Enabling journalism educators to support comprehensive governance responses to HIV/AIDS and other development challenges through journalism education

Assessment of the current status of HIV/AIDS teaching in four journalism schools in South Africa

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Background

Making the link: democratic process and HIV and AIDS responses

By the end of 2001 an estimated five million adults and children out of a population just over 47 million people were living with the HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2002:189) in South Africa. Most of these youth and adults (15.6%) were between 15 and 49 years old ("South Africa HIV & AIDS Statistics," 2011); an age group that makes up the productive segment of the population. In Southern Africa HIV and AIDS rates were rising with more than 40% of pregnant women infected in some areas in the region (UNAIDS, 2002:7). Most people in South Africa who were infected were poor and lived in informal settlements and more women were infected than men (Geffen, 2008). In its 2002 global report UNAIDS acknowledged that “effective responses are possible but only when they are politically backed” and that these responses should involve partners in government, business and civil society (2002:7). These provided a strong rationale for African Democracy Institute Idasa to start to explore the link between good governance and HIV and AIDS. At the time the existing evidence for making a connection between good governance and HIV and AIDS was mostly anecdotal and very little was empirically known about the nexus of good governance, democratic process and HIV and AIDS.

After consultation with regional partners, Idasa launched the Governance and AIDS Programme (Idasa-GAP) in 2002 to show empirically how the epidemic was impacting on the health of nations and the implications for “sustainable democracy, active citizenship, democratic institutions and social justice” – principles that were at the very heart of the work that Idasa has now been doing for more than 20 years. The research agenda of the new Idasa-GAP would be premised on two questions:

1. What is the impact of HIV and AIDS on the ability of a government to sustain good service delivery?; and
2. What is the best way that a government can respond to the epidemic or what is the character of an effective governance response?

The work of journalists in the HIV and AIDS response

In 2003 it became clear that the link between governance and HIV and AIDS will not become part of a wider public discussion unless journalists were systematically and consistently involved in considering the implications of this approach. If a two way conversation between
citizens and government is part of vibrant democratic process, Idasa-GAP posed the question: What are citizens and governments talking about when they talk about HIV and AIDS and what role do the media play to catalyse this conversation? Further, if the media do catalyse a conversation what is their approach in naming and framing this conversation?

In 2004 Idasa-GAP launched the Media, AIDS and Governance Project (MAG) with support from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and based its work on two questions:

1. What are the obstacles that prevent the media from reporting comprehensively and accurately on all aspects of the epidemic; and
2. How can the media work more closely with citizens to ensure that their voice and experience are reflected in policy making and planning?

The material developed for engagement with journalists between 2004 and 2006 was focused on the first question rather than the second. Workshop programmes (see appendix 1) were developed with the (correct) assumption that journalists had to be made aware of the link between governance and AIDS as another dimension of the HIV and AIDS story. Training modules included governance frameworks and their potential as accountability instruments. These included the International Declaration of Human Rights, African Charter for Human and People’s Rights, Nepad Peer Review Mechanism, national AIDS plans, national budgets plus constitutional and other legal frameworks.

Other “obstacles” that were addressed in these first modules were the use of research results and statistics to tell compelling HIV and AIDS stories and how to pitch HIV and AIDS with new angles to news editors and editors in an environment of so-called AIDS fatigue. In this phase the mechanism to give meaning to the concept of “working more closely with citizens” was by way of involving people living with AIDS in the programme to tell their own stories. The modules further stressed the importance of having a range of voices, including those of “ordinary” citizens, when reporting on HIV and AIDS issues.

This initial approach to Idasa-GAP’s work with the media was embedded in an advocacy tradition of participatory research which argued that the journalist’s role in reporting research results was to make researchers accountable to the citizens who provided information in the
research process and to make policy makers and other change agents accountable for the way in which they use the evidence to plan and implement programmes.

**Reflecting on approaches to reconcile the work of government, citizens and journalists**

In 2006 the Ford Foundation extended its support for the work of the MAG project. This provided an opportunity to reflect on the impact and potential impact of the work with Idasa-GAP was doing with the media. While fair progress had been made in terms of the objective to raise awareness among journalists to link good governance with HIV and AIDS, there was a sense that the MAG project had the potential to offer journalists more than just another workshop on HIV and AIDS. At the time organisations like the Panos Institute was reflecting on more than 20 years of HIV and AIDS communication and considering its impact. In a hard hitting report, Panos called for communication approaches that “go beyond the expert-led public health campaigns” and “generally inadequate processes of participation and consultation” (Scalway, 2003:6). The report recognised that political leadership was a critical element in more successful responses to national epidemics (Scalway, 2003:7). This provided an opportunity to examine the content of the MAG project within the context of broader democratic process as proposed by Idasa and therefore Idasa-GAP.

The MAG project went back to its original question about the prospect of journalists as catalysts for vibrant and democratic conversation – particularly on issues that affect the development potential of the African continent. At this point it seemed that a conversation that could have been, and more importantly, that should have been a conversation between citizens and policy makers, planners – those with power to change things – remained a conversation between the well-intentioned experts in the aid and funding community and expert politicians and bureaucrats. It became clear that the MAG project had more potential than to merely “extract stronger and louder citizen voices to inform governance responses on all levels of government (Myburg, 2007)”. While recognising the deliberation potential of citizens, this initial approach made the “mistake of separating citizenship from work (Boyte, 2011:327)”.

It is important at this point to provide clarity on the use of democracy and citizenship in relation to this project. In this assessment Idasa-GAP continues its reflection on the meaning of democracy and/or democratic process beyond the values and traditions inherent in the normative framework of liberal democracy. This work stems from the idea of democratic process as a culmination of productive output (work) by, among others, citizens, journalists and political
representatives. In its work Idasa-GAP explores the character of democratic process including and beyond current normative models and the nature of citizenship particularly as it manifests in active response to common and public concerns. The conceptual approach is shaped by the following:

- The disempowering effect of citizens feeling that their concerns and priorities (in this case as it relates to HIV/AIDS) have become secondary to the priorities of powerful state, economic and other “experts” who determine the news agenda.
- The sense that representative government or liberal democracy is losing its currency because citizens have developed a “habit of seeing the political system as indifferent and unresponsive” to their problems and their circumstances (Mathews, 1999:33).
- The potential of the media to “bridge the gap between the private, domestic world and the concerns and activities of the wider society (McQuail, 2005:432)”.  
- The validity and authority of an assumed identity of the media as a “vital part of political life” (Sparks, 1991:58).
- A re-assessment of political process in terms of the political work of journalists and the political work of citizens and the potential for building new habits of public participation and public discussion – in this case about HIV/AIDS.

**Applying lessons from other areas of Idasa-GAP work**

Progressing into the third phase of Idasa-GAP’s programme, the work with the media drew on experience working with AIDS Councils in South Africa. These Councils or country coordinating structures are found in most sub-Saharan countries and are part of an institutional or governance response prescribed by the UNAIDS “three ones framework” to deal with the complexities of the AIDS pandemic “by bringing together self-coordinating entities, partnerships and funding mechanisms for concerted action (UNAIDS, 2004:1)”.

Idasa’s evidence of these structures in at least four southern African countries showed that attempts to get these structures up and running were extremely uneven and the newly formed structures required considerable support if they were to become “accessible, broad-based and inclusive” as envisaged by the three ones framework. Enormous effort and resources were devoted and are on-going to create better systems in order to ensure proper representation of all stakeholders, more consistent participation in meetings, and better management of information. In spite of all these efforts, few of these multi-sectoral coordinating structures have been fulfilling their mandate. After extensive practical work in particularly with supporting AIDS
Councils in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, Idasa-GAP concluded that the problem with these structures was not simply structural, but rather conceptual. The outcome of our experience showed that unless institutions could reconceptualise their role in more deeply democratic ways, they would struggle to make a significant contribution in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Fundamentally this required a shift in mindset from building structures to building communities. Rather than merely playing a coordinating role, the multi-sectoral structures would need to see themselves as playing a catalytic role, unlocking capacity and energy on every level of communities to address the diverse challenges posed by the epidemic. In an effort to enable this Idasa developed a training programme which focussed on the capacity of multi-sectoral structures to act as catalysts for “unlocking citizen power”. Applying the same principles this training programme was adapted for use in many settings including Idasa-GAP’s work with the media.

**A new approach in working with journalists**

The insights from the work with the AIDS councils coupled with other learning exchanges resulted in a significant shift in approaches to conceptualising Idasa-GAP’s interventions with journalists at the onset of the SIDA/Norad supported phase three of Idasa-GAP activities. The most important shift lies in the idea that the media could and should do more than just include the voices of citizens. Merely including a citizen voice in the news narrative, does not preclude an attitude which Donaldo Macedo aptly describes in his foreword to Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of Freedom: “There is no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself (Freire, 2001:xxvi)”.

Idasa-GAP started to experiment with different ways in which journalists could facilitate spaces where citizens’ voices speak with a purpose: “In our community this is the specifics of the HIV and AIDS problem; this is our proposed solution and this is what we can do with other citizens to help solve the problem.”

The learning material now started to explore the potential of journalists to build a sense of power amongst citizens and replace prevailing attitudes of hopelessness and fatalism. The objective of this approach was to develop modules with the possibility to support journalists in creating new partnerships with citizens and government. Through the learning journalists
identified those constituencies they were able to reach, including those not previously involved in AIDS work, to assist groups and individuals in the community and in this way drive a process of collaborative problem solving in communities. Over and above their role to facilitate and catalyse evidence-based communication between citizens and policy makers – the classic premise of the accountability and transparency functions of the media in a democracy – journalists were now faced with modules that challenged their conception of the media as independent, neutral observers and commentators. Instead, they were now asked to consider a role as change agents in the content AND the nature of the HIV/AIDS discussion.

The shift in mindset that the media work at the Governance and AIDS Programme proposes challenges the identity of journalists and media workers. It is a subtle shift but important at a time that requires a re-assessment from everyone – AIDS activists, researchers, government officials and journalists – of the identity of citizens and the work of citizens. It proposes a stronger concept of the citizen not merely as a customer, but as a proactive agent of change, a resourceful partner and a builder of communities.

In developing the learning material Idasa-GAP is now guided by the following questions:

1. Do current themes of HIV and AIDS reporting reflect the way citizens interpret HIV and AIDS problems in their own communities and does it propose solutions to HIV and AIDS problems as put forward by citizens as well as experts?
2. Do journalists describe the aspirations and work of citizens in a way that imagine citizens, along with government, as people with confidence and talents who are co-creators of society and not merely clients and users of services provided by governments?
3. Does this reporting acknowledge and galvanize the social and cultural assets and capacities of citizens in HIV and AIDS problem-solving?

The potential for new learning

At the World Journalism Education Colloquium held at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa in 2009, Idasa-GAP presented a paper that explored the implications for journalism education if the professional identity of journalists is to shift from an expert-driven identity to a citizen-centred identity. What can academic institutions do to reconnect the democratic work of journalists with the democratic work of citizens? Do academic institutions prepare journalism students to engage with citizens in an effort to broaden and deepen an
understanding for the challenges of democratic work? Or do they continue to follow an academic model which reinforces a role of detachment and passivity where journalists are neutral players offering competing views which often translate in reflecting only the views of those who are able to voice their arguments most effectively? Based on the Idasa-GAP experience working with journalists, the presentation challenged participants at the colloquium to question an academic model which reinforces detachment and passivity where journalists are neutral players offering competing views mostly of those who are able to voice their arguments most effectively. Idasa-GAP argued that this model is inadequate if the media are to play a role in strengthening the kind of civic voice that is necessary in political systems where popular decision making is part of the political process and where the “competence and rationality of citizens is of utmost importance (Voltmer, 2006:4)”.

A partnership with UNESCO

Phase 1: Developing the assessment tool

In 2010 UNESCO asked Idasa-GAP to develop a tool to assess the way in which HIV and AIDS is incorporated in journalism curricula. In its proposal to UNESCO Idasa-GAP argued that in terms of curriculum development HIV and AIDS should be explored within a broader context of the relationship between journalists and citizens and the connections to social and developmental issues – HIV and AIDS being one such issue. Idasa-GAP proposed that journalism education often assumes a democratic and civic role for journalists but it lacks a systematic approach in teaching the connection between social issues and public life. This is a missed opportunity to explore ways in which the media could present citizens with “quality information … in a manner that allows a deliberative process to continue beyond the story itself (Kurpius, 2003:3)”.

With further support from SIDA/Norad Idasa-GAP embarked on the first phase of the project which consisted of three components:

1. Consolidate and update the existing UNESCO database of academic and other institutions in South Africa involved in media training. For academic institutions this included Journalism, Media and Mass Communication Studies. For universities of technology and polytechnics this included institutions teaching film, newspaper, radio and or any other combination of media.
2. Prepare a draft assessment criteria and assessment tools for the analysis of HIV and AIDS teaching in Potential Centres of Excellence in South Africa including policy frameworks, curriculum/course content, teaching materials/texts and research topics in the field of teaching HIV and AIDS in journalism institutions in South Africa.

3. Consolidate the assessment criteria and tools through a consultative process

In September 2010, Idasa-GAP invited a small group of journalism educators from African institutions, including UNESCO’s four potential centres of excellence in South Africa, to attend a two day workshop in Cape Town, South Africa. The objective of the meeting was two-pronged: to launch a community of practice that could spearhead innovations in journalism education and to have a broader discussion on the Idasa-GAP conceptual approach which informs the criteria and assessment tool for this particular project. Further objectives of this meeting included generating a discussion on using HIV and AIDS journalism as a way to focus on the broader question of journalists’ roles in democracy-building, discussing new trends focusing on democratic professionalism, develop concrete plans for experiments in curricular reform in the coming year and to identify partners beyond higher education who might usefully be involved in promoting substantial curricular and practice innovation.

Apart from South African institutions the workshop was also attended by representatives from Daystar University in Kenya, Makerere University in Uganda and the Polytechnic in Namibia. These institutions were invited to the meeting for their role in the broader network of partners in the countries where Idasa-GAP is currently conducting research on the effects of HIV and AIDS on political institutions, government budgets and the ability of citizens to participate freely in political, economic and social life.

Themes emerging from the Cape Town meeting include:

- Journalism schools do more than train journalists. These institutions have important leadership roles including their roles as researchers, scholars, theorists, and critics of the industry and field.
- The leadership roles of journalism schools need to be undertaken in conversation with diverse publics, including journalists, communities, other professionals, politicians and students.
- Journalism is rapidly changing, with a growing number of platforms, outlets, and new roles for citizens.
The state of journalism is linked to the state of society, and reflects new crises (e.g. changing technologies, commercialisation).

Journalism education involves more than curriculum. This project should reflect the fact that pedagogy is a much broader concept. The central question is how to educate journalists for their diverse roles in a democratic society.

The conclusions and outcomes of the Cape Town meeting set the tone for a participatory process in developing an assessment tool that could be used to stimulate a broad reflective discussion in journalism schools about the way democracy and development issues – such as HIV and AIDS – are incorporated in pedagogy at tertiary level. Participants in the Cape Town meeting commented on and contributed to the final assessment tool. This included suggestions that the assessment tool should begin with a clear assessment of “what’s on paper,” including co-curricular activities. It should also address normative questions e.g.: should journalism schools prepare students for “development journalism” and is development journalism possible in a democracy? Should they prepare student journalists to stimulate citizenship and agency through their professional work?

Other important outcomes from this meeting were:

- The need for a tangible outcome to this project: e.g. a publication or a presentation.
- The possibility and need for a broader public debate about media, democracy, development, and society, involving multiple groups (e.g. journalists, politicians, spin doctors, lay citizens, teachers, business leaders etc.) Some suggested Idasa play a convening role.
- HIV and AIDS serve as a proxy for exploring the place of key development issues in journalism education.
- If resources can be found, another element or stage in this project can be a research project on journalism schools, development journalism and democracy. Using a participatory action research approach could be useful, which raises important new questions. For instance should students and/or journalists be involved in research teams? Should they be part of the development of research questions?

The consultative process involving UNESCO’s four South African potential centres of excellence in journalism education – Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University, Tshwane University of Technology and Walter Sisulu University – informed changes to the first draft of the assessment tool. The final assessment tool is attached to this document as appendix A.
Phase 2: Assessing the current status of HIV/AIDS teaching in journalism education

*Terms of reference*

The objective of the second phase of the project – again supported by UNESCO and SIDA/Norad – was to implement the assessment tool developed in the first phase of the project at the four centres of potential excellence in South Africa. The terms of reference called for:

1. Analysis and reflection of current approaches to include HIV/AIDS and other development issues in journalism education at participating institutions
2. Teaching approaches at the participating institutions with potential to prepare journalism students for their roles in democratic process\(^1\).
3. Recommendations, based on the assessment results, on how HIV/AIDS can form part of curricula
4. An outline of a proposed curriculum that uses HIV and AIDS issues as a basis for exploring civic-minded approaches to journalistic practice based on the assessment findings.

Under the agreement the assessment report will be shared with all the institutions and organisations (18) on the current database of trainers and educators in South Africa.

*Methodology and process*

**Developing the assessment tool**

The criteria and assessment tool combined two bodies of research and practice-based conceptual work:

1. The three broad UNESCO criteria areas developed in Guy Berger and Corinne Matras, *Criteria and Indicators for Quality Journalism* (UNESCO 2007), assessing African journalism institutions’ level of eligibility as potential Centres of Excellence. The indicators and criteria below are organized by these areas. They include:
   - Curriculum with theory and practice.
   - Professional and public service (engagement), external links and responsiveness.
   - Strategic plan for realizing potentials.

\(^1\) The rationale for linking HIV/AIDS and development issues to democracy is described in more detail in the Background section of this report.
2. The approach adopted by Idasa’s Governance and AIDS Programme (Idasa-GAP) which connects effective HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment to the work of building democratic societies. The Idasa-GAP approach has three elements which frame HIV and AIDS as a development and democracy question, many of whose lessons can be generalized to other issues:

- Idasa-GAP’s civic-capacity building emphasis comes from understanding democracy as “democratic society”, not simply as a state system. The emphasis is not simply on “who gets what” but on productive public problem solving and the creation of public goods. In citizen agency terms, citizens and communities are not simply voters, clients, or customers but also civic workers, who solve problems, co-produce public goods, and co-create the larger democracy. Emphasis on the public work of democratic professionalism accents not only activated individuals but also activated communities. A major challenge is to motivate and provide tools for communities to “own” HIV and AIDS and other development issues instead of externalizing agency. This role for journalism is stressed by Tanja Bosch (“Using Radio to Encourage Civic-minded Journalism,” *Rhodes Journalism Review* July 2010). Bosch highlights journalism’s potential “to reinforce participatory citizenship”. She argued that journalism education for such a role involves “discarding ideal notions of impartiality in favour of a journalism which develops agency and self-efficacy among its audiences”. This is doubtless a controversial position, needing discussion and debate. Students’ role as co-creators of their education is similarly a potential question raised by civic-minded journalism.

- Idasa-GAP’s analysis of the current status of media coverage of HIV and AIDS and other development questions highlights obstacles like those which participants in the recent Forum for African Media Educators (FAME) meeting observed: Journalism is largely detached from most people’s everyday lives and aimed largely at urban elites.

- Given the innovative nature of democratic professional education on development and democracy questions such as HIV and AIDS, the assessment approach needs to encourage open ended reflection by individuals and groups, as well as relationships with pioneers of democratic professionalism in African journalism.

The assessment tool consists of two parts:

1. The first section consists of a checklist which captures descriptive elements of teaching programmes. At each institution one senior staff member responded to the questions.
2. The second part of the assessment tool consists of questions to stimulate reflection and deliberation on journalism education and its relation to HIV and AIDS in the context of development and democracy. At each institution Idasa-GAP interviewed a minimum of two senior members of faculty. In some cases more teaching staff were available for interviews. The same questions were posed to all respondents.

Scope of the assessment
The four centres of potential excellence in journalism in South Africa – Department of Journalism and Media Studies Rhodes University, Department of Journalism Stellenbosch University, Department of Journalism Tshwane University of Technology and the Department of Journalism Walter Sisulu University – participated in the assessment. The rationale for choosing these institutions was that it would build on previous engagement with UNESCO and therefore increased the potential for further partnerships beyond the assessment. The assessment was also limited to these institutions due to budgetary limitations. The assessment results will be shared electronically with the 18 institutions on the database of training institutions in South Africa that was compiled as part of the project brief for phase one of this assignment. The results will further be shared with representatives from other UNESCO potential centres of excellence in journalism education in Southern Africa and participants in Idasa-GAP’s reference group on curriculum development in journalism education. This group includes Daystar University in Kenya, the Namibian Polytechnic in Namibia, Makerere University in Uganda and trainers involved in informal journalism training and education in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent.

Interviews
The assessment tool (questionnaire) was used as the basis for qualitative interviews at all the participating institutions. At least two senior members of faculty from the media studies and or journalism departments were interviewed. One of the faculty respondents at each institution responded to the “checklist questions” in addition to the reflective part of the assessment questionnaire. Other respondents at the same institution only responded to the questions in the reflective part of the questionnaire. All responses were captured via written documentation and electronic recording. Permission to record the interviews were requested and granted in each case.
In addition a focus group of students were interviewed using a selection of questions from the assessment tool. The focus groups consisted of senior students and were selected by way of invitation on the basis of availability. Each focus group consisted of between five and eight students of mixed gender (roughly 50% male and 50% female in all cases). The same guide was used in each case to facilitate the focus group discussion. As with the key informant interviews, focus groups discussions were captured in writing and electronically. The focus group of students provided valuable input to juxtapose information from the faculty at the participating institutions. In some cases the views of these groups complemented those of the teaching staff and in other cases their perceptions about the value of current curricula offerings provided insight into possible entry points for improved learning. Further, the inclusion of student focus groups in this process was an important manifestation methodologically of the value of co-creation of curricula and cross-evaluation of output involving students and teachers as intimated in the assessment tool. This enriched this report and ensured diverse perspectives on ways to address the issues covered in this assessment.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of interviews at each institution. A full list of names of respondents and contact details are in appendix B of this report. The interviews were recorded and noted. Interviews were then transcribed for analysis and compared to the notes to provide a comprehensive record of the interview.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Total respondents (faculty)</th>
<th>Number of students in focus group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhodes University</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stellenbosch University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshwane University of Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Sisulu University</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion of methodology and process**

The objective of this assessment was shared with at journalism educators and journalists from across South Africa and Southern Africa at a symposium entitled Ethical reporting of health issues in Africa: Exploring civic awareness with journalism practitioners and educators in June 2011 at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. A press release about the
symposium and the full programme of the symposium are attached to this report as appendix C and D respectively. Time constraints due to later than expected disbursement of project funding made it impossible to share this draft report with assessment participants for further input, comment and verification. An addendum report will be distributed to participants for input and comment in the first quarter of 2012 and a final draft along with an introduction to the research project will be distributed to all institutions and organisations on the database of training and teaching institutions on the database compiled in the first phase of this project.

Assessment results

There are a host of factors that determine the extent to which journalism schools could or would implement or experiment with different approaches to include development issues (including HIV/AIDS) in education practice. One of the objectives of the assessment tool was to get a picture of existing teaching programmes at participating institutions and use that as a springboard for exploring potential for innovation in terms of more “civic-minded” approaches to journalism teaching. The information about the existing programmes was collected in a “checklist” of questions which included student numbers, resources available towards curriculum innovation, teaching aides (media platforms) and staff and how HIV/AIDS, developmental themes and democracy feature in current curricula, co-curricular activities and research.

Student numbers, courses offered and media platforms

The journalism schools participating in this assessment graduate just over 400 students each year. This includes students finishing three or four year degree courses, diplomas, one year courses in radio broadcasting and students in postgraduate streams as in BTech (offered by WSU and TUT) and the BPhil courses (SU). This excludes the number of students working towards qualifications on the Masters, MTech, PhD and DTech levels.

All the institutions participating in the assessment offered a comprehensive range of media platforms for journalism education: Radio (community and commercial broadcasting), television, print (magazines and newspapers), internet (design and writing), online media, social media, documentary and photography. There was uneven access to technical equipment, radio labs, internet availability and use and other resources across the institutions but even at
institutions where conditions were not ideal there were efforts to expose journalism students to the full range of media platforms.

In response to a question about how different media platforms could be used to experiment with new approaches to reporting on HIV/AIDS and other development themes one respondent said that the issue was not what technology was available but rather about what teachers know about the use of particular technologies and how it is appropriate for different kinds of journalism. “The relationship between form and content is crucial. There are different ways to tell stories using different platforms and each mode can empower or disempower.”

WSU said it was experimenting with new approaches through its online community radio but that this was “in various stages of effectiveness”. The Department also produces course work for the Eastern Cape Communication Forum (ECCF) and assists them with production of radio stories. WSU is further in partnership with two news agencies that service community newspapers. Students further manage a news broadcast for LinkFM, an East London based community radio station. In their third year students at WSU produce a documentary film for public viewing which often features stories with a development theme.

More than one institution talked of links with local or campus radio stations and community newspapers. RU was experimenting through broadcasting on Bay TV – a community television station broadcasting from Port Elizabeth. The Department is also experimenting with different approaches in its radio courses and through the use of internet and social media. Respondents from RU said producing media on development issues is “part of the design of daily teaching”. Similarly, SU said production of media with development as a theme is addressed in course work. The video programming course in particular provides an avenue for students to produce a story on topics of their choice independently. Students at SU are encouraged and challenged to explore issues like HIV and other development problems in these videos. The theoretical courses prepare students for critical thinking and understanding and to explore different approaches to these stories. TUT reported that they encouraged students to source their own ideas and to produce media based on their own initiatives – often emanating from lived experiences in the communities they come from.

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2 ECCF is an Eastern Cape based NGO to strengthen local media
3 Port Elizabeth is part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Area about 150km from Grahamstown.
HIV/AIDS and development in curricula and research

While all the participating institutions acknowledged the importance of HIV/AIDS and developmental issues the approach to include these themes in teaching and learning consists of a mix of ad-hoc inclusion and structured and systematic design for inclusion. Development journalism is broadly covered as part of courses in political studies or on a theoretical level in postgraduate teaching and research. SU reported “awareness” in their approach to journalism education that journalism is practised in a democratic context. Debates about the meaning of democracy and journalists’ role in democracy are encouraged in the Department. The relationship between citizens and the media is further framed as an ethical issue in these debates. Development journalism is also seen as part of a general commitment to broaden the scope of journalists beyond commercial mainstream journalism and in a general approach to teach a certain “ethos of journalism”⁴. HIV/AIDS is further addressed in the writing of news reports and other practice-based themes in production courses. Some respondents said they included development themes in teaching because they have the freedom to structure courses or “create their own curriculum”⁵.

At WSU HIV/AIDS form part of the broadcasting course in a module on philosophy of life and life skills. Students are challenged to consider their own attitudes to HIV and how this attitude translates in their approach as a broadcaster and the way in which they will deal with listeners’ questions on HIV. In the language module which is part of the mass communication course HIV/AIDS is addressed in terms of naming and framing HIV in terms of language that could be prejudicial, reinforcing stereotypes, gender and other sensitivities.

At TUT HIV/AIDS features as a theme in Mass Communication and Ethics courses. It also features in material that forms part of news themes in general and in specialist fields of news or educational contents.

Of the four participating institutions, only RU reported specific resource persons to ensure that HIV/AIDS and other development issues feature in the curricula of particularly the Health Journalism Honours Programme and the semester course on Journalism, Development and Democracy. Most institutions include HIV/AIDS and development issues as themes in teaching

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⁴ Faculty Respondent, SU
⁵ Faculty respondent, SU
by inviting occasional guest speakers or collaborating with industry specialists or non-governmental organisations.

The following suggests more structured approaches to include development journalism in curricula at the participating institutions:

- RU offers a postgraduate Health Journalism course with a strong focus on HIV/AIDS alongside other health issues. HIV also features in other course programmes and modules as an issue with other development themes.
- RU offers development journalism as a module at third-year level. It is further covered in the first year course as part of Introduction to the Study of the Media, in the second year (Media Sociology, SA Media Histories), third year (Journalism Development and Democracy), fourth year (Representation, Identity and Ethics) and more generally in Journalism and Media Theory. Development journalism also features as part of a Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism called Institutions and Representation. Students could explore development journalism in a variety of Honours options and in MA studies in the Media and Society and Media Policy and Institutions focus areas.
- At WSU the meaning of democracy and journalists’ roles in democracy features in politics as a subject. In this subject key themes include freedom of the press and freedom of expression. The role of civil society in promoting press freedom is also stressed in this subject. The role of specific non-governmental organisations like FXI, the Right to Know campaign and the press ombudsman is covered. The Department also envisages a new focus area on teaching and learning developmental journalism in the context of local culture. HIV/AIDS will be an important aspect of this new focus area.
- At TUT the role of journalists in democratic process is covered in Media law, Mass Communication and Ethics, Political Studies and Journalism studies from year one to four. The subjects also cover issues of social responsibility on different levels.
- SU offers a short course on health journalism and HIV/AIDS with other health-related issues as part of the Science and Technology Journalism course. The meaning of democracy and journalists’ roles in democracy is covered in theoretical modules like Media and Society, Media Ethics, Media History and Media Culture. The relationship between media and democracy is further addressed in theoretical courses. Debates about the role of the media in Africa feature in discussions in most classes. This theme
also features in assignments and research topics in the Masters courses. It features in at least 50% of modules in the BPhil (vocational) course.

All the participating institutions reported research projects relating to HIV or development or democracy but no research projects which specifically explore the three themes together.

**Co-curricular activities**

At all the institutions a commitment to a developmental teaching approach is part of a broader institutional commitment to development in the context of the role of universities in South Africa. WSU defines this priority as part of its branding as “a developmental University”. The Hope Project of SU is an initiative driven by the Vice Chancellor’s office to “create sustainable solutions to some of South Africa’s most pressing challenges through teaching and learning, research and community interaction”. Teaching approaches at RU is informed by a commitment in the vision statement of the School of Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) to contribute to the commitment expressed in the South African Constitution to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental rights; [and] lay the foundations for a democratic and open society …”. TUT’s mission states a commitment to “contribute innovatively to the socio-economic development of South Africa”.

While this commitment may not manifest structurally in curricula it is evident in a variety of outreach projects in communities around the participating institutions. Students are regularly involved in these projects as part of the teaching and learning process. WSU assists with community radio training and supports the start-up process of community radio stations in the Eastern Cape but also further afield in Lesotho and Swaziland. This training involves existing station managers and presenters. WSU further assists community news agencies and community newspapers to produce community media. RU offers in-service and once-off training opportunities through the Highway Africa project and the Sol Plaatje Institute. Both of these projects are part of JMS. SU has offered community support in terms of media literacy. There is a regular summer school programme involving the community and the Department further responds to needs as expressed by professionals in the media industry and others. One example of this support is training in media literacy to local government officials.
Curricular innovation

With the exception of WSU participating institutions reported available resources towards curriculum innovation and in some cases HIV/AIDS and development themes are particular focus points.

The TUT has a specialist curriculum development unit and a practitioner for each faculty to develop new curricula. These changes are driven by the process of re-registration of programmes which has to be completed for accreditation of Higher Education institutions by 2015. At SU the issue of changing and improving the curriculum on an on-going basis is a priority. The curriculum is reviewed annually. While the structure in terms of quality control is fixed and accredited by various institutions, the Department of Journalism has the freedom to work within this framework and move and act on particular needs such as mainstreaming gender, development, ecological issues and also HIV/AIDS.

Doing research on the relationship between HIV/AIDS, development and journalism

While there was general agreement that research on the relationship between HIV/AIDS, development and journalism is important none of the respondents from the participating institutions were aware of research that was on-going about the specific nexus between the three themes. Respondents were aware of research in the area of either HIV/AIDS and the media or the relationship between media and other development issues. At SU the Hope Project encourages research foci on development issues and in particular those with linkages to the millennium development goals (MDGs) as part of inter-disciplinary and cross-faculty research. At RU students also have the option of doing a paper on issues that cut across disciplines, for example, the history of HIV, gender and HIV and other social conditions associated with HIV which “opens up interesting new ways of thinking about HIV”6.

Respondents said that this kind of research would be easier on a postgraduate level and more difficult in one year vocational courses such as the BPhil presented by SU and the Honours course in Health Journalism offered at RU. The student focus groups shared the same view. One faculty respondent said that teachers are often too immersed in teaching to think about

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6 Student focus group, RU
themes that are cross-cutting and interface with different disciplines. “It is an underdeveloped area.”

Inter-disciplinary considerations were however evident in the way respondents talked about the cross-cutting potential of media, HIV/AIDS and development themes. More than one respondent said that while HIV is an important issue it could not be singled out as a problem in isolation from other health problems and indeed problems such as education, housing, unemployment, climate change and poverty in general. “We are committed to do research on social issues and we don’t prescribe to our students which issues to address in their production.”

Students participating in the focus groups said that it was important for them – also in the graduate courses – to know how to do research on these issues. “We need research skills to cover issues such HIV/AIDS.”

Suggestions from respondents on how to stimulate research on the relationship between HIV/AIDS, development and journalism include:

- “Proper” inclusion of HIV/AIDS in the curriculum. “There is no consolidated approach to include HIV/AIDS in the curriculum.”

- Interest in HIV/AIDS as a research topic is weak because the student response to the issue as a research topic is weak

- Include HIV/AIDS as part of a popular course like investigative reporting

- Collaboration with institutions that specialise in HIV/AIDS

- Lecturers with experience and an interest working in these fields can be a catalyst

- Balancing theory and practice. “We are experimenting with ways to bridge the divide between theorists and practitioners. One possibility is to build on existing weekly seminars where we could provide an opportunity for practitioners to claim their intellectual space. Another is through a writing series coupled with peer assessment. The challenge is how to turn this into a structured process to ensure new voices and participation of people from different knowledge bases.”

- Stimulate research on doctoral level

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7 Faculty respondent, RU
8 Faculty respondent, RU
9 Student focus group, TUT
10 Faculty respondent, SU
11 Faculty respondent, RU
Participatory citizenship, civic-minded journalism and objectivity

One objective of this assessment is to establish how current curricula (with theory and practice), professional and public engagement and strategic plans are linked to “the work of building democratic societies”\(^{12}\). The assessment tool was developed with a view to stimulate reflection and discussion on the potential of journalism education to use HIV/AIDS and other development issues as an entry point for teaching and learning on the role of journalists in the context of development and democracy.

Themes of participatory citizenship were first introduced to respondents under criteria relating to curriculum (theory and practice). The intention in this section was to get an understanding of perceptions and attitudes among faculty and students about concepts like participatory citizenship, civic-mindedness and values like impartiality and objectivity in journalism practice. These themes were again raised in the criteria relating to professional and public engagement with the objective to understand how institutions promote or are willing to promote these concepts beyond curriculum and teaching methodologies.

To introduce this conversation under the criteria relating to curriculum, respondents were asked to consider sentiments raised by Tanja Bosch (2010:33) in an article which appeared in the Rhodes Journalism Review. In this article Bosch talks about journalism’s potential “to reinforce participatory citizenship”. She argues that journalism education for such a role involves “discarding ideal notions of impartiality in favour of a journalism which favours social development and developing agency and self-efficacy among its audiences”. This statement set the scene for a discussion about attitudes and perceptions of the role of journalists in democratic process and the notion of teaching “civic minded” approaches in journalism practice.

Based on the Bosch argument, respondents were first asked to reflect on the potential of journalism to forge participatory citizenship. The discussion guide did not offer any conceptual basis or definition of participatory citizenship and none of the respondents questioned the notion. The responses are therefore based on respondents’ own assumptions and interpretation of the statement.

\(^{12}\) See section on methodology and process in this report p13
Most respondents from all institutions agreed that journalism has a role in stimulating participatory citizenship. This awareness was evident in the responses from participants in the student focus groups who talked about the “bond between journalists and citizens” and journalists as a link between government and society. Students talked about the power of journalists and an obligation to provide information which features the voices of citizens as knowledgeable partners. “Journalists don’t know everything. Journalists and citizens should work together.”13 In this regard it seems a structured framework for incorporating alternative tools for engaging with citizens will find resonance with students’ own reflection on the role and identity of journalists in society.

It is evident from this assessment that most respondents equate civic-minded journalism with journalism that is practiced in rural and/or poor and smaller communities. Similarly, community media is associated with journalism that is practiced outside the realm of mainstream, commercial and urban settings. One respondent said that most students come from privileged backgrounds implying that this makes it more difficult to teach approaches which necessitate reaching out to people who come from different contexts than those students are familiar with. Another respondent distinguished between communities with collectivist norms versus communities with individualist norms, suggesting that journalism which reinforces participatory citizenship would be easier to practice in communities with “collectivist features”.

Faculty respondents and participants in student focus groups associated civic-minded journalism with certain genres of reporting, the type publication and areas of specialisation. We can be taught to be both objective and subjective depending what you are reporting on.”14 Students mentioned the Mail & Guardian and the Daily Sun as examples of newspapers with potential to be successful in civic-minded approaches to journalism. “There is a place for the activist journalist but if you work for a newspaper like Business Day you just need to objectively tell the story.”15 More than one focus group also felt that the public broadcaster has a “responsibility” to be civic-minded in its approaches to reporting.

More than one student focus group proposed that notions of civic-minded approaches and journalism to motivate participatory citizenship were incompatible with the agenda of

13 Student focus group TUT
14 Student focus group, TUT
15 Student focus group, SU
commercial media. “Yes, it should be our responsibility but we are also taught about the limitations of the commercial media.”\textsuperscript{16} Most faculty respondents also noted the tension between journalism education and the reality of norms and practices students encounter in the working environment. Others saw this tension as a learning opportunity: “The reality is that the working environment is often a place where news values are cast in stone (of commercialism). The greatest favour we can do for our students is to teach them how to critique those values.”\textsuperscript{17} This respondent said it is necessary to prepare students for working in a commercial environment and that journalism education should equip students with skills and tools that will help them “to make a good case for writing in a different way”. “I embrace the idea that journalists can change the world but in reality it is hard to find the time in the routine and practice of newsrooms.” Another respondent also talked about the importance of teaching students how to “fight for their ideas”\textsuperscript{18}. And another respondent talked about teaching students “newsroom tactics”\textsuperscript{19}.

Another perception evident from the discussion generated by the Bosch quote is the notion that civic-minded approaches to journalism are akin to “signing up to a cause” or driven by the motive to “do good for society” – practices which could potentially compromise the normative identity of journalistic objectivity or neutrality. At the same time, it is evident that this normative identity is challenged, discussed and debated at all participating institutions. Faculty respondents talked about the importance of preparing students for considering the meaning of impartiality and objectivity. “We should be conscious about the debate around objectivity. It is important to talk to journalism students about their place in the public sphere.”\textsuperscript{20} Some respondents were hesitant about the suggestion of discarding the idea of impartiality completely. “Turning journalists – or journalism teachers for that matter – into crusaders worry me.”\textsuperscript{21} One respondent said the notion of the objective professional role of journalists and developmental journalism is not mutually exclusive. “We are looking for an alternative of being detached. What level of engagement and what form? A notion like developmental journalism may be one answer but it is not necessarily the only one.”\textsuperscript{22} One respondent proposed that it was potentially confusing to link the issue of journalism which favours social

\textsuperscript{16} Student focus group SU
\textsuperscript{17} Faculty respondent, SU
\textsuperscript{18} Faculty respondent, RU
\textsuperscript{19} Faculty respondent, WSU
\textsuperscript{20} Faculty respondent, SU
\textsuperscript{21} Faculty respondent, WSU
\textsuperscript{22} Faculty respondent, SU
development or participatory citizenship with impartiality. Another respondent said journalists often conflate development journalism with government public relations. “We live in a press release state. In this context some newspapers think if they take a press release from government and print it unquestioningly, they are pushing development journalism.”

Most students participating in focus groups felt that objectivity was unattainable as a journalistic ideal and that Tanja Bosch’s statement was more honest than to claim impartiality. “It is impossible to move away from your own background. You can’t be detached because you come from somewhere.” Some students however felt strongly that objectivity was necessary in order to create a relationship of trust between journalists and citizens. “It is possible to do journalism that favours social development and be objective at the same time. Your bias is to the community. The purpose of journalism is to engage citizens on the issues of the day. If you are biased the society can no longer trust you.” The challenge of dealing with the issue of impartiality as part of the curriculum was summarised by a student: “While we are taught about objectivity we know objectivity is not possible but we are not taught how to be credible and subjective at the same time. We have to learn that on our own.”

HIV/AIDS was raised by one respondent as a good example of journalists “discarding the notion of impartiality in favour of a journalism which favours social development and developing agency and self-efficacy”.

“In the South African HIV/AIDS debate the media told citizens what to think in terms of HIV/AIDS polices and the science of HIV. In the Mbeki era the policies were the wrong policies. Journalists had to say that. Journalists also had to provide information to help citizens distinguish between the science of HIV and information spread by quacks. In this scenario most journalists took a stance. They worked together with activists and scientists to make sure they provide information with a sound scientific basis. Now South African citizens are amongst the most knowledgeable on the continent and elsewhere when it comes to the science of HIV/AIDS because of the work that journalists did in this regard. This conversation would never have taken place among citizens if it was not in the media. In countries where the science of HIV/AIDS

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23 Faculty respondent, WSU
24 Student focus group, SU
25 Student focus group, WSU
26 Student focus group, TUT
was never in doubt people are not as knowledgeable about what causes HIV and how it can be prevented.”

**Journalism that promote participatory citizenship through professional and public engagement**

All participating institutions are currently involved to a greater or lesser extent in journalism projects with features that include the promotion or encouragement of participatory citizenship. One respondent remarked that it is important to be engaged in communities where there is an “existing civic culture”. “There is a difference between community development and community engagement. Students should not be involved in charity work but very specifically be involved in projects that help communities make use of journalism as a resource.”

Participating institutions proposed the following projects they are currently involved in with potential to encourage participatory citizenship include:

- Students work with community organisations to promote media literacy
- Students are involved with community organisations as part of service-based learning
- Supporting capacity at local newspapers or radio stations. This provides an opportunity to bring together students, working journalists and the community. “I would like us to be far more involved in this kind of activity where journalism students and practicing journalists can share ideas on good practice.”

Some respondents said that it is more difficult to collaborate with mainstream media than with community media but that these partnerships are important. “Journalism schools could do more to create media that is different.” Another respondent agreed that journalism departments are not doing enough to engage with other media institutions on the kind of journalism that encourages citizen participation and self-efficacy in communities. “We must create more and better partnerships.” Another respondent said that this kind of work is not always easy but that “we should want to do more of it than we do”. The public broadcaster was mentioned as

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27 Faculty respondent, RU
28 Faculty respondent, RU
29 Faculty respondent, RU
30 Faculty respondent, RU
31 Faculty respondent, RU
32 Faculty respondent, WSU
an important potential partner. It was proposed that these links could be forged through ex-students who are now staff members at the SABC.

One respondent said journalism educators could be more involved in providing practical and legal frameworks for relationships between communities and local media. The respondent, who was involved in writing policies to guide the interaction between citizens and community radio stations and community multi-media centres, said journalists play a key role in motivating and facilitating community interaction – “with itself and with the outside world”\(^ {33}\). He said journalism schools can become involved in establishing community media and to support and sustain it.

Respondents in the student focus groups said they would like, through teaching, to be more exposed to community activities like political meetings and municipal meetings. “I know municipal meetings are probably boring but we need to know what happens there. In the industry we will have to cover these stories.”\(^ {34}\) Students suggested more deliberate and structured efforts to expose students to community forums. They said short modules or courses on civic participation, how government works and the role of journalism in government and civil society would be useful.

**Professional and public engagement**

As with journalism approaches to encourage participatory citizenship and agency in communities, respondents were also asked about the ways in which development journalism and civic-minded approaches to journalism feature in in the context of professional and public engagement at the participating institutions. The first question explored the internal discussions within departments around these themes. The second question explored perceptions about the idea of the “engaged university” or higher education’s democracy mission and the last question in this category asked respondent about relationships and partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organisations and community groups that may be useful to advance the notion of development journalism and civic-minded approaches to journalism.

Most respondents said there were discussion and debates happening in their departments about the notion of development journalism. One respondent said: “We talk about it all the time. How

\(^ {33}\) Faculty respondent, WSU
\(^ {34}\) Focus group participant, SU
do we get students to engage with the community? The problem is that if we pursue community engagement the idea is well supported but there is a lack of financial support to pull it through.”35

Another respondent said development journalism features in discussion about curriculum content. “When we employ new staff we look for a commitment to self-reflective practice – especially in production staff. We are looking for people who share the kind of values one equates with development journalism.”36 Another respondent said the “department may not score high on the number of discussions and debate on development journalism but as an institution the idea of development is very much a university objective.”37 One student focus group said there was not enough “systematic” debate around the issue.38 Another focus group said they were encouraged to debate and to discuss development journalism and through a “book club” encouraged to read about the topic.39

**The engaged university**

Most respondents said that the idea of the engaged university was a very important part of the vision and mission statement of their institutions. However, this perception did not always seem to be cohesively understood within the same institutions. While all the universities showed strong commitment to the idea of the engaged university, some participants in the student focus groups were unsure or said they were not aware of discussions about of this nature. The exception was participants in the student focus group at TUT who agreed that their institution was “a very engaged institution”. This shows either confusion about the nature of the question or there is not universal awareness about this discussion at participating institutions. Some respondents said that even where there was enthusiasm for the idea a lack of financial resources limits the implementation of frameworks to make this idea a reality. One respondent said there was not general buy-in to this idea by lecturers. Another said that in her own teaching she addresses ways in which universities are re-thinking their role in society but that there is not enough “plugging into those debates”.40

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35 Faculty respondent, WSU  
36 Faculty respondent, RU  
37 Faculty respondent, SU  
38 Focus group participant, WSU  
39 Focus group participant, TUT  
40 Faculty respondent, RU
Partnerships and networks to deepen public and community engagement

Government was high on the agenda of most respondents in terms of potential partners to deepen public and community engagement. Respondents at WSU mentioned efforts to establish partnerships with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the ANC to make the journalism students more aware of government programmes and to create awareness of the role of the media in relationship to the state. At WSU partnerships exist on a technical level in terms of producing material (adverts) for the Department of Social Development and material on road safety for the roads department in the Eastern Cape Province. The Journalism Department has a wide range of relationships and partnerships with civil society, media organisations and Chapter 9 institutions like the Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality.

Respondents at RU said there was an on-going discussion in the Department and the broader institution on how to develop and strengthen relationships with government and other bodies to enable public and community engagement. One respondent said there was also continued reflection on the impact of the work of journalism students in communities in and around Grahamstown. Another respondent at RU said that building relationships as part of community engagement is important because it has implications for how journalists understand their relationship with communities and how communities understand their relationship with journalists. “How do we forge relationships that change the way journalists view citizens and the way citizens view journalists? And how do we create partnerships to create a better understanding about the roles of different institutions and the role of journalists in relation to those institutions?” Another respondent said the relationship between the institution and government was “more underdeveloped than one would expect”. He said this could be because the university feels that it has to “maintain a distance” but “this is a distance that is not appreciated by either parties”.

Respondents at TUT said the department invited representatives from government or other bodies for a monthly Open Forum series of public lectures. “The community is welcome to attend and in this way the community see the value of the institution.”

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41 Faculty respondent, TUT
Respondents were also asked about the potential of student organizations to deepen community engagement. Respondents across the board said the problem with student organisations was that they were either very political or in disarray (WSU) or that there was a high turnover of members of student organisation which makes a sustainable partnership difficult. Some respondents talked of links through the campus radio stations and the student newspapers but these links were described as “not strong or direct”. More than one respondent said that the potential for stronger linkages are there but they remain unexplored by the faculty. Respondents were not probed for specific ideas to forge stronger linkages.

**Relationships with the private sector and community groups to develop civic-minded journalism**

None of the respondents talked of existing relationships with the private sector broadly or in particular with a view to develop civic minded journalism. WSU said the institution had links with the Border Kei Business community but that this was not a “working partnership”. One respondent said that their strategy in terms of collaboration with the industry focuses on partnerships, bursaries and diversity.

RU owns the Grocott’s Mail – a community newspaper in Grahamstown – and this is regarded as an important mechanism for community involvement. The University also has a sponsorship arrangement with a range of corporates. One of the biggest health insurance companies in South Africa, Discovery Health, sponsors the newly founded Honours Programme in Health Journalism. Students at TUT contribute to the RekordNoweto, a community newspaper which is distributed amongst the students and the Soshanguve community. Students also contribute to community radio stations which increases interaction with the community.

More than one respondent said that forging relationships are time consuming and that one needs “willing partners on both sides” to make them work. Others talked of random interaction but that these were not necessarily structured as partnerships.

**Providing journalism students with tools for alternative engagement with citizens**

Rhodes University was the only institution of the four participating institutions offering specific methodologies for alternative engagement with citizens namely civic journalism,
public journalism and “solution based deliberation”\textsuperscript{42}. These methodologies form part of the Journalism, Development and Democracy module offered in the third year. In the fourth year of the Journalism degree course students have to participate in a critical media production course as part of the Development Journalism module. “This gives students an opportunity to pick an alternative approach to engage with sources. We tell them, these are the traditions of practice and you can create your own approach by drawing on these traditions.”\textsuperscript{43} The respondent said students who come through this course talk about it “glowingly”. “They would ask: why do you only tell us that in our 3\textsuperscript{rd} year. By the time they get to their 4\textsuperscript{th} year the difference is clear. The students are more reflective and willing to experiment with different approaches.” Students participating in the focus group at RU corroborated this. Students said the course on critical media production, the journalism, development and democracy module and a six month course on theory of developmental journalism made them aware of community oriented methods of generating story ideas. They said that using focus groups from the community as a first source reference and not “officials and talking heads” made them aware of the importance of the story of people who “experience things on a real level”. The students said these courses gave them a new perspective on journalism “which was very different from the first three years of learning”. Students said these modules made them aware of development journalism. “It opened my eyes to a kind of journalism where you get people more involved; where you give citizens a chance to tell the story from their perspective.” Civic journalism and public journalism are not part of the postgraduate health journalism curriculum at Rhodes University but respondents teaching this course said they teach students to illicit conversations that would enable them to produce stories “with human faces”.\textsuperscript{44} Respondents from RU who are not involved in teaching civic or public journalism said that there were elements of “civic-mindedness” in their teaching material.

Students from most institutions who participated in the focus groups said they were exposed to different ways of thinking about journalism but not specific methodologies. There are ad-hoc efforts to teach students how to engage with communities. Students talked of convening forums where community members are invited to the institutions for debates such as the Protection of State Information Bill or in some cases students go to the communities where the institution is situated to find stories and story ideas. Some students felt that the faculty was “not doing enough” to expose them to different methodologies of engagement with sources. This implied

\textsuperscript{42} Faculty respondent, RU
\textsuperscript{43} Faculty respondent, RU
\textsuperscript{44} Faculty respondent, RU
that there may be a need for including alternative engagement methodologies in more systematic and structural manner in journalism curricula.

Students also said that they learn different models of engagement by being exposed to using different media platforms. Print and radio for example offer different opportunities than online media. “Different programmes teach us different ways of interacting with the community.”

This has implications for teaching and learning at institutions where the range of media platforms is limited.

Almost all the respondents talked about the potential of social media to engage citizens differently. “Social media destroys the idea that journalists can hide from the public.”

Another respondent talked of the potential of new media to engage with citizens in a different way. “New media is a powerful tool in the hands of ordinary people.”

Respondents at WSU said students learn different ways of engaging with citizens in their practical work through linkages with local media like LinkFM. At the institution faculty also take into account the range of journalism that the students are interested in as a cue to the kind of skills they need. “Some see themselves as government spokespersons; others want to be press officers for humanitarian organisation. We recognise these aspirations in the training material.”

Some respondents said that they wanted to teach students different engaging methodologies but there were prohibitive infrastructural problems. At WSU students do not have access to new media tools like facebook and even access to a range of newspapers is problematic due to financial constraints. The absence of social and new media platforms limits teaching about the use of new media to mobilise citizens. “We have great ideas for students to engage with the public but you need capital to create a credible platform.”

Respondents raised the issue of tension between theory and practice again in relation to teaching students skills for alternative engagement. One respondent said there was an onus on journalism teachers to prepare students for industry and that industry is interested in a

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45 Student focus group TUT  
46 Faculty respondent, SU  
47 Faculty respondent, RU  
48 LinkFM is a Christian community radio station based in East London, Eastern Cape  
49 Faculty respondent, WSU  
50 Faculty respondent WSU
particular skills set which may not include civic journalism or public journalism. He said one alternative was to force students to think differently on a theoretical level.

One respondent said the request for alternative methods of engagement comes from the students themselves. He said students do not just want to work in the media but also in other forms of communication. Some want to work directly with the public through working in the non-governmental sector and others have a specific wish to communicate other forms of learning through the media. (“I studied the Sciences and I want to communicate what I’ve learnt to the media.”) The respondent said this creates different opportunities and challenges for teaching students alternative methods of engagement with different audiences.

The reflection on tools for alternative engagement generated a more general discussion about the skills journalists need and what should be prioritised in journalism education. One respondent said she teaches students three skills to engage with different sources: the ability to network, the ability to think out of the box and the importance of extensive preparation before interviews. Faculty respondents at institutions offering one year courses such as the BPhil at SU and the honours course in health journalism at RU said it was vital for them to prioritise the skills students need to enter the industry. One respondent said teaching students basic interview skills is the starting point. “How not to be patronising when you interview a homeless person; preparing students to be sensitive; teaching students that their voice is probably the only voice the other person has. These are the building blocks towards a journalism of participatory citizenship.”

What else can be added to curricula to equip students with such skills?
Most respondents felt there was general room for improvement in the curricula in terms of teaching students skills of engagement with citizens. These ranged from interview skills to research and writing skills to skills in working with focus groups. One respondent said the institution was stuck in doing “classroom journalism”. “We should get out of the classroom more and get students to engage with people who live in the communities.”

One respondent felt that tools could be added to curricula to make students more aware of “what is wrong in the world and what journalists can do to fix it – that is civic-minded journalism.” The same respondent felt that current curricula do not empower journalists with

51 Faculty respondent, SU
52 Faculty respondent, TUT
53 Faculty respondent, RU
a sense that they can change the world. “We conscientise them with theoretical knowledge and critique but we don’t link that to skills that they need to change things.” Another respondent talked of the challenge of teaching students theory while at the same time “make them care”. “The academic process doesn’t allow us to be too strident but in my experience we don’t produce students who are fired up to change the world. Some arrive fired up but we don’t do much of the firing up.”

Another respondent talked about the challenge of teaching students skills that make them “rounded journalists” - journalists with a civic-mindedness and civic responsibility. This respondent said the first question to ask is what kind of baseline skills do journalists need before they specialise in any alternative methodologies? “The challenge is to find a way of teaching specialisation in ways in which you can measure the outcome.”

Another respondent said she “creates her own curriculum” in which she teaches students that the way they “unearth” stories is what sets them apart from other journalists. “The only thing that sets you apart is your sources; the strength of your sources – the voices you bring to your story.”

Participants in two of the student focus groups (RU and TUT) said that language creates barriers in engaging with sources and that it would be useful to learn how to use languages other than English in the curriculum. “We should be able to exchange information with citizens in their own languages.” Students at SU felt it would be useful if forms of journalism other than “traditional journalism” could be part of their course. Students at RU felt that the civic journalism and public journalism modules should be introduced earlier on in their academic schedule. In another focus group participants talked of a module which focuses on the role of journalists in society. “We need a module on our role in communities, especially now in South Africa.”

Bridging the divide between concerns of urban elites and rural populations

The nature of HIV/AIDS coverage is a contentious issue. In the early years of the epidemic in the US it took a celebrity death (Rock Hudson) and the expulsion of the teenager Ryan White
from school because of his HIV status before the mainstream media started covering the epidemic. By that time the epidemic was around for more than six years and had claimed the lives of more than 35,000 people (Melkote & Steeves, 2006:81-83). In sub-Saharan Africa, where the pandemic has hit the hardest most journalists still struggle to get beyond simplifying the complex social processes that drive the pandemic and still tend to “emphasize melodrama” and “turn a complex set of phenomena into a morality tale of battle between good guys and bad guys (Schudson, 2003:48)”. This tendency is also applicable to other development issues. One of the reasons for this could be the divide between the worlds journalists are familiar with and unfamiliarity with the worlds and concerns of people who live outside those worlds. This makes it difficult to fulfil the role of the reporter as someone who makes “the lives of distant strangers of value to us (Moeller, 2004:59)”\footnote{Faculty respondent, RU}. HIV/AIDS happens to “distant strangers” in more than one respect. While no section of the population is unaffected by HIV/AIDS, the majority of people affected are poor and vulnerable and often live in rural areas (http://www.avert.org/aids-impact-africa.htm#).

Most respondents agreed that journalism is oriented to urban elites. Reasons proposed by respondents included the fact that most journalism schools that train the majority of journalists and mainstream media operate from urban centres. One respondent said the problem with journalism education is that it stems from an education model with roots in an industrial context with an urban focus. “In this context other traditions fight to surface.”\footnote{Faculty respondent, RU} Newspapers claim to have limited resources to cover stories in rural areas that are far away from their centres of operation. One respondent said mainstream newspapers that do cover issues related to people living in rural areas often write about rural people and rural issues in a “prejudicial way” and “tone down” the news for the “mythical rural population”\footnote{Faculty respondent, WSU}. Some respondents disagreed and said this was not true as a blanket statement. One respondent proposed that the Daily Dispatch is an example of a mainstream newspaper set in a rural context and with a focus on rural issues. It was also proposed that it was important to differentiate between stories that are aimed at urban readers and stories that focus on rural areas. “There is a difference between rural stories and rural content. The public broadcaster has a strong focus on stories from rural areas and its approach is to let people there speak for themselves.”\footnote{Faculty respondent, RU}
More than one respondent related the urban / rural divide to political economy in that media content is determined by the an urban and more affluent audience that appeals to advertisers. “The media landscape reflects economic imbalance. Unless there is state intervention as in the form of the MDDA the status quo will remain. Agencies like these have to support newspapers that are read by rural people.”62 The same would be true for community radio stations but respondents raised the concern that these radio stations, for a variety of reasons, tend to focus more on entertainment than on news. WSU, which offers a one-year course for radio journalists, said they are aware of the focus on entertainment at community radios. They focus on supporting capacity that could lead to “a movement” to develop citizen journalists so that issues of rural people can be put on the table.63

More than one respondent said the urban bias of the media can only be changed through conscious efforts by journalism educators to remind journalism students of rural stories and to teach them skills so they can write about these stories with confidence. But some students who participated in the focus groups said the problem was that there was a lack of trust between citizens and journalists from mainstream newspapers. They said people tend to trust journalists from newspapers like the Daily Sun more because they feel that these journalists “understand their world”. Another faculty respondent talked of the importance of creating awareness and motivating students. “This may be difficult to address in education but forcing students out of their comfort zones and thinking that their world is the only world is the least journalism educators can do. The rural and urban are not that very far apart after all.”64 Another mentioned the potential of journalism educators to empower an editorial tier of people who in turn can mentor junior journalists to view definitions of urban and rural in different ways.

One respondent said the problem was that most journalism teachers and students are from the urban elite. This means little knowledge or access to rural issues. “The will to change the urban bias is the biggest obstacle. If the will is there the biggest re-orientation will be to think about what the avenues and possibilities are to do this kind of journalism.”65 Some of the avenues and possibilities offered by this respondent were to start community media where it doesn’t exist, to insist on internships in a rural environment or at an NGO for first year students and to incentivise them to blog about this experience. Second and third year students could work with

62 Faculty respondent, SU
63 Faculty respondent, WSU
64 Faculty respondent, SU
65 Faculty respondent, RU
communities to create media with them. “Through the curriculum we should be encouraging students to imagine a different universe of community oriented media where they themselves work or they themselves help create. We have the technology to do that.” Some students who participated in the focus groups said it was important that people who live in rural areas find a space in mainstream media to talk about what affects them. “It is up to the people who live there to find a way to open up that avenue.”

Respondents at TUT said they were using their locality in Soshanguve to structure the course in a way that encourages students to find issues that are relevant to a rural base. TUT encourages students to spend their third year of internship working in the communities where they come from. “Many students don’t find internships at big media houses. We try to orientate them to initiate stories in their communities of origin and to build their portfolios in that way.” But the students participating in the focus group at TUT were unsure that the community oriented focus of their teaching was preparing them for the practice of journalism. “We don’t write stories about the urban elite because of where we are situated. At other institutions students are taught how to pander to the glamour market but we learn how to write about community issues. When we are in the industry it becomes a different story. Stories about community issues are not what pay the bills at mainstream newspapers where we hope to be employed.”

In the same vein some participants in the focus group at SU felt it was not important to reach the rural poor because they are not major consumers.

Nevertheless, some students participating in the focus groups were optimistic about the scope to cover what happens in rural areas. They said it was important to expose people with money to the stories of rural people and that a diverse range of stories expand the readers’ horizon. “Journalists have a responsibility to give people a window on unfamiliar worlds.” They talked of how, as part of their education, they are providing community members with skills to cover stories in their own communities as citizen journalists. The focus group at RU said they were part of mentorship agreements with citizen journalists in communities. These links should be forged more systematically they said. Students in the focus group at SU said they would like to be more exposed to different kinds of communities in the course of their studies to assist them to challenge the urban news bias. “It could be helpful if we are exposed more to different

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66 Student focus group, RU
67 Faculty respondent, TUT
68 Student focus group TUT
69 Student focus group SU
kinds of communities and if we could visit more non-governmental organisations to see what they do and who they work with.”

**Participatory curriculum design and deepening students’ own learning**

Participants of the Cape Town seminar held in September 2010 to help conceptualise this assessment (see page 12 of this report) agreed that journalism schools do more than train journalists and that journalism education involves more than curriculum. The seminar discussed the potential of journalism schools to take a leading role in preparing students for diverse roles including those of researchers, scholars, theorists and critics of the industry and field. This role, participants concluded, need to be undertaken in conversation with diverse publics including journalists, communities, other professionals, politicians and also students. To assess how students are currently regarded as partners in curriculum development and design the assessment tool posed a number of questions related to students’ involvement of curriculum design and assessment.

All respondents agreed that students should participate in curriculum design and assessment but disagreed on the extent of involvement. Different institutions reported a variety of assessment methodologies ranging from an annual assessment of the modules and courses taken in that year (mostly) to a more intensive but informal assessment to gauge student responses to new offerings like the honours course in health journalism at RU.

One respondent suggested that assessment should be detailed and coupled with external evaluation. Most respondents agreed that assessments should include assessment of course work, faculty performance and other students. “Our students know what is missing and what is needed.” Participants in the student focus groups agreed: “Lecturers are qualified but they don’t necessarily know what the students need or expect. Sometimes lecturers don’t know what other lecturers are teaching. Students could raise these issues because they have an overview of all the learning material.” In another focus group students said assessment involving students should be more regular and throughout the year. Faculty respondents at RU said assessment and evaluation are part of a postgraduate diploma in higher education which all lecturers have to complete.

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70 Student focus group SU
71 Faculty respondent, WSU
72 Student focus group, WSU
Faculty respondents acknowledged that there are often a “huge” disconnect between the expectations teaching staff have of the impact of the curriculum and what the students experience. “There is a difference in what students think they should be studying and what we think they should study.”  

Respondents were more sceptical about the potential of and the structuring of student involvement in curriculum design. One respondent said that the institutional structure for changing curricula does not at this point accommodate input from sources other than curriculum specialists. Another respondent said it was not appropriate for students to sit in on major planning meetings. “There are limits to the consultative potential with students.”

Participants in the student focus groups felt that it could be useful for curriculum design if students could give input. “The people who are designing the courses are sometimes out of touch with what is happening on the ground.”

There was not much evidence from any of the participating institutions of systematic and structured frameworks for ensuring that students participate more actively in deepening their own learning experience. While one respondent suggested that students will take their own learning more seriously if they were involved in curriculum design, another respondent said that while there are always ways in which teaching staff could try to deepen learning, initiatives to deepen their own learning have to come from the students themselves. “Ideally the lecturer should be more of a guide and a mentor.” More than one respondent said the worst part of teaching is dealing with “disinterested students” despite efforts to make classes interactive and lively. “We talk to students about developing their own voice. It is not just about what we can do for them but what they can do themselves.” RU is experimenting with blogs as a vehicle to push students to deepen their own learning. “This gives them a voice and at the same time it provides an opportunity for them to consolidate their journalism teaching.”

Another respondent suggested that there is room for improvement in how lecturers engage with students. “We should take quantum leaps. After hundreds of years of teaching we still put students in a lecture room and we still assess by assignment. That methodology has reached its
This respondent said the digital age makes it possible to introduce more autonomous and independent ways of learning. “Students are disenchanted and bored but at the same time they expect to be taught by means of Power Point and chalk. We need to think of the transition – how to do things differently.”

At SU a Centre for Teaching and Learning has been set up to encourage lecturers to explore more innovative ways of teaching. These methodologies emphasise the process of learning as opposed to giving a lecture. This involves giving students research themes which they have to research and present. The students often make use of multi-media for these presentations. “The challenge is how to structure this and give it direction so that it doesn’t become edutainment.”

The student focus group at SU said they felt stimulated to play a role in their own learning through this methodology.

Students said if their views about teaching style and content are acknowledged it could deepen their own learning. “Our own objectives are not taken into account and you end up doing things that are not in line with your own objectives.”

**Strategies to realize the potential for civic-minded journalism on HIV/AIDS and development themes**

The third set of criteria in the assessment tool interrogated the extent to which participating institutions are prepared or willing to make provision for changes in current approaches to journalism education in terms of issues like HIV/AIDS or development.

*What forms of support may be needed*

Most respondents said they would need more support in the areas of infrastructure and training resources to realise the potential for different approaches to journalism that covers HIV/AIDS and other development themes.

In terms of infrastructure respondents mentioned access to books, more and more efficient computers, better equipped radio labs, better internet services, money to subscribe to newspapers for journalism students to read on a daily basis, more material that deal with HIV/AIDS reporting and more teaching staff.
More general support deficits dealt with resources such as training and information. “A trained facilitator who understands the systemic problems we face at this institution will make a big difference.”

One respondent suggested that a network of lecturers who specialise in the area of different teaching methods, HIV/AIDS and development could be useful. Another respondent said a more enthusiastic response from students in general will make it easier to teach any kind of journalism. Large classes made it difficult to specialise in specific niche areas. Respondents mentioned the potential of more research capacity on issues such as HIV/AIDS, development and civic-minded journalism to expand and enrich the curriculum. “The curriculum is a good machine but it could benefit from more research on how to cover these issues more productively.”

External evaluation was also mentioned as a way to strengthen teaching. Another respondent said it was necessary to strengthen the relationship between the Department and the local community in an effort to support civic-minded journalism on HIV/AIDS and other development themes.

One respondent summarised the challenge of incorporating these themes in the curriculum: “The way I see it there are three options: Get the experts involved, make it more structured and try a focused approach in terms of civic-mindedness.”

Funding opportunities to strengthen civic-minded approaches in journalism teaching

Most respondents said there are few if any funding opportunities available to support the teaching of civic-minded approaches to journalism. While respondents reported funding partnerships these partnerships did not necessarily include a funding agreement or specific funding arrangements to support this field. One respondent said when his faculty approached the private sector it is for scholarship support rather than technical support.

One respondent said his department may have sufficient financial resources but what is lacking is teaching staff with the necessary skills to teach in these areas. More than one respondent said that commitment and time to spend on developing potential funding opportunities in these areas was a problem. Another respondent said funding streams through the university channels are very technical and that there was more potential in seeking partnerships with non-governmental organisations and the industry.

The potential for adapting current faculty programmes

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82 Faculty respondent, WSU
83 Faculty respondent, RU
84 Faculty respondent, SU
At one institution a respondent said there would be interest from the side of the staff to adapt current programmes but that most resources to adapt faculty programmes are allocated towards the training of administrators. WSU mentioned training opportunities offered by Deutsche Welle and UNESCO on current journalism pedagogy and community media which will be attended by three staff members. Another respondent said adapting current programmes was difficult because of different viewpoints in the department on the meaning and the nature of development journalism and civic-minded journalism. “We don’t have enough conversations that draw everyone into the debate.”

A respondent at RU said the university’s mission revolves around three equitable pillars: research, community engagement and teaching. Efforts to develop programmes with a view to deepen civic-minded journalism will find support because community engagement is important to the institution. Another respondent said faculty development to deepen civic-minded journalism could be achieved through a more interdisciplinary approach which could include faculty working together on similar themes.

Challenges and obstacles to civic-minded journalism education

It was evident from responses across the participating institutions that journalism educators are aware of the need for civic-minded and other alternative approaches to journalism teaching including on issues such as HIV/AIDS and development in general. More than being aware, educators showed willingness and enthusiasm to explore alternative teaching methodologies to ensure closer bonds between citizens and journalists. This assessment shows that, at least among these participants, there is on-going reflection among journalism educators about the interaction between citizens and journalists and the role of education to make students aware of their potential role in facilitating healthy governance. HIV/AIDS is acknowledged as an important issue and a proxy for other development issues. At all the participating institutions educators are grappling with the challenge of teaching students to deal with these themes in ways that are constructive to building healthier societies.

Educators raised the following challenges in realising more civic-minded journalism education on development issues including HIV/AIDS:

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85 Faculty respondent, RU
• There has to be **wider awareness about the meaning and advantages of civic-minded approaches** to generate interest on the part of educators to change teaching approaches.

• It is not clear how to **measure civic-mindedness**.

• There is **tension between theory and practice**. The challenge is to translate the theoretical idea of civic-minded journalism in practice.

• The **specialist knowledge** which is required in terms of civic-minded alternatives, HIV/AIDS and development is not always available. This applies to the fields separately and as a combined field of interest. “You need someone who is experienced in radio, television and print in order to transfer civic-minded approaches that would work in all media platforms.”

• While respondents agreed that there is a need to reinvent journalism education – or at least parts of it – **not everybody agrees how this could be done**. For this to happen different ideas and different expectations in terms of journalism education need to be reconciled. One respondent talked about aligning faculty and students with commitment to community engagement with a civic-minded curriculum.

• Students and educators have **assumptions of what journalism is about** and this stops people from being creative about journalism teaching. In this assessment students and faculty respondents assumed or talked of assumptions about the kind of journalism approaches adopted by or expected from mainstream, commercial media. One participant in a student focus group was sceptical about the usefulness of being taught any number of different approaches to journalism. “The institution that employs you will decide for you how you will report.”

• **Teaching programmes were already stretched** with generic issues like history, political economy of the media, sociology of news etc. It is difficult to add more specialist themes to teaching programmes that are already filled. Students in more than one focus group said one of the most important obstacles to being exposed to civic-minded approaches to journalism or any other approach was time constraints in the course.

• Faculty respondents said students have **perceptions about issues like HIV/AIDS and gender reporting**. There needs to be a structured approach to address some of these

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86 Faculty respondent, RU
87 Student focus group TUT
perceptions. The perception that audiences were not interested in issues like HIV/AIDS was raised by students.

- **Interview skills** were mentioned as a vital journalistic capability which does not get the required attention in current curricula and which is necessary for good journalism in general and for civic-minded approaches in particular.
- Respondents from more than one institution were tentative about the extent to which current curricula equip students with the necessary **research skills** to enable them to be proficient journalists.

### Concluding recommendations

1. *The link between development (including HIV/AIDS) and the role of journalists in democratic process should be included in curricula in a structured and systematic way.*

It is evident from this assessment that there is on-going reflection at participating institutions on the role of journalism education to prepare journalists for a particular role in democratic process. Respondents across the board (students and faculty) demonstrated willingness to consider ways in which journalists could put issues like HIV/AIDS and other development themes in the public domain through stronger connections with communities and the broader citizenry. While civic-minded approaches to journalism teaching may not be methodically or structurally entrenched in curricula there is evidence from this assessment that current teaching practice is changing the way students think about their role as journalists in civic life. This confirms the power and potential of journalism education to provide alternatives to current coverage of HIV/AIDS and development themes.

At this point it is important to be clear that for the purposes of this assessment HIV/AIDS is considered as a proxy for investigating systemic challenges in health systems and therefore be considered as part of the collective of developmental challenges that South Africa is grappling with. For a reminder on the relevance of linking HIV/AIDS and development to democratic governance please refer to the background section of this report.

The evident problem is that in most cases these themes do not feature in curricula in a systematic and structured way. HIV/AIDS and development issues affect the daily lives of citizens and have policy implications. This makes these issues relevant entry points for considering the role of journalists in catalysing conversation between citizens and government.
There is a need to consider ways in which HIV/AIDS and development issues could be part of a structured curriculum that links these issues to the role of journalists in democratic process. This includes the manner in which interview and research skills are conceptualised for the purpose of civic-minded and other alternative strategies to engage citizens and communities. Respondents said interview skills should include teaching students how to do research in preparation for interviews and different interview methodologies. Students felt that research skills should be introduced earlier in their journalism education.

2. Community, community media, commercial media and mainstream media and the links to civic-minded journalism should be clearly defined.

This assessment shows that most respondents equate civic-minded journalism with journalism that is practiced in rural and / or poor and smaller communities. Similarly, community media is associated with a genre of journalism that is practiced outside the realm of mainstream, commercial and urban settings. While this reflects the broader understanding of community media, such perceptions limit the potential for media to stimulate and facilitate habits of citizen participation in public work. It is important for the purpose of this exercise to have clear definitions of community, civic-minded approaches to journalism and how these link to development issues (and HIV/AIDS) and a democratic governance response. The proposed curriculum outline developed on the basis of this assessment include ways in which civic-minded approaches to journalism could also be part of the routine and practice at mainstream and commercial media and for most genre of journalism.

3. Civic-minded approaches to journalism could benefit from more collaborative teaching practices and more interaction between students from different journalism institutions

Development issues (including HIV/AIDS) are not limited to one media platform. This may require more collaborative teaching practices from faculty involved in the different media platforms offered by institutions. One respondent suggested that this would require re-thinking the curriculum.

Students participating in the focus groups said “meaningful relationships” with students from other institutions and students from other journalism departments would be helpful to get a better understanding of what is being done at different institutions to encourage civic-minded
approaches. They also said students need support from civil society organisations (like Idasa) to help make sure that these kinds of projects work. “It is not just funding that is important.”

4. **Journalism educators need specific methodologies and tools to teach civic-minded journalism which feature development themes (including HIV/AIDS)**

Students from most institutions who participated in the focus groups said they were exposed to different ways of thinking about journalism but not specific methodologies. This implied that there may be a need for including alternative engagement methodologies in a more systematic and structural manner in journalism curricula. These methodologies and tools need to have clear systems for measuring outcome. It would also include adjusting of current models for alternative engagement – like civic journalism or public journalism – to be relevant to the contexts in which journalists work. The connection and potential of new media technologies and so-called citizen journalism should form part of these tools and methodologies.

Some respondents said journalism educators were for the most part stuck in doing “classroom journalism”. A structured approach to civic-minded journalism should also consider ways in which this problem could be addressed. Students said it would be useful if forms of journalism other than “traditional journalism” could be part of their course.

5. **The industry should be involved in efforts to explore more civic-minded approaches to journalism**

More than one respondent said internships in the industry and other organisations could raise awareness for different approaches to journalism. Another respondent said a starting point for journalism educators to embed alternative approaches in mainstream media would be to engage with media outlets that are looking for “different kind of journalists”\(^89\). Resources should be available to place mentors inside those institutions. This respondent said one possibility would also be to get journalists from industry where they practice civic-minded journalism to be based at journalism schools for periods of time.

6. **Journalism education should be more deliberate in its efforts to make students care about the world and its problems**

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\(^{88}\) Focus group participant, WSU
\(^{89}\) Faculty respondent, RU
One respondent felt tools could be added to curricula to make students more aware of “what is wrong in the world and what journalists can do to fix it – that is civic-minded journalism.”

The same respondent said current curricula do not empower journalists with a sense that they can change the world. “We conscientise them with theoretical knowledge and critique but we don’t link that to skills that they need to change things.” Another respondent talked of the challenge of teaching students theory while at the same time “make them care.” Another responded talked about the challenge of teaching students skills that make them “rounded journalists” - journalists with a civic-mindedness and civic responsibility.

7. **Diverse language options and language skills in general should be considered as part of civic-minded approaches to journalism teaching**

Participants in two of the student focus groups (RU and TUT) said language creates barriers in engaging with sources and that it would be useful to add skills that would enable them to communicate in languages other than English in the curriculum. “We should be able to exchange information with citizens in their own languages.”

8. **Interaction with diverse communities should be included in the practice of civic-minded journalism teaching**

Faculty respondents and students expressed the need to be exposed to communities other than those surrounding the participating institutions. While the context in which the institution is based was proposed as an advantage for teaching civic-minded approaches (TUT and WSU) students said engagement limited to this environment could leave them unprepared for working in mainstream and commercial contexts. The issue also emerged in discussions about the rural / urban divide in journalism practice. Students in the focus group at SU said that they would like to be more exposed to different kinds of communities in the course of their studies to assist them to challenge the urban news bias. This may have practical implications that are challenging. One option may be to consider the suggestion for more exchanges on an institutional level mentioned elsewhere in this report.

9. **Curricula should be deliberate in its efforts to explore ways in which development issues (including HIV/AIDS) could be told in more compelling ways**

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90 Faculty respondent, RU
91 Faculty respondent, RU
92 Student focus group, RU
Faculty respondents and students participating in focus groups expressed concern about the general lack of interest from readers and newspaper editors in development issues including HIV/AIDS. Students in one focus group proposed that even if it was true that audiences were not interested in issues like HIV/AIDS it was up to journalists to present issues in a new way. “We need to be more subtle and systematic in our civic-minded approaches in reporting. Every journalist has a responsibility to say this is what I want to do that is more civic-minded.”

**Proposed thematic approaches to “old” stories**

When the Governance and AIDS Programme at Idasa (Idasa-GAP) started engaging with journalists it followed a model of transferring knowledge based on a classic training methodology of packaging new information (the link between HIV/AIDS and governance) and providing that information to journalists and other communication and advocacy practitioners. As the Programme grew our experience showed that capacity support in the context of HIV/AIDS implies more than just information transfer. The epidemic is fundamentally linked to other social issues related to human development and a healthy social fabric. This provided opportunities for reflecting on teaching material and methodologies that go further than providing information about HIV/AIDS and – in the case of Idasa-GAP – what it implies for democratic governance responses to the epidemic. This journey is described in more detail in the background section to this report. Against this background the themes and learning material described in this section is twofold: It responds to some of the issues raised in the assessment project and it is an attempt to encourage journalism educators and students to reflect on the mindset which motivates coverage of issues like HIV and AIDS. This mindset determines approaches to all story material – whether it is an event announcing the latest HIV/AIDS statistics or whether it is about specific issues, like child-headed households, the availability of treatment or policy responses.

The way journalists view their broader role in society (theme 1) will matter when they make choices about how and what to cover in relation to development issues, public health in general and HIV and AIDS in particular. The connections that journalists are willing to forge in the communities where they work (theme 2) will impact on the depth and the breadth of HIV and AIDS coverage. The understanding journalists have of their identity in democratic process

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93 Focus group participant, SU
(theme 3) has bearing on the way they approach their work as professionals. Are they the powerful “helpers” or do they facilitate, with capable citizens, space for analysis and transparent negotiation of strategies for change? Are journalism educators and students willing to consider alternative methodologies to engage with citizens (theme 4) in order to hear what citizens think about issues and hear what citizens are willing to do to address challenges, including HIV and AIDS, in society? And if journalists are willing and able to hear differently what kind of questions could they ask to tap into the problem worlds of citizens who speak a different language – literally, figuratively or both (theme 5). The last theme offers some examples of cases where the approaches described in these five themes have been applied and where there have been successful outcomes.

The assessment assumed HIV/AIDS as a proxy for a range of developmental issues and was conceptually informed by an understanding of journalism education as, among other things, a preparation for media practitioners to help citizens and communities "to have meaningful conversations among themselves about issues that affect them (Romano, 2010:3)".

The themes suggested here also draw conceptually on material developed by UNESCO in response to a need from member states for appropriate learning material following the growing number of media outlets and changing platforms in developing countries. In 2007 UNESCO developed a “model curricula for journalism education (“Model curricula for journalism education,” 2007:4)”. UNESCO further supported the development of a training manual, Civic Education for Media Professionals (Banda, 2009). Respondents participating in this assessment did not report utilisation of this or other free-source UNESCO material with a focus on development issues including HIV/AIDS. The proposed outlines will draw on these resources and on existing resources developed by Idasa, Idasa partners and others. All resources will be clearly cited to enable educators to return to these sources for further guidance.

The themes are intended to serve as a general guide rather than a detailed course description. Aspects of timing, number of sessions required to cover the proposed objectives and material are left to educators to cater for context-appropriate adaptation. The material provided has been developed on the basis of participatory and experiential training methodologies in mind. An interactive style of teaching will be more suitable in utilising the material and is encouraged.

Teaching and learning is an on-going and ever-evolving task. There is no definitive way of teaching and learning complex issues like HIV and AIDS and the challenges of development.
In this spirit Idasa and UNESCO invite users of this material to provide feedback on their experience working with the proposed material and to supplement the reading and learning resources based on their own experience.

**Theme 1: What are journalists for?**

**Objectives**

This theme provides an opportunity to explore assumptions students have of their role as journalists in society. The material provides for general reflection with students on their role in society regardless of the kind of journalism they intend to practice (sport, business, features, politics etc.). In the assessment on which this learning material is based some of the participating institutions talked of targeting students “who want to make a difference on some level in society”. Some educators raised concerns about the assumptions students have about journalists and the media including assumptions about objectivity and neutrality and also the challenges presented in working in a commercialised media environment. Students participating in the focus groups said they arrive on campus with preconceived ideas about what they will do as journalists and these ideas are often challenged through teaching. The material in this theme provides an opportunity to reflect on these assumptions with students and to consider the place of the media – print, radio,

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**What are journalists for?**

Asking what journalists or what news is for, is not a new question. Theorists, journalists, politicians and regular people have been discussing this for centuries. Here are some common views of the role of the news media in a democracy...

- To inform citizens so that they can make intelligent decisions
- To focus public attention on issues.
- To act as a watchdog and uncover abuses of power.
- To ask tough questions.
- To recommend courses of action.
- To praise those who are successful and doing the right things, and blame those who are not.

The journalists, editors and academics who have been thinking about how to improve the role of journalism in recent years would probably agree with all of these things. Most people would probably agree with these points. But the critics of the way news is made today would say that...

- The media no longer informs us about the things that matter. There is more and more focus on celebrities and trivial matters than on important information.
- When it does inform us, the media informs us as consumers and not as citizens.
- The media focuses attention on the wrong issues. The media should uncover abuses of power, but they should do it in a responsible way. They should not stop at uncovering problems but should also help us solve them.

The defenders of the media say that if the news is negative, if there seem to be too many problems, that is because they are simply reflecting what is “out there”. The news is negative because that’s how the world is. They say that journalists and the media have to be objective and that if the result is stories we find depressing or negative that is not their fault.

Critics say that we have to be careful when talking about objectivity. They agree that it is important for journalists to:

- Get their facts straight.
- Be fair and accurate in their reporting.

But, they say, journalists are making choices all the time, about such things as what stories are important, what angle or frame to use for covering a story, and about who to interview for their stories. In making these choices, journalists are not objective, but are influenced by certain values about what constitutes an important story, about what they think their listeners or readers or viewers want to know, and so on. They say that we can improve journalism by choosing what values we base these choices on.

There are four questions that we can ask ourselves that are very helpful in showing the way to more constructive journalism:

- How are we naming the story?
- How are we framing the story?
- Who are we including?
- How are we positioning people?
- What is the Big Story, the master narrative?

(From: Community mapping – a tool to understand your community, Idasa, 2005. For copies of this workbook contact Marietjie Oelofsen, oelofsenm@gmail.com)
television and online-media – in the public sphere.

Proposed questions for guiding the discussion

• What role do you think journalists play in this country?
• What do you hear critics of the news media say?
• If you could change one thing about the way newspapers, radios, television cover the news, what would that be?
• What is journalism?
• What are journalists for?
• If you were a journalist, what role would you like to play in society?

Proposed issues for discussion

• The public sphere
• Objectivity, neutrality and subjectivity
• Journalists as engaged advocates (also in sport, business and entertainment reporting)
• Elements of journalism
• Journalism values

Reading material and other resources

For teachers and students

• Kovach, Bill and Rosenstiel, Tom (2007). New York, Three Rivers Press (This edition has been

“...while necessary of concern to the academy – which provides the industry with so many of its workers – the debates in the academic literature do not focus much on 'mere skilling'. This is because in the SA context, an exclusive focus on skills could be seen as inimical to critical understandings of the historical place and role of journalism in South Africa and the necessity of re-visioning its present and future roles in a developing democracy post-apartheid. What journalism’s democratic role ‘ought’ to be and what contribution the academy and its graduates can make to a wider process of social transformation, of which the media is part, thus forms a central theme around which the conceptualisation and structure of our curriculum is organised. Which brings us back to our frustrated students. What is journalism to them, and what do they think is its role in contemporary South African society? How do they come by their understandings of journalism, and how do these understandings impact on the ways in which they approach their learning?”

Priscilla Boshoff in, The gap between what ‘ought’ to be and what students want, in Rhodes Journalism Review 30, July 2010
reworked and contains an 11th element focusing in the rights and responsibilities of citizens.


**For teachers**


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**Theme 2: Journalists and civic life**

**Objectives**

The connection between journalists and citizens cannot be assumed. If journalists want to put a human face to a story about issues like HIV/AIDS or poverty or any other developmental issue it is important to develop skills that connect them to the affected communities in a useful way – both for the sake of the story and for the sake of the communities or citizen(s) to whom the story will give a voice. One respondent in the assessment summed it up: “The only thing that sets you apart is your sources; the strength of your sources – the voices you bring to your story.”

This outline guides the discussion towards exploring the civic

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94 Faculty respondent, SU

“Maps and mapping are essentially about identity. They are not route maps. That’s one kind of maps. They’re about us. Who we are, how we related to others, to community, to society and to the other, whoever the other might be. The person next to you, the person over the hill, the person in another country. Another society, another ethnic group. That’s essentially what maps are.”

Frene Ginwala, Speaker of Parliament (at the opening of the Parliamentary Millennium Project exhibition)

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**Where do citizens sit in the story frame?**

According to the journalism professor, Jay Rosen, positioning people as citizens means to treat them:

- As people who can make a contribution to public life.
- As potential participants in public affairs.
- As stakeholders with a personal interest in public affairs.
- As members of a community, with shared interests.
- As a deliberative body – that is as a public with issues to discuss.
- As choosers, decision makers.
- As learners with skills to develop.
- As connected and responsible.
- As having certain rights as well as certain responsibilities.

(From: Community mapping – a tool to understand your community, Idasa, 2005. For copies of this workbook contact Marietjie Oelofsen, oelofsenm@gmail.com)
work of journalists and the civic work of citizens. It is different to the previous theme in that the focus in the outline is on the concept of citizen action and civic agency. The course suggests some tools to help journalists reflect on their engagement with citizens and how these engagements could help facilitate a citizenry with skills and confidence to participate in civic life.

**Proposed questions to guide the discussion**

- What do journalists do?
- What do citizens do?
- How can citizens understand the work of journalists better?
- How can journalists understand the work of citizens better?
- How do you position citizens in your reporting?
- What mental map do journalists have of the community they write for?

**Proposed issues for discussion**

- Naming and framing problems for civic-minded news coverage
- Collaborative problem solving
- Journalists and civic life
- Approaching diversity in communities

### GUIDELINES FOR COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING IN COMMUNITIES

1. **Everybody owns the problem**
   Nobody gets deeply involved in collaborative problem-solving to do people a favour. People will get involved in solving a problem if they feel that they own it. If people blame others for a problem, they will also expect others to fix it. This changes when we take joint ownership of the situation, saying, ‘This problem is everybody’s business.’

2. **Everyone is accountable**
   Taking joint responsibility for HIV and AIDS means that accountability shifts from ‘them’ to ‘us’. Instead of criticising other people for what they are not doing, the key question becomes, ‘What is each of us doing to solve this problem in our community?’ If certain partners neglect their responsibilities, instead of complaining that they lack accountability, our question should be, ‘What can we do to hold them accountable?’

3. **Citizens are at the centre**
   The government and other experts often feel that they are responsible for solving citizens’ problems. A truly collaborative approach to community problem-solving does not ask ‘What can we do for citizens?’ but ‘How can we work with citizens to find a solution?’ In this approach, government leaders and experts are ‘on tap, but not on top’. They offer skills and resources, but do not dominate.

4. **Seek out different sources of local knowledge**
   Different people see a problem from different perspectives. To find a good solution, it is important to bring together insights and experiences from different backgrounds and cultures (traditional, religious, business, male, female, youth, etc.). A solution will fit best if it is based on local knowledge rather than general facts. One size does not fit all.

5. **Build relationships**
   Collaboration doesn’t just happen. It takes time for good working relationships to form. Sitting together in meetings does not guarantee that relationships will develop. It is important for partners in a collaborative problem-solving process to spend time getting to know each other’s interests and the resources they can offer (knowledge, skills, time, money, etc.). One-on-one interviews are a good tool for doing this.

6. **Respect differences**
   Different perspectives and experiences are an important resource in collaborative problem solving. However, differences can be difficult to deal with. Expect tension to arise from time to time, and don’t panic when it does. Working through tension can help to clarify important issues, even if it feels uncomfortable. Most importantly, treat difference with respect. Take time to listen and identify people’s unique contributions.

7. **Develop capacity**
   Solving a problem collaboratively is seen not only as an opportunity to share skills, but to build the skills of others. It might seem more efficient to bring in outside experts to solve a problem quickly, but they leave the same gaps in the community when they depart. In fact, the community often feels disempowered by expert interventions and becomes more dependent on the government to rescue them in other situations.

©Idasa 2005 (Strom, 2005)
Journalists and the quality of civic life

But campaign journalism is more than just taking up a cause. It is also service journalism, aimed at looking at the quality of life of readers. Information is valuable and has become even more so in this day of the information revolution. Newspapers are the keepers of such information, and their role is to contribute to a better understanding by citizens of the issues.

Campaigns to improve the lives of our readers are driven by the reality that only people at grassroots can change society, but would not do so spontaneously or even on their own. The critical point, however, is that even in pursuit of such campaigns, the principles that underpin good journalism must never be compromised. Any campaign has to be based on facts and the truth, and should never be distorted to serve sectarian interests.

This was the backbone of newspapers in years past. Local newspapers would campaign for stopping the building of a road cutting through sacred land, for example; or the upstream damming of a river which would deprive downstream communities of water. Or a campaign for traffic lights at a dangerous intersection which has racked up many casualties. The fight against illiteracy is one that might even benefit the newspapers themselves in the long term.

From these to broader issues like crime or the demand for a police station based on scientific data, or - perhaps one of the most sustained campaigns in South African media - James Clarke’s environmental campaign, CARE, which took up issues like the battle against coal mining in the Kruger National Park and mining titanium at St Lucia.

There is, indeed, no substitute for the on-the-ground journalist with his or her finger on the pulse of the community or citizens he serves.


Journalists and civic life – whose story is it anyway?

The recent drumbeat for “local, local, local” news content has not resulted in more for better coverage of what goes on inside the civic structures at the heart of democratic life. Partly this is a result of the circumstances and forces cited above. Partly it is a result of the shrinking resources available to newsrooms across the print and broadcast industries. Partly it is a reflection of the news business’s focus on aggregating audience. (How many people want to read about Gardenview or that church group, anyway?) And partly it is a result of the disconnection of newsroom leaders and news executives from the communities in which they live and publish or broadcast. Well, okay, a reader might well interject at this point. Let’s say you’re right that newspapers and TV stations do a lousy job covering neighborhood associations and local business groups and PTAs and so on. So what? Maybe the conventional wisdom is correct and people really don’t want to read about that kind of stuff. Anyway, how do you plan to get around all those obstacles you just outlined? Fair enough!

First, I don’t think the goings-on inside civic structures are inherently uninteresting. Lots of it is, to be sure, but most of what happens in the majority of nine-inning baseball games isn’t very interesting, either. Yet people read sports sections or watch Baseball Tonight because journalists have figured out what is interesting and how to bring it to the attention of readers and viewers. I think it’s possible to do the same for significant parts of civic life. The question is how to develop and disseminate the tools that journalists need if they are to do a better job of covering civic life and bringing it alive for readers and viewers to strengthen the civic life of local communities—and, on occasion, even lead to the creation of new, on-going civic structures. This is journalism that works in what Richard Harwood has called the “Sweet Spot of Public Life.” While it is rarely practiced, and often raises unfamiliar problems and risks, opportunities for it exist in every community and in every newsroom.

As for getting around the obstacles: It’s a challenge, but not an insurmountable one. For one thing, the timing is right for trying some new stuff in [American] news organizations. It’s hardly a secret that the [American] newspaper industry is in trouble: declining circulation; declining revenues; shrinking staffs, news hole, and newsroom budgets. But while everybody sees the problem, nobody seems to have a solution. As a result, there is a greater acceptance of the need for change in newsrooms in the industry’s recent history. I’m not proposing that covering or strengthening civic life is a cure for the news industry’s problems. I do think figuring out how to do it better would help make newspapers and local broadcasters a more important and trusted part of the lives of their viewers and readers. And that, it seems to me, is surely a part of any equation for the survival and success of the press [in America].

David Holwerk. From Journalists and civic life – whose story is it anyway? In Kettering Review, Winter 2009. Full article available from pelofsnm@gmail.com or holwerk@kettering.org.

*US examples can be replaced with locally appropriate examples
Layers of civic / community life

If you think of civic / community life it may be useful to break it down into five layers:

- **Official**: This is the layer of official politics and institutions. People participate in this layer in places like party political constituency offices, the local government council meetings etc. Other government departments or services also fall under this category.
- **Semi-Official**: This layer is made up of organisations and people who are involved in community organisations or citizen associations that have some kind of relation with the official layer. Examples are local trade union branches, or non-governmental organisations.
- **Informal Meeting Places**: This is where a lot of civic life happens, where people get together to talk and do things together. These are places such as churches, youth groups, hairdresser salons, bars, and so on.
- **Incidental**: This layer is much looser. It is the informal and unpredictable contact that people have with one another – at the café, or talking over the back yard fence, or chatting on the pavement.
- **Private**: This layer is people’s private homes. Sometimes this layer is not seen as political but it becomes this way when it concerns issues like child abuse, health issues, domestic violence and so on.

Dimensions of civic life

When we think of the layers of community life, we think vertically – a column going from top to bottom.

- **Official**
- **Semi-official**
- **Informal**
- **Incidental**
- **Private**

To have a richer picture of the community, we need to consider that community life has many dimensions. In addition to the political side of life, there is also business, traditional life, culture, sport, and so on. Your community probably has other elements too that make it unique. What are these? Try to illustrate those dimensions.

Different kinds of civic / community leaders

To get the news journalists tend to go for the leaders. The trouble is, we limit our view of who these leaders are. It may be useful to break leadership down in the following types:

- **Official Leaders**: People who hold elected positions, who work for government departments or are heads of large institutions. (The mayor, town councillors, MPs, chief executives of big businesses, top union officials etc.)
- **Civic Leaders**: People in leadership positions in organised civil society. (Religious leaders, leaders of community groups or heads of NGOs, union organisers etc.)
- **Connectors**: They move between different levels of the community and different institutions and organisations. They spread ideas, messages and social norms and link people to one another. They often don’t have any official titles or positions.
- **Catalysts**: People turn to catalysts for leadership in everyday life for advice, wisdom or historical perspective. They encourage and inspire people in the community. (Respected neighbours, colleagues, or lay church leaders.)
- **Experts**: People with specialised knowledge or abilities. (Teachers, professors, nurses, doctors, lawyers, scientists etc.)

Exercise: Mapping your community and recognising diversity

Ask students to take 30 – 60 minutes to draw a map of the community where they live or the one served by the media they work for. When they are done look at each or some of the maps asking the following questions:

- What is central
- What is most prominent? Why?
- What is on the edges?
- What does it tell you about who is included and excluded?
- What is biggest?
- What is smallest?
- What perspective were you using? How is your map framed?
- What does this tell you about your own perspective on this community?
- Where are the users of the media you work for on the map? Where do they come from?
- Which parts of this community do you cover in your news and programming?
- What insights does this exercise give you into your own perception of this community?
- What does this exercise tell you about your own knowledge of this community?
- What are the gaps in your knowledge

- When European explorers first drew maps they drew pictures of dragons and one-eyed monsters in parts to indicate fear of regions unknown. Where are the no-go areas? What myths and stories do you hear about certain parts of your community?
- In apartheid South Africa, certain areas were simply left out. Robben Island was airbrushed out of tourist postcards of Cape Town. Johannesburg was shown, but not Soweto. What parts usually get left out in depictions of your community? Why?

Now construct a map of your community. The intention is for this map to be a resource for you as you go about your work, finding stories for your station or newspaper and involving the community as useful sources to enrich your journalism.

A map is a way of seeing the big picture, so that you can see the connections between things. Think about a city map. A series of photos of various buildings is not a map. Showing where each building is in relation to another is a map.

We propose that you consider three elements of the community in building your maps:

- The layers of civic / community life.
- The dimensions of civic / community life.
- The kinds of civic / community leaders.

There are layers of civic life in every community. There is what happens on the surface and what happens underneath. If we want the community to start facing problems that affect everyone journalists can facilitate a process of wide and open discussion. How?

- Talk to new people.
- Talk to people in new places.
- Ask different questions.
- Deal with people in a different way.

(Most of the material and the central ideas in this section come from: Harwood, Richard and Jeff McCrehan (2000) Tapping Civic Life: How to Report First, and Best, What’s Happening in Your Community. 2nd Ed.)
Reading material and other resources

For students and teachers

- Davidson, Brett (2010). Public journalism in South Africa – experiences and experiments with local and community media, International journalism and democracy – civic engagement models from around the world, edited by Angela Romano,
- Community Media, Social Media or Traditional Media – which holds the greatest avenue for citizen participation in South Africa’s democratic and political processes, available at http://mediaandcitizenship.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/community-media-social-media-or-traditional-media-which-holds-the-greatest-avenue-for-citizen-participation-in-south-africas-democratic-and-political-processes/
- For alternative ways of finding information about civic / community life look at this piece on Community Information Boards online at http://www.comminit.com/en/print/325626

For teachers

Theme 3: Journalists, democracy and development (also HIV/AIDS)

Objectives

The role of journalists in democratic process is often assumed and yet journalism educators admit that this role is seldom explored systematically in journalism education. In the assessment of how HIV and AIDS are incorporated in journalism teaching the focus at the participating institutions seems to be on the health and bio-medical aspects of HIV which means that it is covered as part of health journalism or science journalism programmes. There is little evidence of teaching programmes that coherently address journalism practice in the context of democracy and development with HIV/AIDS (or even public health) as a development issue. Democracy and development are addressed in media theory but there doesn’t seem to be a bridge between the theory and the practical application of journalism, democracy and development.

This theme explores the professional identity of journalists in the context of democracy and development and proposes new ways for journalists to explore the nature of media work and collaboration with citizens to address public problems. It also proposes some methodologies for civic-minded approaches to interrogate the way governments respond to these problems including HIV and AIDS.

Proposed questions to guide the discussion

- What is the role of journalists in a democracy?
- What is the journalist’s role as a citizen?
- In a democracy, what kind of media do citizens need?
- What connection do you see between development problems (like HIV and AIDS) and democracy?
- What contribution can journalists make to strengthen and sustain democratic practice?

“The world is flooded with laws and policies, councils and committees. It is tragic that most of these deal with the structures of society, rather than with the heart of society – the people. But the eternal truth of the democratic faith is that the solution always lies with the people.” (adapted from Saul Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals, 1946) (Strom, 2005)

What is governance?

The UNDP* defines governance comprehensively as “the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions, within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions—achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations and firms. Governance, including its social, political and economic dimensions, operates at every level of human enterprise, be it the household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe”.

• What makes a journalist professional?
• Do you know how local government or the national government is structured?
• What governance tools are available to hold governments accountable for their promises in terms of development and progress?
• Have you used any of these governance tools to track progress in terms of responses from policy makers (Volodin, 2005)

**Democratic state v democratic society – Implications for professional identity in the media**
The way in which journalists define democracy and view the citizen has important implications for the way in which they approach their work. The chart below contrasts the “expert” (either inside or outside government), with the “citizen professional”. Use the table by using the left column as an indicator for the values described in the next two columns. For example journalists who see themselves as experts would define citizens more as voters, individuals with rights or consumers of services while if they see themselves as citizen professionals their view of citizens would be as co-creators of society and potential problem solvers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Citizen professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of democracy</td>
<td>Voter, individual with rights, consumer of services</td>
<td>Co-creator and problem solver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of the citizen</td>
<td>Pity (especially towards poor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of duty / Desire to help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place citizens in categories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>Objective, detached</td>
<td>Engaged, “part of the mix”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core work</td>
<td>Gather, analyse and disseminate information</td>
<td>Build relationships, stimulate public discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>Energise and catalyse joint action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Highlight injustice and inequality; speak on behalf of the voiceless; Promote “fix it” policies</td>
<td>Expand public space; advocate for policies that empower people and build civic agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power dynamics</td>
<td>Power is assumed, but also hidden beneath “helper” image</td>
<td>Analysed and negotiated openly in order to strategize for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships and sphere of work</td>
<td>Sectoral “in-group,” Competitive; “enclosed space”</td>
<td>Strategic partnerships across traditional boundaries; “public space”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content and outcomes</td>
<td>Activities (statements, interviews, articles, submissions, proposals, designs, conferences)</td>
<td>Action (strategic interventions in alliance with others to promote system change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Reports, studies, PowerPoint presentations, websites, databases</td>
<td>Building relationships, tapping diverse interests, creating alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Numbers and visibility (events, beneficiaries, products, etc.)</td>
<td>Civic impact (shift in discourse; change in attitudes, people, capacity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Proposed issues for discussion**

• There are different “rhythms” of democracy?

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95 Asked about the meaning of democracy one workshop participant in Senegal said “Africans dance on a western rhythm of democracy”.
• Media and democratic process
• Media and development
• Technocratic government v citizen-centred government
• Technocratic media v citizen-centred media
• Professionalism in the media
• Professionalism in government
• Professionalism in public life

Reading material and other resources

For students and teachers

For teachers
• Model curricula for journalism education. (2007). Foundations of Journalism: National and International Institutions (p49), Reporting and Writing / tier 3: Specialised Journalism (International and Development) (p91), Reporting and Writing / tier 3: Specialised Journalism (politics and

Glossary of Selected Civic Education Terms

Checks and balances/separation of powers: The idea that political power should be dispersed among different branches of the government, and that these branches should be held accountable to others. It requires that each branch of the government shares decision-making and also has the ability to check others.

Citizen/citizenship: The idea of ‘citizenship’ encompasses two notions: the status of being a citizen, “a person co-exists in a society”, and the role, duties and rights that come with being member of a community. It involves issues relating to equality, diversity and social justice. It also includes the range of actions carried out by an individual that impact on the life of the community and thereby require a public sphere for action.

Civic apathy: This refers to a situation whereby citizens lose interest in public life, such as in voting. Usually, this is associated with loss of confidence in the capacity of politicians to deliver on their promises. This is one of the most cited reasons for voter apathy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Civic competence: This refers to the knowledge and ability acquired by a citizen through education and socialisation to actively take part in public affairs.

Civic culture: It refers to that complex whole which consists in the citizens’ civic engagement, political equality, solidarity, trust and tolerance, as well as social structures of cooperation.

Civic education: It is a process of learning to think about one’s life as a citizen in a community and cultivating the knowledge and skills needed to act as such.

Civic engagement: To participate in public life, encourage other people to participate in public life, and join in common work that promotes the well-being of everyone.

Civic knowledge: This refers to fundamental ideas and information about public affairs, such as how government operates, legal provisions, human rights, etc., which one needs to know and use to become an affective and responsible citizen of a democracy. Knowledge alone is not enough. When knowledge is mixed with ability or skill, it results in civic competence.

Civic life: This is the public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation, that is, the public realm.

Civic skills: These include the intellectual skills needed to understand, explain, compare, and evaluate principles and practices of government and citizenship. They also include participatory skills that enable citizens to monitor and influence public policies.

Civic virtue: This refers to those good traits of moral and intellectual character that make for effective participation in public affairs, such as toleration, civility, trust, initiative, outrage at social injustice, etc.

Common or public good: Belief, systems, or actions that are seen to benefit a politically organised society as whole. In practice it would be difficult to find complete agreement on public good or interest. (Banda, 2009:83-84)
government) (p98), Media Law (p127), Media and Society (p137), *UNESCO series on journalism education*


**Theme 4: Alternative approaches to engage with citizens and communities**

**Objectives**

In a system of representative government, the media is assumed as an important institution to reflect public concerns and holding government accountable for the way in which it addresses these public concerns. Not only is this role imposed by a paradigm which views the media as one of the institutions that sustain and consolidate liberal democracy – the so-called fourth estate alongside the legislative, executive and judicial pillars – but the media itself has conceptualised its identity around the notion that journalists are a “vital part of political life” (Sparks, 1991:58).

During the 1990s journalists in the US started to challenge the validity of this authority through experimenting with alternative tools to involve citizens more in identifying the problems they faced in their communities, ways in which these problems could be addressed and what action could be taken by the citizens themselves to address these problems. These journalists suggested that the authority of the media to frame public concerns in a way that is useful for ordinary citizens to “bridge the gap between the private, domestic world and the concerns and activities of the wider society (McQuail, 2005:432)” has been eroded because citizens feel that their concerns and priorities have become secondary to the priorities of powerful state, economic and other “experts” who determine the news agenda. This happened in a context where representative government or what is generally known as liberal democracy was losing
its currency because citizens have developed a “habit of seeing the political system as indifferent and unresponsive” to their problems and their circumstances (Mathews, 1999:33).

This theme explores the potential of different models of engagement between journalists and citizens to rekindle and energise the role of citizens to contribute to the public work of solving common problems that face the wider society. This is particularly important in the context of developmental problems like HIV and AIDS where solutions to problems are often imposed by experts with a (mostly well-intended) attitude aptly described by Donaldo Macedo in his foreword to Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of Freedom: “There is no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself (Freire, 2001:xxvi)”. While Macedo had mostly governments, policy makers and non-governmental organisations in mind when he made this statement, journalists are often guilty of the same practice.

This is an opportunity to explore with journalists different models of engaging with citizens in ways that would provide a public space for citizens to identify and describe problems AND to propose solutions appropriate to the communities where they live and work. And how these alternative modes of engagement could catalyse a public conversation about citizens as active participants in solving

There is a difference between various kinds of news, and too often journalists concentrate on only one kind, while ignoring other important kinds of news.

**EVENTS**
 Mostly, we cover events. We report on things such as car crashes, robberies and murders, concerts, official announcements, and so on. Journalists and producers love this because of the inherent drama, interesting sound, and excitement. While people need to know if there has been a murder or robbery, or if the municipality has announced a big new water project, many event stories end up being “informational wallpaper.” Unless people are directly affected, it is generally not centrally important. Journalists often cover events to fill space or time. Covering events can also be a fairly superficial way to deal with a story. Reporting on events is important, if the events are relevant to the audience. But there is more to reporting than covering events.

**ISSUES**
 These are deeper, underlying currents in the community.

They are sometimes covered by journalists, but because they are more abstract they are often not recognised, ignored, or deliberately avoided — until something drastic happens to force us to look at them. For example we can report on the way nurses treat patients at the local clinic but if we hear the same report of bad treatment week after week we may start to consider the deeper problems like overburden of patients, lack of aftercare for nurses who deal with trauma regularly etc. You can do a story every year on the number of people dying in the country of AIDS related deaths when you go to the UNAIDS press briefing but it is when you start to look closer at this data and what it means for the wellbeing of communities when the story starts to be a compelling news story. The problem then becomes to sustain the interest until something concrete is being done to address the problem. What usually happens is that journalists cover issues for a few days or weeks while the story is hot and then drop it again without following up on how the issue gets resolved.

If journalists consciously look for the central issues in the communities where they work and think creatively about ways of covering them in a way that citizens can see what it is that they can do to help solve the problem public faith in the ability of the media to see problems from their perspective and not just the perspective of the powerful will change.

**Exercise**

*How can you use the mapping exercise from a previous theme to identify community issues, or to identify people to interview about issues?*

*Adjusted from (Davidson & Mati, 2005)*
public problems instead of turning citizens, in the words of Cole Campbell, in “eavesdroppers” on a “conversation between experts” (2000:691).

Alternative engagement models that have been described and named are public journalism, civic journalism, advocacy journalism, development journalism, campaign journalism and citizen journalism. While all of these hold potential for recognising the power of the citizen voice in naming and framing public issues there is an opportunity to develop and conceptualise the characteristics of appropriate and locally engaging methodologies for the relationship between journalists and citizens in different contexts. The questions and reading material proposed here is therefore intended as potential markers in a process of working out what would work best in your own news and public sphere environment.

**Proposed questions to guide the discussion**

- If you cover an event where do you get your information?
- If you write or prepare a programme about an issue where do you get your information?
• What problems do you foresee in involving citizens more as sources in news coverage?
• What do you think you will be able to do to overcome these obstacles?
• What is the difference between covering an event and covering an issue?
• If you have to do a story about the latest national strategy to respond to HIV and AIDS, where would you go first for information? And then?
• If you have to do a story on the problem with frequent fires / flooding in the poorest housing areas in your town where would you start?
• In what scenario would you include citizens as sources in your coverage?
• If you involve citizens as sources in your news story, how would you make sure that you get all the different viewpoints across?

Proposed issues for discussion

• Agenda setting
• The power of the state
• The power of the media
• The power of citizen action
• The public in public broadcasting
• The community in community media
• Citizens as consumers / users of media

Reading material and other resources

For students and teachers

Theme 5: Interview skills for the civic minded journalist

Objectives

A number of respondents in the assessment project raised the issue of interview skills. The challenge is two-fold: first there is the general issue of interview skills to enhance good journalism and the second issue is about tools for civic-minded approaches to interviewing.

The issue of naming problems and framing these in a way that citizens can see the relevance of issues to their lives emerges in the theme around mapping community sources and resources. The objective of this theme is to explore in more detail how journalists phrase questions in a civic-minded way to unearth the problems and issues citizens face in their communities.

Language is important. In the assessment on which these themes are based language emerged as an issue in two ways: in the first instance faculty respondents talked of bridging the gap between students who often come from different backgrounds than those of the people journalists encounter in interviews; and secondly students participating in focus group discussions talked about the barriers that are created between them and the source when they conduct interviews in a language that is not the mother tongue of the person being interviewed. In both instances language becomes an obstacle in getting to the heart of the stories of civic life.

HIV and AIDS and other development issues are pertinent for a discussion on language because journalists often deal with sources that come from different backgrounds than themselves. The stereotype of poverty and underdevelopment (and HIV/AIDS) is poor and uneducated people. The journalists who interview them are privileged and empowered by either education and status or both. In this scenario it is important for journalists to see these citizens as people with power and as potential partners for change. The language or the interview approaches cannot be in a tone that is at best patronising or at worst condescending.
It is vital that journalists make the mind shift to see themselves as partners with citizens. Journalists have a different power – that of facilitating the conversation between citizens and government or policy makers to change the things that really matter to the people who are affected by policy and governance. Structures and the institutions can achieve very little on their own. The power to change society and turn around crises created by underdevelopment and public health lies with citizens. Journalists have to develop interview skills that could catalyse a conversation that would uncover citizen power and tap into the ingenuity, energy and local knowledge on offer from citizens (Strom, 2005:2). This section will propose some practical tools for journalists to use.

One-on-one interviews

Once you have mapped the community where you work and you have identified some alternative sources outside the official and semi-official layers of civic life you want to be prepared to talk to people who can provide you with information that you will not ordinarily get from government sources or organised civil society like the trade union movement or ratepayer associations. One way to find out what makes the people tick whom you encounter in the informal meeting places (churches, youth groups, hairdressing salons etc.) or the men you see talking to each other over the backyard fence or at the café or on the sidewalk, is to be prepared with a few questions that will enable you to identify his / her unique experiences and insights. The questions are different from the kind of questions you will prepare when you interview people over an event. Here you want to identify this person’s resources and talents that could be harnessed in efforts which also involve the media to address challenges communities face. Taking HIV and AIDS as an example, these are some of the questions you might ask. The aim of the interview is to listen with attention and to keep the discussion focussed on the information that could tell you what is the problem in this specific community and what could be done. Avoid a situation where the interviewee gets stuck in blaming others for the problem. Steer gently towards solutions and what it is that this person can do with other community members:

1. What pushed you to start caring about HIV and AIDS?
2. What work are you currently involved in that is related to HIV and AIDS? How do you feel about this work?
3. If you do not work directly on AIDS issues, do you see connections between the AIDS crisis and what you do?
4. What insights have you gained into HIV and AIDS through your work?
5. What different people, groups, institutions and networks do you have relationships with in your community? What insights do these relationships give you about HIV and AIDS? (Think about children, out-of-school youth, business people, pensioners, crèches, schools, churches, sports clubs, etc.)
6. Have you seen positive examples of how people are dealing with HIV and AIDS in our community?
7. What are particular challenges and obstacles to addressing HIV and AIDS in our community? (Think beyond financial issues.)

Adapted from Citizens at the Centre – AIDS councils as catalysts for unlocking citizen power published by Idasa (Strom, 2005)
Asking about collaboration, decision making and participation

When you interview citizens about common problems they face in civic life it is important to consider the fact that almost all choices have costs and involves trade-offs. Being willing to consider those trade-offs and the views of people who do not agree with you on what the solution could be constitutes democratic process. Taking the cue from principles of deliberative democracy an interview about issues could start with questions to establish how the community is dealing with its problems at the time of the interview. These questions are formulated to suggest collaborative action, decision making and diversity in participation:

1. When there is a problem in your town, one that requires the broader community to become involved, how do decisions get made and who gets to participate?
2. Speaking from your personal experiences, how have you seen this unfold in your town? How did you react? (Belcher et al., 2002)

Instead of a vox pops:

A few simple questions in language that is familiar to people journalists could get citizens to think of bigger issues in more fundamentally useful ways than a vox pops which invariable leads to over-simplified and superficial questions and responses. To get behind the problem journalists could ask citizens the following:

- What is bothering you in this community?
- What do you think should be done about the problem?
- If that is done, what do you think will happen?
- Would that be fair to everyone?
- Would everyone be better off?
- Is there a downside?
- If there is, is there something else that should rather be done?
- What would you and others you can call on, be willing to do to solve the problem?

(Holwerk, 2011)

Interviews based on research information

It is often difficult for journalists to involve ordinary citizens in interpretation and analysis of research information. To hold researchers accountable to people who provided the information for the research data and to hold decision makers accountable for the way they respond to social survey data it is important to get the views of ordinary citizens about data. The following proposed questions are designed to help journalists hone in on one research result at a time and ask the following questions:

- What is the problem behind this problem?
- In whose interest is it to solve this problem?
- What action is necessary?
- Can this be done?
- Who can do something about it?
- What are you willing to do?
- Are there other people you know who will get involved?

The media can name and frame public concerns in ways that:

- Encourages citizens to discover the deeply held principles behind opposing views on issues of common concern
- Help people discover, explain, articulate what is really important to them
- Identify different / and / or competing ways of dealing with problems
- Help citizens to talk with other citizens through different options to solving common problems or addressing common concerns
- Provide information that could help citizens consider the consequences of different options for action
- Provide information that could help citizens to acknowledge the trade-offs involved in different options for action
- Capture the most fundamental concerns behind the way people see a problem
- Make sure everyone can see themselves in the choices or approaches they are asked to consider. Do these ring true for citizens?
- Point a way to effective public action. How can citizens act as a public around common problems and concerns?
Examples of civic-minded approaches to journalism

The following news diary is an example of stories suggested by Idasa’s Governance and AIDS Programme in a monthly service to journalists. The questions have been formulated to encourage civic-minded approaches to HIV/AIDS and other developmental issues

Dear Subscriber,
Welcome to the November 2011 edition of The Governance Response to HIV and AIDS - News Diaries from Southern Africa. Click through to get further information and more story ideas if you are a community journalist.

You are receiving these newsflashes about HIV and AIDS and governance stories from Southern Africa because you have demonstrated an interest in Idasa’s Governance and AIDS Programme or have participated in one of our training courses. Options to subscribe and unsubscribe can be found on the website here.

Join our HIV/AIDS and media in Africa facebook group - we've set it up to encourage more discussion about the issues we cover. Post reports or videos of your work, blog your thoughts and join discussions.

Until next time!
Your media@idasa GAP e-news diary team

HIV AND CLIMATE CHANGE
"In the context of existing poverty and HIV and AIDS, climate change is likely to deepen the vulnerability of children in South Africa," a UNICEF representative said at the November release of a study, Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Children in South Africa. The study – commissioned by UNICEF in partnership with two South African government departments – highlights the likely impact of climate change on children’s health, education, nutrition, safety and access to adequate housing and sanitation in South Africa – both directly and indirectly. It makes recommendations for South Africa’s climate change response, including that local and provincial governments need to be supported to understand their roles and responsibilities to children.


Story ideas:
What ideas for responding to the impact of climate change do people infected with HIV in your community have? How have the changes already experienced, such as rising average annual temperatures and decreases in rainfall, affected them so far? Find out which local government structures in your area are planning mitigation and adaptation strategies. Are they taking the needs of people infected and affected by HIV into consideration in their planning? And are citizens affected by HIV getting involved to ensure that their needs are not overlooked?

IT’S NOT ABOUT RAMPANT SEXUALITY
Noting that Southern Africa accounts for over half the global HIV numbers, Prof Francois Venter, outgoing president of the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society, says: “I suspect our sex lives are not that different from anyone else’s, and in a while, we’ll have a proper scientific explanation for our extraordinary epidemic.” He points out why the “common-sense premise” that rampant sexuality is to blame does in fact not make sense and says that data is starting to emerge that supports a more plausible theory that there is something biological that makes sexual transmission far more efficient in this region of the world. “No one disputes that people can modify their HIV risk, but the devil seems to be in the geography, rather than sex behaviour. Studies suggest that in places like Thailand and the US, men with three times more sex partners have one-tenth of the risk of acquiring HIV compared with Uganda,” Dr Venter said.


Story ideas:
When reporting on politicians’ frequent comments about immoral and irresponsible behaviour, question their assumptions. Look out for research in this area and report on the results. You could find out if research is being
done locally or if there are any plans for this. Ask citizens in the communities you serve how they could get involved in advocating for more research into what it is that drives the epidemic.

LOCAL INITIATIVES NEEDED IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC WOES
To ensure the sustainability of HIV and AIDS programmes in times of global economic woes, African countries need to focus on local initiatives and resources, Idasa said after a November conference in Tanzania. Participants at the forum agreed that African governments need to find mechanisms for domestic resource mobilisation as a matter of urgency as external funding is expected to decline with the problems facing Western economies. The importance of deepening community understanding on the mandate of elected representatives was also discussed. The forum examined potential means of domestic revenue collection and local government initiatives to ensure the sustainability of AIDS programmes in Africa.

http://www.idasa.org/our_products/resources/output/governance_and_aids_programme_13/

Story ideas:
Are there local initiatives to support community HIV programmes where external funding has diminished? How has this worked? These could be stories of inspiration to others who are facing similar problems.
Also, you could ask citizens what ideas they have for finding local resources. Ask people in local government what they are doing in this area and use your media to let citizens know. If very little is being done you could get citizens to discuss their ideas for local initiatives with local government representatives (on a call-in radio programme or television chat show) and perhaps this could lead to action.

SUPPORT GROUPS
Joining a support group of similar people could unlock the lonely and fearful world that young people suddenly find themselves in when they discover that they have HIV. A Health-e feature quotes a 22-year-old woman saying that she was so shocked at her HIV-positive diagnosis a year ago that “everything that the counsellor said just went in one ear and went out the other.” She eventually found the motivation she desperately needed in a support group for HIV-positive students which was formed in 2008 at the University of Johannesburg, where she studies. “It’s a voluntary group. We’ve created a space and environment whereby we can sit down and talk about our challenges as students living with HIV”, she says.


Story ideas:
An inspirational feature on support groups could be done by finding people who started or belong to them and letting them tell their stories. What benefits do they see in support groups that routine counselling does not provide? Did they battle to find people with similar needs to form the group – or was the need so apparent that the group came together fast? What structures in local government or institutions such as schools could facilitate support groups for people infected or affected with HIV?

FAMILY STRUCTURES AND KNOWLEDGE OF HIV TRANSMISSION
Results of research done in Cameroon show that living in poor households and disadvantaged communities significantly increases inaccurate knowledge of HIV transmission modes and prevention strategies. The research document assesses the relationships between family structure and family/peer communication about sexuality and accurate knowledge of HIV transmission routes and prevention strategies among youth in sub-Saharan Africa. Findings showed that the role of family environment as a source of accurate HIV knowledge transmission routes and prevention strategies is of paramount significance; however, families have been poorly integrated in the design and implementation of HIV interventions.


Story ideas:
Find out if families and family structure are taken into consideration in the drawing up of HIV interventions in your area. If you can find some (or even one) programmes that do this, a story on how they function and their successes could heighten awareness of the importance of family environment as a source of accurate knowledge of transmission routes.
Also, look at how information about HIV transmission modes is publicised, particularly in education campaigns that aim to reach disadvantaged communities. Ask citizens in these communities how they benefit from education campaigns and what ideas they have to make them more effective.
The next section consists of examples of cases where journalists worked with citizens and government to address problems in communities.

South Africa: Engagement with the national budget process

In 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. It marked the beginning of profound changes after two decades under an apartheid regime. It was the same year that the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), a South African public interest organization committed to democratic consolidation, established the Budget Information Service (BIS). The BIS involves the analysis and dissemination of critical, timely, and accessible information about the budget and its impact on low-income people. Participation of civil society and legislatures in the budget process is a key dimension of BIS. They focus on four main groups: (1) the executive branch - to provide critical analysis of government policies and processes, (2) legislators – to help build and reorient capacity to new challenges under a constitutional democracy, (3) civil society organizations – to build their experience in parliamentary advocacy and policy influence, and their work with poor communities, and (4) the media – to educate journalists about budget processes and improve the quality of media coverage.

Budget Week Preparation

An informed media promotes an informed public debate. Preparing the media before the budget is released is a critical element of BIS's strategy. Journalists are briefed on the budget process and the implications of various policy trends and emerging budget issues. This early engagement fosters a positive media relationship ahead of the budget process. BIS also prepares members of parliament weeks prior to the upcoming budget release. BIS produced a guide book on multi-year budgets and an update of the data in each medium-term budget. For
community based organizations, a popular book on the same topic was distributed. Flyers were also sent to radio stations and NGOs explaining the issues.

**Day One: Budget Release**  
BIS sends an advisory notice to journalists and radio stations informing them that BIS staff will be available for interviews two hours after budget release. To reach mass audiences, BIS radio interviews are conducted in 11 official languages. This has generated a huge interest from the largest non-English speaking community radio stations.

Budget release is done after the presentation of the Minister of Finance. The BIS teams then conduct a review of their respective sectors based on three key questions: (1) What is the overarching political/economic theme of the budget? (2) What are the priority sectors? (3) Who are the winners and losers? After internal BIS discussion, a set of talking points for the media interviews are finalized. BIS produces media briefs and issues press statements on the impact of the budget on the poor. The briefs became widely popular as simple, easy to understand especially designed for those new to the budget debate.

**Day Two: Media analysis**  
A review of media coverage and reflection on issues overlooked or misrepresented in the media guides BIS work in ensuring accurate and objective reporting on the budget. Of particular importance are articles that help prepare civil society and the legislators for parliamentary hearings on the national and provincial budgets. Issue-specific articles on the budget impact on women, children or the elderly, public sector reform, etc. prepared in advance are updated to include budget analysis. These are released to different newspapers.

**Day Three – Parliamentary hearings:**  
BIS prepares a detailed statement on the budget and its likely impact on poverty which is presented at the finance committee hearing. In-depth articles are written for weekend newspapers and a short (10 to 15 minute) radio program is produced for community radio stations. For provincial budgets hearing, the same process is followed. Once the 9 provincial budgets are tabled, BIS conducts inter-provincial comparative analyses of the sectors. Briefs are done prior to the deliberations to help prepare the provincial parliamentarians. Local NGOs who also receive the briefs are encouraged to support their respective provincial budget committees directly to foster local capacity in budget analysis.

BIS has developed several dissemination tools which have proven very effective. Extensive use of technology-based support, through email distribution lists and the Idasa website, helps in ensuring efficiency and cost effectiveness in BIS public dissemination efforts. The *Budget Watch*, a magazine published every six weeks focuses on the executive branch and the legislature as its primary audience. It is mainly a technical publication on budget documentation, effective legislative oversight, and the budget review process. Also included is an in-depth report on the budget and poverty. It has become a credible communication channel of civil society issues to the executive. The *Budget Briefs* are disseminated to a broad range of NGOs and CBOs. A weekly current affairs radio program, called *Democracy Radio* helps enhance public understanding and participation across broad sectors of civil society. "Advocacy tips" and "Advocacy stories of the week" highlight national and provincial debate issues and analyse the budget’s implications for different groups. The program is aired on community radio stations nationwide and provides extensive reach, including poor, remote areas.

When BIS first started, it barely received attention from the media or the public. Only after years of educational outreach, effectively working with the media and maintaining high-quality work did interest slowly develop. BIS places a high premium on producing, credible independent work. As public demand increased, BIS has had to address important issues: (1) how to maintain a balance between the public demand for immediate commentary on the budget debate and the desire to produce more in-depth, careful analysis; (2) how to maintain positive working relations with government who often perceived quick-response commentaries as ‘criticisms’ of the budget as
opposed to civil society organizations who support this approach as taking an independent, strong, pro-poverty line.

As BIS continues to strike the right balance, its contribution to informing public debate and sustaining stakeholder interest on issues are critical to strengthening foundations of the country’s democratic processes and institutions.96

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‘Bogota Como Vamos?’ – Citizen Voice in the Evaluation of Public Services in Bogota

An election campaign in 1997 led to the creation of Bogotá Cómo Vamos (Bogota How are we doing?), a citizen-based social accountability mechanism designed to monitor political campaign promises and their impact on the quality of life in the city. Empowered by the 1991 Constitution’s mandate granting citizens the right to exercise oversight of public administration, a group of private sector representatives developed an educational monitoring strategy to hold the district administration accountable. It provides an evaluation tool for tracking changes in the quality of life in Bogota based on a set of indicators drawn up in the District Administration’s Development Plan.97

The initiative’s political viability was ensured through close consultations with the mayor and his team. A strategic alliance of private sector representatives from the El Tiempo Publishing House, the Corona Foundation, and the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce developed the evaluation and communication tools which were field tested through focus groups involving experts and citizens from different socio-economic strata. Now, the Bogotá Como Vamos project has emerged as a forum for debate on city issues and has broad acceptance of the district government, experts, students and citizens.

The process of monitoring and evaluation involves mobilizing people and implementing processes to facilitate effective citizen oversight in ensuring accountability. Access to information is made possible through the district administration in particular the mayor, secretaries and directors of city government offices who submit regular reports on the city’s plans and programs.

The evaluation tool developed is based on a key set of indicators based on outcome, technical standards and public perception. The technical variables are based on information submitted by the district offices every six months. The public perception variables are based on an annual opinion survey of 1,500 individuals representing various zones and income groups in Bogota. Information on public opinion on the quality of services is gathered through these opinion polls. The project coordinators then prepare a preliminary report which is presented to a group of experts and specialists for in-depth analysis and to develop conclusions and recommendations. The results are presented and discussed at seminars where both public officials and citizens are present. In addition, the project sponsors other types of forums and debates on specific issues related to quality of life in the city. These initiatives

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have focused on issues such as street people, people who have been displaced by violence, and political reforms in the city.

The mass media plays a central role in the dissemination and deliberation of evaluation findings. To reach mass audiences, information is published in El Tiempo, the national newspaper with the largest circulation in the city—reaching 1.4 million people daily, and 3 million Sunday readers. The project also uses a local television station City TV with an audience of 2.9 million people. Other strategies adopted include publishing a quarterly bulletin with 3,000 copies for distribution to grassroots citizen organizations, and other publications from seminars and forums are circulated to experts, libraries, research and documentation centers, universities, and high schools. In addition to publishing them in El Tiempo, a press release is sent to about 25 radio and TV stations and the print media. The findings are also posted on the project’s web page has been created in order to reach more people.

The project’s most significant contribution to ensuring accountability is the development of performance indicators which provide benchmarks for citizens to use as a basis for demanding accountability from city officials. Objective standards are used to measure the quality of service provision in the city and its impact on the quality of life of city residents. Performance and accountability are determined on the basis of qualitative changes, for example, in education improvements in student test scores, in health changes in child mortality rates, in housing and services, changes in housing shortages, water supply and so on.

The project improved the quality of reporting done by past city administrations, and shifted the focus from inputs and activities to impacts and outcomes. Some district offices are using information from the annual public perception survey as core performance indicators. The Secretariat of Education posts this information on its web page: www.sedbogota.edu.co and public service providers design their service delivery indicators based on this information. The General Secretariat of the Mayor’s Office also uses it to monitor the administration’s overall progress.

In the 2000 election campaign, the evaluation findings were used to frame the most important issues for the city and to inform public debate. Two documents were published - “Basis for a Government Program for Bogotá” and “The Citizens’ Agenda”. These materials provided the content for special pieces in El Tiempo, a special bulletin containing a voters’ guide, in public meetings with candidates, and televised debates on City TV.

Bogotá Cómo Vamos has been recognized among the Best Citizen Practices for Improving Quality of Life by the UNDP-Habitat Dubai International Award for Best Practices in 2000 and 2002. This recognition led Harvard University to contact the program with a request for more information. Four hundred people have attended the course it offers, entitled “Bogotá: Public Policy,” in conjunction the National University of Colombia’s Bogotá Network (Red Bogotá). One of the project’s most significant accomplishments is the “Concejo Como Vamos” Project, launched in 2002, to evaluate the performance of the Bogotá City Council with the support of Bogotá Cómo Vamos promoters. Replication of this project is being considered for other interested cities such as Medellín, Cúcuta, Cali, Barranquilla, and Bucaramanga, as well as the central government.

The project has demonstrated its effectiveness as a forum for public debate where strategic issues affecting the city can be examined and deliberated. To further expand its reach to broader segments of society, the project plans to expand its audience reach through partnerships with radio stations. Stronger links with experts and research centers is another area that is being explored to maximize the use of information generated in the surveys. They can write technical publications and research outputs which can stimulate public debate and influence policy dialogue on key issues of public interest.
An article in the local newspaper sparked action from the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG), a non-partisan group of individuals committed to monitor public spending. The news article, which was based on a government report, praised the “20 Successful Infrastructure Projects in the Region”. To the uninformed reader, this would seem like a piece of good news. The CCAGG members, however, knew some of the projects had not even started yet. Since 1987, the group began to actively mobilize community participation and the local media in monitoring government development programs. CCAGG received training from the central planning agency, the National Economic Development Authority, as part of a national policy to increase community participation in development programs. Their exposure to infrastructure projects increased their knowledge of government contracting and project management.

In Abra, a province located in northern Philippines, most major bridges are either damaged or unfinished. The Abra River cuts through most of the province’s rugged terrain, making travel rough especially during the rainy season. A motorized ferry service runs all day, even as late as midnight in some parts of the province. “The ferries are a constant reminder that the bridges are sorely needed in Abra,” noted one investigative reporter. Pura Sumangil, CCAGG head, confirmed the dire situation and said that “In the interiors, children have drowned because of the absence even of hanging bridges.” So, a report that makes false claims about successful projects in a province where much public money has been poured in but with few tangible results can quickly trigger public outrage. And it did.

In 1987, the CCAGG mounted their first investigation on the alleged ‘successful’ projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). The CCAGG collected all the necessary evidence – detailed documentation of the actual state of the projects, signed affidavits from residents of project areas, and photographs of the project sites. The group’s field visits were met with hostile reception. Some members received anonymous threats and refused bribes. Politicians intervened but CCAGG members persisted and were not intimidated. They had support from various citizen groups, including the clergy of Abra and the business sector. The CCAGG investigation exposed the discrepancies and anomalies in the DPWH report. They uncovered ‘ghost’ projects and unfinished bridges that have run out of funds. The group filed an administrative case against 11 public works engineers, including the district engineer.

An official government audit concurred with CCAGG’s findings and several officials were charged with corruption. The lawyers of the government officials requested for leniency, and instead asked for official reprimands as form of punishment. CCAGG members were outraged. They mobilized public opinion and citizens sent a barrage of angry telegrams to the Public Works Secretary and demanded more severe punishment for the convicted officials. The citizens’ plea was heard and the Public Works Secretary conceded. As a result, 11 government officials were found guilty and were suspended from office. The Chief and the Deputy Chief Engineer of DPWH in Abra was also suspended and permanently debarred from serving in the province. After this first CCAGG audit, the DPWH Regional Director issued a directive requiring that projects in Abra province be funded only after they had obtained clearances from CCAGG.

CCAGG has developed its own brand of monitoring government projects. Its members, comprising mainly of housewives, students, and out-of-school youth – observe road construction projects and report their findings to colleagues who are engineers and accountants. These are the specialists who

conduct detailed investigations on project sites and are equipped with monitoring kits—record books, measuring tapes, cameras, and voice recorders. The group uses government technical reference guides and official documents (approved plans, specifications, budgets and work programs) as benchmarks for determining gaps in the implementation of infrastructure projects. They watch for evidence of corruption or poor performance, use of sub-standard materials in road construction projects or fraud in contracting procedures. If the audit identifies problems with the project, a detailed report is submitted to the relevant government officials along with specific demands for corrective action. In one project, CCAGG found evidence of substandard materials used and improper road preparation. In another project, CCAGG found overbilling for construction materials. In both cases, the problems were rectified at the contractors’ expense.

The media plays a crucial role in disseminating the results of CCAGG investigations and in influencing public opinion. Although CCAGG’s exemplary work has gained national attention, the group mainly engages the local media. It has a weekly primetime Sunday radio program called Allangungan which means “Echoes”. Once CCAGG receives the list of projects in Abra, they go on the air to broadcast the information and disseminate details of the projects, its costs, the implementing agency, and key targets. The program is replayed each Wednesday giving it double exposure for increased viewership. The coverage area is wide, reaching four other provinces.

CCAGG has forged partnerships with public agencies and other organizations in strengthening accountability. In 2000, the group became the NGO partner in the participatory audit pilot of the Commission on Audit (COA) and the UNDP. Despite the successful pilot, however, the new COA administration declared other priorities and discontinued participatory audits. Through DPWH appointment, CCAGG members participate as observers in the Prebid and Awards Committee to help monitor transparency in the bidding process. Across the NGO community, CCAGG joined the Transparency and Accountability Network to broaden its links with other national partners. In 2003, the Northern Luzon Coalition for Good Governance, a network of parish-based social action groups, was established with CCAGG at the helm. CCAGG has been successfully replicated in other provinces, covering 15 out of 79 provinces. While CCAGG has gained widespread public attention, it recognizes the importance of strategic partnerships with broad-based networks to amplify citizen voice and influence policy dialogue and debate at the national level.

Questions for reflection:

When you look at the examples of problem-solving in South Africa, Bogota and the Philippines:
1. What was the work of government in these case studies?
2. What was the work of citizens?
3. What was the work of journalists?
4. What lessons does each case study offer for the way in which journalists do their work as citizens?
5. What lessons does each of these case studies offer for the way in which journalists do their work as citizen professionals?
References


