Organisation

**OMEC** L'Observatoire des Médias Congolais (Congolese Media Observatory)

**OTI** Organisation for Transition Initiative

**PPRD** People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy

**PTT** Ministry of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications

**RATECO** Réseau des Radios et Télévisions Communautaires de l'Est de la République Démocratique du Congo (Network of Community Radios and Televisions of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo)

**RCP** Radios for the Consolidation of Peace

**RDTK** Radio Télévision Debout Kasai

**RFI** Radio France Internationale

**RTNC** Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise (Congolese National Radio and Television)

**SNPP** Syndicat National des Professionnels de la Presse (National Union of Press Professionals)

**UCOFEM** Union Congolaise des Femmes des Médias (Congolese Union of Women in Media)

**UDPS** Union for Democracy and Social Progress

**UN** United Nations

**UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**UNICEF** United Nations Children's Fund

**UNIFEM** United Nations Development Fund for Women

**UNOCHA** United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNPC** L'Union Nationale de la Presse du Congo (National Union of the Congolese Press)

**UNTC** Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Congo (National Union for Congolese Workers)

**UPEC** Unité de Production des Programmes d'Education Civique (Production Unit of Civic Education Programmes)

**USAID** United States Agency for International Development

**WHO** World Health Organisation



# Contents

## Country Report Context

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>2. Country Overview</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| Key findings  | 5         |
| <b>3. Media Health</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| 3.1 Status of the laws regarding rights and access to information   | 6         |
| 3.2 Status of the laws regarding criminal defamation and insult   | 6         |
| 3.3 Status of the laws that exist to enable media regulatory bodies to function independently             | 6         |
| 3.4 Current provisions that aim to secure the independence of publicly-owned media                        | 7         |
| 3.5 Current provisions to support community or alternative media  | 7         |
| 3.6 Regulatory obligations for public or state broadcasters to fulfil a public-service broadcasting remit | 8         |
| 3.7 Regulatory obligations for private broadcasters to fulfil a public-service broadcasting remit         | 8         |
| 3.8 Journalism  | 9         |
| Key findings  | 10        |
| <b>4. State of The Media – Literature Review</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| 4.1 Panos Paris (2004a)   | 11        |
| 4.2 UNICEF and Faculty Institute for Information and Communication Sciences (IFASIC) (Eds.) (1999)        | 12        |
| 4.3 Journaliste en Danger (JED) (2004a)   | 12        |
| 4.4 Ministry of Press and Communication (2005)  | 12        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 4.5 High Authority for Media (HAM) (2005)   | 13        |
| 4.6 Bibliography  | 13        |
| Key findings  | 13        |
| <b>5. Radio</b>   | <b>14</b> |
| 5.1 Key changes and developments in the radio marketplace in the past five years      | 14        |
| 5.2 Investment and growth in the radio sector in the past five years                  | 17        |
| 5.3 Plurality, ownership and control  | 17        |
| 5.4 Diversity   | 17        |
| 5.5 Quality of radio output and programming   | 17        |
| 5.6 Specific challenges   | 18        |
| Key findings  | 18        |
| <b>6. Television</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| 6.1 Key changes and developments in the television marketplace in the past five years | 19        |
| 6.2 Investment and growth in the television sector in the past five years             | 22        |
| 6.3 Plurality, ownership and control  | 22        |
| 6.4 Diversity   | 22        |
| 6.5 Quality of television output and programming                                      | 22        |
| 6.6 Specific challenges   | 23        |
| Key findings  | 23        |
| <b>7. Newspapers</b>  | <b>24</b> |
| 7.1 Key changes and developments in the newspaper marketplace in the past five years  | 24        |
| 7.2 Investment and growth in newspapers in the past five years                        | 26        |
| 7.3 Plurality, ownership and control  | 27        |
| 7.4 Diversity   | 27        |
| 7.5 Quality of newspaper reporting  | 27        |
| 7.6 Specific challenges   | 27        |
| Key findings  | 27        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>8. Media Support</b>   | <b>28</b> |
| 8.1 Key changes and developments in new media technologies in the past five years | 28        |
| 8.2 Key changes in media support in the past five years                           | 29        |
| 8.3 Audience and readership research data   | 29        |
| 8.4 Media support, ISPs and ownership   | 29        |
| Key findings  | 29        |
| <b>9. NGO Activity</b>  | <b>30</b> |
| 9.1 Key changes and developments in NGO activity in the past five years           | 30        |
| 9.2 Key NGOs involved in media development activities                             | 30        |
| 9.3 Climate of opportunity for media development activities                       | 33        |
| Key findings  | 33        |
| <b>10. Conclusions</b>  | <b>34</b> |
| 10.1 Access to information and free expression                                    | 34        |
| 10.2 State-owned media (radio and TV)   | 34        |
| 10.3 Media regulation   | 34        |
| 10.4 Community media  | 34        |
| 10.5 Professionalised, sustainable, responsible media                             | 34        |
| 10.6 ICTs   | 35        |
| Key findings  | 35        |
| <b>11. Appendices</b>   | <b>36</b> |
| Appendix 1: Bibliography  | 36        |
| Appendix 2: Individuals/organisations consulted during the research               | 39        |
| Appendix 3: Tables  | 40        |

# Country Report Way Forward

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>12. Introduction</b>   | <b>42</b> |
| <b>13. Media Development: an organisational perspective</b>                 | <b>43</b> |
| 13.1 Key organisations  | 43        |
| 13.2 Impact of media development  | 44        |
| <b>14. Media Development Initiatives</b>                                    | <b>49</b> |
| 14.1 Review   | 49        |
| 14.2 Success and impact   | 51        |
| 14.3 Lessons learned  | 53        |
| <b>15. Developing the Environment for Success</b>                           | <b>55</b> |
| 15.1 Key factors  | 55        |
| 15.2 Political and economic influences                                      | 56        |
| 15.3 Donor communities' role  | 57        |
| <b>16. Future Strategies</b>  | <b>60</b> |
| 16.1 Strategic priorities   | 60        |
| 16.2 Focus of support   | 62        |
| 16.3 Views on media sector focus  | 63        |
| 16.4 Support most needed/useful   | 65        |
| 16.5 Appropriate organisational framework                                   | 66        |
| 16.6 Pan-regional versus country-specific initiatives                       | 67        |
| 16.7 Initiatives relating to developmental content                          | 70        |
| 16.8 Initiatives to develop an independent media                            | 70        |
| 16.9 The role of media development in the country's democratisation process | 70        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>17. Summary and Conclusions</b>          | <b>73</b> |
| 17.1 Context                                | 73        |
| 17.2 Lessons learned                        | 73        |
| 17.3 Developing the environment for success | 74        |
| 17.4 Strategic priorities                   | 74        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>18. Appendices</b>   | <b>75</b> |
| Appendix 1: Interviewees  | 75        |
| Appendix 2: Media development projects/activities described in Section 14 | 76        |

## Country Report Case Study

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>19. Case Study</b>  | <b>80</b> |
| Multi-sector Process for Information and Communication Technologies (DMTIC):<br>a media development initiative | 80        |



# Democratic Republic of Congo

## Country Report Context



# 1. Introduction

Collection of on The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) media data and other data that enables an understanding of the country's media development came up against a number of problems. The vastness of the country made it almost impossible to extend the research over the whole of the republic. Fortunately, the centralisation of data in the capital Kinshasa on many sectors of national life allowed for certain data to be extrapolated.

There was, however, mistrust shown towards the research due to people contacted suspecting that the researcher was a spy or had a hidden agenda. As well, in many cases payment was sought for exchange of information. There were also problems with people failing to attend agreed meetings or of a socio-economic divide, with people of the same social class as the researcher being more willing to share information. Some people even worried, based on occult beliefs, that providing information might give the researcher the ability to inflict harm. In other cases, the barrier was at the level of organisation at institutions in terms of classification and archiving of information, or the desire to keep information confidential for commercial reasons or for fear of legal repercussions. There was an absence of certain data even amongst institutions expected to hold it. For instance, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications did not have data on the number of people who have access to a telephone. In other cases, the difficulty was that the data – on population, for instance – from two different sources was significantly different. As well, the duration of the research period was extremely short for such a far-reaching study.

Fortunately, the researcher has in some cases been able to rely on his own knowledge to fill in gaps in the research – knowledge gained through the researcher's extensive work in many aspects of the DRC media sector<sup>1</sup>.

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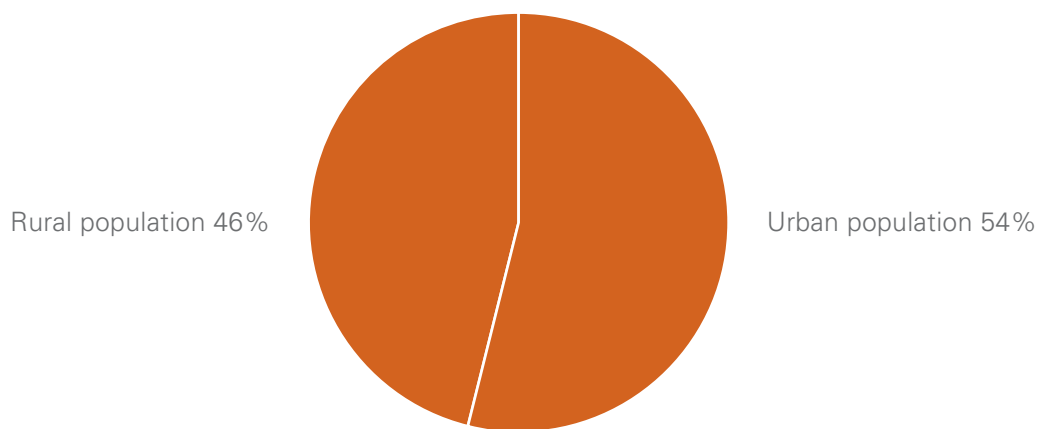
<sup>1</sup> The researcher has, among other things, established and headed a Faculty of Social Communications; worked for and advised the Director of the Ministry of Press and Communication on a law overseen by the High Authority for Media; delivered courses for Congolese journalists since 1990; collaborated on the writing of the Congolese law that governs DRC media; drafted the Communication Director Plan for the Ministry of Press and Communication; drafted in March 2006, at the request of the Ministry of Press and Communication, the advertising law and the law on a school of radio and television; and published three books and various articles on the DRC media, citations for which appear in this study. The researcher also represents training and journalism institutions on the Congolese Media Observatory and is in regular contact with the Congolese press through communication advisory work to the President of the Independent Electoral Commission.



## 2. Country Overview

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the third largest country in Africa, with a population estimated in recent years to be between 55.9 million (World Bank, 2004) and 60 million (Ministry of Planning, 2004, p.6), and a vast land mass that shares borders with nine other countries. By one estimate, the under-15 population is soon expected to rise to around 48% of the population (Ministry of Planning, 2004, p.6). UNSTATS in 2005 estimated a similar figure for the under-15 population, at 47% (UNSTATS, 2005). The population is estimated to be 53.5% urban, and 46.5% rural (UNDP, 2003). The population concentrations are in the mining region of Shaba<sup>2</sup> and in Bas-Congo.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Population Urban vs. Rural**



Source: UNDP, 2003

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<sup>2</sup> Renamed Katanga, under Président Laurent Kabila, in 1997.

There are seven ethnic groups and almost 400 tribes that are mainly Bantu. The old kingdoms constitute the main groups: Kongo, Batéké, Luba, Lunda and Kuba. Nilotiques and Pygmées live in the northwest of the country in forested areas. The country has 11 provinces<sup>3</sup>: the capital Kinshasa, Bandundu, Bas-Congo, Equateur, Kasai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Katanga, Maniema, Nord-Kivu, Orientale and Sud-Kivu.

The number of spoken languages is proportional to the diversity of ethnic groups, with almost 400 languages counted across many linguistic zones. As well as French, which is the official language, there are four other national languages, which are all Bantu: Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo and Tshiluba. They are spread out geographically, with Lingala and Kikongo spoken in the west and in the capital Kinshasa, and Swahili and Tshiluba in the east and in the two Kasai provinces. This split is, however, misleading since three-quarters of Congolese people speak at least two or three of the national languages as well as a mother tongue. State and private media use the national languages. Only community-based radio stations communicate in local languages, in order to reach marginalised groups.

In analysing the media context in the DRC, one also cannot forget religious factors. Congolese are mainly Christian, with 47% of Christians being Catholic, 28% Protestant and 3% Kimbanguists. There are only a few Muslims. One out of five people has animistic beliefs<sup>4</sup>.

After periods of war<sup>5</sup> from 1996 to 1997 and from 1998 to 2001, the country emerged with a power-sharing presidential system of government, as agreed at the peace talks in South Africa (Sun City) in 2003. The DRC is governed by a President and four Vice-Presidents. The initial set of Assembly and Parliament members after the Sun City agreement were not elected, but were proportionally representative of their respective bodies represented at the peace negotiations. In the terms of the agreement, the power-sharing is transitional and will end with the establishment of new leaders in 2006<sup>6</sup>. This will enable the DRC to end the long transition that began in April 1990.

The state of the media in Congo is directly linked to these political upheavals and can only be analysed with these in mind. Media are intimately involved in the different stages of the democratisation process<sup>7</sup>. Their role does not only consist of making known the legal texts voted by Parliament or those from different ministries. Their vital role is education of the masses and making them aware of new political issues. In this, the establishment in 2004 of a regulatory body called High Authority for Media (HAM) was important.

With a per capita income of 20 cents (\$US0.20) per day<sup>8</sup>, 80% of the population lives in poverty, and the DRC is classed among the poorest countries in the world (Ministry of Planning, 2004, p.5). The country's poverty has a marked impact on media. The impact is felt in terms of real access to the media, with poor physical access, low purchasing power, low levels of understanding of the important developmental role of media, and lack of technological adaptation (eg, electronic media in non-electrified areas). These problems of real access do not only affect individuals. Press organisations and businesses are also hit.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2006 Constitution, Article 2, calls for the DRC to be reorganised into 25 provinces.

<sup>4</sup> These figures vary depending on the source.

<sup>5</sup> The number of victims of these successive wars reached more than three million deaths according to the International Refugee Committee (IRC), an American NGO.

<sup>6</sup> Based on July 2006 elections.

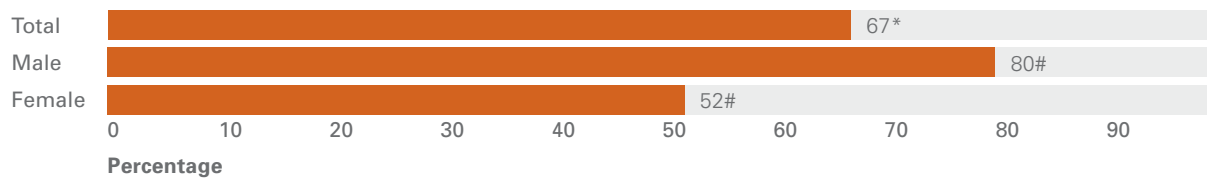
<sup>7</sup> On this subject, see *Journaliste en Danger (JED)* (2004b).

<sup>8</sup> The per capita GDP estimates vary depending on the source. The CIA World Factbook estimated the GDP per person per capita to be \$US700 in 2005 (\$US1.92 per day).

DRC had a total population literacy rate of 67.2%, with the male literacy rate at 79.8% and the female literacy rate at 51.9% (see Figure 2) (;World Bank, 2003; World Bank, 2004).

**Figure 2: Literacy Levels**

**Literacy Levels**



Source: #World Bank, 2003; \*World Bank, 2004

### Key findings

- The DRC is a vast country, the third largest in Africa, and one of the world's poorest nations with an estimated per capita income of 20 cents (\$US0.20) per day.
- July 2006 elections, if successful, will mark the end of a long period of democratic transition that began in 1990.



## 3. Media Health

### 3.1 Status of the laws regarding rights and access to information

The DRC Constitution (2006) provides for freedom of expression, free press, broadcasting freedom and freedom of information. The 1996 Press Law also stipulates that access to information should be free but, in reality, the authorities frequently hold back information that they judge could compromise the country's security. Each time a journalist has had access to sensitive information and published it, the journalist has always been threatened or even imprisoned (UNICEF & IFASIC, 1999, p.75). The reports of an NGO, *Journaliste en Danger* (JED, 2005), cite numerous such cases<sup>9</sup>. Also, the 2003 report of the African Media Institute highlights such threats to journalists (African Media Institute, 2004a, 2004b). This repressive situation has not seen any significant change in the past five years. The legal system often proves unreliable in dealing with information freedom matters, due to the courts' ignorance regarding the 1996 Press Law (Panos Paris, 2004b, p.28).

### 3.2 Status of the laws regarding criminal defamation and insult

Journalistic abuse and defamation are covered in the 1996 Press Law (Article 73), the Congolese journalists Code of Ethics (Article 5) and the Criminal Code (Article 75). Defamation is thus criminalised by virtue of it being in the Criminal Code.

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

The High Authority for Media (HAM) was mandated by the law of 1996 but did not come into existence until 2004 via a specific law outlining its composition and duties. HAM is a transitional media regulator mandated to support democratic processes by ensuring neutral regulation of both private and state media and advising the state on allocation of broadcast frequencies and regulation of advertising. Since its establishment, HAM has often been in conflict with the Ministry of Press and Communication over institutional roles and issues of HAM's independence. Before HAM was created in 2004, the Ministry had been the only media regulator, and it was made clear when HAM was created that, according to one official text, "during the transition period, it is highly desirable that there be absolute collaboration between the Ministry of Information and Press, and HAM, avoiding any unnecessary encroachment on one another" (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005, p.62). The law according to which HAM operates, the result of political negotiation, gives HAM numerous competences that overlap with the competencies assigned to the Ministry in a 2003 Decree. Later this year, after the 2006 elections and installation of Governors following elections,

<sup>9</sup> In a 2005 report on freedom of the press, JED talks about assassinated journalists (1), those reported missing (2), those jailed (13), those interrogated (43), and those attacked/badly treated/tortured (8) or threatened/hassled (10).

HAM will be asked to dissolve. According to the Ministry of Press and Communication, “After the transition a regulatory structure that fulfils international standards should be put in place. For this purpose, a paper will be drawn up by a commission of experts and media professionals” (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005, p.63).

Rulings by HAM in 2006 have included:

- a ban on broadcasting of an artist advert that was initially broadcast without the artist’s permission;
- a ban on a TV news programme broadcast in “Indoubil”, a slang derived from the national language Lingala and associated with marginalised people and criminals;
- a ban on the showing of certain films on TV judged by HAM to be indecent and pornographic, with the ban imposed on the grounds that the films were “not in keeping with good moral standards, African culture, promotion of moral values and women’s dignity” (High Authority for Media, 2006); and,
- suspension of the licence of the Horizon 33 TV broadcaster for seven days because of a programme in which the presenter was judged to have engaged in hate speech against people not belonging to his ethnic group.

The President of HAM is the owner of two recently-opened stations (Radio 7 and TELE 7). It has yet to be seen what this means for the legitimacy and independence of HAM.

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

Despite independence clauses in the law that created the state radio and TV services, the state broadcast channels remain under control of the state and are often accused of favouring the ruling PPRD political party. However, since the instigation of HAM, the state broadcasters have been making an effort to open up their programming to opposition political voices. For instance, the state TV news programmes cover the activities of the four Vice-Presidents, who are known to be of different political persuasions equally. And as far as the state-owned Congolese Press Agency is concerned, a certain amount of independence has begun to appear in the past five years<sup>10</sup>.

### 3.5 Current provisions to support community or alternative media

Community media are not governed explicitly by any law, but many community radio outlets have come into existence in the past five years. Like other non-state media, they are governed by the 1996 Press Law and its complementary clauses (Ministerial Decrees) and by the 2004 law that established and enabled the High Authority for Media (HAM). A good number of community radio stations have been given provisional authorisation to operate by the Ministry of Press and Communication, and the Ministry is working towards loosening the conditions stations need to comply with to obtain authorisation. A commission of experts, of which the writer of this report is part, is working on a law that will govern community media. In the meantime, the community radios have developed a Charter that they sign onto, with the Charter<sup>11</sup> calling on stations to be free and independent (apolitical, and not answering to financial or economic powers); to be at the service of the community and responsive to its needs; to respect human dignity, particularly that of women and children; to reject all forms of discrimination, in particular xenophobia between ethnic groups; to be non-profit; to seek state aid but remain independent from the state; to be transparent in their organisation,

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<sup>10</sup> The Congolese Press Agency was created by Law N°81-052 on 2 April 1981.

programming and financing; and, to show solidarity with other community stations and other institutions in the DRC and internationally.

From his work in the commission of experts drafting a law for community media, the researcher for this report is able to confirm that the relevant authorities, particularly the Ministry of Press and Communication and HAM, are in support, at least in principal, of the community media movement. The Ministry and HAM see community broadcasters not as a competitive threat to state and commercial media but rather as a complementary sector. The state is conscious of the reality that state and commercial broadcasters cannot cover the whole of the country and that grassroots development is served by these community radios. The Press and Information Ministry wrote in its 2005 National Press Programme that “Supporting the creation of associative and community radios in student and/or rural milieus is an important option for promoting proximity media” (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005, p.55). The Ministry statement calls for the support of community broadcasting in order to increase people’s participation in development (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005, p.57).

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

The Constitution of 2006 refers explicitly to the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to express opinions and feelings in whatever medium, freedom of the press, and broadcasting freedom. In terms of state-owned media outlets, the Constitution considers them as public services required to obey the following principals: objectivity, impartiality and pluralism of opinion. The missions of the RTNC state radio and television are defined by a 1981 law (Republic of Zaire, 1981), and these media have, amongst other things, the mission to inform, develop and educate the masses. The need for diversity of opinion and impartiality is made explicit in Articles 52 and 53 of the 1996 Press Law. As mentioned earlier, the High Authority for Media (HAM) was mandated to encourage the state-owned stations to open up and display more diversity of opinion and impartiality. The Press and Information Ministry’s 2005 National Press Programme calls for, among other things, all media to allocate air time in a manner that caters to “the needs and demands of public services in order to further consolidate the achievements of the state in democratic legal terms”, and for all media to:

- ❑ provide balanced and neutral coverage of political parties;
- ❑ ensure balance and neutrality in journalists’ handling of information;
- ❑ serve the wider interests of the national community;
- ❑ conduct audience surveys to evaluate the impact of stations that broadcast nationwide; and,
- ❑ encourage programmes dedicated to moral regeneration and the struggle against poverty (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005, p.57).

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

Private stations are held to the same legal obligations as state-owned media, but their programming requirements depend on the conditions of the contracts the stations sign with the Ministry of Press and Communication, with each station able to have its own particular programming focus. However, it is widely known that stations often do not fully obey the programming conditions of their contracts.

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<sup>11</sup> Association of Community Radios in Congo (ARCO) Charter.

### 3.8 Journalism

The number of journalists has risen by around 113% in the past five years, based on a 1999 estimate of 1,358 journalists (UNICEF & IFASIC, 1999) and a 2004 estimate of 2,889 journalists (Panos Paris, 2004a). There is evidence that this number is continuing to increase, which can be attributed to growing media pluralism and the increasing number of press, radio and television organisations in the DRC. However, the proportion of female journalists is still small, with the Union Nationale de la Presse du Congo (UNPC, 2006) estimating that there are only 300 women journalists. Since the Press Congress of 2004, people have spoken out to condemn the entrance of “black sheep” (unqualified journalists) into the profession. Due to poor internal organisation in the UNPC, press passes – which give certain privileges to the holders – have been arbitrarily handed out, making it difficult to distinguish between real and fake journalists. It was decided at the 2004 Press Congress to set up a commission that would be responsible for making a list of journalists across the country and granting professional identity cards (press passes). The UNPC staged a public launch of this new press pass system on 8 June 2006, attended by one of the country’s Vice-Presidents, Azarias Ruberwa. As well, a new network of journalists focusing on development communications, called Radios for The Consolidation of Peace (RCP), was established in 2006, and is now active in seven of 11 provinces.

Journalists’ salaries in the DRC are among the lowest in the world. The typical Congolese journalist is not able to live off his or her salary, which UNICEF/IFASIC estimates as averaging between \$US100 and US\$300 per month (UNICEF & IFASIC, 1999, p.76). The researcher for this report sees even this low estimate as high, with the real range probably being between \$US50 and \$US200. In most cases, there is no employment contract between the employer and the journalist. This puts the journalist in a weak position, not protected by law and vulnerable to the owner’s whims. Many journalists resort to seeking payments from the people and organisations they cover. This practice, called “coupage” (cutting), inevitably has a negative impact on journalistic balance and fairness.

For comparison purposes, teachers’ salaries range from \$US34 to \$US65 a month. This salary range was negotiated in October 2005 by the teacher’s union. Previously teachers had earned approximately \$US20 a month, and were given a transport allowance of about \$US10 a month (Watchlist, 2006).

There are two types of journalist training in the DRC: formal training obtained in an institute or university; and, informal training which takes the form of re-training or ongoing training. In the DRC, the number of journalism schools has not changed in recent years. At university level, there are five institutions with an academic orientation: the Institute for Information and Communication Science (IFASIC); the University of Kinshasa’s Catholic Faculty for Social Communications; the Communication Department of Kinshasa University; the Information and Communication Science Department at the University of Lubumbashi; and, the Kisangani University Department of Communication Sciences. All these institutions lack sufficient numbers of teachers to keep up with the growth in student numbers.

There are also some private schools that teach journalism but these initiatives experience the same staffing problems as the universities and their quality level is low. There is also the Congolese Audiovisual Institute, a project subsidised by France, which trains journalists and teaches information technology, offering specialised modules for camera operators, sound engineers, set engineers and directors. There are also some other training institutions in the provinces.

## Key findings

- The recently-ratified 2006 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, access to information and media freedom.
- A criminal libel law still exists, by virtue of defamation's inclusion in the Criminal Code.
- A key institution for media transformation during the transition to democracy has been the High Authority for Media (HAM), established in 2004 and due to be replaced by a fully independent media regulator after the 2006 elections.
- The state media (radio, TV and press agency) have, under pressure from HAM, recently begun to open up more to opposition political voices.
- The community radio sector is vibrant and is supported in principle by the Ministry of Press and Communication and HAM.
- The number of journalists is growing, but the number and quality of training opportunities is not keeping pace.



## 4. State of The Media – Literature Review

### 4.1 Panos Paris (2004a)

This report, *Situation des Médias en République Démocratique du Congo*, was financed by Panos Institute Paris and carried out by Professor Aimé Kayembe Tshibamba Malu of The Catholic University of Kinshasa in collaboration with Dr Dominique Mweze and Mr Gervais Chirhagarhula Mparanyi. Conscious that the political changes that have taken place in DRC since 2000 could have repercussions for Congolese media, the study examines the range of media outlets in Kinshasa and the provinces; the legal and regulatory clauses that apply to the media; the environment in which the media are evolving (training structure, professional associations); and the role of media in Congolese society. The researchers examined relevant documents and conducted surveys across all provinces in early 2004, with one questionnaire submitted to more than 350 journalists and press professionals. Resource people were also questioned: radio and television directors, newspaper editors, journalism trainers, civil society members, and those in charge of state structures for information in the provinces.

The report comprises four parts. The first part presents the general context in which the Congolese media are evolving, via a quick outline of the media in each province based on a number of indicators. General findings are made, notably on the setting up of media, internal organisation of media, economic problems they face and cultural obstacles. The second part indicates the relations that exist between the media and the legal framework established by the state. The third part is dedicated to the professional field in which the media evolve, bringing to the forefront media training as well as the structure of professional organisations. The fourth part shows the place media hold in Congolese society, their relationship to civil society and the role they are required to play in the post-conflict political environment.

## 4.2 UNICEF and Faculty Institute for Information and Communication Sciences (IFASIC) (Eds.) (1999)

This UNICEF-IFASIC report, entitled *The Situation of Information in Democratic Republic of Congo* and compiled by 37 authors, is a two-part inquiry: "one is oriented towards structural organisation and the function of information tools and the other is focused on the analysis of the information broadcast and receiver partnership as well as how their respective communication performances bring them towards consensus" (UNICEF & IFASIC, 1999, p.7). Using a comparative and analytical approach, the collected data are aimed at decision-makers and researchers. The report relies on a field survey carried out in mid-1998 in six provinces. The survey subjects were journalists, press attachés, managers (editors, publication directors, editors-in-chief), media distributors (eg, newspaper vendors, those responsible for cultural centres and publishing houses), and the media consumers (consumer associations, students, lecturers, professional bodies, organisations for young people and women). The report comes in three parts. The first part outlines the public communication methods in traditional society, investigating the actors, financial support and target audiences of this communication. The second part gives an inventory of the information and communication methods in state and non-state domains, province by province. The third part brings out the problems and constraints that are present in the production of information and the functioning of communication in DRC. Recommendations are offered.

## 4.3 Journaliste en Danger (JED) (2004a)

This Journaliste en Danger (Journalist in Danger) report, *Report 2004: The State of Freedom of Press in Central Africa*, was funded by several international donors and made public in December 2004. The report is part of JED's campaign to eliminate criminal defamation and criminal libel provisions in the DRC and other countries because of the barriers such laws present for freedom of expression. This report covers the nine member countries of the Central African Organisation for Media (OMAC) and Central African Newspaper Editors Organisation. The DRC is a member of both of these organisations. A case study methodology is principally used, seeking to illustrate restrictions on freedom of the press with actual examples, by citing the names of journalists, their press organisations, the types of allegedly offending information they reported, and the persecution they were subjected to. The report calls attention to the uncertainty present in the DRC concerning journalists' rights. It surveys, case by case, the instances of jailed journalists, the journalists subjected to state interrogations, and the threatened, assaulted or tortured journalists. The report then covers the economic and judicial pressures present in the DRC for journalists.

## 4.4 Ministry of Press and Communication (2005)

The Ministry of Press and Communication's National Press Programme, released May 2005, was developed through collaboration between government officials, advisors, journalists and academics, who held several meetings and a workshop on the state of the press in the DRC.

The process was financed by UNESCO, and the Programme provides both the context and a detailed implementation plan for media development in the DRC, followed by appendices listing the TV stations, radio stations and newspapers in the country.

## 4.5 High Authority for Media (HAM) (2005)

HAM's *Annual Report August 2004-June 2005* covers five main areas: administrative and financial activities; cooperation; regulatory tools; regulatory action; and, other activities. This regulatory body benefits from its links to the Centre of Listening to and Monitoring the Congolese Press, a centre which, like HAM, has been running since 2004 and aims to observe and analyse the content of broadcast programmes and newspaper articles. HAM's role is also to evaluate the level of neutrality and impartiality across media and to assure pluralism and balance of information, particularly in the run-up to and during the elections of July 2006. HAM receives complaints against certain media bodies and questions or sanctions the guilty parties. A significant part of this HAM report brings attention to the cases submitted and how they were dealt with.

## 4.6 Bibliography

High Authority for Media (HAM) (2005) *Annual report, August 2004-June 2005*. Kinshasa: HAM

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Ministry of Press and Communication (2005) *Plan directeur de la press nationale (National press programme)*. Drafted by the government and DRC media professionals with the support of UNESCO. May 2005. Kinshasa: Ministry of Press and Communication. Retrieved June 2006, from [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/18742/11139257267plan\\_directeur\\_fr.pdf/plan\\_directeur\\_fr.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/18742/11139257267plan_directeur_fr.pdf/plan_directeur_fr.pdf)

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UNICEF & Institute for Information and Communication Science (IFASIC) (Eds.) (1999) *The situation of information in Democratic Republic of Congo*. Kinshasa: IFASIC

### Key findings

- The criminal defamation provisions in the DRC Criminal Code are still being used to threaten and even imprison journalists.
- May 2005 saw the completion of an important multi-stakeholder national media strategy process, supported by UNESCO and convened by the Ministry of Press and Communication, which resulted in a National Press Programme.
- The High Authority for Media has been active since its establishment in 2004 in attempting to ensure fair coverage of politics in the run-up to the 2006 elections.



## 5. Radio

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

Since 2000, the radio sector has developed noticeably. There are now around 170 radio stations operating in the country (HAM, 2005). The stations are of four main types: state-owned; commercial; religious; and, community-run. The most growth in recent years has been in the non-state sector – commercial, religious and community – and at non-national level. The emergence of religious stations can be explained in part by the explosion in the DRC of Eglises de Réveil (Revival Churches), while the community stations are apparently the result of the people's eagerness to take control of their communications and development. Though listenership figures for the whole of DRC are not available, 2003 research found that 93% of people in the Kinshasa region had listened to radio in the past 12 months (Intermedia, 2003).

**5.1.1** There are seven<sup>12</sup> radio stations that broadcast nationally: the state RTNC service. OKAPI; Raga; Digital; RTG@; Congo Web; and, Top Congo. Each either has station-relays or broadcasts digitally by satellite, and each has strengths allowing it to draw significant audiences. For instance, OKAPI, set up by the UN, is technologically strong, with good local information and professionalism. The state-owned RTNC, meanwhile, has a wide coverage area through its availability on short wave, and is strong on coverage of public institutions, sport and local messages.

**5.1.2** In terms of radio in the country's most populous areas, of the seven stations mentioned above, five stand out: RTNC, OKAPI, Raga, Digital and Congo Web. These stations have wide coverage in populated areas, use languages accessible to large numbers of listeners and address the public in general, with no particular category of listener noticeably targeted. Several of these stations are also accessible via the Internet. One area where these stations are lacking is in audience measurement capacity, and there are no completely reliable data available on listener numbers. Table 1 (p.15) offers an idea of the most popular stations in each province based on currently available data.

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<sup>12</sup> This figure is based on the author's estimate.

**Table 1: Most Listened-to Radio Stations in Each Province**

|    | Provinces        | Radios   |
|----|------------------|--|
| 1  | KINSHASA         | Radio OKAPI<br>Réveil FM<br>Radio Top Congo  |
| 2  | BAS-CONGO        | Radio OKAPI<br>RFI <sup>13</sup>   |
| 3  | KATANGA          | Radio OKAPI<br>Radio Mwangaza  |
| 4  | MANIEMA          | Radio Maria Nyota<br>Radio OKAPI   |
| 5  | BANDUNDU         | Radio Tomisa<br>Radio OKAPI<br>Radio Raga FM   |
| 6  | KASAI ORIENTAL   | Debout Kasai<br>RTDK   |
| 7  | EQUATEUR         | Radio OKAPI<br>Radio Liberté <sup>14</sup>   |
| 8  | SUD-KIVU         | Radio Sauti ya Rehema <sup>15</sup><br>Radio Messenger <sup>16</sup><br>Radio Rurale de Sange<br>RFI <sup>17</sup> |
| 9  | NORD-KIVU        | Radio OKAPI  |
| 10 | ORIENTALE        | Radio Télé Viens et Vois<br>Radio Nepoko   |
| 11 | KASAI OCCIDENTAL | Radio Ditu Dietu (RDD) <sup>18</sup><br>Radio Kilimanjaro <sup>19</sup>  |

Sources: Kayembe in Panos Paris, 2004a; GRET, 2005

<sup>13</sup> Radio France International (RFI) has been picked up in Bas-Congo since 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Liberté, set up in 2005, is spread over the province. Installation sites are: Bumba, Zongo, Bwamanda, Gemena, (Gbadolite), Mbandaka, Karawa, Lisala, Yakoma, Libenge, Zongo, Boende.

<sup>15</sup> Sauti ya Rehema is a partner of Norwegian Church Aid and UNESCO.

<sup>16</sup> Messenger is a partner of Centre Lokole (an international NGO for production of radio broadcasts focused on development).

<sup>17</sup> RFI has been picked up in Bukavu (Sud-Kivu) since 2004.

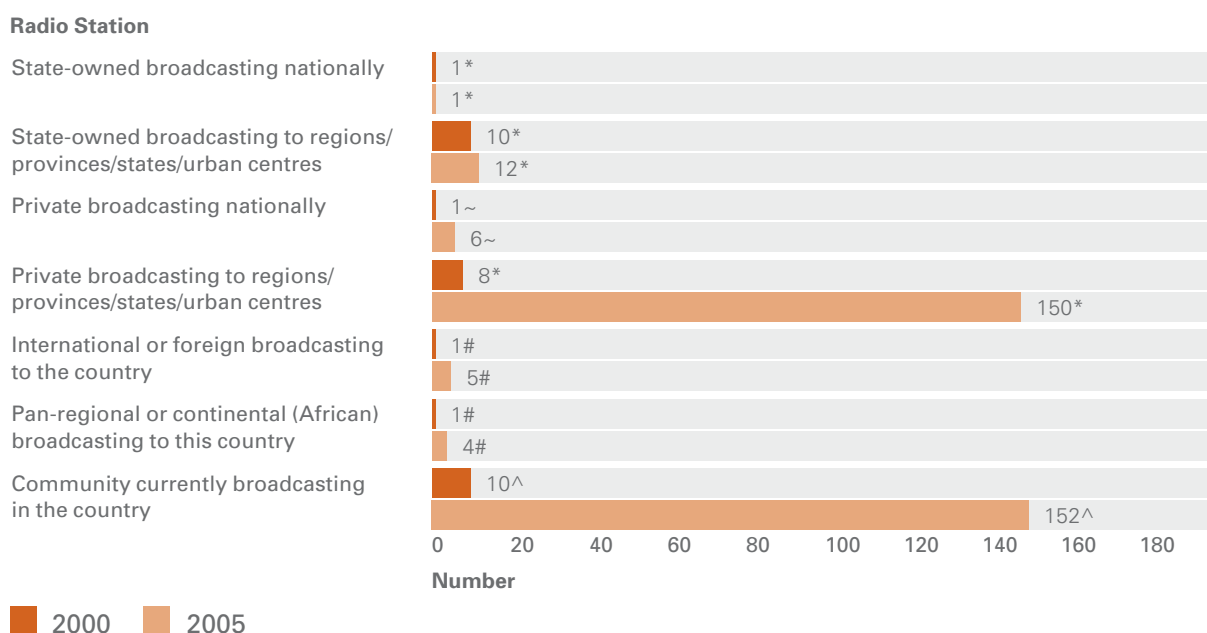
<sup>18</sup> Ditu Dietu is a partner of Centre Lokole.

<sup>19</sup> Kilimanjaro is a partner of the Swallow Foundation, owners of OKAPI radio.

This table was created based on the work of Professor Aimé Kayembe, who carried out a national survey on the media in 2003, referenced in Panos Paris (2004a), p.7-59. The researchers also consulted GRET (2005). We note that Radio OKAPI is present in six provinces. It consists of stations (including relay stations) set up after 2002.

**5.1.3** In terms of new stations launched in the past five years, two are state-owned regional RTNC affiliates – RTNC Butembo and RTNC Beni (Nord-Kivu) – bringing the total number of state radio stations from 11 to 13. Of these 13 state stations, one is RTNC national and the other 12 are affiliates. The number of non-state national stations grew from one to six between 2000 and 2005, while non-state regional/local stations grew from eight to around 150 in the same period (GRET, 2005). The number of international stations available in the DRC went from one in 2000 (Radio France International) to five in 2005, with the BBC, Africa No. 1, Deutsche Welle and RTBF being the newcomers<sup>21</sup> (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005). The number of pan-regional African services available in the DRC also grew from one to four in the period 2000-5 (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005).

**Figure 3: Broadcasting and Ownership Status of Radio Stations**



Sources: \* GRET, 2005; ~Personal research; # Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005; ^ARCO, 2005

As an illustration of the continuing growth in the radio sector, three new radio stations – two private commercial and one community – began trial broadcasts during the preparation of this report in June 2006. The two private commercial stations, both in Kinshasa, are Radio 7 and Business Radio TV. The community station is Radio Yetu Kamituga, broadcasting in the Mwenga area around 175 kilometres from Bukavu in the east of the DRC.

<sup>21</sup> For more on the ownership situation in the 1990s, see Mweze (2003a).

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

The community and commercial stations all face licensing problems when they start out. Licence approvals are issued by the Ministry of Press and Communication, while an operational licence must come from the Ministry of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications (PTT), and fees must be paid to the National Agency for Information (security service), Soneca. Set-up costs and taxes are exorbitant and do not encourage the emergence of a multiplicity of media outlets. Commercial radio is dependent on advertising and sponsorships but the advertising market is extremely small, consisting mainly of brewery, telecommunications and cosmetics firms. And advertising alcohol is technically illegal, making revenue from breweries quite uncertain. Religious radio stations are financed by their churches and by foreign NGOs. Community radios are financed by their communities and by development NGO partners.

## 5.3 Plurality, ownership and control

The number of radio station owners has grown significantly in the past few years: The build-up to the 2006 elections has encouraged investors with political ambitions to set up stations. Meanwhile, some businessmen see radio stations as useful vehicles for building their commercial power.

In general, the state does not meddle in private stations' programming, except to ensure that licence contract conditions are obeyed. The community stations are closest to the population, using local languages and promoting human rights, education, the rights of women and children, the environment, peace and democracy. Joined together in the Association of Community Radios (ARCO), these radios have been emerging all over the country since March 2001. The researcher for this report is of the belief that the number of these radio stations will rise further in the coming years, as they form an important channel of communication for people in rural areas.

## 5.4 Diversity

Though production quality is rudimentary, the growth in commercial, religious and community radio stations has resulted in a greater diversity of Congolese music, prayer, sport, advertising, debates, educational programming and developmental programming finding its way onto the air. However, the researcher has noted recent reductions in the number of educational documentaries and debates on social problems.

## 5.5 Quality of radio output and programming

Many religious stations are criticised for focusing too much on spirituality, prayer and music programmes without providing educational value, debate and programmes for reflection. And on many stations, the news is very basic and non-investigative, with OKAPI radio being an exception to this rule. Professionalism leaves much to be desired, with many radio workers entering the profession without going to journalism school. These untrained journalists are known as "black sheep". Some do not speak French well, which limits their communicative effectiveness. Some are recruited according to ethnic affiliation rather than merit. All of this has an impact on the quality of their service. Fortunately, there has been some improvement in the past two years, thanks to the decision taken at the 2004 Press Congress to mandate the press union to issue press cards only to qualified journalists.

## 5.6 Specific challenges

Challenges facing the DRC radio sector include the need for training, the need for better salaries to limit corruption, the need for better recruitment of journalists, the need for more up-to-date equipment and the need for a more enabling investment environment through, for instance, lower taxation and less cumbersome licensing procedures.

### Key findings

- The strongest radio growth of the past five years has been at regional/local level, where dozens of new commercial, religious and community stations have started up.
- The rise in the DRC of Eglises de Réveil (Revival Churches) has been a key driver of the growth of religious stations.
- Community radios derive much of their power from broadcasting in local languages, whereas many other services are dominated by the five national languages.
- The investment environment is not strong for radio, leading to calls for the state to find a way to support the sector through, for instance, tax breaks and reduced licence fees.
- Many investors setting up commercial radios see them primarily as political vehicles or vehicles for advertising their products, rather than as communications businesses in their own right.
- Professionalism is often low, due to low pay and the hiring of untrained journalists.

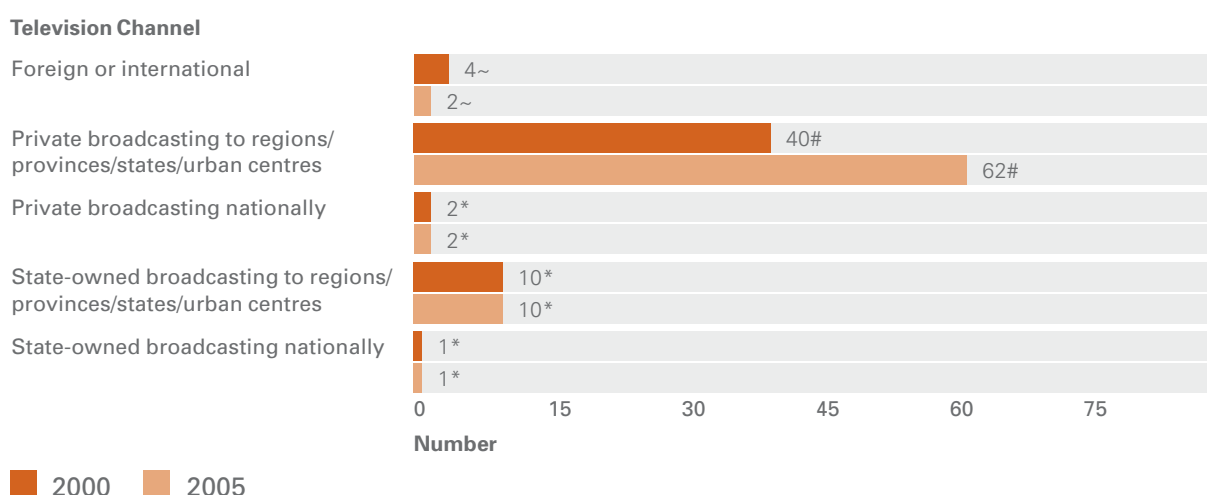


## 6. Television

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

Parts of the DRC's TV sector have seen significant change since 2000. The number of non-state TV stations – religious, commercial and party-political stations – has grown noticeably, from around 40 such channels in 2000<sup>23</sup> to more than 60 in 2005 (HAM, 2005). Meanwhile, the number of state RTNC channels has remained static (one national channel and ten regional services) and the number of international channels has declined from four to two, with only TV5 and EuroNews remaining. This multiplicity of DRC television channels, part of the pluralistic political context first set in motion by then-President Mobutu in 1990, has been driven in recent years by two phenomena: on the one hand the proliferation of religious sects called Eglises de Réveil (Revival Churches)<sup>24</sup>; and, on the other, by the desire on the part of political actors to have a vehicle for election-related broadcasts during the 2006 election. There are more than 1,000 Revival Churches which, in one way or another, are evangelising through the media. More and more, each church or political party has the ambition to have its own TV channel.

**Figure 4: Broadcasting and Ownership Status of Television Stations**



Source: ~Personal research; #HAM, 2005; \*Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005

<sup>23</sup> For more on the impact of these sects see Mweze (2001a; 2003b).

<sup>24</sup> The website addresses for the sites of RTNC and Digital TV are only guesses. At time of the writing of this report in June 2006, the RTNC website had not been updated in ten months, not since 16 August 2005. The site for Digital TV does not show that they broadcast TV via the Internet (only radio is available on the site) but Digital TV makes the claim that its TV service is available via Internet.

There is no community television in the DRC. Subscription TV exists but the providers refused to supply the researcher with their data for confidentiality reasons. The few pieces of data on subscription TV that appear in this document were obtained via the researcher's personal research. The two international television channels available in the country, TV5 and EuroNews, arrive via satellite but are relayed and made available on free-to-air terrestrial frequencies. CanalSat Horizon, which the researcher believes is currently the only DRC-based satellite pay-TV service available in the country, offers around 50 channels of TV and radio. Its least expensive programming package (28 channels) costs around \$US30 per month while the full bouquet of channels costs around \$US80 per month. The start-up cost for the receiver dish and decoder is about \$US220.

**6.1.1** There are three free-to-air TV channels that aim to have almost-national coverage, with their signals reaching around 60% of the national territory: the state channel RTNC, and two commercial operators, Raga TV and Digital TV. These three channels all provide full-spectrum programming (attempting to cater to all segments of the viewing public), with the customary breakdown into sections of news, current affairs, music, sport, education. These three stations have Internet sites, but their signals are not at this point accessible on the web<sup>25</sup>. None of the stations conducts audience measurement. One of these channels, Raga TV, is headed up by a woman.

**6.1.2** At non-national level, the key TV market is the capital Kinshasa, which is now served by more than 30 TV channels (including the three national ones mentioned above), with the result that the PTT Ministry has no more available frequencies to allocate in the capital area. At provincial level, five channels stand out: two state channels (RTNC in Kinshasa, RTNC in Nord-Kivu) and three private ones (Zenith TV in Katanga, RTDK in Kasai Oriental, Television Viens et Vois (RTV) in Orientale). No audience figures are available for any of these stations. They are all available free-to-air, and only one channel, RTNC in North Kivu, makes use of satellite technology in order to relay programming from RTNC headquarters in Kinshasa. None of these stations has a permanent Internet presence.

The state-owned RTNC stations in Kinshasa and North Kivu retain significant viewership because they are part of "the mother channel", the oldest TV service in the country. These channels give information on national life and state institutions and their presenters make TV a tool for national cohesion. These stations display journalistic professionalism and are multilingual, broadcasting in the national languages. As well, the RTNC stations have good signal quality. Meanwhile, the private Television 'Viens et Vois'<sup>26</sup> (Come and See Television), or RTV, in Orientale, is strong in local news programming. Télévision Zénith (Katanga) is known for the quality of its educational content and its considered, non-aggressive discourse. It also has numerous journalists reporting from out in the field. Radio Télévision Debout Kasai (RTDK) in Kasai Oriental is strong in multilingual content, broadcasting in Lingala, Swahili, French and local languages such as Lokele, Topoke, Wagenia, Mbole, Azande and Kiboa. RTDK is also known for its support of the radical opposition party UDPS and its affiliations to business interests, principally diamond merchants.

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<sup>25</sup> 2004 figures supplied by Professor Aimé Kayembe, referenced in Panos Paris (2004a).

<sup>26</sup> Findings here based on High Authority for Media (HAM) 2005, p.30; Ministry of Press and Communication 2005, and from the author's research.

**6.1.3** In terms of new free-to-air TV services in the past five years, Table 2 below lists 28 new stations since 2000 in the capital Kinshasa, with, as mentioned in the opening of this section, non-state stations predominating. The period of particularly strong growth, as seen in Table 2 below, has been between 2002 and 2006.

**Table 2: New TV Stations Available in Kinshasa, 2000-2006**

|    | Name            | Year | Channel | Frequency (MHz) | Status         |
|----|-----------------|------|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1  | RTNC 2 (La 2)   | 2000 | 37      | 598-606         | State          |
| 2  | RTG@            | 2003 | 45      | 662-670         | Commercial     |
| 3  | Raga Plus       | 2004 | -       | 527,25 UHF      | Commercial     |
| 4  | TV Sentinelle   | 2003 | 54      | 734-742         | Religious      |
| 5  | RTAE            | 2002 | 44      | 654-662         | Religious      |
| 6  | RTP             | 2003 | 36      | 590-598         | Religious      |
| 7  | CEBS            | 2003 | 46      | 670-678         | Unknown status |
| 8  | RTDVA           | 2003 | 55      | 742-750         | Religious      |
| 9  | Canal Future TV | 2005 | 42      | 638-646         | Commercial     |
| 10 | Global TV       | 2006 | -       | 719,25-         | Commercial     |
| 11 | Tropicana TV    | 2003 | 26      | 510-518         | Commercial     |
| 12 | Ratelki         | 2003 | 23      | 486-494         | Commercial     |
| 13 | CMB             | 2000 | 22      | 478-518         | Commercial     |
| 14 | Horizon 33      | 2003 | -       | 567,25-         | Commercial     |
| 15 | Hope TV         | 2005 | -       | 535,25-         | Religious      |
| 16 | Nzondo TV       | 2004 | 35      | 582-590         | Commercial     |
| 17 | Digital Congo   | 2005 | -       | 727,75          | Commercial     |
| 18 | RTVA            | 2002 | 56      | 750-758         | Religious      |
| 19 | Télé Kintuadi   | 2005 | 23      | 486-494         | Commercial     |
| 20 | Canal Congo TV  | 2003 | 48      | 687,25 UHF      | Religious      |
| 21 | RLTV            | 2006 | -       | 815             | Commercial     |
| 22 | Mirador TV      | 2006 | -       | 519             | Commercial     |
| 23 | Africa TV       | 2006 | -       | 711             | Commercial     |
| 24 | Numérica        | 2006 | -       | 791             | Commercial     |
| 25 | Canal 5         | 2006 | -       | 551             | Commercial     |
| 26 | Canal CVV       | 2006 | -       | 615,23-         | Religious      |
| 27 | Congo Web       | 2006 | -       | 631             | Commercial     |
| 28 | TELE 7          | 2006 |         |                 | Commercial     |

Sources: Researcher data collection; Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005; Panos Paris, 2004a

The author was not able to gather national statistics for the percentage of total population who watch television. However, there are some statistics for Kinshasa available. In 2003, 95% of the population in the Kinshasa region had watched television in the past 12 months, and 78% had watched television in the past seven days (InterMedia, 2003).

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

The new non-state TV stations established in recent years have been set up not primarily as commercial ventures, but rather as vehicles to serve religious interests or the political campaigns of their owners. Many stations will probably disappear after this year's elections. Most channels are sponsored by a politician or religious person who imposes content, and there is a lack of the substantial investment needed for a station to acquire high-quality programming or modern infrastructure. Some of the TV stations operate in an extremely chaotic manner, with poor management. Another factor potentially undermining sustainable growth in the TV sector is the reliance by stations, particularly those focused on the Kinshasa market, on tobacco and alcohol advertising – advertising which is technically not legal.

## **6.3 Plurality, ownership and control**

The number of TV owners has increased significantly in the past five years, with many stations sponsored by politicians or religious figures. However, the stations lack independence because they are required to praise their owners, thus operating as propaganda tools. Owners rarely reveal their identity and, according to staff spoken to by the researcher, management is seldom transparent.

## **6.4 Diversity**

Across the range of channels, one can find programming appealing to viewers of all ages, social statuses, political leanings or religions. However, in some provinces, coverage of certain ethnic groups might be excluded on a channel that is affiliated to a particular ethnicity.

## **6.5 Quality of television output and programming**

There is, in general, an over-reliance on foreign TV content, with no real local content production sector currently in existence in the DRC. Channels are launched without prior market research. Wrestling, theatre, films, musical shows, documentaries and even news programmes from foreign channels are often re-transmitted, even without payment or a contract. There is also the problem of owners and sponsors forcing their events into news programming, and the problem of musicians, pastors and politicians using TV to settle differences with their adversaries or enemies. This “cultured violence” was castigated during an annual meeting on political communication in DRC (Mweze, 2001b, p.162-192).

With the upsurge of TV channels, the recruitment of journalists is no longer based on professionalism, and many staff members are poorly trained. TV journalists typically lack transport and production resources, preventing them from going out to information sources and leaving them susceptible to the reporting of rumour. There are few reports from the field, and news programmes are events-driven rather than driven by editorial decisions about which issues need covering. Events tend to be reported with a lack of analysis or context, meaning that TV journalists have become a marketing force for politicians or religious figures, and propagandists or marketers for commercial products. Business people sponsor news programmes and sports matches, getting a significant amount of air-time to promote themselves. Few TV journalists master the French language, impacting on the intelligibility of their reports for viewers. Most channels follow the news agenda set by politicians and the national state-run channel RTNC.

## 6.6 Specific challenges

Some of the main challenges facing the DRC TV sector are the lack of local production, the low levels of professionalism, excessive politicisation and intervention by owners, poor management and a lack of investment in programming and equipment.

### Key findings

- The DRC TV sector has experienced an increase in quantity but a decrease in quality over the past five years.
- Key drivers of growth have been the boom in Revival Churches which want TV outlets, and the desire by political figures to have partisan TV channels at their disposal for the 2006 elections.
- The bulk of new stations are in Kinshasa, which is the capital and the headquarters for national government and other national institutions.
- Key difficulties are frequency management, lack of local programming, lack of journalistic quality and ethics, poor management and the overtly partisan political nature of many channels set up to serve the narrow interests of politically-affiliated owners or sponsors.



## 7. Newspapers

The frequency of publication of newspapers in the DRC is elastic, changing according to circumstances and economic imperatives. A newspaper can change from 'daily' to 'weekly' status very quickly. This is because most newspapers have unpredictable, uncertain resources. Many survive on the generosity of politicians who dictate the publication schedule. Newspaper circulations are often very low, with sometimes as few as 500 copies per day being printed in the Kinshasa market despite a population in that city of more than six million inhabitants. The private weekly newspaper *Le Soft* has what is considered a large circulation, at only 2,500 copies. There is no institution that is able to supply reliable data on readership, and the papers themselves do not conduct systematic readership research.

Ten of the most-read papers in the DRC, based on the experience of the researcher, are *Le Soft*, *Le Potential*, *Le Phare*, *Tempetes des Tropiques*, *Reference Plus*, *L'Observateur*, *Uhuru*, *Vision*, *Salongo* and *L'Avenir*<sup>27</sup>. Of these papers, all except *Le Soft* have started up since 1990, the year in which then-President Mobutu called for media pluralism. All the papers are privately-owned, entirely in French (except for *Reference Plus*, which carries two pages in English) and aimed at a wide audience. Around 80% of these papers have a marked political leaning in opposition to the current leadership of the country. The typical price is around \$US1, with the exception of *Le Soft*, which costs \$US5, making it affordable to only an elite of DRC citizens. Most of these papers have some Internet presence.

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

It was estimated that there were about 250 newspapers in DRC in 2005, about half as many as there were in 2000 (HAM, 2005; Panos Paris, 2004a). This decline can be seen as a product of recent history. The decade 1990-2000 was marked by political pluralisation made possible by the unbanning of opposition politics in 1990 by then-President Mobutu, and many newspapers were founded during this period, often affiliated to a political party. The 1996 Press Law encouraged this trend with its support for media pluralism. Since 2000, however, the political, economic and social situation has deteriorated, and many newspapers have disappeared.

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<sup>27</sup> During the final preparation of this report in June 2006, a new newspaper was launched, *Le Point Saillant*, a weekly focusing on politics and general news.

**7.1.1** The number of national daily newspapers remained unchanged at 11 titles over the period 2000-2004 (Panos, 2004a).

**7.1.2** The number of regional weeklies dropped significantly from around 446 in 2000 (Mbaya, 2000) to an estimated 213 in 2004 (Panos Paris, 2004a) and even lower to around 146 in 2005 (HAM, 2005). Table 3 below represents Panos Paris's 2004 estimates of the number of weeklies, both regular and irregular (unreliable publication frequency) in various provinces.

**Table 3: Weekly Newspapers in DRC**

| Provinces        | R  | IR  | Total | %   |
|------------------|----|-----|-------|-----|
| Kinshasa         | 8  | 79  | 87    | 41  |
| Katanga          | 15 | 35  | 50    | 23  |
| Kasai Occidental | 4  | -   | 4     | 2   |
| Bas-Congo        | 8  | -   | 8     | 4   |
| Bandundu         | 1  | -   | 1     | 1   |
| Equateur         | -  | 2   | 2     | -   |
| Orientale        | 4  | 13  | 17    | 8   |
| Nord-Kivu        | 12 | -   | 12    | 17  |
| Maniema          | 0  | -   | 0     | 0   |
| Sud-Kivu         | 4  | -   | 4     | 2   |
| Total            | 64 | 149 | 213   | 100 |

**R = Regular newspapers**

**IR = Irregular newspapers**

Source: Panos 2004a, p.11

The table above shows that the four best-served provinces in terms of regular weeklies are Katanga, Kinshasa, Nord-Kivu and Bas-Congo. Kinshasa has the highest number of weekly titles, but many of them are irregular in their publishing. A good number of these irregular weekly newspapers are photocopied and sold in the big squares of Kinshasa when the political situation demands it. For example, news items requiring special publication strategies would include nominations to political posts, politicians' declarations, sensational news such as misappropriation of public money, scandals in the Presidency, new laws and even the list of candidates for the presidential and legislative posts. There are no dailies focused on a particular province. All dailies aim to reach several provinces.

**7.1.3** The period 2000-5 was, overall, a time of contraction in the print sector, with the number of dailies remaining the same and the number of weeklies dropping significantly. There have, however, been a few new titles launched since 2003 (see Table 4 below), all of them private commercial, mostly published at irregular intervals with low circulation (50-100 copies), poor print quality and, generally, with poor content<sup>28</sup>.

**Table 4: New DRC Newspapers Since 2003**

|   | Newspaper           | Province       | Year started |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Le Révélateur       | Kinshasa       | 2003         |
|   | Echos des élections | Kinshasa       | 2005         |
| 2 | Eclair              | Sud-Kivu       | 2003         |
| 3 | Eclaireur           | Kasai Oriental | 2003         |
| 4 | Marmitor            | Nord-Kivu      | 2003         |
|   | Le Pacificateur     | Nord-Kivu      | 2003         |
|   | Jeune entreprise    | Nord-Kivu      | 2003         |
|   | Union               | Nord-Kivu      | 2003         |
| 5 | Marmite des infos   | Nord-Kivu      | 2003         |
| 6 | Huis-clos           | Orientale      | 2003         |
| 7 | Priorité Santé      | Orientale      | 2003         |
| 8 | La Jeunesse Plus    | Orientale      | 2003         |
|   | Huis clos           | Orientale      | 2003         |
| 9 | Femme nouvelle      | Orientale      | 2003         |

Source: Author's personal research.

## 7.2 Investment and growth in newspapers in the past five years

The newspaper sector has been a victim of the difficult economic situation. Investment in this sector comes up against many problems, including low sales levels, a tight advertising market, high input prices and an absence of direct or indirect state assistance with costs. There are a range of taxes that hurt the press companies and lead to the selling-off of editorial space to politicians or business people in order to survive. As well, papers tend to use poor-quality printers due to lack of finances, and they find it difficult to maintain or replace equipment. The investment climate is made even more uncertain by high turnover of journalists, resulting in papers suddenly having to reduce their size because of a shortage of copy.

<sup>28</sup> Some examples are Engendjo (2004) and Mutoke (2004). We can also add to this list a special edition in 1999 of the Philosophical Review of Kinshasa titled, *African Societies and New Technologies, Existential stakes*, Vol. 13 (23), n° 23-24. Kinshasa: FCK.

### 7.3 Plurality, ownership and control

Over the past five years, ownership of newspapers has remained in private hands. However, in view of the undeniable role the press play in the political scene in forming opinion, political actors continue to make concerted efforts to find allies in the newspaper sector, which undermines efforts by some papers to occupy a position of independence. Many newspapers openly manifest their political positions, not attempting to hide who their political allies are.

### 7.4 Diversity

Most newspapers aim to serve a wide range of interests in society, and several have columns that welcome readers' points of view on particular topics. For instance, *Echo* started to run such a feature in the run-up to the 2006 elections. However, some newspapers with a particular political point of view do not accept inputs that contrast with their ideology.

### 7.5 Quality of newspaper reporting

Journalistic professionalism is absent from some newspapers, primarily because the publishers do not have an experienced and stable staff or a tradition of quality. Poor management, fragile work conditions and lack of financial means push journalists into corrupt behaviour and poor work habits. Too much of the available training is done on the cheap, and poor command of the French language affects the quality of a newspaper and its credibility in the eyes of the public. The high degree of political contestation in the country is also undermining professionalism. During the past five years, many newspapers have become battlegrounds for political players, adopting the polemical and aggressive language of their backers. Others have sacrificed their professional integrity for the sake of gaining favour with powerful businesses, musicians or pastors.

### 7.6 Specific challenges

Newspapers in the DRC face a difficult socio-economic-political climate, which results in low sales, a tight advertising market, high input costs, susceptibility to capture by politicians or business people and inability to upgrade equipment. As well, there is a dearth of trained journalists in the country.

#### Key findings

- While the number of daily papers remained stable, the weekly figure dropped significantly between 2000 and 2005, mainly due to a new political context and poor economic conditions.
- The common factor among newspapers that have survived is their overt alignment with a political party since 2000.
- Professionalism has been undermined by the economic fragility of the papers and by the politically-charged climate in the run-up to this year's elections.



## 8. Media Support

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

There is no reliable data in the DRC on the number of people who have a computer or who have access to a land-line or mobile phone or Internet. Data for Internet usage is scattered and approximated. It either comes from research carried out by national or international NGOs or from research carried out in universities<sup>29</sup>. There are also reports from seminars<sup>30</sup>. According to one estimate, only 0.1% of the DRC population used the Internet in 2002 (Internet World Stats, 2006).

Amongst the NGOs researching new technology use, two notable ones are the Belgian NGO ATOL and another called Multi-sector Dynamic for Information and Communication Technologies (DMTIC). ATOL conducted a survey in 2003 on new information and communication technology (ICT) use in 38 organisations in Kinshasa. The research found low levels of IT availability, low IT literacy and low Internet use. DMTIC did a survey in 2005 on ICT use in Kinshasa. The results of the survey are not yet public, but the researcher for this report was part of the DMTIC report team, and is thus able to say that the DMTIC report will conclude that, on the whole, the level of penetration of ICTs – such as Internet and mobile telephony – in Kinshasa is still very low. In Kinshasa, there are about ten Internet service providers (ISPs), including a new one, established during the writing of this report in June 2006<sup>31</sup>. In 2002, there were eight mobile phone operators and one fixed-line operator in the country (Mbendi, 2006).

The poverty of the country, which does not encourage investment and results in a lack of economies of scale, makes it difficult for telecommunications operators to provide their services at affordable prices.

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<sup>29</sup> Regional IT Network for Africa, Final report from the preparatory workshop at the national forum on political formation for information and communication technologies, Kinshasa, 2001.

<sup>30</sup> ATOL is a Belgian NGO service provider in information and communication management. This survey is part of its 2003-7 programme. It is accessible on the ATOL website: <http://www.atol.be>

<sup>31</sup> For details on the Centre for Listening's functions, read High Authority for Media (2005), p.16-17.

## 8.2 Key changes in media support in the past five years

The media support sector is not strong. There are no commercial television production companies, and market research agencies are rare. Some beer companies and telecommunications companies – such as Bralima, Bracongo, Celtel Vodacom – have their own divisions to conduct market research. There are a handful of advertising agencies, amongst which the most important are Apluriel, Divo, CÉil Graphique, Dispromalt, GHT (Hugo Tanzambi Group), CMCT and Pigma.

There is a non-profit participatory video production association, 3Tamis Rd Congo, with production centres in Bukavu and Kalemie. The association is spearheaded by a Belgian national and supported by local NGOs.

## 8.3 Audience and readership research data

There is no data on audiences for radio, television or printed press, but there are three organisations that monitor the media:

- the Centre for Listening to and Monitoring Congolese Press, which is part of the regulator, the High Authority for Media (HAM). This Centre has been financed by the European Union with the NGO GRET as the implementing agency<sup>32</sup>;
- Congolese Media Observatory (OMEC); and,
- the Production Unit for Civic Education Programmes.

## 8.4 Media support, ISPs and ownership

All the ISPs are privately owned, with the ones in Kinshasa grouped together under an organisation called ISPA-DRC. The state-owned Congolese Post and Telephone Office does not offer an Internet service. The ISPs and telecommunications operators refused to answer the researcher's questionnaires for this study, due to confidentiality of data and fear that use of the data would be detrimental to them, in particular in relation to taxes imposed by the government.

### Key findings

- The new technology and media support sectors are not strong in the DRC.
- There is much room for improvement in terms of market research, media audience research and local content production.

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<sup>32</sup> Figure based on information from Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Press and Communication, Panos Paris, GRET and CEDESURK. For extensive details on NGOs, see CNONGD website: Conseil National des Organisations non-Gouvernementales de Développement en RDC: <http://www.cnongd.org/accueil.html>



## 9. NGO Activity

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

**9.1.1** During the past five years, the number of national and international NGOs operating in DRC has grown and the trend continues, with there now being around 4,700 registered NGOs in the country<sup>33</sup>.

In 2005, the Congolese government officially registered 63 international NGOs, of which eight give support to media. There is only one media support programme supported by the government: the National Press Programme (Ministry of Press and Communication, 2005).

### 9.2 Key NGOs involved in media development activities

The two key international NGOs supporting media development are the Institut Panos Paris and the Research and Technology Exchange Group (GRET). Other important international supporters are the UN mission MONUC (which supports the Swallow Foundation, owner of the OKAPI radio service), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (a German organisation that centres its activities on civic and political education), UNOCHA (a UN logistics body that finances certain media) and CEDESURK (Kinshasa's documentation centre for further and higher education, which collaborates with schools that train journalists and offers research tools).

For the 2004-7 period, Panos Paris is focusing on two programmes: DRIM (Rights and Institutional Strengthening of the Media); and, a programme called Media for Peace. The DRIM programme, supported by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), has been supporting the restructuring of the media landscape in DRC, focusing on three main sets of stakeholders: media professionals; state institutions; and, civil society organisations. DRIM is aiming to build regulation, self-regulation, community radio and institutional capacity. Within this framework, DRIM supports the Association of Community Radios (ARCO), the Network of Community Radio and Television in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (RATECO), and the Women's Association of Congolese Journalists (UCOFEM). The aim is to consolidate the opening up of the media in DRC. The second relevant Panos Paris programme, Media for Peace, is supporting:

- the emergence of journalist networks that specialise in covering conflicts;
- workshops with local authorities on the role of the media as actors for peace;

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<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.atol.be>

- roundtables with media and the various protagonists engaged in conflicts (political parties, authorities, armed groups, civil society organisations);
- partnerships between media and civil society; and,
- research and publications.

Panos's main funders are DfID (80%) and the development assistance programmes of the Canadian (10%) and Dutch (10%) governments.

GRET, also an international NGO, has been present in the DRC since 1994 and focuses activities on micro-finance, road construction, health centres and rural development projects.

Since 2004, GRET has also been involved in media support work in the DRC, financed mainly by the EU and Canada. GRET has worked to support the following DRC media support institutions: the High Authority for Media (HAM); the Congolese National Press Union (UNPC); the Congolese Media Observatory (OMEC); Journaliste en Danger (JED); Syfia Intercongo; the Association of Community Radios (ARCO); the National Association of Newspaper Editors (ANECO); the National Union of Press Professionals (SNPP); and, the Congolese Union of Women in Media (UCOFEM). The GRET project aims to encourage freedom of the press and democratic pluralism by supporting the Congolese media in five ways:

- support for structures such as trade unions, journalist associations and the press card system;
- support for the local NGO Journaliste en Danger (JED) in its work monitoring freedom of the press and publicising of violations daily;
- support for journalist re-training, in Kinshasa and the provinces, in partnership with the Lille School of Journalism and the Independent Electoral Commission;
- economic aid to the newspaper industry to finance training of newspaper sales managers in marketing, publicity and sales, as well as studies on the distribution of press to and from Kinshasa and the possibility of setting up a central merchandising and transportation system for newspapers; and,
- support for regulation and self-regulation, through grants to the High Authority for Media (HAM) and the Congolese Media Observatory (OMEC).

Other NGOs work on a smaller scale than Panos Paris and GRET. As mentioned in the previous section of this report, the Belgian NGO ATOL has carried out investigations into the state of ICTs in the DRC<sup>34</sup>. Another NGO, the Lokole Centre, produces radio broadcasts on development issues and distributes them to radios. A non-profit video production association, 3 Tamis RD Congo, has participatory production centres in Bukavu and Kalemie and is supported by the Belgian government in partnership with local NGOs, including the Diocese Bureau of Medical Works, the Olame Centre, the Jeremie Group and the Diobass platform.

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<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.auf.org>

UNESCO supports the UNPC, OMEC, ARCO, UCOFEM and media development work at universities. Other important players providing financial and/or expert support are the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NiZA), the Association for the Promotion of Education and Training abroad (APF), the RESATICE Network<sup>35</sup>, the Belgian Foreign Ministry, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Organisation for Transition Initiative (OTI), and AFRICANTI, an international NGO that collaborates with Panos.

The leading Congolese NGOs involved in media development, many of which have already been mentioned in one way or another in this report, are:

- Congolese National Press Union (UNPC), established in 2004;
- Congolese Media Observatory (OMEC), a UNPC structure that conducts research on the media's role in civil society, established in 2004;
- Journaliste en Danger (JED), established in 1998;
- Association of Community Radios (ARCO);
- Network of Community Radio and Television in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (RATECO);
- National Association of Newspaper Editors (ANEKO);
- National Union of Press Professionals (SNPP), established in 1998;
- African Media Institute (AMI), established in 2003;
- National Association of Private Audiovisual Companies (ANEAP), established in 2002;
- Multi-sector Dynamic of Information and Communication Technology (DMTIC), established in 2005;
- Congolese Union of Women in Media (UCOFEM), established in 1996;
- Journalists for the Promotion of Human Rights (JPHR);
- Production Unit of Civic Education Programmes (UPEC), established in 2002;
- Federation of Professional Media Organisations (FOPROMEDIAS);
- Katanga Women's Media Association (AFEMEK), established in 2002 ;
- Women's Association of Media in South Kivu (AFEMSK), established in 2004; and,
- Media for Peace, established in 1997.

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<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.resatice.org>

### 9.3. Climate of opportunity for media development activities

NGO support for the media has contributed considerably to the strengthening of pluralism and dynamism of both the state and private media (commercial, religious, community). The NGOs assist the state, which has not yet provided the media with a dispensation allowing them to function fully. The NGOs contribute to pluralism in the sense that they do not discriminate between the different sectors of the media in financing projects, training journalists and developing structures. It is desirable, however, that the NGOs become less managerial and more respectful of the identity of the structures they support.

It seems clear that the face of Congolese media changed positively in many cases thanks to the support of mostly international NGOs. One good example of support for development of new structures has been the financing of the 2004 Press Congress, which came at an important time. The structures resulting from this Congress will re-energise the profession from the inside. Another positive example of foreign NGO supported work is that of the Congolese Media Observatory disciplinary committee on the press pass, a necessary development for a press the professional ethics of which have been sliding for a long time. And the High Authority for Media (HAM) would not have been able to carry out its regulating role suitably had it not benefited from the support and aid of NGOs. As well, the community radios, a success for the Congolese media, would not have been able to function without the structural support of NGOs. Finally, without NGOs, numerous seminars for training journalists, and numerous publications referring to the press and its problems, would not have been possible.

#### Key findings

- There is strong NGO presence in media development work in the DRC.
- Institut Panos Paris and the Research and Technological Exchange Group (GRET) are two of the key overseas-based players.
- NGO work has been particularly significant in supporting institutional developments, such as the High Authority for Media (HAM) and the new press card system being overseen by the Congolese Media Observatory (OMEC).
- The fast-growing community radio sector has also benefited greatly from NGO support.



# 10. Conclusions

This report has been able to paint a rough picture of the evolution and development of the Congolese media in the past five years. The following are some of the conclusions that can be drawn:

## 10.1 Access to information and free expression

Access to information and free expression can now be found at all social levels. However, this right still needs to be strengthened by the regulatory structures that are in place and by the relaxing of measures the state still takes to protect its power (eg, the criminal libel provision).

## 10.2 State-owned media (radio and TV)

The state-owned media are making an effort to open up their domain to all political standpoints, with a view to guaranteeing a plurality of opinion.

## 10.3 Media regulation

The High Authority for Media (HAM)'s regulatory efforts are for the most part beneficial to the media profession and are helping to diffuse tensions between political actors, which is an element of building national cohesion.

## 10.4 Community media

The state, in its overall strategy for the media, encourages and supports the emergence of community channels.

## 10.5 Professionalised, sustainable, responsible media

In the past decade, the Congolese media have operated within a socio-political and economic context that does not favour development of a truly efficient, free and responsible media sector. It is recommended that the state put into place measures to support media development.

## 10.6 ICTs

The Democratic Republic of Congo is experiencing a significant “digital divide”, and it is thus necessary to put in place policies based on building ICT skills and knowledge, reducing taxes on ICT suppliers, providing locally-appropriate ICT tools and applications and investing in ICT infrastructure, including a safer, more comprehensive electrical network and a broadband backbone. As well, a legal and statutory framework is needed that provides a predictable environment for investors and international organisations wanting to support this sector.

### Key findings

- While the new Constitution of 2006 protects freedom of expression, access to information and media freedom, there is still much to be done in terms of regulatory practices and specific legal instruments to ensure realisation of these ideals.
- Continued opening up of the state broadcasters to opposition voices is needed, as is continued work towards balanced political coverage in all media.
- Journalistic professionalism needs strengthening in all media sectors.
- Improved ICT tools, access and literacy require creative policy intervention.



# 11. Appendices

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## Appendix 2: Individuals/organisations consulted during the research

- Kabeya Pindi, Président, National Congolese Press Union
- Baudouin Tschombe, CAFEC
- Aimé Tshibamba Malu Kayembe, Professor of Communication, journalist, and UNDP expert
- Lina Piripiri Mvumbi, Children Survival Manager, USAID
- Bangwene Aziza, DRC Representative, Panos Paris
- Ben Kabamba, Coordinator of GRET
- Isidore Kabongo, Ministry of Press and Communication
- Médard Tshipidiayi, Director of Megatel
- Itindi Jean-Pierre Bokanga, Professor and Administrative Secretary-General, IFASIC

## Appendix 3: Tables

### Radio Stations in Kinshasa

| N° | DENOMINATION                                     | FREQUENCE (Mhz) | OBSERVATIONS            |
|----|--|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 01 | RAGA FM  | 90.5            | Commercial              |
| 02 | ELIKYA   | 97.5            | Religious               |
| 03 | Radio Télé Groupe L'Avenir (RTGA)                | 88,1 MHZ        | Commercial              |
| 04 | Radio Télé Kin Malebo (RTKM)                     | 95.1            | Commercial              |
| 05 | Radio Sango Malamu                               | 104.5           | Religious               |
| 06 | Radio Sentinelle                                 | 97,1            | Religious               |
| 07 | Radio Télé Armée de l'Eternel                    | 94.5            | Commercial<br>Religious |
| 08 | Radio Télé Puissance                             | 101,03          | Commercial<br>Religious |
| 09 | Radio Kintuadi                                   | 91.1            | Religious               |
| 10 | Radio Malebo Broadcast Chanel (MBC)              | 98.3            | Commercial              |
| 11 | Réveil FM  | 105.4           | Community               |
| 12 | Canal Futur                                      | 107,4           | Commercial              |
| 13 | Radio Télé Message de Vie                        | 88.7            | Religious               |
| 14 | Radio Canal CVV (Le Chemin, la Vérité et la Vie) | 102.3           | Religious               |
| 15 | RTNC (chaîne nationale)                          | 100,0           | Public                  |
| 16 | RTNC (chaîne Kinshasa-                           | 91,8            | Public                  |
| 17 | RTNC (chaîne en langues nationales)              | 97              | Public                  |
| 18 | Radio Méthodiste Lokole                          | 100,8           | Religious               |
| 19 | Radio ECC  | 104.0           | Religious               |
| 20 | RATELKI  | 90,2            | Religious               |
| 21 | Radio OKAPI                                      | 103,5           | Humanitarian            |
| 22 | CEBS   | 93,7            |                         |
| 24 | Novembre/  | Lingwala        | Thematic                |
| 23 | Top Congo  | 88,4            | Commercial              |
| 24 | DIGITAL CONGO FM                                 |                 |                         |
| 25 | Radio Parole Eternelle                           | 103,8           | Religious               |
| 26 | Radio Liberté Kinshasa                           |                 | Commercial              |
| 27 | Radio Télévision Dieu Vivant                     |                 | Religious               |

Source: Author's research.



# Democratic Republic of Congo Country Report Way Forward



## 12. Introduction

The guidelines for the Stage 2 Report of the AMDI research were adhered to. The research utilized the 'key informants' methodology; media organisations in the DRC were contacted and formed the sampling frame from which key media actors were identified. Those interviewed were selected for their experience in promoting a particular area of media, the importance of the type of communication they work in and their prominence within Congolese media. Busy schedules due to the upcoming elections, coupled with a complex political context, made it difficult to conduct 15 in-depth interviews as specified in the research guidelines. Seven interviews were conducted in total.



# 13. Media Development: an organisational perspective

## 13.1 Key organisations

The interviewees chosen are heavily involved in the organizations of study; they operate widely in the media sector and have a significant impact on it – each in their own field. Interviewees were drawn from a range of entities operating in the DRC, and are listed as follows:

**Kasonga Tshilunde** is General Secretary of the Congolese National Press Union (UNPC); he is also editor of a sports journal and President of the Congolese Association for Sports Journalists. He has extensive experience of the media in the DRC.

**Kayembe Malu Tshibamba** is a university lecturer at the Catholic University of Kinshasa, specialising in Information and Communication Sciences. He is also a national expert at the UNDP, where he works on media strategies in relation to public administration reform. He is also a journalist.

**Médard Tshipidiayi** is a systems engineer. He is the Director of a Telecommunications company called Megatel, which offers professional training courses and develops software.

**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay** is a coordinator of the Central African Cultural Exchange network (CAFEC) and Sub-regional Coordinator of the African Civil Society for Information Society (ACSIS).

**Francoise Mukuku** is a coordinator of the national NGO, *'Si Jeunesse Savait'* ('If Youth Knew'). She is also a journalist with Radio OKAPI, the radio station with most national and possibly regional coverage in the DRC. This radio station is an initiative run by the 'Hirondelle' Foundation, an international NGO. It works in partnership with the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC). To note, the interviewee does not represent the radio station here, but the NGO *'Si Jeunesse Savait'*.

**André Yoka Lye** is a University Professor; he teaches Communication Science. He is also employed as a consultant on cultural issues for the UNESCO office in DRC.

François Budim'bani Yambu is a University Professor and Publishing Director of a number of magazines (Media Entrepreneur, La République and JV Magazine), DRC.

## 13.2 Impact of media development

The overall changes in the media sector over the past five years are explained by Professor Yoka:

*“...the primary change is the quality of regulation in the media domain. The fact that more and more people have been trained in this domain has also meant that, in the framework for television channels and radio stations, there has been an increasing trend for a different management compared to what we have seen previously. There is of course room for further improvement, but the willingness for change is tangible, not just in management but also in the message content that is broadcast. The second thing is the noticeable increase in awareness of the electoral process. I think that Congolese people in the last ten years have shown that they are increasingly aware of the democratic stakes for the country. Mass media, especially independent press, have played a big part in informing the people. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

These overall developments are attributed to more specific changes that have taken place in the media sector over the past five years (2000-5). These are described in descending order, according to how many interviewees supported the change.

### Setting up of community radio stations

The increasingly important role of community radio in the Congolese media is confirmed by four interviewees.

The importance of these radio stations and the way in which they allow for participation of news production by villagers, is also emphasised by Baudouin Schombe:

*“ I am thinking of ARCO, which is the Association of Community Radio. It must have processes that reflect the villages that participate in the production of information. These processes must be structured for a greater level of participation. If this process is not established, we will be out of touch with the base, the people. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC, and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

Françoise Mukuku adds:

*“ Community radio has facilitated the circulation of more news and the delivery of news to places that were previously inaccessible... I think that for a long time in our country, information came from towns and went to the villages. With community radio stations in villages, now we have news that comes from the source [in remote areas] and into the big towns. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', NGO, DRC)

Ms Mukuku cites, for example, success of the 'Radio Okapi' project. She regards this community radio station as providing an invaluable public service across the country. She asserts that this station benefits significantly from its financial and material links with the UN and other international donors. It also has a large number of well-trained staff and subsequently produces a high-quality output.

Professor Yoka Lye believes community radio projects have had a powerful impact on Congolese society, and have made a far-reaching contribution to establishing peace. The interviewee made special reference to the crucial role of community radio in education.

*“ At UNESCO, we work with the Association of Community radio stations in Congo. And each time, evaluations are carried out in relation to specific objectives and activities that we run and based on the latest evaluations, two or three months ago, we realise people have a huge need to move towards peace, and these radio stations have made a huge contribution to [enable people to] be the first informed, and to apply themselves as a citizen into the process that is taking place. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

He believes that community radio is important because it is within everyone's reach both physically and financially, and is a media that complements the country's verbal culture:

*“ ... so, it has a stronger presence and has better proximity perhaps compared to television. And in terms of quality, programme content seems to be more apt for the context. They may not have a wide scope in terms of broadcast but they are very close to the people. And in return, they are obliged to focus on the real needs of the people. So the interaction between the community [station] and their audience seems to me to be very productive. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

### **The Press Congress**

Three interviewees spoke about the importance of the Press Congress, which took place in April 2003. This allowed the press to be restructured and revitalised, and helped to re-establish professional standards in the sector. François Budim'bani Yambu explained how the press congress event:

*“... allowed the unity of the profession to be re-established... because the profession hasn't existed for a number of years. Press bodies, media professionals [previously] worked disparately. ”*

(**François Budim'bani Yambu**, University Professor, Publishing Director, Media Entrepreneur, *La République* and *JV Magazine*, DRC)

In Professor Kayembe's words:

*“ During this congress for a new start for the Press, we managed to band together all the journalists within a structure where they can all be recognised: the National Union of Congolese Press. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor, Catholic University of Kinshasa, DRC)

New structures at the heart of the National Union of Press in Congo were set up as a result of this Congress. These included the Congolese Media Observatory, the Commission for the Press Pass and the Discipline Commission.

### **Establishment of the High Authority for Media**

The establishment of a High Authority for Media (HAM) is enshrined in law no. 4/017 of the 30 July 2004. As a civil institution for supporting the democratic process, it is responsible for assuring the neutrality and regulation of both public and private media, and advises the State on the allocation of frequencies and on advertising regulation.

According to one of our interviewees, HAM has created:

*“... a new culture of media management that contrasts with the past. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor, Catholic University of Kinshasa, DRC)

### **The advent of national and international NGOs that promote peace and defend freedom of information and of the press**

NGOs, ‘Journaliste en Danger’ (JED) and ‘Heritier de Justice (HDJ), are both well-known human rights and advocacy groups in the DRC. Whilst both tackle human rights issues in the DRC, the former is specifically concerned with defending press freedom and the rights of journalists. It works to raise awareness of the persecution of journalists in the DRC amongst the international community.

Talking about JED, Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba explains:

*“ This organisation is a big organisation in Congo today... JED has just signed a programme with its partners in order to set up a system to monitor the state of freedom of the press in Congo. ”*

He adds:

*“ JED has the support of almost all Congolese media professionals and of certain Unions. It often organises meetings which have a high attendance rate. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Lecturer, Catholic University of Kinshasa, DRC)

For example, in early 2005, about 30 journalists and professional media organisations met in Kinshasa to discuss the media situation in the DRC, to highlight cases of media repression and to set up suitable strategies to enhance solidarity between journalists and media professionals. Recommendations were subsequently made to the Ministry of Press and Information. One interviewee commented:

*“ JED has not always been well received by the state authorities because it often challenges the government’s record on human rights. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

The same interviewee commented on the important role of both JED and HDJ in providing information to the population:

*“ These NGOs have worked hard, and today produce a lot of information, not just on the web... they also produce news bulletins in regional languages. With these bulletins, the people read them and can understand what is happening. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

### **Deregulation of media and media pluralism**

Three interviewees commented on media deregulation, and the growth and development of independent and private media initiatives:

*“ The primary change is the plurality in the media landscape; there has been a proliferation of radio stations, TV channels, whether they are religious or political in content... there are also many community radio stations. The most important thing has been the change in the print press – the majority have become dailies. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

### **The establishment of further education and university institutions that train in journalism and communication sciences**

The increase in training opportunities was also cited as an important development. The number of media courses has increased, and even entire faculties devoted to communication studies have been set up (eg the Institute Facultaire des Sciences de l'Information (IFASIC); the University of Kinshasa's Department of Communication, and the Catholic University of Kinshasa's Department of Communication). As one interviewee described:

*“ There is the will and ambition to have top level and modern training [in the DRC]. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

With regards to journalist training, Kasonga Tshilunde thinks that national and international NGOs that work in the media sector have enabled Congolese journalists to succeed. He cites the successful achievements of certain NGOs, including GRET and the Panos Institute, Paris. In his opinion, an increase in training seminars organised by NGOs since 2005 has had a noticeable impact on professional standards. (Kasonga Tshilunde, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba picks out the following three impacts of training on the press sector in general:

- 'recovery' and the 'rediscovery' of the value of freedom of the press;
- increased use of the 'interview' as a journalistic tool; and,
- greater institutional regulation and self-regulation as guarantees of freedom of the press and journalistic professionalism.

## Digital contribution

Telecommunications structures in the DRC have, until recently, been slow to develop largely because of outdated wiring. Médard Tshipidiayi describes the positive contribution of digital telephony on opening up communication networks in the DRC.

In his words:

*“ The existence of digital structures means that we have leapt forward roughly ten years. Mobile communication channels now cover almost the whole national territory. Medical structures and state structures have all benefited from now being able to communicate easily with different administrative departments... we can control the development process... because we can reach who we want, when we want, not only by phone but now, more and more, by computer... It has had an unquestionable impact on the mental structure of our society. ”*

(Médard Tshipidiayi, Director of Megatel, DRC)

According to the Mr Tshipidiayi, the openness and flexibility of the Ministry for Posts, Telephone and Telecommunications (PTT) is seen to have benefited the telecommunications sector. The Ministry has reportedly acted as an important information point for different service providers, and has also been successful in the establishment of a legal framework that has helped guarantee the interests of new businesses in this sector.



# 14. Media Development Initiatives

Almost all our interviewees have participated either in the conceptualisation or setting up of a number of successful media development projects. This section gives an idea of how organisations and donors evaluate the success or failure of their initiatives. The evaluation methods used vary according to the type of project. Whilst most reports are only available internally, our interviewees did provide some general information on the results.

## 14.1 Review

**Kasonga Tshilunde** cited his participation in the *employment contracts signature project*. This operation has been to ensure that all parts of the Congolese press sign employment contracts, as supported by GRET. Most press businesses in the DRC do not sign employment contracts with their journalists. The challenge was to persuade them to do so, in order to secure employment for journalists, to assure their stability and safety, and to promote their profession according to the regulations of Congolese law.

In 2004, GRET organised a workshop on employment contracts in the media sector. Many professional media organisations and Unions took part: the National Association of DRC Newspaper Editors (ANECO), Press Professionals Union (SNPP), the National Association for Private Audiovisual Organisations (ANEAP), the National Federation for Press and Book Sector Workers, National Union of Congolese Workers (UNTC), the Association for Associated and Community Radios (ARCO), the Women's Press Journalists Association (AJPF), the Congolese Union for Women in Media (UCOFEM) and the General Inspectorate for Work (Ministry of Work and Social Foresight, Ministry of Press and Information).

The goal was to reflect on the conditions for the creation of a legal framework on the working conditions of Congolese journalists<sup>1</sup>. The workshop set up a four-month long national commission to support the process of concluding employment contracts in the private media.

Mr Tshilunde also talked of his involvement in initiatives regarding the *harmonisation of the collective labour agreement* – to bring the DRC in line with the rest of central Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, please see Banakayi, E. (2005) Une première en RDC: un atelier sur l'élaboration d'un contrat de travail dans le secteur des médias, in *Plume et liberté* 4:15

In 2004, a workshop organised by the OIF, the Organisation for Media in Central Africa (OMAC) and GRET took place in Kinshasa on collective labour agreements for journalists. This workshop brought together 25 participants from the journalistic field, unions and professionals working in the media sector in Central Africa. The issue was to put in place a consultation framework for the region, a framework that takes into account employment law as it is established in the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA).

To follow on from this project, in 2006, the Congolese National Press Union set up a number of training sessions in DRC provinces. These sessions were financed by GRET and aimed to train journalists in methods of press business management. These sessions were recommended by one interviewee:

*“ Nowadays, you can’t ask a partner to make a contribution if you can’t prove to this partner that you already run your business well. Staff is the most important thing for a company – to run well – and you can’t have staff without signing an employment contract. Thanks to GRET we were able to offer training for those responsible for accounting and marketing in press businesses. ”*

**(Kasonga Tshilunde, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)**

In his interview, **Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba** described his involvement with the Cooperation Unit of the Belgian Embassy in their various activities to give support to the printed press in the DRC. This has involved the organisation of seminars and drawing up a working document. He has also been employed as editor of a research project initiated by the French Embassy in Congo, which examines the impact of broadcasts by Canal France Internationale on Congolese towns. He was also involved in a study evaluating the activities of JED. In addition, Professor Malu Tshibamba has written a piece of work assessing the situation of media in DRC. This piece, financed by Panos Institute, Paris, was published in April 2004<sup>2</sup>.

The Megatel organisation runs IT training and development programmes with the aim of improving knowledge and skills in the sector. It has set up two training departments: one to train young people and managers in IT skills; and, the other to develop IT software. The Director of the group, **Mr Médard Tshipidiayi**, explains:

*“ We created two departments, a training department which allows young people and managers who are already established in different organisations to get an idea of IT, starting with basic IT... and then working up to advanced technology training. Topics of training also cover basic binary data processing and learning about the technologies involved in satellite transmission. We also have an ‘IT development’ department. This means writing programmes, building software, etc. ”*

**(Médard Tshipidiayi, Director of Megatel, DRC)**

**Francoise Mukuku** has participated in the set up and management of an Internet portal that provides support and visibility to Congolese civil society organisations. The portal was initiated with the help of ‘Alternatives’, a Canadian NGO, and brings together over 460 organisations on one site ([www.societecivile.cd](http://www.societecivile.cd)). Ms Mukuku explains:

*“ The site was started by Canadians with a mission to make it appropriate to the Congolese people, so they approached Congolese organisations. ”*

**(Francoise Mukuku, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)**

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<sup>2</sup> Available online from, <http://www.panosparis.org/fr/doc/Situation.pdf>

**Baudouin Schombe** describes the aim of the ACSIS project in the DRC as follows:

*“ It is about getting information to the people; getting them involved in their own capacity-building and making them realise that having access to information is important, and a human right. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

For Mr Schombe, providing access to information is key to the process of making citizens conscious of their rights and obligations as citizens, particularly in the context of elections. He explains:

*“ We had to put a strategy in place that would involve the population. With the announcement of candidates, and maybe decentralisation in the new constitution plan, we must prepare the population for the long term... so that people are aware of their responsibility as citizens in a democracy. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

This project aims in particular to find innovative ways to help to guarantee access to sources of information amongst remote populations. Mr Schombe adds:

*“... we have to see how new technologies can contribute to this process. That’s what we are doing at the moment. In the same way, we have to see how the project can benefit from collaborations with the media at national and local level. We define the strengths of each type of media and decide how to build on them to get our message across to the people. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

**Professor André Yoka Lye** developed an ethical code ‘handbook’ for journalists during the July 2006 electoral period. The aim was to create an environment of peace and good management of information during the elections. This work was financed by UNESCO and the Congolese Media Observatory. Professor Yoka Lye has also been involved in budget management of a ‘peace festival’ organised in the DRC by the women’s media organisation “FemMed-WomMed”.

## 14.2 Success and impact

The *employment contracts signature project* is cited as a partial success by Kasonga Tshilunde; whilst the project has faced heavy resistance from media managers, two or three organisations (to the author’s knowledge) have signed the contract. Evaluation on the collective labour agreement project is yet to be carried out.

As for the evaluation method used, **Professor Kasonga Tshilunde** describes it thus:

*“ We look at the state of the project as it was at the beginning. We see the progress we have made with the project. We set ourselves objectives and check to see if these objectives have been met. If they have not been achieved, we ask ‘why not?’ and we then define the actions we must take in the next six months to achieve these objectives. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

**Médard Tshipidiayi** describes the evaluation of Megatel training and software development projects as consisting of both 'internal' and 'external' assessments:

*“ With regards to ‘internal factors’...we set up mid-term goals to meet our objectives. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

With regards to 'external' factors, Mr Tshipidiayi explains that the organisation assesses how beneficial the clients feel the projects have been to their personnel. Full evaluation reports are not made available to the public.

**Professor Malu Tshibamba** believes the “Situation of the media in the Congo” report has had an important impact on the way the media is understood in the DRC; it has served as an important reference point for those involved in developing a legal and regulatory framework for the media in the DRC. Similarly, the study served as a backdrop to the Press Congress meeting in 2003.

*“ This is a fundamental document that has served as a backdrop to the Press Congress to which has helped the Congolese media profession to reform, to reorganise itself and to come together with shared principles. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

**Ms Mukuku** describes the Internet portal project that was initiated in collaboration with 'Alternatives', as a success.

*“ This initiative has had an important impact because it forms part of an ‘alternative media’ that is really needed to free up information and provide a counter-balance to official sources. It is sometimes difficult to locate direct sources of information in the DRC. Especially when the country was in conflict and divided in two, these portals provided access to locally-based organisations and to other sources of information to find out what was happening on the other side... it became the only way that these organisations could find out information, and inform foreigners and donors about what was going on inside the country – either to react, to get involved, or just to know about what has happened to their investments. It has had significant impact. Other sites cannot tell you what this site can – it will tell you about what happened in a little village, and provide news that is often ignored by official or private media from the towns. ”*

(**Francoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', NGO, DRC)

The interviewee explains that evaluation is a fundamental part of the activities of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', and is carried out systematically. Financial assessment takes the form of an audit, as required by the organisation's donors. It takes place just once a year due to lack of funds. Ms Mukuku expressed that she would like it to be done at least every four months. She adds:

*“ The evaluation enables us to rectify aims, to see if our objectives have been reached... if they have not been reached – why?... and what direction we need to go in. ”*

(**Francoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', NGO, DRC)

For his part, **Baudouin Schombe** explains that the ACSIS project is still at report stage, but has received backing from many partners, including the UNDP (in its 'Sharing the future' project), and the EU. Its findings and plans will be made operational after December 2006.

Finally, **Professor André Yoka Lye** informed us that, as a consultant for UNESCO, he is required to carry out an internal evaluation of projects every four months. Results are not, however, made available to the public.

### 14.3 Lessons learned

Most of those interviewed described lessons learned regarding the conception, set up and the follow up of media development projects.

Francoise Mukuku underlined, from her experiences, the importance of consulting target populations before starting a project. She feels that it is essential that the needs and opinions of the community (ie the ultimate beneficiaries of the project) are understood and considered.

*“ We learned that you should not try and create a project or an idea and then impose it on the community. You must speak with your target audience first. This helps save time and a lot of money... we need their opinions to know how they perceive the idea that we are going to bring to them. ”*

(**Francoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

From their experiences in the field, many interviewees also identified the need to take into account the cultural context and value systems to ensure the success of a project. Language is also a determining factor as another describes:

*“ Media development initiatives have taken [language]... into account. The Press Congress has emphasised the importance of local language programmes. This was a complete change from the ‘normal’ way of doing things because, in Africa, speaking a foreign language was considered a sign of intelligence... but now the media has to produce 50% in local language and 50% foreign programmes... This is enshrined in law 96/002 of the 22 June 1996, which requires the media to guarantee local production and ensure local and cultural content across different programmes. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Another interviewee agrees:

*“ They must create programmes in local languages, programmes with themes that interest the majority of population instead of feeding them something that is pre-recorded. ”*

(**Francoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

This is also something that is necessary in the IT sector, as confirmed by Mr Tshipidiayi. The Director of Megatel agrees that African languages should be taken into account when developing software programmes:

*“ When we develop software, we use programmes that can communicate in our own [local] languages, but that can also be communicated in French. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

Arguably, radio in general, and community radio in particular, seems better adapted to the oral culture that is a characteristic of Congolese societies.

*“ From a cultural point of view, radio is part of the oral culture and so, it may have a greater presence and proximity than television. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

This interviewee added that radio offers the greatest spatial and financial reach for projects to have the most success.

Furthermore, one interviewee recommended that projects run by international organisations should resist automatically following a pre-determined project pattern, and should adapt their plans to the countrys in which they are working.

*“ I think that, in general, unfortunately, international organisations work in established ways, and in a technocratic culture. Often the outlines come from headquarters in Paris or Geneva, for example... there is a gap between pre-determined ‘macro’ programmes and reality, and we see that every day. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

Understanding the context and working with local people to overcome obstacles was also highlighted by Baudouin Schombe. From his experiences working for ACSIS, he described:

*“ Our concern is how to get people involved in generating information at the community level. We encountered many difficulties with this, there’s a lot of difference of opinion and conflicts within each township, and within every community group. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

Communication with local leaders is regarded as crucial to overcoming these problems of divergence between people of different ethnic, educational or political backgrounds, and also problems of access to remote areas. Some important lessons, however, were drawn from this experience.

*“ It was necessary to compromise with the leaders of these communities to create an information channel to get the message across. We sometimes experienced problems with the local leaders. They believe themselves to be the sole person with power, and they claim to know all problems in their area, whereas actually they are completely out of touch with their own. This is what prevents us from making a real impact in some areas. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

Baudouin Schombe agrees that collaboration between associations working in the same area, and at all levels, is necessary for success.

*“ It is necessary to create an interaction between all structures... collaboration should be vertical as well as horizontal. ”*

Talking about community radio, he adds:

*“ There should be processes in place at the village level for those affected to participate in the production of information. This process should be structured. The longer these processes are not in place, the more out of touch we will be with the people. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)



# 15. Developing the Environment for Success

## 15.1 Key factors

Our interviewees brought up a number of factors that they feel can contribute to media success.

Firstly, funding is thought to be a key factor for the success of media development initiatives in the DRC. This includes funding from the government, as well as from international and national organisations. One interviewee recognised the added benefits of material support provided by partners:

*“ Office equipment, IT equipment... and the help of experts from different countries. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

The same interviewee expressed a need for more opportunities for media professionals within the DRC, and across Africa more generally, to meet and share their experiences:

*“ Congolese NGOs and Congolese media professionals should travel across the country. Study trips, sharing experiences, is necessary. Here we call for media people to participate in international forums where they talk about it to each other. You rarely see Congolese people travelling, going to seminars here and there. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

## 15.2 Political and economic influences

Interviewees cite a welcoming, liberal and stable political climate as having facilitated the opening up of the telecommunications sector in the DRC.

Liberalisation has made it easier for new companies to start up, and has led to a diversification of the media industry in the DRC.

*“ New media structures starting out [in the DRC] will not encounter as many problems as they would in some other countries where the sector has not been liberalised. ”*

(**Francoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

Comparing with Congo-Brazzaville, one interviewee describes:

*“ A basic telecommunications licence is ten times cheaper here than Brazzaville. This is a help, something positive that facilitates development of this sector. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

Whilst most interviewees agreed that a stable political climate has had a positive impact on media development initiatives, on the whole, they felt that the state could do more to be supportive of projects.

*“ I would say that the Congolese state acts more like a spectator! It does not give support in any way; but neither is it in opposition [to media development], the state is neutral. Maybe in the future new regulations will provide support... or maybe not... but, at the moment it is difficult to argue either way. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

The need to raise awareness of Congolese media laws at the highest levels of government and the judiciary are also recommended. From his experience, Professor Malu Tshibamba criticises members of the judiciary and civil service as a whole for being ignorant of the content of the country’s media laws:

*“ Which are laws that must be respected. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor, Catholic University of Kinshasa, DRC)

He believes that the majority of provincial rulers, and those working for the police or for the Ministry of Information, have never seen a copy of the country’s media laws.

Françoise Mukuku believes that this ignorance is also a reflection of the lack of clarity in the country’s media regulation, which needs to be updated.

*“ Our regulation could be considered advanced in relation to some countries... but when you look at community radio, for example, we ask them to pay the same taxes [as other forms of media]... a radio that delivers a service to the community, that is not making profits, should not be asked to pay the same taxes as a private radio that makes profits – this implies that we don’t really understand anything. I think that that is a weakness in the regulation. ”*

She continues:

*“ Regarding Internet media; today, those who want to initiate Internet-related projects in Kinshasa don't know which authority regulates what information on the Internet. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', NGO, DRC)

The current system of taxation in the DRC was also criticised for hindering the success of media projects.

*“ I think that our fiscal system... imposes a heavy burden on investors. We are in a country where the public sector is bigger than the private sector economically. Therefore, the few visible businesses established [in the DRC] pay the bills for all the others. This is a dangerous factor that could discourage investment. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

### 15.3 Donor communities' role

The majority of interviewees agreed that, on the whole, donors play a crucial role in supporting media development initiatives in the country. However, some areas for improvement were identified.

#### **Donors work to pre-determined patterns, and may 'miss the point'**

One interviewee confirms:

*“ The nature of projects in the [press] sector is pre-determined and shaped by the politics of the donor community. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Another interviewee adds that sometimes donors can in fact harm the outcome of the project that it is giving financial backing to:

*“ To talk generally of the situation of community radios in the DRC, I have noticed how large numbers of donors all come into a 'hot' area all at the same time – these are areas of conflict, with humanitarian concerns... I think that, in our country... donors all prefer to go in the same areas, and where there are many 'problems', but at the same time they forget about the other areas [that have less 'visible' problems]. This creates an imbalance of information. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', NGO, DRC)

There is subsequently often a discrepancy between the technocratic objectives of the donor programmes, and the actual reality of the situation on the ground, as described by Professor André Yoka Lye:

*“ I think that, in general, unfortunately, international organisations work on pre-determined programmes, based on a technocratic culture. Project outlines often come from the headquarters of an organisation, in Paris or Geneva, and...there is [therefore] a lot of repetition of programmes on the ground... As a result, there is often conflict between international organisations and grassroots organisations. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

The same interviewee further believes that the concept of a 'project' is not well understood by donors. He says:

*“ The actual concept of the ‘project’ is rarely understood by the partners we work with. They still don’t know how to define the terms of reference of the project; not in technical or budgetary terms. So our job now consists of having to help them, not all, but most, to plan a project. That’s the first obstacle. Even before addressing the content of the project, the method for designing a project is often missing. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

### **Likewise, some donors invest in a sector that they know little about**

Experts in the sector should be consulted by donors to avoid problems that may occur in the field. One interviewee confirms:

*“ They are financial backers, not media specialists... the people who are brought in to coordinate project funding are generally foreign to the media profession, and consequently have a limited understanding of media concerns. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

### **Donors do not provide appropriate equipment and do not ‘follow up’ projects**

For one interviewee:

*“ There are a lot of projects that remain unfinished. For example, I know of one organisation that finances the development of community radios. It donated equipment that requires power, but did not think about providing petrol or fuel... and then, after one year, it said ‘this is your radio, and we will not give you anything else’. So even the material that they send, sometimes it is not appropriate... they send ‘minidisks’, despite the fact that in the most remote areas, you cannot find ‘minidisk’ equipment. They should send a cassette player that uses batteries... there are also dictaphones that you can use with a crank handle, so that when you do not have any more batteries, you can turn it quickly and it operates by kinetic energy... Sometimes donors do not provide appropriate equipment and do not follow-up. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, DRC)

### **Aid is often given to beneficiaries without prior consultation**

*“ The big difficulty here is that aid is often imposed on media organisations without having been requested and without consultation [with the beneficiary]... A donor might give you a certain amount of money, but what you really need is one hundred times that amount. So you might need ten, but someone decides to bring you only one without asking you. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor, Catholic University of Kinshasa, DRC)

This means that the amount donated may only have a little impact on the beneficiary (and could ultimately have been better spent elsewhere).

## Donors exhibit 'preferences' towards certain countries

*“ In world politics, and especially in Africa, there are countries that take advantage of their reputation... Some countries receive more [aid] because they are perceived to have a good system of government. They become the 'favourite'; donors will tend to think of them first, and care more about what happens in this country than others. ”*

(Yoka Lye, University Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)



# 16. Future Strategies

## 16.1 Strategic priorities

### 16.1.1 Media Framework

Establishing a legislative environment that actively promotes the development of the media in the DRC is regarded as a priority by many interviewees.

*“ I think that it is necessary to put in place a legislative environment that would promote the development of the media in our country. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

### 16.1.2 Developing local content

According to law no. 96/002 of the 22 June 1996, the development of local content in media initiatives constitutes a priority. Five interviewees believe it is crucial for donors to incorporate local content into their strategies. Professor Kayembe Malu explained:

*“ Yes, [developing] local content should be a concern... it is required by law. The problem is that we receive media from abroad. We are very influenced by what happens outside and there is a risk that it [foreign content] may become more important in our media, while what happens around us... is ignored. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Another interviewee added:

*“ Media in all African countries... make use of their local languages. Unfortunately, however, many media don't take local content into account. Religious programmes are an exception to the rule. They take local content into account, and preach and evangelize in local languages. It is with this method that they are able to reach the hearts of the Africans. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

He continues:

*“ In Africa, we have another very delicate problem. How can we communicate scientific and technological information in local languages? This is a matter of concern not only for the Media but also for the African intellectual class. The debate is an academic one, but the [everyday] African, living in the deepest parts of Africa, does not have any input in this kind of debate. Every country must address this problem. Even when we speak about literacy... or natural resource problems, problems of health, citizenship and managing the environment – these problems must be translated into local languages so that even the average person on the street can understand what is written [and] what is said. So far, Africa has not evolved on that issue. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

### 16.1.3 Raising standards of journalism

Strengthening skills through training is also regarded as a key strategic priority by many questioned during this research. As one interviewee remarked:

*“ I think that training is the foundation for everything. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

Interviewees emphasised the need for training to be embraced by all different groups of media professionals, and media managers in particular.

*“ There are problems, [for example] because information is often sold for a cheaper price than its actual worth. It's in these terms that we should train them [media professionals] so that they learn how to make their businesses more profitable. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

The same interviewee calls for more specialised training;

*“ Technical training is [also] needed to improve production and programme-making skills... Specific content can only be handled by people that have specialist training. It's necessary to train journalists so that they become qualified to handle specialised subjects. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Professor André Yoka Lye agrees:

*“ In medicine, there is general training, and then specialised training – in gynaecology, obstetrics, surgery, podiatry and so on. Then, in communication, we should also have specialists. But secondly... there should also be a link between training and professional experience. Finally... how many journalists are at UNESCO for example? There is no platform for systematic consultation between journalists who work on development initiatives and development agencies. It does not exist. They [the agencies] only come occasionally to special events; there should be an exchange, a permanent platform – exchange of information, strategy, actions. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

The following general recommendations were also made in the interviews:

- training should be ongoing and regular;
- training should be provided through supplementary, tertiary and adult educational programmes – not solely formal traditional schooling;
- quality and performance of schemes should be monitored; and,
- the efficacy of training programmes should continuously be evaluated in terms of performance in the field.

Marked differences have been noticed by the interviewees between those media professionals with and without training. An increase in training is said to have improved ethical standards in the sector.

## 16.2 Focus of support

### 16.2.1 Strategic priorities for donors

The following recommendations were made by the interviewees regarding the role of the donor community.

#### Work with national stakeholders

A sustained dialogue with project beneficiaries and those already working within the country is recommended.

*“ Donors don’t trust us enough. They tell themselves: a country such as Congo where there’s no electricity, where nobody has mastered information and communication technologies, an Internet site is too demanding, yet we live there, we made all the preliminary arrangements, we carried out training in order to have at least a specialism in every region. They are reluctant to finance us! ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

#### Ensure project completion and follow-up, or have a suitable contingency plan if you are required to leave

*“ First, initiate long-term projects; do not abandon beneficiaries after the term of their contract even if donors withdraw, they should always search for ways and means that makes up for their absence in the project. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

#### Make sound choices: target and support viable existing grassroots initiatives

*“ I think that the strategic priority is to provide funding to existing grassroots initiatives. They [donors] should see if any work has already been done, or conceived by people at the grassroots. I think this is the most important priority. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

## Encourage country-wide initiatives

Investment in media development initiatives located in remote and rural areas is also recommended.

*“ When the provinces have big radio and TV stations, they won’t need to be based in Kinshasa... We have to develop each province to slow down rural migration [into the cities]. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

### 16.3 Views on media sector focus

All media sectors in the DRC are regarded as a priority by the interviewees; they are important in different ways, and are all inter-related.

For some, the public media requires most investment.

*“ The priority is public media... it is through public media that we can measure progress – the state of democracy in a country. We can also measure the degree of transparency in the management of the state. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

However, for others, public media is not a priority.

*“ I don’t think it is [a priority]. I think that, as and when democracy advances, so the training of journalists improves, the state must withdraw to become a partner like any other. State radio should be able to compete with other radios, on an equal footing, even if the content is different according to their objectives. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

Another interviewee adds:

*“ The first priority is to ensure that the private media, and a diverse private media, is the strongest... to counteract official media. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

Also, encouraging advertising revenues in the private sector can improve salaries in rural areas.

*“ In the villages there are no advertising companies in these villages. There should be funds for those who work in this sector and to pay those who have families to feed. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

Providing support to create an independent media is regarded as an imperative for many reasons. Firstly, independent media are seen to offer more objective information than that provided by the public media – they act as a counter-balance and guarantee pluralism.

*“ An independent and diverse media can act as the strongest force of opposition against official media sources. For the official media, it is easy. When you are in power you can just make something [information] up very easily. But the real challenge for the independent media is to extend democracy. For me, this is the priority. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

Independent media can alert people to topics of interest that may often be ignored by public or private media, and may also be valuable in helping support positive steps taken by the government.

*“ Providing aid is something we have to do for the government, and this requires help from partners, including the media... the government needs to have a media that supports its efforts. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

The independent media in the DRC are seen to be largely oriented towards developmental goals, and are active in promoting civil education regarding rights, liberties and citizenship roles. Several interviewees highlighted the benefits of supporting the growth of community radio:

*“... because community media sometimes has the advantage of operating in townships or districts which are far from government or where [other media] perhaps does not reach them. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Another adds:

*“ If I had to invest, I would go for community media, because it is this type of media that co-exists with the people. It is this media that describes everyday life, for every moment, in each local community. These media can enable the population to work in the community, to improve it, not to leave it for the town, where they might become criminals or where they have nothing to do. If we put a media that promotes the land, to see what activities there are; hunting, fishing, coconut gathering, and explain to this community the importance of what they're doing, this would be a big achievement. That would release the pressure on the towns, and to invest so that the young people can stay where they come from, to live better and not to be jealous of those living in the towns. I would give priority to community media. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

Françoise Mukuku agrees:

*“ It is true that if I should choose between the three [public, private and community media], I would say that community media are the big priority because they are the 'closest' to the population. It is therefore community media that needs support at all stages: from their conception, their creation, and their implementation as well as during their operation – they need support. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of 'Si Jeunesse Savait', NGO, DRC)

## 16.4 Support most needed/useful

### 16.4.1 Contributions by business/commercial interests

Most interviewees outline the role of business in media development:

*“ Business partners have an important role to play, because they have the means. They can help significantly by providing media equipment... but the world of business is complicated. They have other priorities that have nothing to do with media. They would say, ‘if I invest in this area, how will I benefit?’ – they only see short-term returns. Perhaps it would be a good idea to communicate to them why they should invest in media, and in the non-profit-making sector. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

Advertising is recommended as a sustainable and positive method:

*“ The presence of advertisers... makes a lot of sense. It makes it possible to create jobs and to hire specialist personnel in these areas, multimedia in particular. I think it is positive. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

A review of the present taxation system was suggested as one way to encourage independent media initiatives:

*“ I take the example of radio and television. You have to help them by removing taxes. TV and radio are burdened by taxes and they complain about it everyday. If we can help them at this level, that would be something. These media organisations often buy rubbish [equipment]. If they buy big professional cameras and if they’re not tax free, they could pay double the purchase price. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

One interviewee believes that opening up the media world to business is inevitable, but describes how this could be dangerous to the country if safeguards are not put in place.

*“ You don’t even need to imagine. It depends on the will of the business person... we are in a very poor country where many domains are not regulated. If you open the door to powerful financiers, they end up influencing laws; and the few laws that exist for media. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

### 16.4.2 Investment in telecommunications projects

The priority for the telecommunications sector is two-fold: greater access to ICT equipment and the Internet; and, greater access to information and training on ICTs in general.

*“ [The DRC is] under-developed technologically; firstly, we need equipment and then we need to enable access to the Internet to diversify sources of information for the media to use each day. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC)

Médard Tshipidiayi agrees:

*“ Concerning equipment, the priority today is to orient all the sector of telecommunication towards integration with the Internet. On the human side, it is training. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

The same interviewee advises the integration of DRC nationals in the management of IT projects to provide greater efficiency, and to protect DRC interests.

Telecommunications are finally described as a profit-making opportunity for all those involved:

*“ ... this world of ICTs can be compared to a river system. It flows, and there are plenty of resources within it; some people earn their living from the river because they have boats and can transport other people on the river. There are also other people who earn their living from the river because they can catch the fish from the river. There are others who earn their living from the river just by harvesting algae from it. The world of telecommunications is a little bit like this: there is room for everybody. All kinds of businesses can be created just by picking a tip of activity in it. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director Megatel, DRC)

### **16.4.3 Provision of equipment**

The allocation of equipment to media is a recurring theme.

*“ ... to have quality media, the priority is to send the necessary equipment. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, UNPC, DRC)

However, the simple provision of equipment is not enough; training and support has to be guaranteed. One potentially successful and effective example cited by one interviewee was that of a mobile training system for community radio, as initiated by a Dutch radio station in the DRC.

*“ A new initiative? We could talk about the Dutch radio initiative that is not installed in Congo as yet, but it is on its way – they use a mobile training system... the training centres will travel to the community radio stations and will carry out training according to their needs. Talking with community radio staff helps the trainers to understand the problems that need to be addressed. They will perform training that is relevant only to that radio station. And if they go on to another radio station, it will be another kind of training. I think that it is necessary to promote this kind of initiative. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

## **16.5 Appropriate organisational framework**

### **16.5.1 Collaborating with various development agencies**

There was an overall positive response from interviewees when asked whether they thought collaboration with development agencies was a good idea. For many, it is an opportunity to be seized, particularly when considering the post-conflict situation in the DRC, as one interviewee explains:

*“ I think it’s important. I think that misfortune sometimes provides an exceptional opportunity. At the moment, given the post-conflict situation of DRC, lots of NGOs or governmental developmental organisations are interested in the country. We must take advantage and make the most of it. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

According to our interviewees, the most credible development agencies are mainly international ones, including: UNESCO, UNDP, UNIFEM, WHO, UNICEF, OIF, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, NIZA and the Rockefeller Foundation.

*“ UNESCO is obviously hugely prestigious: morally, and is significant technically. There’s the UNDP, which has a lot of money and which gives a lot of support to [development] activities. There’s also UNIFEM, which addresses gender issues; there’s also UNICEF, which is an important fund for mothers and children... there’s also WHO, for everything to do with health, but also the Human Rights division, which is a representation of United Nations at Kinshasa on the same grounds as others. They do a lot in terms of media, publications, contact with the public in the Human Rights domain. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

One interviewee added:

*“ Credible organisations? I cite the OIF, which has brought its experience here to Congo as well as to West Africa; it has brought finance, institutional aid, and institutional support. And this institutional support, they have financially supported a number of newspapers... the UHURU newspaper, Le Potentiel, La Reference Plus also. It gives the newspapers the potential to take on production without too much worry. I also cite NIZA, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation... and the Rockefeller Foundation, these are foundations that can support circulation of ideas and organisation of the city activities through media work. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Interviewees believe that the creation of a new development agency is not necessary – most benefits can be obtained by existing agencies working together.

*“ I think that the multiplication of agencies would complicate things... what we are missing is collaborative work. Each one works in its own domain... I think there’s a need to revise the strategies and make targets clear based on the apparent needs. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

## 16.6 Pan-regional versus country-specific initiatives

The creation of a regional consultation framework is recommended to allow donors and media professionals to exchange information and experiences:

*“ It is necessary to open up the debate on the development of the media, not only in the DRC, but also in the Central African region, because all these countries have the same problems. It is necessary to establish a dialogue framework between all media organisations and all private structures that are involved in the media domain. This exchange will allow the Government and the private sectors alike, to be aware of media development in this African sub-region. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

Mr Schombe continues:

*“ The first priority would be for donors to organize a conference to adopt a common approach regarding the policy for developing the financing of media, not only in Africa, but internationally. Then, they need a dialogue with African governments to define a common policy of media development throughout the African Union... From this step, they can open up dialogues at the African level, country by country, with structures, with the organizations representing African media. They can work by sub-region... It is about building on these steps, sector by sector, to establish a common policy. It will permit having some informed ideas on media problems encountered at the institutional level, the financial level, the staff level, and so on... After that, it will be necessary to establish a framework for funding... this will allow donors to know whether what they are contributing is enough. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

Many were in favour of greater integration of regional African media networks, particularly because of the benefits that could be drawn from sharing experiences in a continuously changing sector. One example cited was that of journalist training.

*“ Yes, in regional terms, I am aware of work which is being done by the SADC. It is a sub-regional organisation, which brings Southern African countries together and has a programme of training for trainers [in the media domain]. They have regular training, and those they train become trainers in the journalism schools [in the DRC]. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Another confirms:

*“ Putting Congolese media into African networks would allow, as I’ve said before, for experience sharing. Knowing what is happening at your neighbour’s house can improve your lifestyle. That’s number one. This is important because you can’t live ‘closed off’ with the same people... work in the press and media is an evolving activity, it must evolve. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Another interviewee agrees that working with national, African and international networks brings benefits to the sector.

*“ I don’t think we’ve talked enough about networks... a national network, an African network, an international network in concentric terms. It’s important... I know, for example, that there is a women’s network called FemMed-WomMed. It’s a network of female journalists, which seems to be influential in Africa... There is also Signis<sup>3</sup> – I’ve heard a lot of positive things about them, too, and I’ve taken part in a workshop organised here at Kinshasa on the role of Christian and Catholic media in democratisation, and that seemed to be a very worthy organisation. Networks are important because they allow you a greater understanding, but they also provide you with means [to do things]. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

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<sup>3</sup> For more information about this international NGO, go to [www.signis.org](http://www.signis.org)

Baudouin Schombe firmly supports greater connections between Congolese and external organisations to strengthen the media in his country.

*“ Relations with research and training institutes; this is what has given credit to the European and American media... this inter-institution relation is what is necessary! ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)

For the others, greater integration of regional initiatives is not suitable given that the circumstances of the countries are different.

*“ I personally prefer targeted initiatives because regional ones tend to make generalisations about the situation... These regional initiatives sometimes standardize all and so, sometimes they attend to some needs and not others. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

A similar assessment is made by another interviewee.

*“ There is a problem at this [regional] level because every country has its own policies. For example, I was at Libreville for the collective labour agreement. I found that although we were all Central African countries, each country had their way of seeing how to sign the contract of employment. There were countries where the employment contract didn’t mean anything because the media worked with external contractors who were either teachers, lecturers, agents from government, or who owned firms, or were bankers for whom a specific share is put to one side, and at the end of the month they get a bonus. There are media who don’t have an editorial staff. That caused a problem: how to explain to them that it’s necessary to sign a contract of employment? It was difficult to agree on how to work. So what should be done?... We should run our own policy, design our own actions and find our own means to finance these actions and move forward. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, UNPC, DRC)

He continues:

*“ I cannot work with [people from other countries] because they don’t know what it’s like to work here. In terms of the National Press Union, I know the weaknesses of the profession; I know what’s not working. If I started up a new agency, I know how to manage my country’s problems; I know that putting a certain media in a certain province will be successful right away. I couldn’t agree to get involved with an organisation from the African networks. ”*

(**Kasonga Tshilunde**, General Secretary, UNPC, DRC)

## 16.7 Initiatives relating to developmental content

There is evidence of interest in encouraging media development initiatives that conform to the Millennium Development Goals:

*“ These initiatives allow the population to know the state, for example, of the struggle against AIDS, to know the method for protection, to know the evolution of science on the subject, to know how the Government perceives it, and vice versa. Through questions asked in the field, the Governments also learn the level of awareness of the people, on these types of topic. So this work has already been done in DRC... Two months ago, I had to lead a seminar on the sexual health of adolescents that was organised at Kinshasa where we showed the journalists the possibilities that are available so that they understand how to use information on sexual health issues amongst adolescents... these are the types of problems that media people need to take on. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

## 16.8 Initiatives to develop an independent media

The views here were similar to those in the area of contributions that might be made by business/commercial interests. Support for independent commercial media was seen as not only desirable but also imperative.

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

All our interviewees state that media has a role that cannot be ignored in the democratisation process for DRC.

*“ Yes, media has an important role in the democratic process. I give you an example: in 2004, I evaluated the NGO, 'Journaliste en Danger'. We went to the Eastern Province [to do research]... some people we met did not even know if Mobutu, the former President, was dead! There were people who asked us if he was still alive... and this was in 2004... You see in this context, that having un-informed or badly informed people [in a country] is dangerous. This is also an obstacle to development... If the media are not developed, through which channel can political candidates make their policies known? ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

For one interviewee, incorporating democracy into media initiatives is a moral obligation for journalists. Democracy and development are seen to go hand in hand:

*“ They [the journalists] are development agents... It is a terrific responsibility. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

Talking about the link between telecommunications and development of the democracy process in DRC, Mr Tshipidiayi states:

*“ Democracy without information isn’t possible. If you look at Kinshasa and Butembo [Congoles town] – you see the distance that separates them. How can someone in Butembo elect a candidate in Kinshasa when they are not aware of events that have taken place there? It would be a joke to choose someone based on appearance alone. With telecommunications, people in rural areas can talk to each other, everyday and all the time... You can call a cousin, or a parent to tell them ‘such and such an event has just occurred here’, and it is done in real time, immediately. Maybe newspapers won’t report it. And even when newspapers write about it, it still takes time to reach Butembo, by aeroplane. And aeroplanes don’t fly to Butembo everyday. Therefore, the environment of telecommunications facilitates democracy. This is inescapable. In order for democracy to grow, it is necessary for voters to be well informed on everything... With regards to a candidate’s private life, if the voter knows what he has done, the voter may not want to vote for him. Telecommunications contribute greatly to the development of democracy. It is not as visible as the written press... but, what people tell each other every day, from one end of Congo to the other, could never have existed if these means were not in place. ”*

(**Médard Tshipidiayi**, Director of Megatel, DRC)

When asked whether the media and democracy go together, another interviewee added:

*“ Yes, absolutely, in the sense that media allow information to circulate... and provide feedback from the population to the decision-makers. And within the setting of good governance, this is what must be done. Decision-makers usually make promises to the people and the people must be informed whether these promises have been fulfilled and if not, why not? ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

According to the interviewee, in countries where media doesn’t exist, there is no flow of information between decision-makers and the people.

*“ Decision-makers usually make promises... If I take the example of our country during the election period, decision-makers promise a lot of things. But, how in the context of [encouraging] good governance – how can you verify that the promises have all been achieved if media is not free to enable information to flow freely? Or, how can you collect information from the public and bring it to those who matter in the decision-making process? ‘Your population wants this, it wants that.’ Therefore, I insist on the fact that, in terms of good governance – which constitutes an integral part of the democratization process of a country – media have a major role to play. ”*

(**Françoise Mukuku**, Coordinator of ‘Si Jeunesse Savait’, NGO, DRC)

Another agrees that media play a vital public service role:

*“ Yes, this function is essential. Our country has a population that is 70% illiterate. What’s more, 80% of the population live in rural areas. The media [is important for] informing, training, and entertaining the people... It’s the media that teaches people, for example, that voting is a citizen’s obligation; that voting is a right, that no one can be considered ‘stateless’. ”*

(**Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba**, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC)

Its main role is thus to guarantee civil education and to make the public aware of development problems.

*“ In a developing country, public service is the very idea of national education in the wider sense... It’s about human development, promoting knowledge and know-how. That’s what I call public service, in terms of increasing awareness. Attaining that is the priority. ”*

(**André Yoka Lye**, Professor and UNESCO consultant, DRC)

According to another interviewee, it is also necessary to consider collaboration between different media organisations at the national level.

*“ Media should not enter into conflict with each other while they are working towards the same goals. ”*

(**Baudouin Schombe Aki Mambo Ucay**, Coordinator of CAFEC and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC)



# 17. Summary and Conclusions

## 17.1 Context

- On the whole, interviewees report both a positive quantitative and qualitative change in terms of the number and content of media messages.
- Liberalisation and more stable political climate has facilitated the opening up of the telecommunications sector, and has led to a diversification of the media industry.
- Community radio has proliferated and has brought many benefits, particularly in terms of enhancing participation and information provision to those living in remote areas.
- The establishment of a Press Congress and the High Authority for Media has created a more favourable environment for the media to development.
- The advent of national and international NGOs that promote peace, and defend freedom of information and of the press, has been important in supporting journalists who suffer repression.
- There has been a substantial increase in the number of further education institutions and courses that offer training in journalism and communication sciences.
- According to one interviewee, expanding digital telecommunications networks offer the greatest potential to improve communication and information provision across the country.

## 17.2 Lessons learned

- Donors should initiate projects that are relevant and wanted by the beneficiaries.
- Consultation with in-country experts and people 'on the ground' is crucial for the success of any project.
- Radio complements the country's oral culture and offers the greatest spatial and financial reach to projects.

## 17.3 Developing the environment for success

### Political and economic influences

- More cross-country (and pan-African) opportunities for media professionals to meet are recommended as a valuable way for them to share their experiences and knowledge, and to raise standards in the sector.
- State needs to be more supportive of media development initiatives and ensure that the legal framework has the confidence of those working in the media industry.
- A better understanding of the country's media laws by those in government and by media professionals in general would go a long way to protecting journalists against political repression and manipulation by media managers.
- Current taxation system is seen to hinder business investment in the private sector.

### Donors' role

- Country-wide initiatives that support viable existing grassroots initiatives are recommended.
- Understand the context and the needs of the beneficiaries.
- Appropriate equipment needs to be provided.
- 'Following-up' on projects is essential.

## 17.4 Strategic priorities

- Developing local content and languages in programmes should be a priority.
- Raise standards of journalism through training in reporting (and election reporting), production and basic management skills. Training in new technologies is also recommended, as is training in specialist issues to help meet development goals.
- Substantial infrastructural and technological support is required.
- Interviewees agreed that a healthy and diverse independent media is a foundation stone for good governance and democracy.



# 18. Appendices

## Appendix 1: Interviewees

1. Kasonga Tshilunde, General Secretary, Media Support, UNPC, DRC
2. Professor Kayembe Malu Tshibamba, University Professor and UNDP expert, DRC
3. Médard Tshipidiayi, Director of Megatel, DRC
4. Baudouin Schombe, Coordinator of CAFEC, and Sub-regional Coordinator of ACSIS, NGO, DRC
5. Françoise Mukuku, Coordinator of *'Si Jeunesse Savait'*, NGO, DRC
6. André Yoka Lye, University Professor and UNESCO consultant NGO, DRC
7. François Budim'bani Yambu, University Professor, Publishing Director, Media Entrepreneur, *La République* and the *JV Magazine*, DRC

## Appendix 2: Media Development Projects/Activities described in Section I4 of Interview

| Interviewee name and organisation   | Specific media development project: title        | Key purpose/aim of project/initiative/ or activity                                   | Project time span (dates or length in months/years of project) and status (ongoing etc) | Outcome sought  | Target audience   | Evaluation method used (if any)  | Result of evaluation                               | Is/was this project/activity considered by your organisation to be a success? On what basis?                                     |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Kasonga Tshilunde, General Secretary, National Union of Press in Congo                      | Employment contracts signature project           | The creation of a legal framework on the working conditions of Congolese journalists | Ongoing   | To persuade press businesses to sign employment contracts with their journalists, to assure their stability and survival, and to promote their profession according to the regulations of Congolese law | Media organisations, journalists and government officials | Internal evaluation  | Evaluation results are not available to the public | A partial success as two or three organisations have signed; but the project faces heavy resistance from press business managers |
|   | Harmonisation of the collective labour agreement | Training journalists in press business management skills                             | No information  | Workshops and training on improving accounting and marketing methods  | Media organisations, journalists and government officials | Internal assessment of project successes   | Evaluation reports are not available to the public | No information   |
| Prof Kayembe Malu Tshibamba, University Lecturer, Educator, Catholic University of Kinshasa | Audience survey                                  | To provide information on the impact on Radio France Internationale programmes       | Completed   | To generate data on audiences in towns in the DRC   | French embassy and media professionals                    | Interviews, panel exchange, questionnaires and direct observation were used as methods of evaluation | No information                                     | No information   |

## Appendix 2: Media Development Projects/Activities described in Section I4 of Interview – continued

|  |   |  |                                      |   |   |   |   |                      |   |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------------|---|
| Prof Kayembe Malu Tshibamba, University Lecturer, Educator, Catholic, University of Kinshasa     | Evaluation of activities run by the national NGO 'Journalist in danger'                             | To evaluate the activities and successes of the NGO  | Completed                            | Identify gaps between objectives and what has been achieved             | NGO 'Journalists in Danger'                   | No information  | No information                                | No information       | Project considered a success  |
|  | Involvement with the Cooperation unit of the Belgian Embassy in favour of a Congolese printed press | To organise seminars and a draw up a working document  | No other information on this project | No information  | No information                                | No information  | No information                                | No information       | No information  |
|  | Media Survey  | National report on the state of the media in Congo   | Published April 2003                 | Produce data on the current media situation, covering the whole country | All users of data, especially media operators | None  | None  | None                 | A success because it has had a positive impact on the legal and regulatory framework, and has been used by the Press Congress in its activities |
| Médard Tshipidiayi, Director of a Telecommunications and Tele-information Media Support, MEGATEL | IT training and development programmes  | To set up two training departments; one to train young people and managers in IT skills; the other to develop IT programmes software | Ongoing                              | Improve IT skills and knowledge in the media sector                     | Media professionals                           | Evaluations consist of assessing if the training has been beneficial to the personnel and on client reactions | The evaluation is not available to the public | No information given | No information given  |

## Appendix 2: Media Development Projects/Activities described in Section I4 of Interview – continued

|   |  |   |   |  |  |   |                      |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|----------------------|--|
| Baudouin Tschombe, Coordinator at the Exchange Centre and for Congolese law, NGO, CAFEC | "Right to information" project                                     | To inform people across the country conscious of their rights and obligations as citizens | Ongoing. This project is at research stage and will be operational after the elections in the DRC (Dec. 2006) | Prepare people for making choices in elections and for planned decentralisation  | General public                                     | Internal evaluation structures exist along with more general assessments made in partnership with funders. These involve writing activity reports and consultation documents to assess competencies and areas of activity | No information given | The project is considered a success but has problems associated with ethnic divide, education levels, access, conflicts with political parties and communication problems with local leaders |
| Francoise Mukuku, Coordinator of the National NGO « If Youth Knew »                     | Set up and organise an internal portal for Congolese civil society | To make the site appropriate to the Congolese people                                      | Ongoing   | To use the site to act as a counter-balance to official information and to provide information for the outside to understand what is going on in the DRC | Citizens of the DRC and other international donors | Systematic evaluation through a yearly audit as required by the funders   | None                 | The project is considered a success- 460 organisations communicate through the site  |
| Andre YOKA Lye, University Professor, Institut National des Arts; and UNESCO consultant | Organisation of a 'Women for Peace' festival                       | No information  | No information  | To help create an environment of peace and good management of information during the election period   | Citizens   | Responsible to UNESCO   | No information       | No information   |
|   | Code of ethics for journalists                                     | Creation of an ethical code for journalists during the electoral period                   | No information  | To help create an environment of peace and good management of information during the election period   | Journalists and media practitioners                | Responsible to UNESCO   | No information       | No information   |



# Democratic Republic of Congo Country Report Case Study



# 19. Case Study

## **Multi-sector Process for Information and Communication Technologies (DMTIC): a media development initiative**

### **1. Background**

Recent developments in the DRC have seen government, civil society, media and private sectors working together in an innovative approach that has developed a multi-stakeholder alliance on ICT for development policy. Known as the Multi Sector ICT Dynamic (DMTIC), the approach's ultimate objective is to democratise access to ICTs in the DRC and transform them into a real tool of empowerment and social development.

The DMTIC is a non-profit-making organisation that was formed as a result of a multi-stakeholder roundtable organised in January 2005 in Kinshasa. The roundtable brought together representatives from government, business and the non-profit sector for the first time in the DRC, to identify key issues that could be included in the development of a national ICT policy.

This roundtable was initiated by 'Alternatives', a Canadian non-governmental advocacy organisation, in collaboration with the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the International Development Research Centre (CRDI-Canada), and the 'Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa, (CATIA) programme. The culmination of the meeting was the set up and elaboration of a strategic plan for the DMTIC (Le Phare, 2005).

### **2. Activities**

The overall role of the DMTIC is to work with civil society organisations to raise the consciousness of decision-makers about the stakes involved in developing the DRC into an 'information society'. As such, DMTIC promotes collaboration with the government to develop a coherent ICT policy in the country.

An ICT advisor has subsequently been appointed by the Ministry of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications to work closely with the DMTIC to facilitate its goals.

The statutory obligations of the DMTIC include:

- a)** to encourage and take on initiatives aimed at promoting information and communication technologies in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- b)** to mobilise social associations with the same objective in order to work together;

- c) to make political decision-makers aware of the importance of information and communication technology and its issues, and to make the case for reasons to use these technologies for the country's development and, consequently, to create an information society;
- d) to collaborate with the authorities to establish a national policy for information and communication technologies;
- e) to collaborate with the private sector for the implementation of these technologies and to put forward the case for a pricing policy that encourages the spread of ICTs, and which takes into account the population's underprivileged classes;
- f) to have a measurable and representative number of participants at international demonstrations and forums for ICT; and,
- g) to encourage channelling of available international human, material and financial resources for ICT towards Democratic Republic of Congo and to campaign for funding.

### **Training and capacity building**

Whilst still in its infancy, the DMTIC has put forward a number of proposals to develop the ICT sector in the DRC. These proposals include the need for *training and capacity building* so that people are not only able to use ICT tools, but also to integrate them into their daily tasks. Training in the following areas is particularly recommended:

- in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education;
- public sensitisation; and,
- professional training.

### **Judicial and institutional reform**

A framework has also been suggested by the DMTIC to examine possibilities for judicial and institutional reform in the DRC, with recommendations covering the following:

- revisit and complete existing ICT regulation;
- partake in international regulation activities;
- create a framework for co-ordination of all the stakeholders; and,
- create an ICT policy implementing executive organ.

### ***Le 'backbone' national***

Finally, DMTIC has proposed a strategy for the effective management of a 'national backbone' that will link up with the SAT3 underwater fibre-optic cable to provide open access of ICTs in the DRC. This cable runs along the coast of several African nations. In the case of the DRC, this cable is linked to the town of Moanda on the Atlantic coast. The DMTIC proposes to create a country-wide telecommunications structure, or 'national backbone', which will use this underwater cable connection to interconnect cities and towns to the Internet. The benefits of expanding the national backbone would reduce the DRC's dependence on satellite and offers lower network costs at higher band width.

In June 2006, a workshop was organised in Kinshasa to present the technical and economic impacts of developing such a structure to potential investors and stakeholders. International NGOs have since pledged financial support to this idea. The DMTIC is in the process of carrying out a feasibility study, supported by 'Alternatives' and the International Development Research Centre (CDRI).

The overall objective of this study is to investigate and propose strategies for infrastructural development and the implementation of policies to promote affordable bandwidth that is more accessible to all Congolese people. The main topics of interest that the study will cover include:

- internet as a point of exchange;
- the current state of Open Access;
- the current bandwidth demand issues (cost, options, opportunities and policies);
- ICT infrastructure;
- Congolese ICT regulation;
- the set-up of a national ICT policy; and,
- further education ICT needs.

Its findings are due in December 2006 (APC, 2006).

### **Telecentre project**

DMTIC has also proposed the setting up of a telecentre project in the DRC. The main aim of this project is to engage the Congolese communities in the development process, by setting up affordable and viable telecentres to access ICT tools. With investment, the DMTIC believes that these telecentres can provide communities with the tools to reduce the digital divide and ensure their social, economic and technical development.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- to define the methods and procedure for installing a telecentre;
- to formulate strategies to establish local needs and the collection of relevant information;
- to formulate strategies to understand how to take advantage of the different services provided by the telecentre, to meet the needs of the population, in particular those relating to education, management, health, agriculture, etc;
- to draw up ICT training programmes ;
- to implement partnership agreements and pricing structures;
- to evaluate the technologies' social, economic and cultural impact in terms of local and national development; and,
- to contribute to a better understanding of the importance of information and telecommunications for development, and the relationship between ICT and development.

The tele-centres will offer basic services in IT, Internet and IP telephony and library services, as well as training and support for the users. More specifically, the following services will be provided:

- public telecommunication services – public phones, fax, email, and Internet;
- information production, databases and publications that reflect local knowledge and skills;
- technical support to evaluate software and training needs;

- access to specialist knowledge and information that the communities need – public domain, NGOs, commercial data banks, etc;
- training for the use of modern information and telecommunication techniques, especially to improve production and commercial activity;
- online learning;
- online medicine;
- photocopying, typing, reprographics, word-processing and other paid-for services for local businesses and NGOs;
- making available (hiring) venues and material for training and get-togethers within and between communities; and,
- organisation of get-togethers between community members and ICT conferences.

It is hoped that this will enable communities, not currently serviced, to be brought into line with the rest of the country, and also to open them up to the rest of the world. Furthermore, these centres aim to provide a friendly place where people meet to discuss problems present in the community.

#### **Other activities**

The DMTIC is involved in a number of other activities to promote investment and growth in the ICT sector.

- It is involved in the organisation of two international days for telecommunications in the DRC, in partnership with the Ministry of Posts, Telephone and Telecommunications.
- The organisation has participated in international forums for ICT, in particular the World Summit for Information (Tunisia) and Commission for Africa (Yaoundé, 7-8 June 2005).
- With the support of APC and the British non-government organisation Computer Aid International, the DMTIC is also involved in a programme of distributing low-price computers to Congolese civil society organisations (APC, 2006).

### **3. Conclusion**

The work of the DMTIC is still in its early stages. A big challenge for DMTIC is to secure funding, but most importantly, it is to ensure that ICT content is relevant to people's daily lives, particularly to those living in rural areas. It will also have to surmount problems related to limited human resources to get projects off the ground, and will have to find ways to overcome the high costs of access and computer hardware.

However, through its proposals, the DMTIC seems to offer an innovative way of approaching ICT deficiency in the DRC. Most importantly, the DMTIC demonstrates that civil society, media, the government and the private sector are capable of working together to develop and implement an ICT development policy in the DRC. Working with the authorities, and getting the private sector involved (mainly telecommunications operators and Internet service providers) and civil society organisations, the DMTIC approach offers decision-makers the content and framework suggestions necessary for creating a successful ICT policy. If successful, its projects have the potential to transform the Congolese economy and society, and reduce the 'digital divide' between urban and rural areas. If the national backbone is established, it would be as a result of the efforts, studies and work of the DMTIC.

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