

'Reporting the TRC'

Freetown

14 – 25 October 2002

Trainers' report
Fiona Lloyd & Hugh Lewin

1. Background & introduction

In July 2002, IMS began discussions with the trainers about a 'Reporting the TRC' training initiative for journalists in Sierra Leone. Fiona Lloyd has considerable experience as a trainer in conflict areas and has developed the 'Reporting for Peace' training programme in Indonesia. Hugh Lewin has worked with Fiona in Indonesia and Kosova, and was a member of the South African Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

As trainers, we would like to stress the importance for the training of these early discussions and consultations. They formed an essential part of the planning for the training and contributed greatly to its eventual effectiveness.

This report details:

- The aims and objectives of the training
- Structure and course methodology
- What was achieved
- Challenges and learning points
- Recommendations for follow-up.

The body of the report summarises the issues outlined above. Please refer to the appendices and to the separate wall newspaper attachment for more details.

2. Training objectives

(Please refer to the appendices for a more detailed description.)

To summarise, our training objectives were as follows:

- To give participants a clear idea about the aims, structure and process of the Sierra Leone TRC, in the context of other TRC models and experiences;
- To explore the role of the Sierra Leone media in reporting on the TRC process;
- To give participants as much practical experience as possible in basic reporting skills – especially interviewing, writing and researching;
- To help build a clear set of ethical guidelines for TRC reporting, in the context of the post-conflict environment of Sierra Leone.

3. Course dates and venue

The 'Reporting the TRC' training was held at the British Council premises in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from Monday, 14 October, to Friday, 25 October 2002.

4. Structure of training

The training was divided into two one-week modules: Week One was Monday to midday Saturday; Sunday was a rest day; Week Two was Monday to Friday. Both trainers facilitated the foundation week; Fiona Lloyd stayed on to facilitate the second week.

4.1 The foundation week

During the first two days, we focussed on building an awareness about the Sierra Leone TRC process, in the context of the South African experience (and others). For the next three days participants gained practical journalistic skills in TRC reporting (both radio and print). Day five was a practical field work day, when participants produced radio material and a wall newspaper. Day six was a reflection day, when we gave feedback about the work produced and made action plans for the second week.

From the afternoon of the first day until the end of Day Five we worked mostly in sub groups, so that we could give more individual attention and focus on specific needs.

The training was very interactive and practical, with role plays, scenarios and exercises. We also listened to audio examples of TRC-related stories and analysed print examples. (*See appendices for session-by-session breakdown & overview of skills covered.*)

We feel that during the foundation week, participants gained:

- A basic understanding of the TRC process & the role of the media in covering it;
- A good grasp of key journalistic skills like interviewing techniques, how to write a tight introduction (lead), the effective use of quotes and soundbytes, how to find a strong angle without being sensational;
- The radio group also gained practical skills in making packages from the field, using sound creatively and on-the-spot links.

The work produced for the wall newspaper (*see separate attachment*) is testimony to the way participants attempted to source diverse voices and views on TRC issues during this foundation week.

4.2 Week two

Originally it was planned that, in Week Two, Fiona Lloyd would focus exclusively on radio and would do in-house mini workshops on various issues. Following discussions in Copenhagen, however, it was decided that she should continue with the original group of 17 during the second week and that they should concentrate on producing stories and radio packages from the field.

This proved challenging, as there was now only one trainer to mentor and give feedback to a large, diverse group comprising both print and radio journalists. Working hours were – inevitably – much longer than the previous week, but this added an intensity to the process and the group responded well in terms of taking responsibility and initiative.

During this second week, participants were urged to ‘dig deeper’ and to give the bigger picture to contextualise their stories more effectively. Whereas in the foundation week, journalists had gone out to source ‘alternative voices’ and ‘diverse views’, they were now focussing more on placing those views within an official context. This meant trying to pin down and obtain comments from ‘figures in authority’, something that was often frustratingly difficult.

Journalists discovered that, while ‘ordinary people’ were usually very willing to speak about their experiences, ‘official figures’ were less than open. We noticed a suspicion towards the media which even expressed itself – at times – in abusive language and arrogant attitudes.

This proved to be a huge learning curve – and an important one. Without such ‘real world’ experience the training could not hope to make any impact.

Despite these difficulties, participants produced an impressive portfolio of work. In particular, one journalist took up the challenge of doing an in-depth investigative piece about the alleged ‘boycott’ of the TRC process by amputees, one of the key focus groups among the ‘victims’. Through patient research and much digging he was able to write about the ‘boycott’ in a sensitive, clear way which described the concerns of the major stakeholders and opened up the way for dialogue and possible solutions. The group, as a whole, learned much from this assignment.

The radio journalists also developed impressively in the second week. They not only produced more packages from the field, but created and recorded a ten-minute drama about reconciliation – something they would be able to use to stimulate discussion on their talk shows. They even composed a song (about forgiveness) to complement the drama.

(Please listen to the 'Each one tell one' radio cassette - sent separately - for examples of the work produced).

5 Resource material

5.1 Resource manual

For this pilot training we developed a 54-page resource manual, a bound copy of which was given to each participant. *(Please refer to appendices for summary of contents and issues covered.)*

We hope to develop this draft manual further for follow-up training.

6 Participants

6.1 Overview

(Please refer to the appendices for a full list of participants and their organisations.)

Of the 17 participants, 10 were from print and 7 from radio. There were five women. The group included one editor and one radio news director.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate that so few senior editors and managers attended the training. The course organisers tried very hard to ensure their participation but, for various reasons, this did not materialise quite as we had hoped.

6.2 Assessment

We were highly impressed by the calibre of the participants. Although there was a wide range of level and experience, they worked extremely hard and showed strong commitment to the training. Nearly everyone progressed dramatically during the two weeks and showed a real sense of pride in their work.

Discussions were always lively and stimulating and – with one or two exceptions – everyone carried out their work assignments professionally.

This training was also remarkable for the way in which several participants bravely and honestly confronted personal issues of reconciliation and healing. Sometimes this happened during group sessions; at other times people took the opportunity to talk to us individually.

It is clear to us that, despite a severe lack of training and mentoring, there is a pool of potentially good journalists in Freetown. The question is: how far do editors support and encourage professional journalistic

standards? The work of CJFE is clearly important in this regard, but we fear that unless more can be done to strengthen positive newsroom leadership skills, the journalists themselves will not be given sufficient scope to grow.

7 Evaluations

Participants took the end-of-workshop evaluations very seriously: they spent considerable time filling out the forms and answered all questions with great care. Their replies are interesting in terms of revealing what the training meant to them and what they learnt.

Overall, the replies were very gratifying, for their praise for, and obvious enjoyment of the training and for the considerable evidence of understanding of the TRC process, especially the potential and important role of the media in helping ensure its success. There was full agreement that the workshop had provided a better understanding of all aspects of the TRC process and how best to report it, in all its complexities. Participants also highlighted their appreciation of being able to discuss their potential role in covering the commission. The strongest impression from the workshop was of agreement about the importance of the TRC and the need for them as journalists to help ensure its success.

Coincidentally – in almost equal part to the understanding of the TRC – participants highlighted a number of basic journalistic skills which they felt they had learnt during the workshop. And they asked for further training, both to coincide with the further phases of the TRC process and to provide further practical skills. *(Please refer to appendices for more detailed analysis of evaluation comments.)*

8 Successes and high points

This was a pioneer venture, with many initial concerns about its possible impact. The apprehensions were emphasised rather than resolved by the extensive preparations for the training. Inevitably too, the participants were obviously suspicious at the start. But, once the training began, these fears were quickly dispelled – in large part, it must be stressed, thanks to the commitment of the participants and their grasp of the fundamentally important part to be played by the media in the TRC process. Their commitment – and their attendance – throughout two intense and demanding weeks was admirable.

To summarise the undoubted success of the training, we feel there were four major achievements:

- a. A full appreciation of the importance of the TRC process for Sierra Leone. As several commentators put it, if it fails, the consequences are too grim to contemplate.
- b. A similar understanding of the essential role of the media in introducing, explaining and covering the TRC process.
- c. An appreciation of the diversity of the issues involved and of the difficulties in covering them.
- d. A firm grounding for the journalists of how to handle the difficulties and report in a responsible and professional way.

In practical terms, the success can be measured by the actual products of the participants, in particular the wall newspaper and the radio programme.

8.1 The wall newspaper

Producing stories for the wall newspaper became the focus of activity for the print participants at the end of the first week. After a planning discussion on Thursday afternoon, they worked during Friday morning to meet the midday deadline. By lunchtime, the hand-written stories were pasted on to a large sheet of paper stuck on the training-room wall. The 15 stories produced were later converted to disk and copied for each participant. (*See separate attachment for the stories.*)

The participants decided to name the wall newspaper 'TRC News', with a slogan: 'Truth Brings Reconciliation'. Each of the (ten) print participants aimed to produce two stories – in the end, 15 stories were produced.

Planned stories, showing a good grasp of possibilities, included:

- Views of TRC: from police, students (including views on declared 'neutrality' on campus), internal displaced persons, civil defence force;
- Vox pop: 'Will TRC bring reconciliation?' and on reparations;
- Interview with RUFP: will they encourage members to testify?
- Interviews with TRC officials: dates and schedule for hearings, question of self-incrimination;
- Interview with amputee witness;
- Interview with market woman whose daughter was killed;
- Interview with potential witness, injured in crash while trying to reach TRC office;
- Story of a reluctant witness.

8.2 The radio programme

The radio group has reason to be proud of the 30-minute magazine show they produced during the second week. Entitled 'Each one tell one' the show is a lively compilation of on-the-spot packages, opinion pieces, drama and song. Each participant has been given a copy of the

programme, and we gather that some stations have already broadcast the material.

The show includes the following:

- Packages made at Kroobay (one of the poorest areas of Freetown), the amputees' camp and two training centres where ex-combatants are being given computer skills;
- An opinion piece about why the TRC is so important;
- A comic mini-drama which opens up the issues of forgiveness and reconciliation, through the fable of a 'cunning thief who became a policeman'.

8.3 The 'Reporting TRC' awards

An initial suggestion was that participants should be rewarded for their workshop products. Because of the overall commitment shown by all participants, it was felt this procedure would be difficult to implement. We welcome the revised suggestion that an award be established in Sierra Leone to recognise the best broadcast and print reporting of the TRC. This will provide both incentive for and recognition of the best coverage of the TRC by local journalists.

8.4 Connection with SC

A key issue in Sierra Leone is the relationship between the TRC and the Special Court. Despite their separate legal status, their operations from the media's point of view will be closely related, especially if, as seems likely, they function simultaneously.

9 Logistical issues

For a variety of obvious reasons, this was not the easiest of training exercises. We would like to place on record our deep appreciation of the hospitality and assistance we received at every stage of this undertaking: we were made to feel completely at home by all our hosts and they assisted without complaint wherever necessary, making our tasks considerably easier than often experienced elsewhere. In particular:

9.1 Training venue

The British Council was an excellent training venue. The training room was ideal and the break-away room, though small, was adequate. The assistance from the British Council staff – particularly those in the Library – was always very supportive and friendly, and the availability, for example, of photocopying facilities was a big bonus.

9.2 Accommodation

Our initial accommodation at the Cape Guesthouse was very good and comfortable, but too far from the training venue, involving a time-consuming and stressful early-morning drive through traffic. We would recommend that in future the hotel to which we later moved, the Lax Guesthouse, be used.

10 Learning points and challenges

This was an intense and sometimes difficult learning experience for all of us. We would like to think that it provided a worthwhile experience for all participants, particularly by way of developing a keen and better-equipped core of journalists who will cover TRC proceedings through the difficult months ahead. Moreover, we feel this training has provided a sound basis for moving forward, both in terms of the immediate requirements of journalists and of future training.

There are a number of important challenges.

10.1 Input from TRC personnel

Unfortunately the Commission's chairperson was away and the training coincided with other local commissioners being up-country. Further direct input from the Commission was difficult and, as we discovered only during the second week, the Commission was facing serious problems about securing finance and was itself in the middle of an internal administrative crisis.

It emerged that, although the structure of the TRC will follow the lines we envisaged, their schedule and time-frame may be significantly changed. This will clearly impact on our future training plans. We are following developments as closely as possible through our South African contacts.

10.2 Input from the editors

The editors and other senior personnel did not participate in the training in the way we had intended. Nevertheless, there were some positive interactions with key editors:

- i. there was a fairly good turn-out from at least ten media groups at the meeting on Friday, 18 October, at 'Stop Press', where the President of the SLAJ also played a key role. Both of us addressed the meeting and outlined the training programme, as well as discussing with them the core documents to emerge from the training:
 - Role of the Media in the TRC process;
 - Reporting responsibly about the TRC;
 - Story checklist.

- ii. at the official launch of the training on Monday, 21 October, several editors did attend: again, not everyone, but those who came were keen and committed.

Clearly a lot of work still needs to be done to involve the editors more directly, but Foday will be moving this process forward - armed, for instance, with copies of the wall newspaper stories.

10.3 How we adapted to the realities of the environment

There can be no denying the difficulties faced by local journalists, especially in how their stories are used in the local newspapers. Discussion with participants emphasised, for example, the need to keep stories short and punchy, to avoid insensitive cutting, and the problems of sensationalising both story content and headlines. A better understanding of the TRC process itself will surely improve matters, but the journalists (and their editors) face considerable problems, which cannot be ignored. The consensus was to underscore the need for greater sensitivity and professionalism in the whole production process, something that can only come from continued vigilance – and training of all involved.

11 Recommendations for future courses

The administrative problems of the TRC – and the possible changes in their schedule – make forward planning difficult. But our experience in Freetown from this training convinces us that our original plan for further phases in this vital training remains valid, and urgent. We suggest five steps as a follow-up to the October training:

1. Training to support the actual coverage of the TRC hearings, probably starting in March.
2. Possibly coincidental with the above, efforts to reach the editors and other gate-keepers.
3. Training for TRC personnel in handling their media liaison.
4. Further training for the journalists in basic reporting skills.
5. Revision of the Resource Notes into a reporting manual for coverage of the TRC.

12 Conclusion

The 'Reporting the TRC' training was essential and, we feel, useful - as a first step. The response from the participants indicated their appreciation of a sympathetic and practical approach to their undeniable difficulties and certainly enhanced their understanding of the importance of their contribution. Much more was actually achieved than we hoped for, largely through the remarkable commitment of the participants.

At the same time, we are very aware that this could only be a first step. We look forward to being able to assist in the next steps.

Biographies of trainers

Fiona Lloyd is a Johannesburg-based radio journalist and media trainer who specialises in training journalists on the 'front line' of conflict. She has worked in Liberia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kosova, East Timor and Indonesia - particularly with community-based radio projects. In 1999 she co-devised the 'Reporting for Peace' curriculum for Internews (Jakarta). She is currently involved in developing course materials for the training of trainers, and also works with NGOs and community leaders in 'Handling the Media' and 'Communicating for Humanity' courses.

Hugh Lewin is a South African-born media trainer and writer. He was until recently Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism in Johannesburg, responsible for the training and skills development of working journalists throughout Southern Africa. He was for two years seconded to the South African Truth & Reconciliation Commission as a member of the Human Rights Violations Committee. He now works as a freelance media trainer and consultant, concentrating on news reporting and editing, with an emphasis on race, diversity and conflict.

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Areas covered by the training

AWARENESS ISSUES:

- Understanding 'Truth & Reconciliation' – what is the role of the media in 'healing the wounds' of conflict? Why should the media commit itself to covering the TRC process?
- Understanding the role of media in conflict and post conflict situations – how do journalists either 'lower the temperature' or 'raise' it?
- Fairness and ethics – how to avoid blame, sensationalism and stereotyping; how to check facts and ensure balance;
- Handling sensitive or 'hidden' issues – especially gender-related (eg rape);
- Handling bribes and intimidation;
- Respecting the rights of 'victims' – especially children;
- Challenging mainstream news values – when covering the TRC, do we need to redefine who and what is newsworthy? How do we source the 'invisible, inaudible' stories that are often overlooked?
- Avoiding stereotyping & closed language – ('victims' and 'perpetrators');
- Making the TRC accessible to our readers and listeners – how to demystify TRC processes, structures and terminology, without distorting meaning;
- Handling our own stress – the effect on journalists of covering the TRC. How do we cope with this stress?
- Understanding the needs of our listeners and readers – how do we include them more fully in TRC reporting?

SKILLS:

Reporting skills

Finding the angle; exploring alternative viewpoints; redefining mainstream news values; understanding 'balance' (facts vs opinions); avoiding blame, stereotyping, sensationalism and rumours; reporting the 'bigger picture' and 'lowering the temperature'; understanding the power of words; making responsible 'framing' choices; checking sources;

Interview skills

Preparation, research and setting-up; learning to listen; framing key questions; pinning down and opening up; interviewing survivors of trauma & people in authority; body language and power dynamics;

Writing for radio and print

How to make the most of each medium, through clear, creative scripting and fresh writing; using quotes (or soundbytes) accurately and effectively.

Principles of radio and TV presentation

Breathing and voice work; de-stressing; understanding your audience;

Becoming more interactive:

Radio/TV: handling vox pops and phone-ins; encouraging listener/viewer participation; making mini dramas “without an ending” to stimulate live discussion.

Collecting the stories:

Practical tips for making inserts/packages/documentaries (for radio); writing reports and features (for print); valuing stories which show so-called ‘ordinary’ people or community groupings working together to build dialogue, and to find common ground; stories which challenge prevailing stereotypes and prejudices.

Skills specific to radio:

Handling talk shows and phone-ins: how to air diverse views and opinions in a responsible way, so that debates about the TRC are accessible to all. Making PSAs/jingles with clear, educational messages. Producing simple, dynamic mini dramas to open up ‘unsafe’ or sensitive issues safely. Exploring the use of traditional storytelling for the same purpose.

Resource materials

Each participant received a copy of the ‘Reporting the TRC – resource notes’. The booklet included:

- i. Workshop notes – by Fiona Lloyd
 - What and who makes news
 - Involving listeners and civil society
 - Censoring news for the ‘sake of peace’?
 - How to be balanced
 - Reporting conflict – a new approach
 - Conflict resolution toolkit
 - The 5 Ws + - questions for reporting on conflicts

Handling interviews
Interview listening skills
Tips for radio interviews
Reporting on torture and related issues (Amani Trust)
Tips for interviewing survivors of trauma
Writing for the ear not the eye
Handling stress and anxiety

- ii. The TRC at a glance – UDHR Sierra Leone, series 7, 2001
- iii. 20 Questions and Answers on the TRC – Sierra Leone Web
- iv. Language and words – translations, terms and meanings (Rhodes University Review, May 1997)
- v. Official Voices (from SA TRC – Rhodes University Review, May 1997)
- vi. Guiding Principles for the Journalist – Bob Steele, Poynter Institute, December 1994
- vii. SAUJ Code of Conduct – from *Basic Journalism*, Gwen Ansell, Johannesburg, 2002
- viii. South African Press Ombudsman’s Code of Professional Practice – from *Basic Journalism* (ibid)
- ix. International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism – from Traber & Nordenstreng’s *Few Voices, Many Worlds*, WACC, London 1992

During the workshop, the following handouts were developed based on discussions:

- i. Role of the media in TRC process
- ii. Reporting responsibly about reconciliation
- iii. Story checklist
- iv. Tips for interviewing children

The role of the media in the TRC process

'The media should be like a midwife in the TRC process – monitoring progress and diagnosing problems to ensure a safe birth.'

(comment by workshop participant)

During the training, participants drew up the following checklist to describe their responsibilities as journalists reporting on the TRC. They felt that journalists should:

- Take the TRC to the people
- Make the TRC clear for the people
- Find out what people know & don't know; what they expect and need from the TRC; what they fear
- Help people to understand why the TRC is important
- Identify 'grey areas' and areas of confusion in the TRC process and structure. Reflect these areas in our stories and open up the issues for public debate

Participants felt that TRC-related stories should:

- First 'do no harm'
- Be clear and balanced
- Show maturity and empathy without blaming anyone or sensationalising issues
- Challenge prejudices and stereotypes
- Not attempt to give a 'rosy picture' or promote 'microwave reconciliation' but should act as 'windows of opportunity' showing how 'something good can come from even a bad situation'
- Reflect people's potential to change

As one participant commented:

'The TRC is a process of national reconciliation, but there will be millions of journeys of personal reconciliation. As journalists we shouldn't try to determine how – or even if – these individual journeys should happen. We should just tell the stories.'

From these discussions, we developed a ten-point 'story checklist' which – participants agreed – should be used for all stories, not only those which are TRC-related:

1. Does the story avoid sensational language?
2. Is it balanced?
3. Are facts clearly distinguished from opinions?
4. Does the story use named and reliable sources?
5. Is the introduction strong?
6. Is there a clear angle?
7. Is the story interesting?
8. Is there at least one direct quote?
9. Does the story flow logically?
10. Is the ending satisfactory?

End-of-course evaluations

Originals of individual responses are sent separately. In summary, the responses to each question were as follows:

1. **Most important thing you gained from the training?**
Reporting the TRC: gaining knowledge of Commission and the implications of the process; understanding journalists' responsibility in reporting it; how to approach sensitive issues; need to avoid sensationalism and provide balance in reporting.
In addition, they felt they'd gained a 'broad survey' of journalism skills, with some specific areas of useful focus: interviewing techniques, radio production skills and writing intros.
2. **What aspect of training did you enjoy most?**
Group discussions, especially about the significance of the media in a democratic process (therefore, 'media tree' exercise – *see below*) and close analysis of TRC documentation. Also specified were several practical sessions, most importantly the field exercises and sessions on interviewing, particularly interviewing of children and trauma victims.
3. **Did training help you to understand TRC better?**
Everybody agreed the workshop had helped. Some interesting comments: that they had not realised process was so complex nor so important ('I now know the TRC has everything to do with me'); the

relationship between TRC and Special Court was of primary concern; and that the whole process will require 'more care'. Journalistically, one typical reply stressed that the media would need to give 'the bigger picture to portray 'the human face' (quotes from the resource notes).

4. What new journalism skills have you gained from the training?

The prime skill, cited by most participants, was 'cool interviewing', specially dealing with children and trauma victims. 'Opening-up' and 'pinning-down' techniques were also favourites. And a 'smiling voice' brings deeper insight.

Print participants were particularly taken with the idea of tight intros (16 words only) and short headlines (eg 5 words only) – thus finding the story angle more clearly. Also note-taking, using quotes and distinguishing between fact and opinion.

5. Comment on trainers and the way they trained

Comments were embarrassingly complimentary. Main points: participants felt valued and respected – 'they made us feel good, important'; they appreciated the trainers' expertise and patience; and noted that, 'despite their colour', their 'dialects' were understandable.

6. The other participants: did the group interact well?

Most respondents commented on the way in which the group became more and more cooperative and friendly, respecting each other. Particular point: welcome meeting between print and electronic journalists. 'We are one people, fighting for the same goal.'

7. Were fieldwork assignments useful?

Unanimous agreement, yes, for two main reasons: (a) this let us get to know the people out there, 'discovering what the unheards feel about the TRC'; and (b) enabled us to put new skills into practice and discover, eg that 'I don't need a studio to make a programme'.

8. Will you be able to implement what you've gained?

Majority agreement that they would try to take the message of training back to newsrooms – and a few definite commitments: to start a daily TRC column; to 'dedicate a page' to TRC coverage; to hold a one-day tutorial with reporters; and generally to 'beef up' news pages with TRC stories. And one participant was already teaching his newsroom about 16-word intros.

9. Comment on logistical aspects of training (venue, catering, etc)

General agreement on suitability of British Council as training venue. Majority feeling that food was 'not satisfactory'. Possible reason for

this was that participants clearly preferred the practice of the second week, where they were given a cash allowance for food (while chasing stories) rather than the food itself.

10. Biggest challenge now facing you in reporting TRC?

Three main points: (a) TRC-related problems, eg handling 'interaction' between victims and perpetrators; ensuring 'satisfaction and reconciliation'; and explaining usefulness of TRC; (b) journalistic issues, eg 'professional reporting to make process succeed'; making suitable programmes; getting editors to agree to carry TRC copy; having copy 'hacked' by sub-editors; and (c) financial issues, eg how to finance coverage of distant provinces, where most abuses happened, but where allowances don't cover accommodation or transport.

11. Would follow-up training be useful? If so, what topics?

Unanimously, Yes, specially to coincide with the hearing phase, to assist, eg, with handling of difficult interviews (amputees, rape victims); and to compare coverage, eg of South African commission's hearings. Requests for more training in basic skills and, eg, environmental reporting, grammar, presentation of programmes.

12. Any other comment?

Two main points: (a) 'please bring these trainers back', during hearings and for follow-up training – and, most important, editors and subs must be included in future training; (b) expression of thanks: 'This training was completely different. It kept me thinking all through.'

The 'Media Tree'

This was an early Day 1 exercise, with participants divided into three groups and asked to brainstorm three features of the 'media tree'. The exercise aimed to determine their grasp of the role of the media and to reveal local realities:

- ROOTS – the foundations for an independent media;
- FRUITS – the possible outcomes of a flourishing media;
- WORMS – the potential threats to a flourishing media.

Participation was enthusiastic.

Roots included:

- democracy, freedom of information and expression, good governance, political stability, literacy, credibility and objectivity, investment and finance, professional training, accuracy, ethics,

neutrality, a 'vibrant and independent media commission' and no criminal or libel laws against the media.

Fruits:

social awareness, stability, corrupt-free society, literacy, good communications, transparency, truth and reconciliation, development, peace building, 'vibrant' police, 'unfettered' judiciary, and a healthy environment.

Worms:

rotten and 'fettered' judiciary, corruption, dictators, censorship, poor social services, instability, poverty, illiteracy, draconian laws, secrecy, bribery, political interference and patronage, ignorance, untrained and unqualified media personnel and 'yellow' journalism.

The groups were also able to identify different branches of the media. Apart from print, broadcast and electronic media, one group listed 'traditional media', including folk media, town criers (griots), story-tellers, praise singers, songs and relay-runners.

As expected, the subsequent discussion was lively and focused, providing a most revealing insight into the participants' analysis of their current situation. The three trees remained on the walls of the training-room and remained a useful point of reference for later discussions.