

**Report on Training Programme for Journalists on
Reporting the TRC in Sierra Leone**

Freetown, October 14-25, 2002

By Prof. Kwame Karikari

Participation

In all, 20 Journalists from Newspapers and Radio Stations registered to start the programme. Two had registered from each of two newspapers, so one had to drop from each. Two others dropped out after the first two or three days. In the end 16 participated in the course from beginning to close. (The list of participants is attached.) Of the group, five (5) were female and the rest male. Five were from three radio stations, 10 from newspapers, and one from the radio production Talking Drum Studio. One was an editor of his own newspaper; two (one female, one male) were very new to journalism, having practiced for not more than some months.

Attendance was generally punctual, and participation was active and full. Discipline was guided by ground rules which the class agreed on. And it was followed well.

The Training Course

The training course was entirely handled by Fiona Lloyd and Hugh Lewin. The first week consisted of a balanced programme of discussions and practical exercises. It went straight into the business of the element of TRC, its complexities, and the particular concerns for media coverage. The course was so designed that participants got actively involved all the time, discussing, taking initiatives, and writing.

Working in groups was one principal strategy, which helped encourage individual participation and an atmosphere of friendliness and confidence.

Progress was visible from day to day. So that, by the end of the first week, participants had produced radio programmes and publishable articles that showed tremendous progress in the participants' skills. Initial exercises were useful indicators, or diagnosis, of the participants' levels of skills.

The trainers' followed each participant's progress and capacity closely. So each felt attended to even as they worked in groups. The use of learning – games contributed to creating a relaxed, yet serious atmosphere all the time.

The two trainers, from my very wide experience with training and trainers around Africa, are easily among the very best and most effective. The impact of their methods of training and commitment to it, was visible and was clear from day one. The second week was designed to be fieldwork and practical production exercises. It followed logically the first week's work of introducing basic principles and approaches to covering the TRC.

Certificate

Following the suggestion by the trainers, it was agreed, and a certificate was designed and printed for the participants. (A copy is attached.)

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

1. Editors' Forum

A two-hour meeting was organised to have a discussion with editors on the course, and to engage their interest and commitment to the objectives of the course. Of the expected 14 editors and managers, only four actually turned up. The rest either sent representatives or did not show up at all. Altogether, however, there were 14 people in attendance.

This poor response is characteristic of the editors of the country's press. It is important, but challenging, to mobilize them around professional questions. However, a good discussion was held with those who attended the meeting. They raised many of the critical questions regarding the media and attitudes to and coverage of the TRC in Sierra Leone. These questions were very important because of the personal involvement, of many editors, one way or the other, in the politics of the war in the country.

2. Official Opening

On Monday, October 21, a formal opening of the course was held. The purpose was to meet certain government officials and officials of the TRC and to formally introduce the course to them.

The Ambassador for Ghana, a longstanding journalist and recently the president of the West African Journalists Association, Mr. Kabral Blay Amihere, gave a keynote speech. The country's Minister of Information, Professor Septimus Kaikai, also gave a speech. It was chaired by an elderly, respected editor and member of the country's Independent Media Commission, Mr. J.B. Kargbo.

The Chairman of the TRC could not attend. The ceremony was a brief session that also provided some opportunity for discussing the objectives of the course and general issues of media responsibility in the TRC.

3. Lecture on TRC

On the second day of the course, a South African member of the TRC, Yasmine Sooka, gave a lecture and discussion on the TRC. She provided an overview of the TRC in Sierra Leone, and some of the experiences of the TRC in South Africa.

This session provided very useful insights and helped raise for discussion many of the critical questions confronting the process in Sierra Leone. It set a very good tone for the participants, and filled much of the knowledge gap that the participants had regarding the process in Sierra Leone. At the end, the session was a basis for building up participants' self-confidence.

Problems and Challenges

The main organisational problems had to do with the attitude of the editors and managers to the selection of participants. A number of people originally selected were replaced. Some also were sent who hardly fit the criteria agreed on during the preparatory visit. This meant that the group became a mix of experienced ones with some who had little or no experience at all in journalism.

Recommendations

1. A follow-up, as originally planned, will be necessary. However, the following may be considered for the follow-up training programme:
 - a). The duration must also be 2 weeks, or even more, if possible.
 - b). The next phase may be organised about two or three months after the Commission starts work. In that case, what the media have started to do will need to be evaluated to provide a guide for areas of emphasis, review and attention in the course programme.
 - c). Those media that would have been negligent in promoting the values and objectives of the course, should be dropped from the second.
2. It may be possible to organise in the next course, a 2-day or 3-day special session with Editors. However, this must concentrate on those few editors whose media would have shown consistency and commitment to the values and objects of the whole programme.

3. SPECIAL AWARD

As an incentive it is strongly recommended that two main prizes are awarded after the TRC process for the best Newspaper and the best Radio reporting of the TRC.

The management, procedures and organisations of the Award and related programme can be discussed and planned for later. But whatever shape it takes, clear criteria, guidelines, an

independent panel, and related matters will need to be planned and dealt with after the Commission starts its work.

CONCLUSION

The course overall was a major success. A network of TRC reporters, with a high sense of responsibility and commitment, has been created. With a bit of encouragement, the network should make impact in terms of media coverage and helping create appreciably healthy public attitudes to the process.

The two trainers, Fiona and Hugh, deserve special commendation for excellent work.

A follow-up programme will consolidate the gains and help advance further the professional standards of TRC reporting. This would certainly also have long-term positive implications for general journalistic standards in the country.

Accra
October 30, 2002

List of Course Participants

Name

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Beecher, Augustine | Standard Times |
| 2. Borbor, Tamba | Awoko Newspaper |
| 3. Brewa, Kumba | UNAMSIL Radio |
| 4. During, Cecilia | SLBS |
| 5. Foray, Betty | The Democrat |
| 6. Kamanda, Joseph | Concord Times |
| 7. Kanu, Susan | SLBS |
| 8. Kargbo, Moses | Talking Drum Studio |
| 9. Kargbo, Osman Ben | New Citizen |
| 10. Khoryama, George | SKKYY FM |
| 11. Konneh, Max | Sierra News |
| 12. Koromah, Abdul Karim | Independent Observer |
| 13. Mansaray, John | Salone Times |
| 14. Moseray, Daniel | SLBS |
| 15. Sandi, Rashid | For di People |
| 16. Sesay, Cherno Ojuku | The Pool |
| 17. Sesay, Kadie | Citizen FM |

**The International Media Support
Reporting the TRC in Sierra Leone
A training programme for Journalists
Freetown, October 14-25, 2002**

Financial Report

ITEM	Budget Est.	Expenditure	Balance	Debit
Training Material	800	836.29		-36.29
Rent of Space	975	842.86	132.14	--
Honorarium	1,250	--	1,250	--
Lunch/Dinner	3,000	3,466.14		-466.14
Transport	1,200	985	215	
Advisory Planning group	500	--	500	
Local Resource Persons	300	--	300	
Local Trainers' fee	600	300	300	
Local facilitators	1,500	1,500	--	
Participants' Accommodation	<u>600</u>	--	<u>600</u>	<u> </u>
	10,725	7,930.29	3,297.14	502.43

Total Balance = 2,794.71

Prof. Kwame Karikari
Accra
October 31, 2002

Reporting the TRC in Sierra Leone

Financial Report – Detail

ITEM	Expenditure
1. Training Material	
Photocopying	Le. 383,200
Printing Certificates	120,000
Binding	60,000
Cassette tapes	35,000
Batteries	47,000
Cotton fabric	9,000
Stationery (a)	37,500
Stationery (b)	329,500
Sub Total	Le. 1,021,200
	\$486.29
Printing Course Work	<u>350</u>
Sub total	836.29
2. Rent of Space	
	Le. 1,770,000
	\$842.86
3. Honorarium	
	- nil -
4. Lunch/Dinner	
	Le. 4,758,900
Wk. One	\$2,266.14
Wk. Two	<u>\$1,200.00</u>
Sub total	\$3,466.14
5. Transport	
Wk. One	\$505
Wk. Two	<u>480</u>
Sub total	985
6. Advisory Planning	
	- nil –
7. Local Resource Persons	
	- nil –
8. Local Trainers	
	\$300
9. Local Facilitators	
	1,500
10. Participants Accommodation	
	<u>- nil –</u>
Total	7,930.29
Balance/ Credit to IMS	2,794.71

Rate of exchange: \$1.00 = Leone 2100.

Prof. Kwame Karikari

Accra
October 31, 2002