

Mission Report:

**The Media Situation in Angola
- Obstacles and Possibilities**

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1 Introduction

Following the end of the civil war in Angola in 2002, a number of organizations involved in media development in Southern Africa have on different occasions discussed the options for support to the media sector in Angola. In the beginning of 2003, MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa), the Open Society Institute and IMS (International Media Support) agreed to try to advance the process by fielding a joint assessment mission with the objective of ensuring a coordinated approach by donor organisations and NGO's working in the field of press freedom and media assistance. The team should suggest tangible media support projects, which could be implemented with short notice.

The mission itself was organised with very short notice in order to provide updated information for a meeting in the Funders Forum in Cape Town on April 5, 2003. The following organisations were supposed to send non-Angola-based representatives:

- AMARC (World Association of Community Radios)
- Article 19
- IFJ (International Federation of Journalists)
- IMS (International Media Support)
- Media Action International
- WAN (World Association of Newspapers)

As a reflection of the difficulties in working in Angola, however, only the representatives of IMS and AMARC obtained visas for Angola, and the AMARC representative arrived a week later than planned. Hence, developing tangible project proposals in direct cooperation between Angolan organisations and their potential regional/international counterparts was not possible to the extent intended. Instead the main focus was to prepare the ground for future direct cooperation by providing an assessment of the general situation in Angola and by suggesting strategic areas of intervention in the media sector.

This report is primarily the result of the work carried out by the representatives of AMARC, IMS and the local representative of MISA. The team members would like to express their gratitude for the important discussions with and practical support from the Luanda staff of Open Society, World Learning and IBIS.

2 Present Situation In Angola

2.1 Recent Political Developments

Following the death of the UNITA rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in early 2002 and the subsequent peace agreement signed on April 4th 2002, Angola is finally enjoying a period of peace and relative stability after more than three decades of liberation struggle and a devastating civil war. The only area still affected by occasional fighting is the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda in the North of the country.

During the seventies and eighties Angola was an active front in the cold war between the superpowers USA and USSR and their allies. The Soviet Union and Cuba supported the ruling MPLA, while the USA and South Africa supported UNITA. Following the collapse of the USSR, the international community pushed for a peaceful settlement and elections were held under the auspices of the UN in 1992. The UNITA leader

Savimbi, however, did not accept his defeat in the elections, and his forces again took up arms.

Due to the vast riches of diamonds and other natural resources in the UNITA controlled areas, the rebel movement was able to finance a continued military resistance, which only stopped, when the leader was killed.

Despite the recent peace, Angola still faces major problems. "We have peace in the sense that there is no more actions of war going on, but we still do not have social peace", says one of the editors of the state media.

Corruption and relocation of refugees and internally displaced person are among the most serious challenges. According to government and UN figures almost 4 million people – equivalent of one third of the population – have been forced to leave their homes, and in many families two generations have grown up in camps. The majority of the displaced are living in camps around the major towns and in particular around the capital Luanda. In 25 years the population in Luanda has grown from 400.000 to 4.000.000 inhabitants. UNHCR estimates that 450.000 refugees are also living in camps in the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Zambia, and Congo (DRC).

Angola is potentially one of the richest countries not only in Africa but in the entire world. The natural resources of diamonds, precious metals and oil are incredible and the land is fertile in most of the country. Furthermore, the waterways provide potential production of cheap, environmentally friendly energy and the sea off Angola is rich in fish and other seafood.

Despite these resources, basic food like chicken and even bottled drinking water is still imported from Europe. For decades the excuse has been the civil war, but local critics of the government also blame the ruling elite. During the MPLA rule, a small elite consisting of reportedly 100 families has gained control of practically all assets in the country. The members of this elite control all trade and all the natural riches, and they have no interest in changing the status quo.

They also have no interest in investing in Angola in general because there is very little chance that they will be able to keep their personal fortunes of hundreds of millions of Dollars if there is ever a change of regime. Ministers, generals and other civil servants can only have obtained such wealth illegally, so they keep their money out of the country just in case of a change of the regime – or in case of a sudden fall from grace of the present top leadership.

Corruption seems to be the order of the day at all levels of society from the traffic police to top ministers, who divert huge percentages of the public budget into their private pockets. According to the IMF, more than 1 billion US Dollars were unaccounted for in the state accounts last year.

As a result of international pressure, the government has announced general and presidential elections to take place late 2004 or early 2005. But so far no detailed plans for the elections have been publicized, and the general perception among government critics seems to be that it is highly unlikely that elections will actually take place before 2006 at the earliest.

All in all this paints a picture of a potentially rich but hopelessly mismanaged country – but that is not the only truth about Angola. Most of the state officials, international aid workers and Angolan NGO and media representatives interviewed for this report express a strong optimism. The political climate as well as the business climate has improved considerably during the past 12 months of peace, and there is hope for further improvement. Especially if the international community succeeds in supporting the present drive for political reform.

2.2 Status of Civil Society

Compared to other countries in the region, the Angolan civil society organisations are relatively weak. There has been no strong tradition of organising, and the existing NGO's are primarily organisations working on behalf of different segments of the population and they are not mass organisations of IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons) or other vulnerable groups. The NGO's are typically run by human rights activists, who work on behalf of the disadvantaged groups.

In such a setting it is difficult to assess whether the organisations have a real constituency or not, and some actually only exist by name but they have no activities. The persons interviewed by the assessment team estimate that there are about 40 active NGO's in Angola, out of the around 240 legally established organisations.

The opinions of the state of Angolan civil society depend very much on the eyes seeing. Is the glass half full or half empty? Can the NGO's change anything or not because they are facing such a powerful opponent? There are no fixed answers to that question but some NGO's are actually quite active, and they do win small victories here and there. A recent example is the NGO "Free Hands" (Mãos Libres), which prevented eviction of a Township community by taking the case to the courts.

Some will argue that the government will only start applying more sophisticated repression methods as the organisations grow stronger, and that is probably true. The government is already now using all kinds of methods to silence critics including using the state media to run defamation campaigns. On the other hand it remains a fact that some NGO's are actually working, and they do contribute to a democratic development in the country. It also seems to be a general perception in the NGO community that the political environment is improving and that today there is considerably more space for critical debate than just a year ago.

The NGO's and the democracy and human rights activists have connections to the more progressive members of the ruling MPLA, who are positive towards reforms. At this stage, however, the civil society organisations are most probably not strong enough to form the basis of a "Third Force", which could support an alternative to the two old political groupings MPLA and UNITA.

The Catholic Church is presently one of the most important of the non-governmental forces in Angola. The church has played a strong role in promoting peace and reconciliation, and democracy and social justice is high on the church agenda. Radio Eclésia, which is run by the Council of Bishops (CEAST), has been and still is one of the most important non-governmental media institutions.

3 The Media Landscape

3.1 State Media

The State media, which include **Radio Nacional de Angola (RNA)**, **Televisão Popular de Angola (TPA)**, and **Jornal de Angola** are by far the biggest media in the country.

Of these institutions, the state radio RNA is presently without competition the organ, which has the widest coverage. The signal reaches the entire country, and RNA has correspondents in all provincial capitals, which also produce material for local broadcast. Some of the provincial offices have as many as 40-50 staff. In Luanda, the News Department alone has 60-65 reporters.

RNA transmits 24 hours per day in AM - nationwide as well as locally. The programming is a combination of what is labelled "Specific Programmes", i.e. programmes about health, culture etc. and debates, news and current affairs. There is a daily news and current affairs programme every morning, and short news on the hour throughout the day.

The equipment is fairly advanced with new computers and Internet connection at least in Luanda, and RNA is in the process of digitalising the production facilities.

According to RNA management, the biggest need of the station is qualified staff. There are very few journalists, who are specialising in any specific area, i.e. political, economic or social reporting.

As in other Angolan media institutions, language skills are also required. Lack of knowledge of English is seen a major barrier. There is an expressed wish to interact more with the other countries in the region, but very few staffs are able to communicate with their regional colleagues.

Government critics see RNA as the willing mouthpiece of the government, and little space is given to opposition voices in RNA. The station also resorts to old-style direct propaganda against government opponents. It should be mentioned though that it is becoming more open to debate and call-in type programmes, and this is a very recent development.

Another point of criticism - which also comes from sources in the state media - is the tendency to top-down communication. The entire approach of RNA is urban based, because the majority of the journalists never leave Luanda or their provincial offices to get reports from the field.

Televisão Popular de Angola (TPA) has the same fundamental weakness. The headquarters are in Luanda, where the majority of the 1.400 employees are based. TPA does, however have provincial newsrooms with recording and editing facilities in three of the biggest towns and correspondents in the remaining provincial capitals.

TPA broadcasts nationwide on Channel 1, and recently a second channel transmitting in the Luanda area has been opened. The new Channel 2 is intended to cater for the educated audience while Channel 1 will be the broader News and entertainment channel.

Apart from the news, current affairs and entertainment programmes in Portuguese, Channel 1 also has a daily magazine programme in the seven biggest local languages. Each day there is one hour in one language, and the management find these

programmes important although there are very few TV sets in the areas, where the languages are spoken. The rationale is that many of original inhabitants are now living in and around Luanda, where they have access to TV although they might not have their own TV set.

TPA is technically well equipped with new computer network in the Newsroom and advanced broadcasting formats (BetaCam SX). The main technical shortcoming is the lack of link facilities from the provinces, so there is no possibility of direct broadcasts from outside Luanda. All recorded material has to be sent to Luanda by plane or car or whatever means of available transport.

The TPA management sees lack of skilled staff as one of the major weaknesses of the institution. A considerable number of young people graduate from the universities and higher training institutions with 3-5 years of communication studies, but they have no practical reporting skills. Basic interviewing and reporting skills is also a problem for the staff already working at TPA. And then the lack of capacity to speak any other language than Portuguese is perceived as a major barrier against further integration in the region – an integration, which at least top management sees as very important in the future.

Seen from outside, it is quite questionable how many viewers TPA actually has. The people, who can afford a TV, can also afford a satellite dish, and they will often prefer to watch the Portuguese RTP or other international channels.

TPA does, however, have the potential to play an active role in the reconstruction and democratisation of Angola, although TV still is very much an urban phenomenon. The equipment and the general infrastructure are in place and despite the shortcomings there are also many well-qualified staffs. The main problem is the direct government control of the institution and even the individual journalists. According to opposition sources, journalists get extra benefits if they are members of the ruling MPLA. These benefits can be in the form of a car, house allowance or the like, and these advantages are easily removed, if the journalists do not follow the party line.

The same conditions apply for the government newspaper **Jornal de Angola**, which is the only daily newspaper in the country and the only written news publication, which is circulated outside Luanda.

The paper has a modern newsroom with computer network, permanent Internet connection and access to satellite TV and international news services. The paper is edited entirely on computers and in a very few months a new printing equipment will be installed.

Like the other state media, Jornal de Angola has local offices in all provinces - and like RNA and TPA the paper is under strict government control. According to opposition voices, the paper has a special propaganda unit, which specialises in attacks on government critics. Recently there have been incidents, where the paper has incited to violence against former members of the UNITA forces although the official line is now national reconciliation.

3.2 Private Media

Radio Ecclésia is without competition the most important non-government media institution in Angola. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day and independent news and not least public debate are the main ingredients. The station has a total staff of 40 in Luanda plus 15 correspondents in the provinces, and it is presently broadcasting in FM in a radius of about 70 kilometres from Luanda. A daily magazine programme is also

sent as a compressed MP3 file to Europe by email and broadcast from there on short wave.

The station does however plan to extend the FM transmission to the entire country by installing repetition units, and the provincial offices will receive more production equipment. Most of the equipment is already procured but not all units have been cleared by the customs authorities, and some parts are also still missing. The management expects all the remaining problems to be solved within few months.

There are no independent surveys rating the number of listeners, but Radio Ecclésia (RE) seems to be the most popular station in the Luanda area. The commercial competitors estimate that RE has about 30-40 percent of the listeners, while NGO sources put the number as high as 90 percent. The truth is probably somewhere in-between and that number is in any case impressively high considering the limited resources of RE.

The Council of Bishops (CEAST) constitutes the board of Radio Ecclésia and this has been an important safeguard for the editorial freedom of the station because it is not depending on a single section of the church or any individuals. Government officials clearly see Radio Ecclésia as an opposition voice but this is not how the station defines itself. As the management words it: "The ministers way of thinking is that people are either friends or enemies, but we are neither for nor against the government. Our only obligation is to tell the truth."

That happens not least in the very popular radio debates and phone-in programmes, where listeners contribute to the discussion. Recently, one of the listeners stated that "the real problem in Angola was the President", and that caused the Ministry of Information to label RE a "Terrorist Radio".

There are no direct threats to close down the station, but RE management feels that the government is using dirty tricks to obstruct the institution. This includes slow processing of import of new equipment, cutting phone lines, "poaching" of RE staff to the state media and disruption of electricity and water supply. Recently, a considerable amount of equipment was destroyed because of very high voltage electricity being led to the studio. The state radio RNA last year even a few times tried to make "copy-debates" about the same topics and at the same time as RE in order to confuse the listeners. Hence, RE now keeps the topics of the debates a secret until the programmes are on air.

RE is almost completely reliant on donor support for its operation. The station has very limited advertisement revenues because all public or government affiliated companies do not want to support the station and most private companies are afraid to be seen as supporters of the station.

Because of its unique position and performance, RE does not have major problems attracting donor support for technical equipment, but it is an eternal struggle to raise fund for ordinary running costs such as salaries, electricity etc. Donors seem to believe in the concept of volunteers, but it is absolutely impossible to base the function of a station of this nature on voluntary work.

Radio LAC or Luanda Antenna Commercial is the other major non-governmental broadcaster in Angola. It was started in 1992 as a commercial off-spring from the national radio RNA.

The station has a 5 kw FM transmitter, which on a good days carries the signal more than 1.000 kilometres away from Luanda. Broadcast hours are from 05:00 to 01:00, and the plan is to gradually start broadcasting around the clock. The key audience is

the well-educated Luanda elite, which is interesting for the advertising clients because of the buying power.

The main revenues of Radio LAC come from sale of airtime to institutions and organisation. Prices vary depending on the time but as an indication of the level, the management informs that an international organisation pays 3.000 US \$ pr. month for a programme about reconciliation two hours every Saturday morning.

Advertisement is also bringing in increasing revenues. Especially the past 7-8 months have shown a real increase in business activity and also in advertising, and Radio LAC as well as the private newspapers have benefited from this development. Still, Radio LAC is no goldmine – the around 40 staff members get a salary, which is almost as high as in the state media, but there is no financial consolidation, and the station has problems in finding funds for replacement for worn-out equipment.

LAC management points to the public power supply as the biggest problem at the moment. The supply is so unstable that the stations need not only one but two back-up generators. The voltage is also so unpredictable that it has been necessary to install a chain of no less than three UPS'es (or "No-Breaks") in order to protect the equipment from extremely high voltage from the public supplier.

Outside Luanda, there are three more private radio stations: **Radio Morena in Benguela, Radio 2000 in Lubango, and the Commercial Radio in Cabinda** but the assessment team has no further information about these stations.

In Luanda there are a total of **eight private weekly newspapers**, which have a total circulation of 22.000-25.000 copies, which is extremely little in a city of four million citizens. Less than five percent of the papers reach costumers outside Luanda, so the independent press is very much an urban elite phenomenon. As a prominent lawyer phrases it: "Democracy is in Luanda".

Despite the limited outreach, the private weeklies do play an important role in the democratic development. They provide a space for various civil society organisations to air their views, and the papers do carry stories, which would otherwise not be published. One example is a recent series in **Angolense** exposing the wealthiest people in the country including the public officials, who have made fortunes on shady business. As a curiosity, this resulted in a call from a Member of Parliament, who complained that his fortune had been described as too small. "What would my business partners think if they thought that I am only good for 100 million Dollars?"

The private papers are organised in the **Associação da Imprensa Privada de Angola** (A.I.P.A.), but they do not have much in common except for the struggle to make financial ends meet. The organisation itself predicts that only two or three of the papers will still be alive two years from now. The income of the papers is typically 70-80 percent sales revenues and 20-30 percent advertisement. Like Radio Ecclésia, the private papers loose advertisement revenues because private companies are afraid to be associated with the opposition voices.

3.3 Media Legislation

The present media legislation is part of the 1992 Constitution, and on the one hand it contains certain liberties such as freedom of information and the right not to disclose sources of information. But on the other hand it also gives a number of privileges to the state media.

In 1999 the state prosecutor charged three journalists with defamation against the President of the republic. The journalists were convicted with suspended sentence after a trial, which was closely followed by the public at national and international level.

After this trial, the government wanted to tighten the media legislation, and in 2000 a draft containing severe punishment for any publications, which could in any way damage or criticise the authorities. This draft law was met by fierce national and international resistance because of the criminalisation of having opinions, and the draft was cancelled as a direct consequence of the protests.

Instead the government appointed a legal commission. The task was to draft a new media law. This commission is still working, and there is no formal information about when it is supposed to deliver a draft.

3.4 Media Organisations

There are very few active media organisations in Angola at the moment. The biggest is the Union of Journalists SJA, which now seems to be reviving after a period of more than ten years, where it existed merely by name. The new board elected last year seems to work actively to involve the Union in future media development. Alongside the union there are many minor associations of journalists with specific interest such as sport, culture, health etc., but the union is now trying to incorporate these minor organisation into SJA.

AMUJA, the Organisation of Woman Journalists, however, is presently not functioning according to board members.

The Association of Private Newspapers, AIPA, is the organisation representing the 8 independent weekly papers in the country.

The Centre for Training of Journalists is not an organisation as such, but it deserves to be mentioned here anyway. It was established in 1991 as the training department of the national radio but it is now in the process of becoming a national training centre for young media graduates and practicing journalists. The centre has all facilities required for courses in print, Radio and TV including top-end desktop publishing and audio and video editing facilities. It even has a dormitory, which can accommodate 32 students, and it is worthwhile considering these facilities for national as well as regional training courses.

4 Current Media Projects

So far the international engagement in media development projects in Angola has been relatively limited. The team has not been able to collect information on all activities, but in the following some of the main projects, which have come to our knowledge, is listed:

FES has been one of the most active organisations, which has been involved in the following activities:

- Public discussion forums in 2000 on the draft media law presented by the government
- In 2001 publication of the counter proposals to the media law of the journalists' association
- In 2002 two seminars with SJA, one of which on media legislation in the region with specific focus on self regulation and community radio
- Currently support to SJA providing legal advice for the Media Reform Commission
- In March 2003 a public discussion forum on the current media situation (defamation, quality of media etc.)

Currently FES is also planning a study tour to Zambia for the Media Reform Commission in order to learn about the reform process there, and preparations are being made to support a public debate on a new draft media law as soon as it has been presented.

Apart from these activities, there have been training excursions for journalists on specific subjects, i.e. on the EU (Brussels) and the WTO (Geneva). Staff of the NGO ADRA has received training on community radio in South Africa, and since 2001 FES has supported the production radio programmes on human rights and gender equality with RNA. Currently FES works with ADRA in the Huambo province on a HR programme (provincial), and another there are plans to work with the Ordem dos Advogados de Angola (OAA) on HR on a national scale.

Common Ground Angola has held training courses for around 300 journalists in what the organisation calls "Peace Journalism". The main content of the courses are basic principles of objectivity, balance and fairness.

Other organisations such as **Oxfam** (community radio); **Troicare** (support to Radio Ecclesia) and the **Konrad Adenauer Stiftung** have also been active in the media sector, but the assessment team did not have a chance to meet these organisations. We have, however, been informed that the Konrad Adenauer regional media project is planning training in journalistic skills and support to private print media (Agora).

UNICEF is cooperating with a core group of 30 journalists, who on a monthly basis are invited to mini-seminars or meetings about children's issues. Furthermore, UNICEF is starting a project with children reporters.

UNHCR is about to launch a major information campaign directed towards Angolan refugees in the neighbouring countries.

The European Commission is about to commit 3 million Euro for the years 2003 and 2004 for projects, which can empower civil society, and support to media projects is one of the specifically mentioned elements in this package.

5 Suggested Strategies

Angola does have the potential for a very positive socio-economic development, but the progressive forces in the country will need a helping hand from the outside world. One of the main problems for Angolan civil society seems to be the lack of contact to like-minded individuals and organisations in the neighbouring countries, and this is also the case in the media sector. Thus, breaking the isolation should be the main headline for support to the media sector, and all projects and programmes should be designed with a view to the objective of including Angola and Angolan individuals and organisations in the vibrant media development community of Southern Africa.

In a society as complex as Angola it will be necessary to approach the questions of democratisation and media from a number of different angles. Focusing only on training of journalists or subsidies to private/independent media will not lead to long-term improvements.

International organisations should also pay much attention to the fact that many Angolan institutions and organisations are beginning to show a fatigue towards international experts: "We have seen many missions but no projects!" as one editor phrases it. So now is the time to start acting – and to do so with Angolan organisations and institutions in a leading role in the projects.

Several international institutions have had serious accounting problems and other difficulties when working with Angolan counterparts, but there is no alternative to working with Angolan nationals in key positions. The mistrust of foreigners – or Angolans, who are seen as instruments of foreigners – is massive and a real local ownership is essential to obtain any positive results.

In this spirit, it is appropriate to quote the strategy on media, which emerged from a workshop for civil society organisations held in Luanda in October 2002 with facilitation of Open Society Angola:

"So as to guarantee to Angolans, throughout the country, greater access to information, transmitted with absence of party doctrine and a sense of responsibility, we propose:

- *The creation of programs directed towards monitoring the action of the media in the broadcasting of reconciliation messages, particularly the State media;*
- *The removal of any party affiliation scheme for job access, maintenance or promotion in the State media; and the consequent nomination independent and consensual directors for those selfsame organs, as an essential guaranty for the plurality, impartiality and their freedom in relation to all political parties;*
- *The participatory preparation and application of a subsidy policy to the independent media so as to provide them with basic incentives for their self-sustenance and professional development and, consequently, their gradual expansion throughout the whole country and the exercising of their plurality and diversity of information."*

Obviously, **transformation of the government-controlled media** into public service institutions and **support to private media** as suggested above should be high on the national and international lobby agendas, and no opportunity to advocate these goals should be missed. It is, however, very unlikely that the Angolan government will overnight relinquish its control of the state media and start supporting the opposition voices.

In such a situation one can choose not to engage in any form of cooperation with the state media or one can choose to initiate minor projects in order to test the ground for willingness to change from within the institutions. Though recognizing that a true change in the state media will only come after a separation from the government, the team behind this report strongly recommends the latter approach, as it has already shown relatively positive effects for organisations like UNICEF and Associação Justiça Paz e Democracia.

The formation of a **Coalition for Media in Angola**, which could be a focal point for media development projects, has earlier been proposed by MISA. Such a network of media institutions, the Journalist Union, human rights organisations, the Bar Association, the Women's Network etc. would certainly be desirable, and the idea should actively be pursued. The media institutions and organisations do not have the clout to advocate their own (and society's) interest without the strong backing of a wider representation of civil society organisations.

It should not be neglected, however, that the assessment team did not find very fertile ground for the proposal. Some organisations said bluntly that they were not interested, because they were afraid that such a new body would "steal projects". Others rejected the idea, because they do not want to be associated with some of the organisations working in the media development field or with other Angolan organisations.

It is a fact that there is a lot of rivalry between the different organisations and their leaders as individuals and one should not expect to overcome these problems easily. So a viable strategy would be to keep working to establish a coalition without letting all future activities depend of a successful outcome of this endeavour.

It will be a major task to convince the Angolan stakeholders that increased local cooperation will result in more international support and not increased local in-fight over project funds. Very few Angolans believe that more cooperation on the ground will lead to a bigger pie to share and consequently bigger slices for everybody, although this is the experience from other parts of the world. Thus, working towards the creation of the coalition should be part of the long-term strategy and not the first step.

While still advocating the concept of a media coalition, it would be advisable to establish as many concrete media projects as possible as soon as and to integrate local cooperation as a natural part of these projects. The Angolan media organisations need the encouragement of seeing concrete projects actually happening, and the best way to promote cooperation is to have good projects to cooperate on.

The strategy should be to **work with existing organisations on a bilateral basis**, in order to promote local cooperation and to strengthen the capacity of organisations such as Sindicato dos Jornalistas Angolanos and Associação da Imprensa Privada de Angola (the Association of Private Media in Angola) or for that matter parts of the state media. It should be a top priority for the future MISA representation in Luanda to facilitate the establishment of direct cooperation between Angolan and regional/international organisations.

Lobbying for more **donor cooperation** should also be on the agenda of MISA and other regional and local organisations. It does not seem to be a priority for the donor representatives interviewed by the assessment team, but it would nonetheless be important in order to avoid duplication of initiatives and in order to create a joint strategy for the media sector. The donor coordination is particularly important in relation to the issue of transformation of the state media.

The ongoing **revision of the media legislation** is presently a rather closed process, where the sitting commission is not engaged in any major consultative process. When a draft is presented, international and regional organisations such as Article 19, WAN, IFJ, AMARC, MISA, FES and others should, however, be prepared to provide immediate support to the Angolan counterparts.

Training journalists in language and reporting skills should be a part of the overall strategy for media reform and development in Angola. The majority of the journalists have learnt their trade in the state media, and they need introduction to concepts such as impartiality and fairness as well as knowledge of specific issues such as economic and political reporting, health etc. And many need basic journalistic skills.

Finally, a strong **focus on Angola outside Luanda** should be a guiding principle for all projects. All activities and the recent opening towards more democracy and freedom of expression are concentrated in and around Luanda, while many provinces have not developed during the past two-three decades. Furthermore, the provincial staffs of the media institutions are generally perceived to have a better picture of the realities of the country than their Luanda based colleagues. It is possible to live in Luanda without having to face the harsh realities of the refugee camps, while journalists based in the smaller provincial towns cannot avoid seeing the poverty and despair.

In summary, the strategy for a democratic development of the Angolan media should as a minimum be based on the following principles and elements:

- Angolan nationals must play an active role in any project implementation.
- Not too much talk but practical action now.
- National and international lobbying for a transformation of the state media into Public Service institutions.
- Lobbying for support to private media.
- Lobbying for establishment of a Coalition for Media in Angola – but do not let future activities depend on the creation of this network.
- Lobbying for better donor coordination.
- Establishment of direct cooperation between Angolan and international/regional organisations.
- Technical/legal backup to the ongoing revision of the media legislation.
- Training of journalists in basic reporting and foreign language skills.
- All projects should have a focus on Angola outside Luanda
- All projects should have programmes geared towards promoting women and gender balance in the media

6 Specific Action Proposals

As mentioned in chapter 1, an original objective of the present mission was to identify tangible media support projects, which could be implemented with short notice. But due to the decimation of the team this has not been possible to extent originally planned. A number of recommendable initiatives and ideas, however, have come to the attention of the team. Some have already been presented in the text above, but they will be listed below in order to create a quick overview.

The proposed activities are grouped in different categories, which, however, are all supportive of the overall goal of breaking the isolation of the Angolan media and civil society in general, and which are backing existing positive initiatives in the country. Previous reports from MISA and IMS have suggested a baseline study about media consumption and ongoing media development projects in Angola. This present report lists some of basic information needed, but it would still be relevant to have a more comprehensive material, and it is recommended to commission such a study as soon as possible.

6.1 Organisational Strengthening

Media Ethics Council

The Journalists Union is trying to establish an Ethics Council, which could establish a code of ethics, and where members of the public can complain about incorrect or unfair treatment in the press. The idea is to establish self-regulating mechanisms in the media sector in order to increase the quality of reporting and to minimise government penal sanctions. This would be an obvious area of cooperation for organisations such as FES, IFJ and Article 19.

Coalition for Media in Angola

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is certainly a need to unite the civil society forces, which are in favour of media reform. It will not be easy because of the internal rivalry in the Angolan NGO sector but it is nonetheless important to try. This would be a natural task for organisations such as MISA, NIZA, Open Society, FES and others.

It is also important to stress that working with local organizations should be a priority as it is the only hope for the success of any project in Angola.

Improved Donor Coordination

The foreign embassies and independent donor agencies in Luanda ought to coordinate their efforts to support a democratic development of the media sector, and not least to establish a common agenda for the transformation of the state media. Independent agencies such as FES and NIZA would be natural focal points for such an initiative.

Support to Women in Journalism

It is important to give specific support to women working in the media. One way could be to support the already existing **AMUJA, Angolan Women Journalist Association**. This will be specifically to ensure that the organization is revived and its leadership is strengthened to encourage greater involvement and participation of women in the changes currently taking place in the media.

This can also be achieved by giving general capacity in the form of training and other projects through which women can improve their skills and begin to take part in the decision making processes.

6.2 Training Activities

Journalistic Skills Training

Lack of basic journalistic skills is an expressed problem in all media institutions, and it will be even bigger in the months and years to come as election time approaches. The Journalist Union is beginning to organise courses in election coverage and this initiative is worthwhile supporting. It is also worthwhile to explore the possibilities of arranging courses in subjects such as financial or political reporting for journalists from the private as well as the public institutions. Furthermore, it should be considered to combine English language courses for journalists with internship programmes in Anglophone media in neighbouring countries. Possible partners could be SJA and Centro de Formação de Jornalistas.

Young Journalists Internship Scheme

An estimated 250 young potential journalists with 3-5 years of mass communication studies are presently unemployed in Luanda. At the same time, all the private media are struggling with scarce human resources. Thus, the Association of Private Media suggests an internship scheme, where talented young people can get a chance to get practical journalistic experience by working for the private newspapers and radios. The project would involve funds for nominal salaries for the interns and support to basic skills training courses.

Children Reporters

UNICEF is presently aiming to establish teams of children reporters, who will be trained in basic radio production skills so they can produce their own programmes seen from a child perspective. At this moment, there are only funds to start the project with a total of nine children in Luanda, but the hope is to find funding for an extension of the project to as many of the provinces as possible. The concept will be to establish small production units, which can provide material for RNA or private radio stations.

6.3 Media Development Activities

Strengthening of Rádio Ecclésia

Radio Ecclésia, which is run by the Catholic Church, is the most powerful independent voice in Angola at the moment, and several donor organisations appreciate this by nationwide coverage. Despite being a "donors darling", however, Radio Ecclésia is still supporting the station with new equipment, which can help the station achieve struggling to meet actual running costs such as salaries, electricity bills etc. Securing core funding for the station would give it a much-needed breathing space to concentrate on programme content and long-term sustainability.

Establishment of Rural Community Radio

While the civil society in and around Luanda is weak, this is even more so the case in the rural areas. A number of organisations, though, are working with general capacity building and democracy development in the provinces, which will hopefully soon see a relocation of refugees and IDP's. The use of community media and particularly Community Radio can be an important tool in these processes.

Community Radio initiatives do not necessarily need fully fledged transmission facilities from the outset. It is possible to establish simple production facilities, where the local organisations and activists can produce radio programmes, which can be aired on the existing provincial RNA stations or Radio Ecclésia, when the new transmission equipment is installed. Such a production facility is easily established for 3.000 USD.

The present media law does not have any provisions for community radio stations, but it is a guiding principle in Angolan law that anything is legal if it is not explicitly forbidden. Thus, there should be no legal obstacles for the establishment of local stations – although there will surely be many administrative and practical barriers.

Alternative Printing Facilities for Private Media

The private newspapers are struggling to find printing facilities at a decent price. Most existing print shops refuse to print the publications because of fear of sanctions from the authorities, and the one presently being used is of poor quality and the price is high. The private magazines are negotiating with an alternative printing house, but this company will only be able to do the job after investing in new technology. Funding is being sought from USAID but if this fails for one reason or another, other donor agencies should consider the project – possibly with WAN as a partner.

6.4 Humanitarian Information

Relocation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP's) will be an enormous task in the years to come, and this operation will need a substantial communication and information component. UNHCR is about to launch an information campaign targeting refugees in the camps in Congo (DRC), Zambia and Namibia. The idea is to take leaders from the camps back to their areas of origin to see for themselves how the situation is in their former homes. These "scouting" missions are supposed to be filmed and the videos will be shown to the refugees in the camps.

A similar project targeting the four million IDP's would be an important extension of the UNHCR campaign. Natural partners would be TPA and international organisations with experience in humanitarian communication.

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