

PARLIAMENTARY INDABA:
TRANSFORMATION AND
DIVERSITY IN THE SOUTH
AFRICAN PRINT MEDIA

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ABOUT MMA

Formerly the Media Monitoring Project • Vision:

A responsible media that enables an informed and engaged citizenry in Africa and across the world.

Promoting Human Rights and Democracy through the media since 1993



MORE ABOUT MMA

- Human rights NGO monitoring the media since 1993 celebrating 18 years;
- Conducted over 120 media monitoring projects:
 - Race (SAHRC, CSVR), Elections;
 - Gender (GMBS, GMMP);
 - Children (ECM);
 - o HIV (WITS, MAP), and more!



MMA & SUBMISSIONS

- Impact media policy, submissions:
 - •IBA and ICASA
 - Broadcasters Code of Conduct;
 - •SABC Licence Conditions;
 - Elections report;
 - •Disability code of conduct, and more!
 - •Individual media, SABC Editorial Policies;
 - Press Council Review;
 - Parliamentary Committees;
 - Broadcasting Bills;
 - Advertising & Transformation Hearings;



MMA Bias and Assumptions

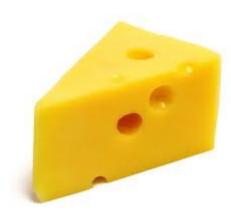
- oMMA work has Human Rights Bias;
- •LOVE our Constitution;
- •Print media and Government intend to do good;
- •Public and citizen participation essential for democracy;



Starting Point

- o1994 to 2012
- •Print media:





- •Self regulatory review brutal, but positive;
- oMvelaphanda deal 100% Black ownership



Back to basics

- Why are we really bothering with print media?
 - Circulation figures indicate that with a few exceptions - Isolezwe, M&G – significant decrease in line with international trends;
- Matters for two key reasons:
 - It continues to set the agenda and opinions in our society i.e. Very powerful
 - Often for good Mldluli is most recent example
 - Also for bad sometimes unethical coverage of children
 - Some see lots of value in it —Mvelaphanda, and Independent until recently cash cow for UK;



The Elephant: To Charter or not to

- Probe clear: Transformation is essential and huge pressure to ensure it happens;
- Understand transformation as being, "a wide field that covers ownership, distribution, content and the languages of publications." (Press Freedom Commission P:61)
- Charter doesn't cover all of these areas
- Crucially no evidence will improve quality of media;
- Media special cannot simply ignore concerns;
- Also tend to favour an elite;
- Transformation essential in number of core areas charter for print inappropriate – much broader



Transformation: shades of grey Needs to be simultaneous across many areas;

- Also on different levels newsrooms significantly transformed in terms of race – not so much gender – But lots of variance;
- Across scale of media different from big four to small commercial;
- What's our vision of transformed media?
- That all people in South Africa are able to receive a diverse range of media and where they are able to receive and impart stories about them and their experiences.



- Where are we now? Need to acknowledge that big, niche, small commercial and community media offer a great deal. Certainly if middle class there is great diversity of media and platforms available;
- While limited this is amazing achievement and should be celebrated – better than many countries;
- BUT: Where is diversity when talk about rural and the poor?
 - SABC: most accessible also fantastic but hardly constitutes diversity;
 - Under resourced community media sector;



- Real transformation

 Most optimal option is Fast Cheap Broadband (FCB) for all;
- Then people can choose for themselves AND;
- Right to Receive and IMPART information;
- Digital changed not only means of delivery of media but also makes communication with audiences essential;
- If FCB there and news and content that people want isn't – they can create for themselves;
- Value FCB is recognised by Government most recently at ICT Conference. (Although dominance of big players suggests for wealthy only);



Real transformation • Benefits of FCB are clear:

- - Economic development;
 - Skills development;
 - Empowered citizens and MORE;
- Fundamental to our democracy that it is a national priority;
- BUT significant difficulties:
- Good news it is happening albeit slowly;
- Appears to follow similar class bias middle and upper, not the poor or outside metropoles;



- FCB: Fast Cheap Broadband
 Temptation to challenge roll out by supporting smaller new players – but just set them up to fail;
- While behemoths guilty of all manner of evils e.g. expensive calls unintelligible packages – leave Steven Hawkins baffled;
- They do have skills, resources, capacity and infrastructure to "monetise the poorer markets".
- Counter intuitive response to begin with to allow them to get even bigger to realise FCB all over SA.



- FCB: Fast Cheap Broadband
 If accept value of FCB need to talk about real transformation in telecoms and ICT as well – which goes well beyond print;
- But print still supplies content so crucial to ensuring real transformation;
- o ICT Charter just come into effect − and codes should be supported by all;
- BUT need other aspects to change simultaneously for real transformation;
- All to receive and impart own ideas, stories etc;



- Conclusion Come back to FCB and skills development;
- As well as diversity of content sources so all can choose – role of community media crucial in this
- At same time need real support and development of Community sector MDDA huge role here!
- Cannot achieve real transformation with limited focus on ownership and print;
- If people not happy big companies will be forced to change content – that's real sustainable transformation, from the people by the people;



Thank you

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