



SPI launches digital Newsletter

Welcome to the SPI's first electronic Newsletter, which comes out just in time for Christmas 2010. We at the Sol Plaatje Institute (SPI) for Media Leadership hope to use this platform to keep our main stakeholders – current, former and future students, media managers across Africa and funders and sponsors – abreast of what's happening at the Institute and in the field of media management.

From next year, the Newsletter will be released quarterly. Our first edition sums up key events at the SPI this year. It includes reports by some of our scholarship-backed students who have just completed their Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management (PDMM); the SPI's partnership with non-governmental organisation Gender Links; and an interview with Johannesburg-based government communicator and media trainer Themba Sepotokele, who talks about the role of a government communications specialist in a changing world.

The SPI is Africa's only university-level institute that offers high-level, accredited and customised business and editorial training programmes and courses to African media. It runs the one-year-long PDMM, which is taken by students on fulltime basis, and has a research unit that examines current and future media management challenges that impact Africa.

I am privileged to have been the first managing editor of this first edition of the Newsletter. Please do give us lots of feedback on the Newsletter, especially on the content you would want to read. Till next time, merry Christmas and a better 2011. – **Managing Editor Monique L'Oréal Senekal. Editing of this issue is by SPI Director Francis Mdlongwa.**

Courses on offer in 2011

Essentials of Newspaper Management

14-18 March & 22-26 August

Essentials of Broadcast Media Management

18-22 April & 24-28 October

Government Media: Essential Tools for Editors and Journalists

16-20 May & 26-30 September

Essentials of Digital Media Management

23-27 May

Essentials of People Management

20-24 June & 14-18 November

Visit: www.spiml.co.za/ for course brochures and more information.

Contact Linda Snam (SPI Administrator) –

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SPI Director Francis Mdlongwa and Marketing-Communications Officer Monique Senekal

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PDMM student activities

‘PDMM an asset to any media firm’

By Nelisa Mqhedlana, MTN scholar

The PDMM class of 2010 comprised of people from different countries and with different qualifications. I was able to sit down with Tendai Matonhodze, a Bachelor of Social Sciences graduate with no previous experience in the media industry, to find out what the programme has meant for her and her advice to the PDMM class of 2011.

Coming from a non-media background, why did you choose to do the PDMM?

Initially, I thought I was using the PDMM as a bridge to cross over to management as I'd always wanted to do management. Come end of the year, I now feel I will be an asset at any media firm anywhere.

What have you taken out of the PDMM, and how does this compare to your expectations?

Although the course is about media management, the information actually cuts across industries and is applicable anywhere. The course went far beyond my expectations.

What was your favourite module and why?

I would say that Human Resource Management was my favourite because it was general in its approach. It can be applied to any industry, and not just media.

What was the biggest highlight for you this year?

The activity that stood out to me most was the outing the PDMM Class had to the *Daily Dispatch*

during module 7 (on Content Management). Since the module focused mainly on radio, it was nice to see how things are done in print. Also, it was nice to get away from the regular class environment for a while.

What would be your advice or 'words of wisdom' to people doing the PDMM next year?

I'd say they must give it their all because it gets really hectic yet so bearable. They will not regret doing the PDMM because, at the end of it all, they will be fully equipped to enter the working world.



PDMM Class of 2010 with SPI staff

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Knight scholars seek to revive troubled Radio Grahamstown

By Smangele Dlamini, PDMM Knight Scholar

Financial sustainability is a major challenge for most community radio stations in South Africa, and there is a pressing need for them to find sustainable income generation ideas that work – and fast.

One of these stations, Radio Grahamstown (Radio G), was re-launched earlier this year thanks to a funding grant awarded by the Knight Foundation, a US-based funding organisation started by John S and James L Knight and aims to advance journalism in the digital age and promote informed and engaged communication. Radio G was shut down in 2008 due to lack of funds. But Professor Harry Dugmore, MTN Chair of Media and Mobile Communications and Head of the Knight Foundation Project at Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies, says that Radio G should be used as a case study to explore different revenue generation possibilities most feasible for local community radio stations.

Some community radio stations have tried to generate revenue through paid Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and by allocating air time to local companies to advertise their products and services. But these efforts, though seemingly plausible, are simply not good enough given drastic changes redrawing the media industry because of the onslaught of digital media and the subsequent increase in competition for audiences and advertisers.

The three PDMM 2010 Knight Scholars conducted comprehensive market research into the marketing and advertising needs of small-to-medium-sized businesses in Grahamstown. During the June-July vacation, they also conducted a mini-survey to find out what kind of economic activity is taking place in Grahamstown East (the under-resourced part of town).



PDMM 2010 Knight Foundation Scholars (l-r): David Moeping (Botswana); Smangele Dlamini (Swaziland); and Boldwill Hungwe (Zimbabwe).

The research involved collecting primary data about the preferences, listening habits, opinions and attitudes of current and prospective

small business owners in Grahamstown East. Radio G will now process this data and determine the size, location and demographics of its intended market, as well as its listenership frequency. This will assist it in developing a strategic advertising campaign that will help to increase the station's advertising revenue.

Now that mobile technology is widely seen as bridging the information access gap, the Knight Foundation/Radio G project can go a long way in assisting small- and medium-sized businesses increase their sales through the effective use of mobile phones. Advertisers will have the opportunity to run their advertisements and promotions across Radio G's mobile applications, which the station says account for around 99% of its thousand users' daily listening.



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Sketching the life of a youth activist

By Monique Senekal, Managing Editor

PDMM MTN scholar Luzuko Buku describes himself as an advocacy journalist at heart and a community youth leader at the same time.

While completing the PDMM this year, Luzuko was the Regional Chairperson of the South African Student Congress (SASCO), an organisation that stretches from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's George campus in the Western Cape, to Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape. As Regional Chairperson, he headed the organisation's communication and policy formulation and advocacy office.

Luzuko was also the Deputy Secretary of the South African Youth Council (SAYC) in Makana Municipality in Grahamstown. This structure is a coalition of different youth structures. Here he represented the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA). He also headed the communications office of this civic organisation.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading Marxism-Leninism. He utilises this communist ideology to develop his critical analysis, and as a guide to action.

His interest and passion for youth activism started as early as 1999 when he, together with his friends, started circulating boxing stories and gossip in some

parts of Mdantsane, a township popularly known for boxing in East London, his birthplace.

He chose to do the PDMM mainly because he believed the course would equip him with the relevant theoretical understanding and managerial skills to pursue a career in youth activism and community media. However, Luzuko explains that the course has changed his preconceived ideas; particularly how different media houses can contribute to transformation in society.

“Before doing the PDMM, I had a negative view about privately-owned and so-called ‘public service’ media houses. I thought their only interest was to either make a profit, or to mislead people into thinking they had their best interest at heart. In my eyes, it was only community media who could earnestly contribute to societal transformation and democracy. I now understand that other media houses can also contribute to this transformation by consciously structuring and implementing policies in their workplace which reflect the values and rights of all people in a democracy, protected by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,” he told me.

Luzuko's plan for 2011 is a reflection of his passion for youth empowerment and community media activism.

“I am currently working on creating a national campus website that will collate student news, current affairs and future prospects for students from all universities in South Africa. I already have a group of dedicated students from various universities who will work on this project -- namely colleagues from Walter Sisulu University, Rhodes University, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and the University of Fort Hare.”

The content of the intended website, however, will not steer far away from Luzuko's undeniable bias towards political affairs.

“The website will mainly be a reflection on issues affecting the youth, and include reports about

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student council meetings and the key issues discussed at various societal meetings. Our aim is to create a dialogue and an information-sharing hub that will help students make more informed decisions on issues which directly affect them.”

Luzuko and his team have already set specific milestones and timeframes for meeting the launch of the website.

“Thanks to the PDMM programme, I have developed a critical understanding of the key media management aspects I need to think about in launching a viable media undertaking. By the end of January 2011, we aim to have an editorial policy in place, together with a strategic marketing plan detailing how we are going to target our content to meet the needs of our audiences.”

Luzuko admits that the main challenge he now faces is acquiring start-up capital to launch the initiative.



However, he has a strategic plan which he believes will help him and his team of four approach potential partners and funders.

Coming from an impoverished township environment, Luzuko says being a recipient of an MTN scholarship has not only given him the ability to further his studies and be independent, but it has also opened up the door to opportunities.

“Being able to introduce myself to media companies as an MTN scholar has given me that edge needed to be taken seriously as a person. It is thus that *Eastern Cape Today* offered me a job as a journalist for next year. They really think I can add value to their organisation by virtue of myself being an MTN scholar. Launching the website next year is a definite as I am very passionate about this. All that is left for me now is to decide to either further my studies, or to start work and earn some money while managing the website business. It is quite a difficult

decision to make, but I need to compromise on one or the other.”



‘Studying towards a PDMM is the best decision I have ever made’

By Penelope Mashego, MTN scholar

Even before I started the PDMM, I knew what I wanted to do in the future.

My BA in Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) and in Politics and International Studies made me realise how much more I could do to help others. This realisation to believe that one day I could own a media organisation which would contribute to the development and education of my community. I was not sure how I would go about doing that, but I felt the PDMM would help me understand the business side of media organisations to achieve my dream.

The PDMM has exceeded my expectations. Not only did I learn more about the logistics of running a media business, but I also learned about the ethics thereof – essential considerations to the sustainability of any organisation. I also found learning about how to deal with threats to media freedom by governments and other competing forces very interesting and relevant.

The most important lesson I picked up from the PDMM, though, is that **determination** and **passion** are important if one wants to survive in the media world.

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But my immediate plan for next year is to travel and teach English in a foreign country. Thereafter I will come back to South Africa to pursue a career in the media industry.

Wherever I go, I will always take with me the lessons I learned on the PDMM because these are so valuable and applicable to any working environment.

Thank you MTN for sponsoring my studies and stay in Grahamstown this past year. I remain eternally grateful.

In other news...

SPI's media awards promote gender equality in SADC Newsrooms

By Monique Senekal, Managing Editor

Different psychosocial understandings of gender in society are still the cause of gender power imbalances in the workplace.

Professor Michael G. Dudley from the Department of Psychology, Illinois University, believes that the inequitable distribution of power between men and women needs to be redressed in order to better serve our contemporary society. This can be achieved by considering both the desire of women to obtain more power, and the external agents that have the power to pressure and institutionalise such endeavours.

In his words:

“[T]he only plausible solution to the quagmire of gender inequality rests not within the confines of internal agency but in the wholesale adoption of progressive societal forces on the periphery” (2006: 1).

Gender Links, a Southern African NGO founded in 2001 and is committed to spearheading gender equality in the public and private spheres, is one such external agent which uses its power of influence to put effect to internal agency by structuring and releasing gender policies. However, Gender Links' ability to affect change directly depends on, and is effectively limited to, the proactive support it receives from external organisations these policies are targeting.

In an effort to recognise and honour those media organisations which purposefully and vigorously support the redistribution of gender power in the workplace, the SPI four years ago partnered with Gender Links to launch media

awards for Southern African media companies which show leadership in combating HIV and AIDS and in mainstreaming and promoting gender-sensitive policies.

SPI Director Francis Mdlongwa elaborates:

“We have a bilateral agreement with Gender Links to co-sponsor two awards in media management which recognise and honour two things: firstly, media companies which formulate and vigorously implement policies which make people aware of HIV/AIDS in the media industry; and secondly, those companies which deliberately promote gender policies that ensure women in those organisations are promoted into senior positions.”

These awards are running parallel to Gender Links' Gender and Media (GEM) Awards that recognise progressive practice in the news coverage of these issues.

This year's GEM Awards, the fourth since being launched, were presented at a summit held in Johannesburg from 13-15 October. Seventeen journalists – 14 women and three men -- were honoured with awards in various categories. The winners were chosen from more than 180 entries drawn from 13 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

“In the Media Action Plan (MAP) categories, Lesotho's People's Choice Radio won the award for HIV and AIDS and the Media Institutional Excellence Award for the creation of their gender-sensitive HIV and AIDS policy. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation won for their progressive gender policy. Malawi's Capital Radio was the runner-up in the category of media houses' gender policies,” according to Gender Links (2010).

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Gender Links' Media Programme Manager Sikhonzile Ndlovu noted that her organisation would be rolling out a gender policy, designed along the lines of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, to 100 newsrooms in the region by June 2011. The policy is aimed at encouraging editors and media managers to ensure a gender balance in newsrooms (Katerere, 2010).

Whereas mainstream research shows that female journalists feel as though their potential to advance in the newsroom is limited by deep gender power imbalances existing in society, SPI Researcher Johanna Mavhungu disagrees.

“No, I don't feel limited as a female professional. Conventional society is patriarchal and organisations such as Gender Links are doing a great job to challenge that system. I believe if you find yourself too obsessed with patriarchal attitudes you will actually be working against yourself and your own development -- male or female,” she said in an interview.

Reflecting on how she lives her own life, Mavhungu illustrates her internal motivation mechanism as follows:

“I don't need to measure myself against a man; I work within my own abilities and capabilities as an individual. Similarly, I measure another person, male or female, according to their own abilities and capabilities; their ability to deliver based on the specifics in our written contractual agreements.”

It is important to note, then, that gender politics is not just about women. It is about power imbalances and psychosocial prejudices facing both men and women in the workplace. In the media research sector, for example, Mavhungu explains that there is a gap in knowledge about the psychosocial prejudices which may exist.

“I think there is a need to examine the media research sector by conducting research into the gender spread of these researchers: if there are more women than men, how can we create more opportunities for men to get into the research sector; if there are more men than women in the research sector, how can we create more

opportunities for women to get into research positions?”

It therefore seems that developing a critical understanding of the dynamics of opportunities which exist in society – links to history, to the economy, to culture and status – is essential in overcoming the unfair bias linked to defining what constitutes a ‘male’ job or role, and what constitutes a ‘female’ job or role.

Mdlongwa explains that the SPI would like to run more courses at the Institute which teach media managers the importance of promoting gender policies in newsrooms and media organisations. However, progress on this front is constrained by the Institute's increasing workload and lack of capacity. Mdlongwa further notes the Institute's intention to address this training need.

“We will increase our efforts in this regard as our staff complement and other resources increase. But the recent – some say continuing -- global economic downturn has affected our potential to increase our staff as business is generally low.”



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Q&A

SPI course bridges comms skills gap for SA government officials

One of the training strategies of the Sol Plaatje Institute is to ensure that its media management programmes and courses are delivered by a mix of industry experts and academics. This takes classroom learning into the real world, providing course participants with both knowledge and practical skills in how to turn their media organisations into sustainable and profitable enterprises that are run ethically.

Managing Editor Monique Senekal spoke with Themba Sepotokele, a former journalist and now Gauteng-based media trainer who teaches a government communications course part-time at the SPI, about the course he runs, what it entails and its possible impact.



Monique Senekal: How did you get associated with the Institute as a media trainer?

Themba Sepotokele: I had been attending the SPI's **Essential Tools for Editors and Journalists** course in 2008 when SPI Director Francis Mdlongwa approached me. I had been postponing attending this course because my job as spokesperson for the Gauteng Local Government MEC, Qedani Mahlangu, required me to be there 24/7. It so happened that during that time she went abroad and I managed to attend the course. Mr. Mdlongwa asked me to consider taking over from him because, he said, I possessed the traits, qualifications and exhibited good skills. Since then, I haven't looked back and I am enjoying making a difference and contributing to producing a crop of communicators who understand the media terrain, and journalists who understand the complexity of government communication.

MS: Could you explain what the course you teach is really all about and what its target market is?

TS: The course aims to give government communicators and journalists the platform to learn about their roles as effective and efficient government communicators who also cultivate sound and ethical relationships with the media and other stakeholders such as the public. The target market is government communicators, mayors, municipal managers, and media practitioners, including journalists. On one hand, most communicators do not appreciate the role of the media, and, on the other hand, journalists don't understand the complexity involved in being a government communicator. The course is like a bridge that links them together and we concern ourselves with the "hows".

MS: Why this course now?

TS: Most government communicators, spokespersons and even their political principals used to regard communication as the by-the-way. It is only when they are under media scrutiny that they appreciate the importance of strategic communication in handling the media. Furthermore, when it comes to facing the media with confidence, one requires on-going training. I usually make an example of ANC Youth League President Julius Malema the day he threw his toys out of the box and chased BBC journalist Jonah Fischer, and how AWB General Secretary André Visagie lost his cool during a live television debate with political analyst Lebohang Pheko following the death of AWB Leader Eugene Terre'Blanche as examples of how not to handle the media.

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MS: How was the course developed?

TS: The course was designed and developed by the SPI. Among the modules taught is how to become an effective and credible communicator; how to design and develop a government communications strategy and campaign; the role of the media in society, and leadership and management of a government communications agency. Some of the modules are taught by your Rhodes people while I focus on government communications-specific modules. I make them (the course participants) understand the environment in which they operate in by bringing relevant newspaper clippings for them to engage with and analyse. This allows the government communicators to appreciate the important role being played by the media in general, and allows them to understand how to use the media to their own advantage in getting their message across, rather than seeing their counterpart as the enemy.



Above: Communications Officers who attended the “Government Media: Essential Tools for Editors and Journalists” course at the SPI from 27 Sept-1 Oct 2010

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Research



SPI Research Unit: What we've been up to in 2010

By Johanna Mavhungu, SPI Researcher

SPI research in 2010 has been led by innovation in the face of reduced budgets for research from funders. A highlight for the year is the *Media Sustainability Index* (MSI) 2010 on behalf of the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), an international educational and media NGO based in Washington, DC. SPI research produced the indexes of five SADC country chapters from Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Namibia and Malawi. The index measures the strength of media using five broad objectives to determine the degree of free speech, professional journalism, media diversity and plurality of news sources, business management and, lastly, the effectiveness of support organisations, specifically non-governmental organisations and journalism education institutions.

On this index, South Africa in the last three years had a sustainable system compared to the 37 African countries measured by the MSI. However, this year saw a decline in the near sustainable category for objective 1 on free speech in particular a result of debates and amendments to government legislation and imminent laws that supposedly threaten to curtail free speech.

During the MSI panel discussion of 2010, Franklin Huizies, CEO of the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), a member-based association for community radio broadcasters, raised concerns about the Public Service Broadcast Bill. The Bill defines the relationship between the broadcast community media and government. Municipalities

have to be co-opted onto boards which, for Huizies, created a quagmire of problems.

Citing an example of how the Bill can be open to abuse, Huizies said:

“Some stations have been victims of municipalities withdrawing business. [The stations] were selling airtime to the municipality and they (the municipalities) cancelled that because of statements made by the station they were unhappy with” (MSI South Africa Chapter, 2010).

In South Africa, of the five objectives that make up the index, three scored below the average point needed to achieve a sustainable socio-political and economic climate that promotes media growth.

These and further concerns from 37 African countries are captured and recorded on an annual basis in the publication, *Development of Sustainable Independent Media in Africa* (MSI).

Support from the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF-SA) will enable the SPI shortly to produce a publication titled *The Sustainability and Viability of Mobile News Services in South Africa*. Mobile phones are being touted as the future for Africa, due to lack of access to broadband and internet by the majority of media consumers. The SPI research examines the strategy of four media houses -- AVUSA, Etv, Media 24 and Grocott's Mail's *Grocott's Now* -- for implementing mobile news services. This research will be a useful resource for those interested in “new media

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platforms for journalism” for educational, professional and information purposes. Elvira van Noort, working alongside SPI researcher Johanna Mavhungu, has begun analysing findings from in-depth interviews and observations during field visits to the media

houses.

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)-SPI Africa Media Leadership Conference (AMLC) 2010 provided an opportunity for the research unit to expand its work. Under the broad conference theme “Sustainable Media Business Models in the Digital Age”, delegates completed a questionnaire and took part in interviews that were later podcast on the SPI’s blog (www.spiml.blogspot.com), alongside summary articles of speakers’ presentations. The research data gathered at the conference will culminate in a scholarly article that addresses the broad theme as well as interrogates what we mean by sustainable business models – taking into account issues of convergence, journalism quality, media content, audiences and advertising, and the successes and challenges faced by media houses on the continent.

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2010 HIGHLIGHTS



AFRICA MEDIA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE:

“Sustainable Media Business Models in the Digital Age” - Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 26-29 September



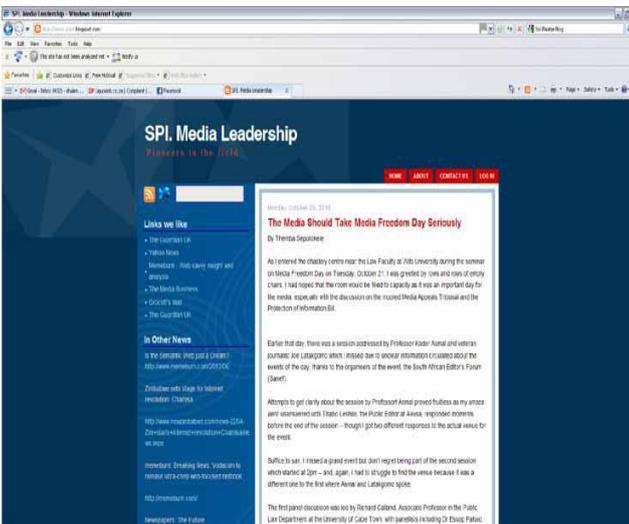
Publication released in
October:

*Harnessing Africa's Digital
Future*

Edited by
Francis Mdlongwa
& Moagisi Letlhaku



PDMM students visit Daily Dispatch
as part of their Content Management
coursework in September.
Course lecturer: Johanna Mavhungu



Launch of SPI. Media Leadership blog:

March 2010

Look Forward to a Revamped SPI
Website in 2011

SPI will be giving its current
website a face-lift.

The new website will feature some
of the latest interactive website
features and be more user-friendly
to better engage with the user.

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