

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRATIZATION: UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTING MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAMS

Dates: JULY 5-16, 2010.

Duration: 2 weeks

Organized by:

- Center for Global Communication Studies (CGCS) at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
- Center for Media and Communication Studies (CMCS), CEU

Statement of purpose:

This intensive summer course on media development and democratization is designed to help researchers from academia and civil society gain a better understanding of the history, theory, practice, current trends, and differing methodologies involved with the monitoring and evaluation of international aid programs and their impact, with a focus on the role of radio as a medium for development goals.

Course Structure and Objectives

The goals of the course are:

1. To stimulate and advance research, scholarship and academic discourse on monitoring and evaluation in media development;
2. To identify a core group of scholars working in this area and nurture their research interests and capabilities with the aim of future collaborations amongst faculty, course participants, institutions and CEU;
3. To give participants the opportunity to gain valuable experience in monitoring and evaluation through the seminars, group project work, and field trips.

Participants will be exposed to a wide range of practical and theoretical views related to monitoring and evaluation, and how to integrate social science methods into their daily work. The course will be run as a “master class” on the topic of monitoring and evaluation in media development and will feature a range of lectures, group discussions, as well as field trips within Budapest and Hungary to meet with individuals engaged with work in this field either as researchers, donors or recipients, including a number of minority and community radio projects. In order to maximize the output and opportunities for participants the course will have a maximum of 20 students.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation intensive, participants will work in teams on a group assignment for the duration of the course. Each group will be presented with a hypothetical case study [developed from actual media development request for proposal (RFPs), a media development project implemented by an NGO, or other materials used by donors (governments, foundations, and inter-governmental organizations)]. Each

team will be required to prepare a written report (approximately 10-15 pages in total), and give a multi-media presentation to the group at the end of the course.

In parallel to the rigorous overview and practice in the field, there will also be a series of special topic lectures and panels related to radio broadcasting – from commercial, public, and community perspectives. The powerful role that radio continues to play in much of the world, especially the developing world, will be a core area for discussion in the context of media development and as the basis for many case studies in monitoring and evaluation. Radio is an area in which a significant amount of international aid is given towards, yet there is insufficient research assessing the impact of radio in development. Participants will hear from a range of experts that work in the area of media development and radio to address the challenges and opportunities that this medium provides for development as well as for monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, the summer school will once again feature a live, online web seminar (or “webinar”), produced in partnership with CMCS partner Magyar Telecom, featuring the course participants and other invited guests.

Background

Media development, a sector of international assistance that largely supports efforts at improving or jump-starting democracy and good governance in developing and transitioning countries, has been a mainstay of development efforts of primarily western government aid agencies and foundations for the better part of the past 20 years. In the context of the transitions of post-communist Europe, media development programs contributed to the development of more democratic and pluralistic media spaces by helping to: launch private sector, commercial media outlets; transition from state-run media into public service media; establish independent regulatory agencies; train journalists and editors; and a wide array of other initiatives designed to aid in the development of free and independent media. The impetus for supporting media is largely rooted in the belief that media support democratic reforms by serving as a foundation or building block for improving civil society, educating the masses, and serving as a filter through which the institutions of the state and society can be vetted and scrutinized in an effort to stamp out corruption and check against the abuses of power. Furthermore, media have been described as the connective tissue of democracy; the rationale being that without freedom of expression and access to information, economic, social, and political development is hard to achieve.

Many of the assumptions that media developers like to make -- that free media are important for political stability and democratic reforms, that media play a pivotal role in alleviating poverty and enabling economic development, and that media serve as springboard for many of the other human rights and freedoms that are associated with democratic ideals -- are largely based on theories and conjecture. Empirical evidence and rigorous testing of the relationship between media and all good that they are associated with is scant. As a result, academics, donors, and media development implementers have increasingly started to get serious about developing better tools to monitor and evaluate media development programs in an effort to provide evidence of media development's impact. Unlike some fields of development, however, media development presents a

number of unique challenges and difficulties when it comes to understanding seemingly simple issues like unit of measurement, indicators of success, and selecting a research framework or methodology to assess impact.

Nonetheless, in an era marked by severe strains on budgets and repeated calls to show “value for money”, media development organizations are under serious pressure to substantiate their programs and put forward a compelling case for how donor money gets used and what impact it has had. This has led to a scurry of activity by donors, NGOs, academics, and others to come up with better monitoring and evaluation schemes, toolkits, best practices, and frameworks for proving to the world that media do matter, and that they really do all the things that the media development community likes to purport.

Further, the development and fostering of community radio stations and programs has become increasingly important to many media development initiatives. In an era of digital technologies and globalization, radio is increasingly being recognized as a vital component of pluralistic media sectors, as a valuable source for local information and cultural exchange, and as a tool for indigenous or minority language communication needs. Whether in locales where the digital divide persists, or for the expressed purpose of “citizen” based communication, radio initiatives are on the rise at the grassroots and as part of media development programs. The field of community radio provides both examples of monitoring and evaluation and the need for better-developed methods for such monitoring and evaluation. It is for these reasons that this course will pay special attention to the role of radio within the broader context of monitoring and evaluation in media development.

In short, the problem is that monitoring and evaluation has an awkward relationship within the world of media development. Evidence of impact that is often used to justify democracy and governance support, especially for projects filtered through media development assistance programs, is often difficult to demonstrate due to limitations of time, money, staff, and methodological know-how. Funding for and inclusion of plans for program evaluation is rarely adequate, although this gap is starting to be closed, or at least addressed, as monitoring and evaluation becomes something of a *cause du jour* in international development circles. As a result, media development as a field must come of age, and in doing so, develop and put into practice research methods and techniques that employ sound results-based monitoring and evaluation systems.

Preliminary schedule

Week 1

Monday

Morning

CEU SUN Introductions

Tour of CEU and library

Course introduction and overview

Afternoon

“Getting to know you” ice-breakers

Overview of the group project work on monitoring and evaluation

Lecture featuring invited guest from *Social Impacts*: “Why do we care about Monitoring and Evaluation?”

Tuesday

Morning

Starting Points: “What is it that we are measuring?” Comparing media systems, and enabling environments for media environments

Afternoon

Deconstructing Monitoring & Evaluation – What is it, what does it look like, indicators, goals, outcomes, and differences between monitoring and evaluation as well as differences between macro and micro level assessments.

Special Topics Lecture: Radio as a Tool of Development

Wednesday

Morning

Applying social science techniques to media development initiatives – An Overview of quantitative and qualitative methods – part 1

Afternoon

Setting up Content Analysis: Break into groups – (short) assignment will be given

Media Development: An African Perspective

Thursday

Morning

Methods and Case Studies of M&E – the problems and challenges of different countries and projects, group discussion

Afternoon

Special Topics Lecture: The promise and problem of community media

Research in media and development, the role of academia

Friday

Field trips to media development and community media projects in Hungary

Week 2

Monday

Morning

Case studies

Afternoon

Breakout session for group work

Special topics lecture: "Internet radio and developing media in closed, authoritarian environments"

Tuesday

Morning

Case studies

Afternoon

Special "Webinar", a live online seminar for global audience hosted at Magyar Telekom:

"Chasing the Next Big Thing: Media development in an ever-changing technological landscape"

Wednesday

Morning

Evaluating the effectiveness of communications for social change

Special topics lecture

Afternoon

Time allocated for group work and planning of presentations

Thursday

Morning

Case study of monitoring and evaluation project

Field Trips to Magyar Television and Magyar Radio (course will divide into 2 groups)

Afternoon

Time allocated for group work and planning of presentations

Friday

Group presentations

Course wrap-up, discussions and closing event!

Bibliography

This is a list of key texts related to the field, NOT a list of required readings for the course. A much smaller list of required readings will be distributed to participants in advance of the course.

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CIMA, *Independent Media's Vital Role in Development: A Report to the Center for International Media Assistance*, http://www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Media's_Vital_Role_in_Development-Report.pdf

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OSI Television Across Europe: Regulation, Policy and Independence. 2005. Available at:
<http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/the-2005-television-across-europe-reports/television-across-europe-2005-2006-international-edition>

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