



Media Leadership Strategies from Southern Africa

Asta Rau

with research assistance from
Peter du Toit, Johanna Mavhungu & Jacqueline Kabeta

MEDIA LEADERSHIP: STRATEGIES FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

This book is a unique record of a gathering of 18 media leaders from ten Southern African countries. Made up largely of direct quotes from people with first hand experience, it represents the thinking and expertise of current leaders in the print, radio, publishing and media consultancy sectors.

Divided into easy-to-navigate sections, the book opens up several debates and dilemmas. It presents principles, ideas, techniques and strategies to guide, assist, and inspire anyone involved in media in Africa. It is essential reading for leaders and managers in media, as well as media researchers.

SOL PLAATJE INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA LEADERSHIP &
SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Media Leadership: Strategies from Southern Africa

Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership

Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development

2009

Dr. Asta Rau

**With research assistance from:
Peter du Toit, Johana Mavhungu and Jacqueline Kabeta**

Funded by NiZA: Nederlands Institute for Southern Africa

**Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI)
Rhodes University**

Media Leadership: Strategies from Southern Africa
ISBN: 9780868104522

Copyright © 2009
by Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI)
Rhodes University
School of Journalism and Media Studies
Grahamstown
South Africa

Author: Asta Rau
Editors: Robert Berold and Mindy Stanford
Research assistants: Peter du Toit, Johanna Mavhungu and Jacqueline Kabeta
Typesetting and Design: Shalen Gajadhar
Cover image: Darren Hester © 2008 (www.stockvault.net)
Cover concept: Asta Rau

Funded by NiZA: Nederlands Institute for Southern Africa
Published by Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) (South Africa)

Printed by Grocott's Printers and Publishers (Grahamstown, South Africa).
Paper stock: 120gsm Gloss
Typesetting done in Calibri 11pt and Tin Doghouse 32pt.

Grahamstown, South Africa, 2009

To reproduce any part of this book please contact Director/Deputy Director: Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (<http://www.spiml.com>)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs License.
To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/za/> or
send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all the lekgotla delegates who gave so generously of their time and expertise, and who remained so energetically committed throughout the event.

We are very grateful to Nederlands Institute for Southern Africa (NiZA), which funded the lekgotla and this publication.

Thank you to the facilitators – Peter du Toit, Asta Rau, and Johanna Mavhungu, from the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) in South Africa, and Jacqueline Kabeta and Silumesii Milupi from the Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development in Botswana.

For editing and proofreading the text, gratitude to Robert Berold and Mindy Stanford of Grahamstown. And thanks to Shalen Gajadhar of Rhodes University for layout and reproduction.

Thank you also to the Rhodes University students who so carefully transcribed the raw data – Anthony Mlay, Aretha Phiri, Kate Chauncey, Loyiso Sidimba, Megan Morgan, Rebecca French, Shea Karssing, Sibusiso Mdlongwa and Tracy-Lee Nicol.

Contents

About the Leadership Lekgotla	1
Overview	2
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats	4
The lekgotla as a research process	8
Limitations	10
Meet the Partners	13
Meet the Delegates	15
Meet the Facilitators	24
Chapter 1 What Constitutes Leadership?	27
Leadership is both a process and a position	27
Leadership is multidimensional, multifaceted, holistic	28
Leadership embraces change	29
Leadership exploits opportunities and manages risk	29
Leadership is visionary	30

Leadership is strategic	31
Leadership sets the tone	31
Leadership is a relationship	32
Leadership is mindful and reflexive	33
Towards defining leadership	33

Chapter 2 Up Close and Personal: Why Delegates Think they are Good Leaders 37

Vision, direction and belief	37
Thinking on your feet and capitalising on opportunities	38
Having courage and commitment	38
Leading by example	39
Being flexible	40
Team working	40
Being open to learning and multiple perspectives	40
Reflecting	41
Contributing to the wider media community	41
Empowering people	42
Motivating people	43
Delivering the goods, getting results	43
Influencing people and networking for growth	44
Initiating and managing change	45

Chapter 3 Key Leadership Roles and Responsibilities	47
Creating organisational vision	47
Answering to stakeholders	47
Securing revenue, mobilising resources	48
Promoting diversity	48
Educating people about the role of media	49
Enhancing democratic processes	50
Networking and partnering	51
The bigger picture, and getting staff to see it	51
Identifying and exploiting opportunities	52
Maintaining order and discipline	53
Taking responsibility	53
Leading by example	54
Ensuring succession	54
Setting up and maintaining appropriate governance	55
Managing people	55
Passing on the passion	56
Solving problems	56
Planning	57

Chapter 4 Starting Media Organisations and Being Promoted	59
Being promoted or taking over as leader	59
Starting up a media business	63
Some of the challenges	64
 Chapter 5 First Principles: Visions and Mandates	 69
Creating the vision	70
Getting buy-in to the vision	70
Issue-focused visions	71
Business-focused visions	73
From visions to mandate	74
 Chapter 6 Business Matters	 77
Governance and board members	77
Money matters	81
Risk management	84
Foreign exchange	85
Donor funding	86
Changing mindsets	87
Innovative strategies for generating revenue	88

Money and staff	90
Advertising	92
Advertising and governments	93
Advertising and the private sector	95
Marketing	98
Finding your niche: research and feedback	98
Capturing audience	100
Product development, branding	103
Networking	104
 Chapter 7 People Power	 109
 Challenging stereotypes	 109
The buck stops here	113
Internal frictions and factions	115
Communicating and arbitrating	117
Soliciting feedback	118
People and change	121
Discipline	122
Setting standards and codes of conduct	123
Fairness and favouritism	125
Reprimanding and congratulating	126
Firing, hiring and redeploying	128

Delegation and teamwork	121
Motivating staff	135
Empowering and inspiring	137
Incentives	138
Human resource challenges	140
Training and mentoring	142
Formal training	143
Mentoring and coaching	144
 Chapter 8 Ethics and Independence	 147
Editorial independence – tensions inside the organisation	148
Credibility, neutrality, reliability	148
Corruption	151
Financial factors	152
Chequebook journalism	154
 Chapter 9 Politics, Independence, Law	 157
Media's broad social mandate	157
Politics and problems	159
Problems with ownership	161

Suspicion	161
Infiltrating, opposing, victimising	164
Positive views, possible solutions	166
Legislation and litigation	169
Contexts and frameworks	169
Access to information	170
Licensing and opening up media channels	171
Litigation	173
 Chapter 10 Development and Diversity	 177
 Social responsibility	 179
Solidarity and support	179
Media solidarity	179
Media support	181
News agencies	182
Printing and distribution	183
Localisation: music and language	185
Music	185
Language	186
Promoting a reading culture	189

Chapter 11 Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change	193
Changing media landscapes	193
Altering mindsets	197
Shifting dependence on donor funding	198
Succession	199
Internet communication technologies: the coming media	202
Signing off	206
References	207

About the Leadership Lekgotla

Media in Africa is in an exciting phase of development, with talented, resourceful media leaders. But the region's capacity to support the ongoing professional development of current leaders, as well as train and groom new leadership candidates, is limited. Nevertheless we have experienced leaders in the region who have much to teach us.

With this in mind, a small and intimate Leadership Lekgotla was held over four days in Johannesburg during August 2007. It was attended by 18 delegates from print, radio, publishing and media consultancy sectors in 10 African countries – Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Co-hosted by the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* (SPI) and the *Southern African Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development* (SAIMED), the gathering was funded by the *Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa* (NiZA).

The lekgotla sparked off around a roaring fire on the evening of 31 July 2007. Energy remained high and engagement was intense right through to the closing plenary. Over the four days we explored a range of topical themes, including: leadership roles and styles, editorial independence, problems encountered in the workplace and broader media contexts, and how delegates respond to these problems. A flexible agenda allowed space to delve further into some of the topics that were raised by focus groups and two-person teams as well as in the storytelling and plenary sessions. In keeping with the collaborative nature of the lekgotla, no formal papers were presented. Even the key speaker, Rory Wilson – a media consultant – used interactive exercises designed to stimulate reflection and debate.

In planning the lekgotla we had two broad aims:

- Collaboration – to bring media leaders together so that they could network, share their experiences, learn from each other, and generate solutions to challenges.
- Research – to draw on and document the collective experiences of people with a proven track record in media leadership. We wanted to use their input to assemble and publicise a range of principles, ideas, techniques and strategies to guide and assist, and most importantly to inspire Africa's current and budding media leaders.

Regarding the collaboration objective, delegates noted in their evaluations that they had benefited from sharing ideas with professionals from different countries and media platforms. Some said they had been exposed to new ways of approaching media challenges; others appreciated the opportunity to forge new business relationships.

Regarding the research objective, the Iekgotla generated a rich body of information. This book's analysis and presentation of information closely reflects the exploratory and dialogic nature of the event. Instead of analysing delegates' input in relation to knowledge and texts in the public domain, the debates that emerged are juxtaposed so that readers can follow dialogues revealing the direct leadership experiences of delegates. In keeping with this spirit, this book makes little reference to leadership theory per se.

Overview

Divided into easy-to-navigate sections that are rich in quotes from media leaders, this book presents principles, ideas, techniques and strategies to guide, assist, and inspire Africa's media leaders. It also opens up several challenges and dilemmas.

This introductory section offers an **overview** of the contents in each of the chapters, the findings from a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of media in the region, and a description of the Iekgotla as a research process. Readers are then introduced to Iekgotla partners, delegates and the funder.

The first three chapters construct a foundation for African media leadership. **Chapter 1** records what the delegates regard as essential attributes of good leaders, while **Chapters 2 and 3** reveal the areas in which delegates see themselves as having succeeded as leaders and what they consider to be their key roles.

In **Chapter 4** delegates speak about their experiences of taking on leadership positions. Several found that the staff in their organisations had not been properly briefed about the leadership change, nor told what their new leader's credentials were. Inevitably this led to resistance to their leadership. They said the only solution is to 'get on with it and prove yourself worthy of the task'.

Chapter 5 is about setting visions, missions and mandates. Some delegates have adopted issue-focused visions for their organisations, aiming for empowerment and development, while others favour more business-focused visions. Whichever the vision, there was agreement that a vision has to be for the benefit of both the media organisation and its audience.

Any media professional hoping to move into management and leadership has to learn the lessons of business. **Chapter 6** is about these issues. It begins with how to work with one's governing board.

Delegates agreed that it was vital to elect board members who add value, rather than people who are simply well-known public figures. Even with committed boards, they said, board members must be “workshopped, and thoroughly workshopped.”

The business chapter goes on to discuss money matters: diversification, foreign exchange, innovative strategies for generating revenue, how to encourage staff to save and generate money, and finally, advertising – in relation to government and private sectors. This is followed by a discussion on marketing: how to find your niche through research and feedback, how to capture audiences, how to develop a product, and branding.

In **Chapter 7: ‘People power’**, delegates analyse their personal leadership styles and explore how it feels to be a leader. They discuss accountability and transparency, handling internal ‘frictions and factions’, leadership training, several aspects of discipline, as well as firing and hiring. Here the reader can really see delegates’ leadership skills in action. The knack of leading people, as one delegate says, is “to be clever about getting things done in ways whereby people enjoy doing them”. Or as another delegate put it:

If you make a decision on your own, nobody else is going to buy into it. You need to take decisions together with others – that’s what locks them in and makes them feel part of it. Then as leader you sit back and watch. If you isolate people from decision-making processes, then you’ll have to fight tooth and nail to impose your will on them. You need to understand decisions as processes – journeys you have to go through. Don’t rush people into decisions ... take it slowly.

Chapter 8 looks at editorial independence. Delegates acknowledge that it is extremely difficult to balance advertising and editorial independence. As one comments: “I find myself faced every week with the decision of how to approach people for funding and advertising yet still remain independent.” In print organisations this issue tends to emerge in tensions between editorial and marketing departments, while in broadcast organisations tensions arise between star personalities and other staff members. Also discussed under the theme of editorial independence is the contentious issue of ‘chequebook journalism’ and various other corrupt and dubious practices.

Chapter 9 discusses political and legal pressures on the media in delegates’ home countries, including their different experiences with the law and with the courts.

Chapter 10 goes on to cover how a contemporary media leader in Africa has to take on the role of promoting diversity and enhancing democratic processes. An interesting discussion here on ‘music and language’ demonstrates that local arts and languages are not only means to cultivating diversity and inclusiveness, but offer solid business opportunities.

Finally, **Chapter 11** addresses growth, sustainability and change. Issues discussed include changes in

the media landscape, leadership succession planning and the impact of donor funding on sustainability. There were fascinating discussions of the challenges and opportunities coming from new technologies.

Many of these and other debates are the subject of public and academic media conferences. Where this book goes further is in encapsulating ‘first hand’ the specific and deeply informed experience and expertise of delegates. It is a unique record of today’s media leaders speaking their minds – and, it is hoped, provides accessible and valuable reading for both media researchers and upcoming media leaders.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

This section gathers together delegates’ perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in relation to media and media leadership in the region. All points are comprehensively explored in the body of the book.

As delegates rightfully acknowledge, just as strengths provide opportunities, so can weaknesses and threats. One of the values of the SWOT exercise lies in the process of participants deliberating about which categories a particular factor or quality falls into. This generates dialogue and fresh insights among participants. To offset some of the ambiguities or limitations that arise from decisions to allocate particular factors to particular categories, the four sections that follow integrate what participants said *throughout* the Iekgotla, with information gathered during the actual SWOT analysis sessions.

Leadership strengths and achievements

- There is a good pool of media leaders in the region.
- There is better empowerment of media through regional watchdogs.
- Media training is more widely available in the region.
- Media organisations are no longer confined to their geographical location, but can operate locally, regionally, internationally as well as globally.
- Media has managed to build a broad alliance with civil society. There is an increased understanding of the role of media in building democracy and of the media as an industry offering business investment opportunities.
- Ownership of media is still predominantly vested in individuals rather than the stock market, so leaders can more easily pursue agendas that are not governed by the interests of stakeholders who tend

to focus only on financial returns.

- Courage and determination are apparent in Africa's media leaders. Delegates agree that starting up and carrying a media organisation forward through myriad challenges is "no lunch" as one delegate expresses it. M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, comments: "Our region has now produced many sustainable media enterprises invested in continuing, competing and creating – and it's from them that we get our leaders."
- Many media organisations in the region have established a good reputation for reliability and integrity and have attracted very strong audiences for their products.
- Media is able to empower local communities.
- Diversity of media in the region has improved in the last decade. The discussion on 'Music and language' demonstrates that the arts are not only a means to cultivating diversity and inclusiveness in the region, but offer very solid business opportunities.

Leadership weaknesses and areas of vulnerability

- There are still too few leaders with business savvy, as evidenced by the closure of many media enterprises.
- Meagre financial resources hamper progress, particularly for smaller independent community organisations.
- Media organisations tend to be perceived and are often treated by society as if they are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) serving a human rights agenda, rather than being bona fide businesses. Media fails to market itself and to educate people to realise its goals, and fails to appreciate that, as with any business, its services must be paid for.
- While delegates agree that donors remain essential to media in the region, donor-dependency nonetheless represents a weakness and does not necessarily produce sustainable media organisations. A plenary presentation of focus group findings summarised this observation: "We need to see a more concentrated and more holistic approach in the region to donor funding of new media organisations. Let's graduate 10 of 20 fledgling organisations rather than open 300 new ones, the majority of which are going to die. There must be some rethinking around that."
- There is a lack of benchmarking standards, particularly for media organisations in rural areas serving rural communities.

- While the increase in international collaboration is noted as a strength, the media still does not foster enough cross-border collaboration or build enough mutually beneficial business partnerships.
- There is too little media solidarity and more support structures are needed for it. Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, comments: “I think a leadership weakness in the region – definitely in Botswana – is a serious lack of effective lobbying amongst different media leaders in the country. Our leadership seems to be disjointed in that you find media owners fight their own little wars and never come together to say, ‘What are our common interests?’ That’s why we’ve been ineffective, really, in fighting some of the challenges and prejudices from government.”
- There is not enough training specific to management and leadership in the media industry.
- Planning and training for leadership succession is weak.
- Journalists are conditioned to ‘bash’ governments.
- Many leaders still tend to micro-manage and do not delegate as much as they should. As a result they undermine their own executive management capacity. Alluding to this, Pheello Selinyane of *Public Eye* in Lesotho points out, “As leaders we are not able to oversee staff and make sure they are well cultivated because we are overstretched.”
- Few organisations in the print industry have their own printing presses. They have to use what often prove to be unreliable or inefficient outside resources.
- Audience and readership research remains the domain of wealthier, larger, media organisations. Without the ability to conduct organisation-specific research, smaller companies are unable to develop products that target their particular audiences.

Opportunities

- Conditions in the industry, especially the increasing withdrawal of a financial scaffolding, for instance the provision of funding to sustain fledgling media organisations beyond their startup grant, along with withdrawal of official advertising support, have had the effect of sharpening media leaders’ business acumen and developing their capacity for innovation.
- Delegates from countries other than Zimbabwe and Lesotho report that interference in media in the region is on the decline. As Salomao Moyana editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique says: “The issue of media freedom is now on the agenda all over the region.”

- Through investigative journalism and by presenting multiple viewpoints, media capitalises on government and corporations that, in response to bad press, spend more on media products in an effort to improve their image.
- Information and communication technologies (ICTs), most notably the Internet, can be harnessed for media development, diversity and growth.
- Local positioning means there are new opportunities in local markets. As one delegate points out: “It’s a niche that big competitors from international houses and with international titles can’t take from you. That’s an enormous advantage. But we must make sure that we don’t grow local content that’s a lot of rubbish, but be very innovative and creative in how we develop those products.”
- There is a market for independent voices and this impacts positively on growth. Evidence could be found in the very fact that all Iekgotla delegates are leaders of independent organisations.
- Delegates agree that the number of media platforms, products and organisations has grown in the region. The resulting competition stimulates innovation, leads to the cultivation of higher standards and opens up opportunities for diversification.

Threats

- Delegates from all the countries complain of competition from government media, which threatens, inter alia, the financial sustainability of media across the region. Kennedy Otsheleng from *GABZ FM* in Botswana remarks: “Government says we are a free market economy and that they want to stay away from business. And they have kept their word to the extent that they’ve stayed away from every business except media.”
- Some countries have government policies that restrict media functioning and development. Access to information in most countries is not easy. Some media organisations, along with their staff and audiences, have been victimised and intimidated. Overt and covert government interference in media is identified by most delegates as a considerable threat to running a stable and profitable business.
- The legal systems in some countries are not conducive to media freedom and effective functioning. In the broadcasting sector many countries remain tightly regulated with airwaves monopolised by governments. Litigation and its costs can have a negative impact on freedom of speech.
- More often than not, media-government relationships are characterised by mutual suspicion and a lack of understanding. Anton van Zyl, the editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa comments: “It is definitely a huge problem in this country where the local government municipalities

view the media as a threat and then criticise them, instead of seeing them as a responsible watchdog.”

- A shortage (in the case of Zimbabwe a total lack) of foreign exchange can cause problems for media growth and development.
- Poor remuneration and working conditions mean experienced professionals often leave the industry for greener pastures. This is exacerbated by the poaching of skilled professionals and executives by governments and large international organisations.
- Media organisations in the global community, and particularly in the western world, are merging into large conglomerates and flexing their financial muscle to alter the industry in ways that make it difficult for smaller organisations to remain viable and to compete.
- Ethical standards and editorial independence are threatened in corporate and other business relationships, particularly in the light of the fierce competition for revenue. Such a context tends to lead to self-censorship and ‘chequebook’ journalism, which is a growing problem in the region. Samantha Kalisa, editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner*, Cape Town, observes: “The increasing power that that advertisers have over the media has become really alarming.” Delegates agree that African media leaders need to find new ways to ensure organisational sustainability without compromising editorial integrity.
- In order to compete in the new media context, organisations need to invest in up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT), as well as technology experts and training, but financial and time constraints mean this is out of reach for many.
- Many democracies are still young, which means conflict between opposing parties may be highly volatile, with the potential to destabilise countries. Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* in Malawi comments: “You can’t predict what will happen tomorrow, and there is always conflict. The idea of having a ruling party on the side, and opposition parties working together, and allowing that dissent to enrich the nationwide discourse, and hoping that it’s going to yield something good for the country, hasn’t really settled.”

The lekgotla as a research process

The lekgotla was originally conceived of as a research project, but one with a difference: the process of data collection was designed to bring participants together so that they would collaborate and network. The idea was to actively gather information while providing a space for delegates to share their expert knowledge and experience of media leadership, and generate ideas. As with any rigorous research, this lekgotla followed a carefully designed methodology, which is described here.

Research approach

The research was underpinned by critical realist¹ theory and followed a qualitative² approach. The final product was written using a narrative style that mirrors the character of a lekgotla.

Sampling parameters

Delegates were selectively sampled over a period of several months. They were chosen from independent commercial and community print organisations and from the commercial and community radio sectors in 10 southern African countries – Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* and the *Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development* selected delegates based on their experience and profiles as media leaders. Nineteen delegates were invited and 18 attended.

Data collection and processing

- Data were collected at the lekgotla in a series of 8 focus groups and 10 plenary sessions.
- Discussion outlines were used to ensure a degree of standardisation for parallel focus group meetings.
- During focus group sessions, scribes entered information into a standard template – this made reporting back to plenary sessions easy and ensured that all points of view were represented.
- All focus groups and plenary sessions were audio-recorded. After the lekgotla, data were collated and transcribed. Data were captured into nVivo7 – a qualitative data management program.

Analysis

A content analysis³ of the data was conducted in three phases:

1. First all the transcriptions from the focus groups and plenary sessions were read to get an impression of overall content.
2. The data were then scrutinised and coded for meaning.
3. Codes were then categorised into themes and examined for relationships such as similarities, differences, and crosscutting issues.

Validity

Information offered by delegates was accepted as being representative of their personal perceptions at the time of the lekgotla. The group dynamic ensured that any contentious statements and interpretations did not go unchallenged.

Draft copies of the write-up were sent to delegates for their comments and suggestions and these were integrated into the text.

Because of the small sample of leaders attending the lekgotla, information cannot be generalised or taken as being representative of media sectors or countries.

Limitations

In presenting our analysis we have done our best to capture the complex multi-dimensionality of the input. In organising the material our challenge has been that in pulling at any one thread we've generally found that everything else is attached to it. While the chapter structure of this book organises material into crosscutting leadership themes, liberal use is made of cross-referencing to direct readers to other parts of the book where allied ideas are discussed. Although this sometimes disturbs the narrative flow, it makes the book more useful for readers who prefer to 'dip in' and explore.

Due to a most unfortunate event when two delegates were hijacked at the outset of the lekgotla on arrival at the gates of the Johannesburg conference venue, the voices of these delegates are barely represented. They are Tanzanian media leader Samwel Nyalla, who is managing director of *Sahara Communication and Publication Company*, *Star TV*, *Radio Free Africa*, *Kiss FM* and *Msanii Afrika* Newspaper and Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)* in Namibia. Samwel did manage to attend a final plenary session, but due to the collective nature of plenary sessions and the limitations of audio recording, we have no individually distinguishable recording of his input. Sandra managed to attend one focus group and the final plenary so we do have some comments on record from her. It is with great regret that lekgotla delegates and facilitators were not able to benefit more from the insights of these two dynamic people.

A few comments made in this book are not attributed to a specific speaker. As mentioned above, audio recordings, particularly of plenary sessions, can be problematic in this regard.

Since the material has been organised according to *leadership themes* – as opposed to media sectors or countries – the information about the 10 participating countries and the various media sectors is dispersed throughout the text as it cuts across the various leadership themes.

We have chosen to write most sections in the present tense as this allowed us to capture some of the dynamism of the *lekgotla*. It should be noted that statements made by delegates represent their opinions *at the time of the lekgotla*, and that these perceptions and opinions, as well as the circumstances in which delegates work, could well have changed in the meantime. As noted with great regret on page 20, Kennedy Otsheleng of *GABZ FM* has since passed away. Nonetheless when quoting his input, as with other delegates, we have retained the present tense.

Care was taken to reproduce delegates' words and ideas accurately. A draft of the manuscript was distributed to all delegates (with the exception of Kennedy Otsheleng) for their feedback and corrections, and the final text incorporates their feedback. The authors, the facilitators, the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* (SPI), the *Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development* (SAIMED), and the funder, *Nederlands Institute for Southern Africa* (NiZA), cannot be held liable for any misrepresentations or incorrect information should these occur in this book.

Endnotes:

- 1: Benton & Craib, 2001.
- 2: Babbie & Mouton, 2001.
- 3: Ezzy, 2002.

Meet the Partners

Nederlands Institute for Southern Africa (NiZA) – funder

On the basis of a long-standing history of solidarity and critical dialogue, NiZA cooperates with people and organisations in Africa and Europe to strive for a democratic southern Africa. We share with them a vision of a southern Africa where the population is able to realise a just division of power, means and opportunities, and where human rights are respected and guaranteed. NiZA supports the struggle against inequalities in power, rights and welfare by supporting civil society and citizens in Africa, particularly women and girls, in their efforts to build countervailing power. Closely linked to this struggle, NiZA and its networks are dedicated to an international power shift that favours democracy and development in southern Africa.¹

More on NiZA, its co-operation activities and partners, can be found on its website: <http://www.niza.nl/>

Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) – co-host

The Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) is part of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. The Institute offers a broad range of leadership and management training courses for media professionals, as well as a year-long accredited Post-graduate Diploma in Media Management (PDMM).

In 2005 the SPI launched its media leadership research division – the first of its kind on the continent. A guiding principle of the SPI is to cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships in service of a development agenda. More on the SPI, its training offerings, and research reports can be found on its website: <http://www.spiml.com> or <http://www.spiml.co.za>

Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED) – co-host

The Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development is an independent institution established by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2002 to strengthen the emerging independent media in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SAIMED offers three programmes:

- The emerging media development programme focuses on emerging commercial media enterprises throughout the region. Typically, these are newspapers, magazines, FM radio stations and small printing presses.
- The community media development programme targets community media enterprises. These typically come in two forms: community radio stations and community newspapers.
- The youth media development programme focuses on developing media enterprises among the youth in the region.

More on SAIMED can be found on its website: <http://www.saimed.ac.bw>

Endnotes:

1: NiZA, 2007.

Meet the Delegates

Chilambo, Esther

Director – *Radio and TV Tumaini*, Tanzania

Daka, Michael

Owner & Managing Director – *Breeze FM*, Zambia

Hans, Collen

Managing Director – *Drizabone Entertainment* and *IAJ* Freelance Trainer, South Africa

Kalisa, Samantha

Editor – *Bignews for the Business Owner*, Cape Town, South Africa

Kasale, Beata

Publisher – *The Voice*, Botswana

Khumalo, Raphael

Chief Executive Officer – *Zimind Publishers (Pvt) Ltd*, Zimbabwe. Publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard* newspapers

Leepile, M. (Methaetsile)

Managing Consultant – *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy*, Botswana

Moyana, Salomao

Editor – *Magazine Independente*, Mozambique

Mwase, Pat

Chief Executive Officer – *Mining Mirror*, Zambia

Nkambule, Siphwiwe

Co-founder and Marketing Manager – *Miles Communications*, Swaziland

Ntonga, Alfred

Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Editor-In-Chief - *Nation Publications Ltd*, Malawi

Nyalla, Samwel

Managing Director – *Sahara Communication and Publication Company Ltd; Star TV; Radio Free Africa; Kiss FM; Msanii Afrika Newspaper*, Tanzania

Otsheleng, Kennedy

Chief Executive Officer – *GABZ FM*, Botswana

Ramainoane, Sebonomoea Ratabane Khoase

Editor-in-Chief– *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine*, Lesotho

Selinyane, Pheello (Nthakeng)

Editor – *Public Eye*, Lesotho

Van den Bosch, Servaas

Editor – *The Big Issue*, Namibia

Van Zyl, Anton

Editor/Manager – *Limpopo Mirror/Zoutpansberger*, South Africa

Williams, Sandra Lois

Station Manager – *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)*, Namibia

Wilson, Rory

Independent Consultant on Media and Leadership, South Africa

In more detail...**Chilambo, Esther**

Director – *Radio and TV Tumaini*, Tanzania

Esther's training began with a comprehensive secretarial course at Kianda College in Nairobi Kenya (the former College for East Africa Community). Since then she has undergone numerous national, regional and international training programmes in information systems, communications, management, and media leadership. She has worked in government ministries in Tanzania, the National Textile Corporation of Tanzania, and as management office secretary to the executives and the International Tea Association in the Netherlands. In 1994, when *Radio Tumaini* started, she became involved as a volunteer announcer

and producer. Since March 2001 she has been working full time for *Radio and TV Tumaini* as its executive director.

Daka, Michael (Mike)

Owner and Managing Director – *Breeze FM*, Zambia

Michael Daka's media career spans over 30 years. He worked for 17 years for the Zambia News Agency, rising through the ranks to the position of editor-in-chief. He followed this with a 13-year period as director and chief executive of the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM). Michael is currently the owner and managing director of *Breeze FM*, a commercial radio station based in Eastern Zambia.

Hans, Collen

Managing Director – *Drizabone Entertainment* and *IAJ* Freelance Trainer, South Africa

Collen entered media through his work with SFH's (Society for Family Health) Newstart HIV/AIDS programme as a counsellor. He joined *Jozi FM* as a presenter and later as its programme manager. He is also the MD of Drizabone Entertainment Centre. The interest generated by his work led *IAJ* to bring him on board as a freelance radio trainer. A father of two, Collen is inspired by young people in the developing world of media.

Kalisa, Samantha

Editor – *Bignews for the Business Owner*, Cape Town, South Africa

Samantha started out as journalist in an alternative community newspaper and freelanced with local news agencies. She then moved on to corporate journalism, public relations and marketing with a major corporation in Cape Town and Johannesburg. After working as an adult educator in English and basic Mathematics, she returned to journalism with a rural development agency specialising in communicating with rural communities.

In 2004 Samantha joined *Bignews for the Business Owner* as a senior writer – it was then a small, independent business publication. She later became sub-editor and news editor, and is now both editor and managing editor of the newspaper. She also edits the website www.businessowner.co.za.

Kasale, Beata

Publisher – *The Voice*, Botswana

Beata is co-owner and publisher of *The Voice*, Botswana's best selling newspaper. She has over 20 years' experience in journalism and photography, having worked as a consultant conducting market research, needs assessments and media evaluations of *inter alia* HIV/AIDS and community radio initiatives. She has worked extensively with international NGOs and press organisations.

Beata is the Local Media Trainer for the Washington DC-based IWMF's Maisha Yetu ('Our lives' in Swahili) program and works with the public media *Mmegi* and *Mmegi Monitor*. She trains journalists from Botswana media houses on health reporting – particularly the need to enhance the quality of reporting on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB and on mainstreaming gender into news coverage. She is a Commonwealth Elections Observer and acting chairperson of the Botswana Media Consultative Council. She has also written a children's book, *The Treasure in the Garden*, published by Heinemann UK.

Khumalo, Raphael

Chief Executive Officer – Zimind Publishers, Zimbabwe, publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard* newspapers

Raphael has a B.Com from the National University of Lesotho and an MBA from the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe. After serving his articles with a firm of chartered accountants, he worked in a number of engineering companies before joining the Zimpapers group, Zimbabwe's largest media and publishing company. He worked there for 13 years, five years of which he spent as finance manager of the group's flagship newspaper, *The Herald*. In 2003 Raphael joined *Zimind Publishers*, publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, as CEO.

Leepile, M. (Methaetsile)

Managing Consultant – Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy, Botswana

Methaetsile has been involved in the media industry for 23 years, starting with the resuscitation of *Mmegi*, Botswana's leading independent daily, in 1984. He later became *Mmegi*'s editor and, from 1988 to 1994, its managing director. After that he served for four years as executive director of the Windhoek-based Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), an organisation he helped found with a group of independent media practitioners from the southern Africa region. He then became the founding CEO of SAMDEF (the Southern African Media Development Fund), the regional media development fund, owned by the MISA Trust Fund. In 2002 Methaetsile founded *Mokgosi*, the country's first broadsheet in over 50 years to publish in Setswana, the national language.

Methaetsile is currently the managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo*, a Botswana-based management and communication consultancy firm specialising in project management, communication strategy development, communication skills training and research. For the past year he has been engaged, through *Motlabaseyo*, as general manager of the *Botswana Guardian* and *Midweek Sun*, two of the country's enduring newspaper brands. His brief includes restructuring and repositioning the operation, and identifying and training a new generation of managers.

Moyana, Salomao**Editor – *Magazine Independente*, Mozambique**

Salomao was worked in the media industry in Mozambique for 25 years, as a journalist, manager and trainer. He was the founding editor of the independent newspapers *Savana* and *Zambeze* and is currently the publisher of the weekly *Magazine Independente*. He is also a lecturer in the School of Journalism at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo.

Mwase, Pat**Chief Executive Officer – *Mining Mirror*, Zambia**

Pat Mwase is an entrepreneur whose main area of expertise is marketing. She has worked for Africa Health Services, an Anglo American-owned company, and has done business with multinationals such as Gillette, Johnson & Johnson, Dark & Lovely, Revlon, and Palmers.

In the media field, Pat has worked for *The Chronicle* newspaper in Zambia, *Sky FM*, and *Breeze FM*, and she was also the publisher of the women's magazine *Tiyende*. She is currently managing director of Opti-Quest Corporation, which she established in 1999, and chief executive officer of *Mining Mirror* Newspaper in Zambia. She is also the current vice president of the Media Institute of Southern Africa – Zambia, and acting chairperson of the Zambia Editor's Forum. She has served on the Media Ethics Council of Zambia committee.

Pat has consulted for international organisations such as the European Union, The World Bank and UNAIDS. She works in her consultancy role with various community radio stations and media in sustainability strategy and income generation.

Nkambule, Sipiwe**Co-founder and Marketing Manager – *Miles Communications*, Swaziland**

Sipiwe Nkambule is the former marketing manager and co-founder of Miles Communications, an advertising and publishing company established in 2001, which publishes the children's magazine *Super Buddies*. Through the children's magazine she has formed an organisation called Super Buddies Club that engages children and young people in issues affecting them that include HIV/AIDS.

Prior to founding Miles Communications, Sipiwe worked for the daily *Times of Swaziland* for 14 years. She joined the paper as a news translator for the Seswati-language newspaper *Tikhatsi TeMaswati*, later becoming editor. She worked in various other roles at the *Times of Swaziland*, including selling advertising and working as a sub-editor.

Sipiwe holds a diploma in public relations as well as certificates in graphic design, marketing, media

management and business management. She is a former chairperson of the Media Institute of Southern (MISA) Africa-Swaziland, a former director of the Southern African Media Development Fund (SAMDEF) and is currently a board member of the Southern African Media Entrepreneurship Media Development (SAIMED).

Ntonga, Alfred

Deputy Chief Executive Officer/ Editor-In-Chief – *Nation Publications Ltd, Malawi*

Together with his chief executive officer, Alfred runs *Nation Publications*, which has over 200 employees in four departments: editorial, sales (advertising and circulation), production (design studio and print), and accounts and administration. The company has branches in Lilongwe, the capital, and Mzuzu, another city in the Northern Region.

As editor-in-chief, Alfred is head of the editorial department which produces *The Nation* (a daily paper Monday to Friday), *Weekend Nation* (a weekly paper on Saturday) and *Nation on Sunday*. Each newspaper is headed by an editor, and Alfred's role is to oversee matters of policy, budget, planning, recruitment, consolidation and growth.

Nyalla, Samwel

Managing Director – *Sahara Communication and Publication Company, Star TV, Radio Free Africa, Kiss FM, Msanii Afrika Newspaper, Tanzania*

Samwel graduated from Greenwich University in the United Kingdom as an engineer. Since 1995, he has been MD and founder member of *Radio Free Africa* (the biggest private radio station in Tanzania) and *Star TV*. He has attended several media leadership-training courses in South Africa and Germany. Samwel is also an active sports leader who is an executive member of Tanzania's football association.

Otsheleng, Kennedy

Chief Executive Officer – *GABZ FM, Botswana*

Kennedy graduated from university with a business management degree in 1997, then spent two years working for government as a foreign investment advisor, followed by two and a half years at BP as a business manager. For the past four years he was CEO of *GABZ FM* radio station, which he turned around after helping it to acquire a national broadcasting licence.

Sadly Kennedy passed away in late 2007. Lekgotla delegates will remember his incisive insights, and his inclination to challenge assumptions and generate debates while retaining a friendly, relaxed style.

Ramainoane, Sebonomoea Ratabane Khoase
Editor-in-Chief – MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine, Lesotho

Ramainoane is a former correspondent of various regional and international media outlets such as the BBC Afrika Service, AFP, South African Business Day newspaper, Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) Zimbabwe, and the Botswana Broadcasting Corporation. In 1998, he became OSISA's (Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa) first advisory board member from Lesotho.

He was educated in Lesotho and in Britain, reading Law, Media Studies, Theology and Marketing. In 2006 the United States based Alpha Bible College and Seminary honoured Ramainoane with a Doctor of Divinity degree and made him its Distinguished Professor. Ramainoane is also the president of the Lesotho based Third World Evangelical Movement which aims to empower poor and marginalized society members via the media.

From 1992 to 1995 Ramainoane served as the City of Maseru's mayor. He has subsequently received various awards for his community work. Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission, for instance, lauded MOAFRIKA's tireless efforts towards assuring the success of the 2002 general elections. MOAFRIKA is the only media institution in Lesotho with a national rescue service and crime watch facility, which since 2003, has saved many lives and properties and led to the arrest and conviction of suspects. And through MOAFRIKA, Ramainoane also shares with the poor his knowledge of various issues such as law, politics, food security, human rights and socio-economic development.

Selinyane, Pheello (Nthakeng)
Editor – Public Eye, Lesotho

Public Eye is a wholly Basotho-owned weekly which started publishing in Maseru some 10 years ago, covering Lesotho and South Africa's Free State province. It has become the largest circulating and most influential English weekly in Lesotho, with a distribution of 10 500 copies. In 2005/6 *Public Eye* became the first Lesotho newspaper to open offices in the South African cities of Bloemfontein and Johannesburg, in response to a growing reader and advertiser demand.

Nthakeng Selinyane has been with *Public Eye* from the beginning, as a columnist, political commentator and part-time writer. He was recently appointed political editor.

Van den Bosch, Servaas
Editor – The Big Issue, Namibia

Servaas holds an MA in History and Journalism from Groningen University in the Netherlands (2002). After a three-year stint as a political correspondent and editor in The Hague, he did a second MA part time through Rhodes University, with a thesis on "The Proudly South African Campaign as an identity creator".

Servaas has been a freelancer and Internet consultant throughout his career in the Netherlands, South Africa and Namibia. Until early 2008 he was editor-in-chief of *The Big Issue* in Namibia.

van Zyl, Anton

Editor/Manager – Limpopo Mirror/Zoutpansberger, South Africa

Anton is the owner/editor of two newspapers distributed in the northern part of Limpopo Province. These two newspapers have a proud independent history that dates back to 1980 when the first *Zoutpansberger* was published. The *Limpopo Mirror*, or *Venda Mirror* as it was first known, was first published in 1990 and became one of the few commercially successful newspapers aimed at a predominantly black readership. The *Mirror* is currently the top selling community newspaper in the province, with ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) figures of almost 9 500 copies per week.

Anton is a founder member of the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP), and a director of Capro Ltd, an advertising procurement company that represents independent newspapers at national level. He is involved in development projects within the industry, and has spent a lot of time developing open-source software for grassroots publishers, such as an advertising booking system and a distribution management system. He was also instrumental in starting a website for the two newspapers back in 1997, making it one of the oldest and longest running news websites in the country.

Williams, Sandra Lois

Station Manager – Katutura Community Radio (KCR), Namibia

Sandra's career has included radio, TV, the civil service and the corporate world, ultimately returning to radio as station manager of *Katutura Community Radio* in Namibia where she says she is really a "development worker". She still reads the news several times a day on 106.2 FM. As a board member of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Williams advocates for community radio. She feels that the media landscape in Namibia is too mainstream, and that "danger lights are flashing when it comes to press freedom in Namibia".

Wilson, Rory

Independent Consultant: Media and Leadership, South Africa

Rory has had a long and varied career in editing and managing newspapers in South Africa. From 1972 to 1981 he worked at the *Cape Times*, as reporter, sub-editor, chief sub-editor, night editor and finally managing editor. From 1981 to 1999 he held various management positions at South African Associated Newspapers (now TML), *The Star* in Johannesburg, the *Sowetan* (where he was MD) and Independent Newspapers Cape (also as MD). He then spent five years as CEO of Juta, the book publishers.

Now retired and a grandfather, Rory serves on the boards of various NGOs, and as a mentor at TSiBA

Education, a privately-funded university for disadvantaged school-leavers. In 2006 and 2007 he and his wife completed the Camino de Santiago, the ancient pilgrim route in France and Spain, by bicycle and in both directions.

Meet the Facilitators

Du Toit, Peter

Deputy Director – *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*, South Africa

Peter is particularly interested in how managers can effectively lead media organisations. Prior to joining the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in 2003, Peter was a partner in the *Media Education and Training Agency*, which provided training in media management, conflict reporting, election reporting and media and democracy. He has run courses in South Africa, Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Egypt and East Timor. For the past seven years, Peter has been responsible for developing and running media management courses for Rhodes University's Department of Journalism and Media Studies, and researching editorial management training needs across the SADC region. He has worked with the *Times Media Ltd* stable of papers in Port Elizabeth and served as news editor for the *Development Media Agency* in Grahamstown.

Kabeta, Jacqueline

Executive Director – *Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED)*, Botswana

Jacqueline is a media specialist who has a Masters degree in media studies and journalism from Rhodes University, South Africa, and a Bachelor of Arts in mass communication and public administration. She has worked for 14 years in the media industry as a social development communicator and trainer. She has acquired a sound knowledge of the media (private, public, community and commercial) in the SADC region.

Mavhungu, Johanna

Researcher – *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*, South Africa

Johanna's involvement in media, research and development communication began at *Ochre Media* where her work helped to inform the development of broadcast television programmes on community development. She is now the resident researcher at the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*.

Johanna has an honours degree in dramatic arts from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she is currently studying towards a Master's degree in arts and culture management.

Rau, Asta

Research Consultant – *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, South Africa*

Asta lives in Grahamstown and works as an independent research consultant in the fields of media, higher education, HIV/AIDS, and monitoring & evaluation – and sometimes on projects combining these fields. Her academic background is in psychology and she holds a PhD in education. Most of her working life has been in the business world and she finds the skills and knowledge learned in business invaluable in her current work. Being a researcher, she says, is “*much* more than a career – it’s a passion!”

Silumesii, Milupi

Programme Officer – Emerging Media, *Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED), Botswana*

Silumesii's management position at *SAIMED* includes training, operational finance, contract and procurement, and monitoring. He has a Master of Arts in Business Administration and 10 years of experience in the training and media fields.

Chapter 1

What Constitutes Leadership?

With lekgotla delegates from 10 African countries representing a range of media sectors (print, radio, publishing and consultancies) it stands to reason that multiple perspectives will emerge about what constitutes leadership. Even so, it is clear that delegates' views converge in a number of key ideas:

Leadership is both a process and a position

Most lekgotla delegates rose through the ranks of media organisations over many years of on-the-job learning. A few entered the media field from other professions. None of the delegates began their careers as media leaders, but all those who founded media organisations had some prior leadership experience before doing so. Delegates agree that as leaders they are now positioned at the 'top'. They assert that it is the *process* of personal and professional development – of continuous learning – that has forged them into leaders.

From what delegates say, innovation, experimentation and inspiration are drivers of the leadership process. Salomao Moyana, who has been in the media industry for the last 25 years and is the founding editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, attests to this:

I think the basic idea is that leadership should be seen as a process and that process does not come from one direction. It can come from you, it can come from the people, it can come from the situation on the ground – it can come from anywhere. It's a process of getting inspiration, and from the origin and standpoint of that particular inspiration, you form certain purposes and objectives and then move towards them.

Although delegates are positioned at the top, many say they do not always ‘lead from the front’. Mike Daka of *Breeze FM* in Zambia proposes: “In business, I think we should be talking about *leaders*, rather than *a leader*... leaders guide and have a vision but they should also be ready to learn from others.”

Jacqueline Kabeta, executive director of Botswana’s *Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED)* points out that leaders and managers are not the only decision-makers: “It doesn’t matter who you are or where you are in the hierarchy of an organisation – you can play a leadership role.” Alfred Ntonga, who has been in media for decades and is deputy chief executive officer (CEO) and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications*, Malawi’s leading newspaper house, elaborates:

It’s so important to realize that a leader is not necessarily always right. When you look at leadership in a hierarchical manner and you see yourself at the top – the one with the vision, the one to come to for inspiration – then it’s all about the ego, the ‘I’ at the centre. Often we don’t do at all well when we are obsessed with the conventional definition where I am the leader and they are the led. We must accept that the people surrounding us, the teams we are leading, can also lead in many ways.

Leadership is multidimensional, multifaceted, holistic

It is clear from delegates’ insights that media organisations are microcosms of the societies in which they operate. They encompass and weave together a complex network of contexts, systems and interactions.

Rory Wilson worked in print media for over 30 years, 25 in managerial positions. He is now retired but teaches and consults periodically. He believes that leadership “involves maintaining a tension and balance between the many dimensions that exist both outside and inside our media organisations. You have to keep the complexity going.” He continues:

As a leader of a complex organisation, don’t assume that it works. Start by assuming it is not working, because then you have a chance to deal with the complexity. If you assume your organisation is working, I’m 99.9 percent sure you are going to be wrong. Go into a part of your organisation for a day and you’ll hear about the craziness. Remember that from the bottom up your organisation is fundamentally dysfunctional: it doesn’t work anything like the way you think it does. I believe the first thing you have to do is to ask your senior executives to go back into the organisation and start listening and talking to people again.

The leadership theorist MJ Wheatley points out that organisational leaders who are aware of inherent chaos operate like “equilibrium busters”¹ who are “...deliberately looking for information that might threaten stability, knock [us] off balance, and open [us] to growth.” According to this theory, challenging and questioning are vital leadership strategies. As Schumacher articulates it, “We have to leave room for

non-knowledge. Take a small step, wait for feedback, and then proceed further.”²

Leadership embraces change

Success itself is seen by delegates as a shifting destination. Their professional and personal development paths, as well as the growth paths of their organisations, show that the destinations of success are more like short- and medium-term stopovers. At any point long-term goals and directions can change and an organisation’s outward focus may shift to a different market, product or platform. In many instances delegates have transformed and restructured organisations and formulated new, potentially more effective, *modus operandi*.

To keep their organisations afloat and moving forward, leaders must be able to work *with* whatever arises – to engage change in a way that balances its dynamic, creative potential with a prudent measure of stability and equilibrium. As Wheatley states in *Leadership and the New Science*, “Stasis, balance, equilibrium, these are temporary states. What endures is process – dynamic, adaptive, creative.”³

Anton van Zyl, owner editor and manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror*, two influential newspapers in the northernmost province of South Africa, comments:

We are operating in a rapidly changing environment – every week there are changes. No one knows exactly where the industry is going. Leadership comes in when you embrace these changes; you must not be afraid of them. You must encourage people around you to embrace these changes too, and lead them through and forward.

Leadership exploits opportunities and manages risk

Working creatively with change is an intricate balancing act of exploiting opportunities and managing risk. Kennedy Otsheleng, chief executive officer (CEO) of *GABZ FM*, a commercial radio station in Botswana, comments:

We need to start developing entrepreneurship amongst our leaders; we need to generate bankable ideas which will sustain our businesses, which will grow our businesses. Part of the process of doing that is learning to think in such a manner that you can identify an opportunity when it exists.

Leadership is visionary

Essentially an organisation's vision is about its intent and identity. An articulated vision positions an organisation politically, economically, and socially. As leadership theorist Wheatley (1999) remarks:

Without a clear sense of who they are, and what they are trying to accomplish, organisations get tossed and turned by shifts in the environment. No person or organisation can be an effective co-creator with the environment without clarity about who they are intending to become.⁴

Delegates view the formulation and steering of organisational identity and intent as key leadership activities. Some delegates – particularly those from large, more mature organisations – favour a predominantly top-down approach to the formulation of a vision. Smaller or younger organisations are more inclined to engage staff in co-creating and negotiating a vision.

The vision and mission of print and radio organisations in the independent community sector focuses on empowering the communities they serve. These organisations tend to be issue-focused with development mandates. In other words, they concentrate on issues such as HIV/AIDS, the continuity and purity of indigenous languages, fostering the diversity of local cultures and talent, and educating communities about their rights and responsibilities. Some work to nurture readership among children, viewing children as active participants in media and even as producers of media. Organisations with issue-based visions focus on conscience, consciousness and helping others. As Sipiwe Nkambule co-founder and marketing manager of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, which publishes the children's magazine *Super Buddies* declares: "Leadership is about transformation – equipping and empowering people to positively change the world around them." Issue-focused organisations are not necessarily small in terms of their reach: *MOAFRIKA FM Radio* is the largest private broadcaster in Lesotho, and together with its print counterpart *MOAFRIKA Newsmagazine*, it champions an empowerment vision.

Some discussions about vision indicate a more business-focused ethic. Predictably, perhaps, this is more often the case with larger, commercial organisations or those operating in a particular industrial or business niche. This is not to say that organisations with issue-focused visions are not also business-minded – Sebonomoea Ramainoane, who is editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine*, remarks:

I'm coming from a country where for a very long time private journalism was associated with political activism – oppositional political activism – always wanting to see regime change. I think we need to move on from that. We should get into the politics of business, the politics of economic growth.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM*, a commercial radio station based in Eastern Zambia, adds: "I think we are business people and we have passed a phase where media was for philanthropy – we know now from hard experience that to survive in this market we need to run it as a business."

Siphiwe Nkambules's account of running a non-profit educational children's magazine as well as a commercial enterprise (see p. 71) illustrates the difficulties encountered when trying to balance philanthropy with business demands.

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, cautions media leaders: "Don't let your vision boil down to one thing. Your vision must be complex and you should enjoy and encourage that complexity."

Leadership is strategic

Leadership involves translating organisational visions into strategic plans. From what delegates say, successful strategising involves creativity, innovation and importantly, business experience – particularly media-related experience. Effective strategising also requires business savvy, the ability to mobilise networks and to manoeuvre politically.

When it comes to translating strategy into operational plans and implementation, lekgotla discussions show that in the media industry there is considerable overlap between leadership and management. One representative statement is: "A good leader should be a good manager, a good organizer and communicator, but he or she should also take control and be in charge."

Leaders of larger and more mature media organisations, it seems, spend most of their time and effort on vision and high level strategising. Those from smaller, less mature organisations tend to have a more hands-on approach and be more closely involved in the day-to-day running of their businesses. Smaller organisations also seem to have a higher incidence of 'organic' growth – perhaps their size makes it easier to be more immediately responsive to change and so to strategise in a more spontaneous way.

Irrespective of whether organisations are large or small, have visions that are issue- or business-focused, or whether leaders play visionary, strategic or managerial roles, all delegates strongly concur that they are indeed *in business*. In this context, leadership is about assuring product delivery: "You need to get the job done. Without a product, there's no need for leadership."

Leadership sets the tone

Delegates agree that leadership entails 'walking the talk' – congruence between what is said and what is done: "Represent the vision faithfully and lead by example. You can't be having a budget-constraining ethos and then within a quarter year the MD's travel budget has run out – it doesn't go with the vision."

Organisational theorists⁵ who base their work on quantum principles present persuasive research findings

to show how *intent* combined with *determination* and *consistency* – ‘intentionality’ – can shape organisational relationships, and even structures. The leader is the pivot in this process: like a magnet, this person’s intentionality becomes the central organising force around which people, like iron filings, will arrange themselves. As Capra remarks: “...the overall consistency of their interrelations then determines the structure of the entire web.”⁶

Leadership is a relationship

Again and again, delegates highlight the need for leadership that balances internal and external relationships and multiple, often conflicting, demands. Rory Wilson asserts, “It’s not about me as leader, it’s about my people. Leadership is about people.” And, as another delegate puts it, “The human component is vital – it’s the supportive means to get the job done.”

Leadership is about wielding influence to mobilise political, commercial and economic relationships so that media mandates are fulfilled, whether these are neutral or activist orientated, collaborative or oppositional. Delegates from most of the countries report some degree of strain between media and government. Challenges range from the business level where, for instance, governments compete with media, to direct and subtle forms of political interference in editorial content, to outright obstruction of business as well as media mandates. Editorial independence is also threatened in corporate and other business relationships, particularly when it comes to competing for revenue. Delegates agree that African media leaders need to find more as well as more innovative ways to ensure organisational sustainability without compromising editorial integrity.

Networking was repeatedly mentioned as being an essential aspect of leadership. Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia comments:

An important characteristic of leadership is maturity. In Namibia we started a media forum, it’s still very new, and you can see that people are quite uncomfortable being in the same room – after all the guy next to you may be your competitor. I think a part of leadership is not being short sighted and thinking ‘How can I cross this guy?’ but rather being mature and thinking ‘How can we network?’

Much time was spent discussing relationships inside media organisations. Delegates clearly favour consultative, collaborative approaches to leading and managing staff. As one delegate summarises it, “The idea of teams and team-building, that groups of people must work together, comes out very clearly.”

Getting buy-in from co-workers – “shared consensus” – was mentioned repeatedly in conjunction with staff development. Samantha Kalisa, editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner*, comments:

Leaders should inspire and motivate people to work towards a common vision and at the same time empower them. You need to empower people if you want them to be able to achieve things, and empower them to achieve more than they think they are capable of.

An essential element of staff empowerment and capacity development is meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Participation addresses what Grice and Humphries describe as “...the opposition between the purposefulness of individuals and the seeming ‘givenness’ and narrow instrumentality of work-process relationships.”⁷ Interpersonal power relations such as “...listening, conversing, respecting one another’s uniqueness”⁸ are essential to a collaborative leadership approach. Open communication between people at all levels in an organisation facilitates feedback and the exchange of ideas. This allows for new voices to be heard and for leaders and managers to take up ideas that originate in the needs and daily experiences of co-workers. This empowers all concerned to actively create their organisational realities.⁹ It challenges outmoded structures and stimulates the innovation so vital for survival. As Wheatley comments, “...an organisation rich with many interpretations develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done. Such organisations become more intelligent.”¹⁰

Leadership is mindful and reflexive

For channels of communication to remain open, minds must be open. An open mind turns itself upon ‘the self’ in order to examine assumptions, emotions and motivations. As Senge puts it, mindfulness and reflection, is about “becoming an observer of your own thinking and action.”¹¹ The reward of reflection is greater knowledge of oneself and one’s organisation, and with this, new understandings emerge. These understandings have the potential to help us change personally and to bring about organisational change.

Part of being mindful is observing and learning from others. Peter du Toit of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* advises his leadership students: “You can learn from the bad leaders, just as much as you learn from the great leaders. From the bad leaders you learn what you don’t want, and from the good leaders you learn what you can adopt.”

Towards defining leadership

The following two defining views of leadership broadly reflect what delegates say. M. Leepile, veteran media leader and managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana says:

We need to reflect as leaders and think about what type of organisations we want to build for the future: functioning organisations, properly governed, properly structured. And then create them. This requires a bit of work – the first thing is investment in researching your organisation, then

equipping everybody from the board down and from the bottom up with a vision and mission. You negotiate the vision and get buy-in to it. You crystallise the vision into a series of plans and systems. And then you will find that your road is mapped and you can say 'Within this time frame we are going to achieve this'. That is leadership.

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente*, Mozambique, and Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Limpopo Mirror / Zoutpansberger*, South Africa say: "Leadership is a process of setting a vision and clear goals and reaching those through involving and encouraging people in a sustainable and effective way."

Endnotes:

- 1: A term coined by Jantsch (in Wheatley, 1999, p. 83).
- 2: Schumacher in Capra 1989, p. 230.
- 3: Wheatley, 1999, p. 90.
- 4: Wheatley, 1999, p. 39.
- 5: Capra, 1989; Senge et al., 1994; Wheatley, 1999.
- 6: Capra, 1989, p. 52.
- 7: Grice & Humphries, 1997, p. 417.
- 8: Grice & Humphries, 1997, p. 417.
- 9: Wheatley, 1999, p. 37.
- 10: Wheatley, 1999, p. 67.
- 11: Senge et al., 1994, p. 60.

Chapter 2

Up Close and Personal: Why Delegates Think They are Good Leaders

Instead of simply asking lekgotla delegates what they regarded as essential traits or attributes of good leaders, we asked each one to share with the group their response to the question: ‘What do you think makes **you** a good leader?’ This section gathers together the delegates’ answers and some of the reflections their answers evoked. Predictably, nobody wanted to blow their own trumpet so there were many disclaimers attending declarations of skill, talent and mindfulness. These courtesies have been edited out of the text.

Vision, direction and belief

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana says:

The quality I feel makes me an effective leader is being able to personally establish a clear vision in any corporation that I’ve headed. The other element that I feel strongly about in leadership is being able to focus and stay with anything. I first establish a vision and sense of purpose and where I want to take that organisation. The next important thing is to be able to effectively communicate that vision down into the rest of the structure so that there’s understanding of where we are and where we are trying to go. Next, you have to make people understand the processes to get there, then reinforce those processes through repeating them. Once you can get the processes right, everything else becomes automated. Everybody seems to know what they have to do. The most productive and most successful environment that people can work in is when they fully understand why they are there and what they are there to achieve. As a leader, as long as you can, with clarity, point out all those factors, you will be successful.

M. Leepile of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana also speaks about vision and focus:

I do have a vision of things and that gives me a focus. When I focus on something, that makes me believe in it, and I think that sustains me. The bottom line is, to be a leader you have to be decisive and you have to know what you want. I usually know what I want.

Samantha Kalisa of the South African *Bignews for the Business Owner* offers an apt metaphor for decisiveness and knowing what you want:

It's like people in a forest, a big thick forest. They're chopping down trees trying to find their way out. But the leader is the one who climbs the tree and looks up over the forest and says, 'That way'. I've learnt that to lead well you need confidence in yourself and in your publication. You need to know what your publication is doing, where it's going, and you have to believe in where it's going. You have to encourage people's buy-in to what you're doing and inspire them to follow you. I think I have that vision.

Thinking on your feet and capitalising on opportunities

Pat Mwase of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia made some shrewd moves in a time of desperation (p. 89). She says: "I learnt that as a leader you really need to think on your feet. You also have to keep your eyes open for the right opportunities – they don't say 'Hello, here I am!' They sneak up on you. You have to see it and ride that wave."

Having courage and commitment

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, comments: "The many stories we are hearing are classic examples of choosing an attitude: 'If I'm positive, if I'm prepared to work hard enough, I can do this'."

Jacqueline Kabeta of *SAIMED (Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development)* in Botswana describes one of her leadership qualities as: "My ability to stand when I fall. We face a lot of challenges and have to survive them. You are part of a team so you should also be able to help everyone to stand together and stand fast against a setback."

Siphiwe Nkambule of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland says:

I am able to persevere through hardship. We started the company from basically nothing but we've seen it helping so many children. As a result we have an NGO out of the publication, the *Super*

Buddies Club, where children, thousands of children countrywide, come together and participate actively in the fight against HIV and AIDS. I haven't been doing this with much help because we don't have financial resources to hire people, so most of the things we've done ourselves – with the help of few people.

Esther Chilambo, the director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania, says:

I lead effectively because there is improvement in our organisation. But success is not only from my own power or energy – I am working in God and I think that God is the one who's helping me do such a job because working with men is difficult for a lady. And working with the bishops and the priests – you have to be strong and persevere.

Many of the delegates started up their organisations. A representative view is that “Media leaders need courage to start and finance their organisations. You find most of the time banks don't want to finance media – one colleague from our group even mentioned that he sold his cars to start a business!”

Leading by example

Kennedy Otsheleng observes: “A leader must have integrity, because without it nobody will really respect him or her, nobody will listen to that leader with their minds and hearts.”

Integrity is not a reified ‘thing’ that a person possesses. Rather, it is a quality that becomes evident – felt and seen – in the person's attitudes and actions. In a comment broadly representative of the other delegates, Samantha Kalisa notes:

As a leader you should be able to lead by example. It's really, really important that if you're going to be taking certain measures, like cutting costs or salary benefits, these should be applied to everybody including yourself and other leaders in your company. It's the displaying of the values that counts. That's what being a leader is about – you lead, people follow.

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, offers a down-to-earth example:

We've got what we call manpower costs. We record each and every petty cash slip for our expenses. It was agreed that everyone would be allocated a certain amount of money for airtime, cell phones and transport. If you exceed that, it's at your own cost. We all stick to that.

Rory Wilson draws attention to a different aspect of leading by example:

One of the unspoken implications of being an effective leader is that you shouldn't make mistakes –

and that's something we need to knock on the head. We've got to make mistakes because we learn from those mistakes. And we've got to share our mistakes so others can learn from them too. One of the biggest examples we can set as leaders is to own up to our mistakes. Why? Because you want your people to be able to say they made a mistake without you coming down on their heads – as long as the issue around making the mistakes is genuine, of course.

Leading by example emerged as a theme in many stories that delegates shared during storytelling sessions ('Starting Media Organisations and Being Promoted', p.59).

Being flexible

M. Leepile reflects on what makes him a good leader:

Over the years I have changed my style over and over again. I'm much more flexible than I ever used to be. You have to move with the times. The regimes we work around nowadays with labour laws and politics and what have you – they challenge you. Also, you have to allow new managers you're grooming to take charge. So yes, I have self-belief, but I think it's important to believe in others too, to be flexible and give other people space.

Team working

Owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, Mike Daka, attributes much of his success to an aspect of leadership that all delegates agree is vital:

I build teams and I think working through those teams we are able to do things that perhaps others would think almost impossible. We plan well and set very high goals and challenges too, but building strong teams to do the work is a major factor.

Being open to learning and multiple perspectives

Alfred Ntonga is deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi. One of his successful leadership qualities is his consultative approach:

I knew that nobody wanted to be at the tail, everybody preferred to be at the head, so I had to try and work out systems to bring everybody's contribution in. So I set up regular brainstorming sessions that reach into all our sections – us in the newsroom, the people responsible for distribution and sales, the ones printing the newspaper, people in management, administration, accounts,

everybody – even a messenger has something to offer. Over a period of time many people at Nation Publishers have come to think like journalists, even though they may not be trained journalists. I always go to them for ideas and I link their ideas to those from the newsroom. It works miracles. So, I believe in demystifying power, authority and, of course, journalism itself.

Reflecting

Being able to step back and reflect on a situation is important if a leader is to think past his or her assumptions, past the ordinary, the crisis, the usual way of dealing with leadership issues. It enables the leader to grow in expertise and understanding. Samantha Kalisa comments about how reflection helps her as a leader to keep the end goal in sight and navigate towards it: “There’s a saying that goes: ‘Working *on* your business and not *in* it’ – I stand back and look at it and see where I’m going.”

For Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, reflection enables him to both appreciate and challenge his leadership style:

The thing that makes me an effective leader is possibly also that thing that sometimes holds me back. I make a point to trying to listen and empathise with people. At times it’s appropriate, but on reflection I see that sometimes I’m too worried about people’s feelings and that actually stops me from doing things that I should do. I’m learning lately to make the distinction between when I actually need to be tough and when I can make space to say ‘I want to deal with the human aspect of this problem’. I guess I’m saying that you can’t put on a thick skin; it’s something that needs to develop. And at the heart of it is being prepared to be reflective.

Criticism can be a good catalyst for reflection. Pat Mwase of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia adds:

You have to be able to internalise, digest and process stuff, and kick in the thinking process before you react. If you are able to internalise things and gather some extra layers of skin, it becomes easier to deal with things. It’s the thinking process that enables the constructive stuff.

However Rory Wilson cautions: “Reflection is good, it’s necessary, but you must take care not to beat yourself up.”

Contributing to the wider media community

Anton van Zyl of *Limpopo Mirror/Zoutpansberger* has found that “from a leadership point of view, the greatest successes I’ve personally seen are the various projects we run, some of them mentoring projects, assisting other small newspapers which turned out to be very successful.”

Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* in Malawi speaks about the spill-over of trained staff from his organisation into the wider media arena in Malawi:

I'm proud to say that I managed to bring together a team, inspire it and lead it to the extent that today *Nation* has provided the entire management – from the general manager to all the editors – of our major rival, *Brandy Newspapers*, which owns *Daily Times* and *Malawi News*. In Malawi you hear that what we do directs where other reporters, other papers go. I guess this is an indication of our position, and that we have something to offer to the growth of media in Malawi. I do believe that there's always room for improvement so probably as I'm talking to you in this meeting, you'll see very little that shows I'm satisfied with what I am doing.

On a different note, Siphwe Nkambule of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland speaks of the benefits of being involved in media development outside your particular organisation:

I've been very active in MISA [the Media Institute of Southern Africa], I have sat on the SAM-DEF [Southern African Media Development Fund] board, and now I am with SAIMED. I feel these involvements have improved my ability to lead.

Empowering people

MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine in Lesotho sets out to empower people including children (p.53). Editor-in-chief Sebonomoea Ramainoane comments:

Part of leadership success comes from our achievements in the area of empowerment, which is our passion. We work at empowering the community at grassroots level about various issues: local and national development, and local and national politics – the importance of participating in an election and accepting its results, and importantly, understanding one's culture and making good use of it – your own culture and knowledge of your history, which is very lacking because it is only at university level that this is really covered.

South African businessman and freelance *IAJ* trainer Collen Hans also puts his leadership skills at the service of an empowerment agenda:

When I was at *Josi FM* I initiated a programme to do media through the voice of the child. And that programme took off. We challenged the mainstream media saying 'Who says children can't talk about teenage pregnancy? Who says children can't talk about HIV/AIDS? Who says children cannot talk about abuse?' The *IAJ* saw what we were doing, they believed in us and said 'Let's face this on a national level.' That partnership helped me to reach the level where I am now, a freelance facilitator going into the rural areas to get material there, and then bringing it back to the city buildings.

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania, adds:

I work with various newspapers teaching them how to report HIV/AIDS effectively, and enhance their quality. That they are able to work to a certain standard on a daily basis indicates that my leadership is not confined to just words. Also, I'm very proud that I encourage journalists to test for HIV/AIDS and write about their experiences.

Motivating people

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, comments:

What makes me an effective leader is my ability to set clear goals and to coordinate and motivate staff to follow these through. It is very important get things done through other people. We are human – it's not possible to do everything. As leader you have to be able to control what is being done by others, but also have the capacity to delegate responsibilities and pass power to all the people.

"How do I know I'm effective?" asks Pat Mwase of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia. She thinks there has to be a direct link between empowerment and profit:

I think for me it would have to be the bottom line. We have been able to take a paper that was closing, where nothing was going on, bring it back to market and make sure it doesn't lose money in the process. It's also about being able to take the underdog – not the bright lights of media, not the best editors, not just journalists but very basic people – and make them believe that they can do anything. Making them reach deep into themselves to perform. So we've seen better quality reporting, better output, we've seen young guys take on really amazing challenges and I think, 'Wow, you really did that!' And also reaching sales quota by breaking their fragmented approach to working – making sure that they understand they're a team and therefore achieving common goals.

Delivering the goods, getting results

Pat Mwase's story just quoted is about motivating and empowering people, but it's also very much about working to make an organisation productive and financially viable. Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue*, an independent street paper in Namibia, offers a similar story:

What I can say is that when I came to the organisation we were facing a severe crisis, including closure. I've had to be very hands on, very busy, basically managing crisis after crisis. Things are look-

ing up now. What I've learned as an editor is that what counts most is to get that magazine onto the street. And I guess it's through leadership that we've managed to do that time after time.

Servaas is quick to acknowledge that moving towards success is not straightforward: "It's a very stressful and wavering kind of process."

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, also speaks about delivering a good product as being evidence of good leadership: "I publish the best-selling newspaper in Botswana. That we managed to become the best-selling newspaper is an indication that I am an effective leader."

Milupi Silumesii, Emerging Media programme officer of *SAIMED (Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development)* in Botswana, says: "I'm able to interpret the mission and objectives, the strategies and tactics of our organisation and use these to meet organisational and the individual needs."

Under the leadership of Mike Daka of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, "The station, which is in a rural area in the middle of nowhere, has within its first three years become the major channel for communication in the area, and its broadcasts are spinning off into Malawi and parts of Mozambique too."

MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine's Sebonomoea Ramainoane links leadership success to organisational growth:

Since 1990 we have been publishing a weekly newspaper in vernacular Sesotho. In 1999 we started the radio station, also broadcasting in Sesotho and we have since become the largest in terms of vernacular coverage in Lesotho and in South Africa's Eastern Cape and Free State. We are also global – the only radio station in Lesotho that is on audio streaming, so you can tune to us almost anywhere you want in the world. I don't know how soon, but I anticipate that we will also add television to our offerings at some stage. We have accomplished most of our objectives and we continue to accomplish them with no assistance whatsoever from donors, from the government, or from any [source] excepting a support base that we have helped to build in Lesotho. I consider us to be a good leader because of these accomplishments.

44 | Influencing people and networking for growth

Having steered his organisation through rough times Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, which produces *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, regards himself as an effective leader:

Over the period that I have been with the organisation I have been able to steer my two publications out of government closure. I have also been able to develop the organisation to the point that

we've been able to acquire and grow a distribution company. Over the period I have been able to make friends and have useful contacts within business, the private media and the private sector. Lastly, the reputation of our newspapers is at an all time high, and I feel that it is through effective leadership that I have been able to do that.

Initiating and managing change

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, says:

I'm an activist and a street campaigner on all sorts of issues. That's what brought me into media, including being involved in media campaigns such as MISA [*the Media Institute for Southern Africa*]. I get bored with staying in one place – that makes me able to initiate organisational change – be an actor in social reconstruction, one could say. My talent, I think, is that I'm particularly impassioned. If I want things, most of the time I move ahead and get them done.

Chapter 3

Key Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

From the discussion it was clear that the roles and responsibilities of leaders depend on each organisation's particular vision, purpose and structure. However there are some commonalities.

Creating organisational vision

All participants agree that key leadership roles are creating a vision and mission and devising plans for following this through. This was raised earlier (pages 30 & 37) but is more fully discussed under 'First Principles: Visions and Mandates' (p.69).

Answering to stakeholders

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, comments:

Effective leadership can be impeded by having to answer to stakeholders who may have different objectives to you. As leader, you tend to have in your agenda priorities like inculcating a certain culture, inculcating certain beliefs and inspiring people to a certain standard of performance. Whereas the mandate of shareholders is more focused on the bottom line and delivering on the numbers. One of our major strengths as a region is that we are still in a stage where ownership of media does not lie in the stock exchanges and we can effect our leadership free of those influences.

Pressure and solutions related to stakeholders and clients are discussed in 'Financial factors' a subsection

of Chapter 8: 'Ethics and Independence' (p.152) and in Advertising (p.92).

Securing revenue, mobilising resources

Throughout the lekgotla Kennedy Otsheleng advocated a more business-oriented approach to media leadership and his insights usually stimulated debate and encouraged in-depth exploration of issues. His statement quoted above sparked heated debate about securing capital and generating revenue – topics that occupied a considerable amount of lekgotla discussions ('Business Matters' p.77). On the same note Kennedy challenges his colleagues:

Not being in the stock market can disadvantage you with respect to getting money and getting access to capital, but our discussion is not capital, we are discussing leadership – creating a vision, creating direction – which are different issues.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia asserts: "One big part of my work as a leader in my institution is making sure that we have the resources. So for me capital – finance – is a big issue." Kennedy retorts: "Then you will have to stand up and say that without money you can't be an effective leader. I want us to reflect on that." Echoing the views of the majority of delegates Anton van Zyl, editor and manager of *Limpopo Mirror* / *Zoutpansberger*, South Africa, responds:

In my experience of small community newspapers it takes great courage for a man or a woman to leave their fixed job and fixed salary and enter the open market. They have to put everything on line in the hope that the venture will work. The person has to raise money before making money, and when the business is up and running finance is always a concern.

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, provides a perspective that unites leadership and business issues:

Leadership is about creating a common vision and sustaining that common vision. And in order to sustain that common vision you need resources. So we have to work in both directions, establish and pursue a common vision but at the same time secure enough resources to sustain the vision.

Promoting diversity

Delegates from independent community media organisations, and those with issue-based visions, regard promoting diversity as a key leadership role. Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Limpopo Mirror* and *Zoutpansberger* in South Africa points out:

We need diversity, we need more voices, we need communities to be able to report what is happening to them. That's what being part of a community is all about, and what makes a community a healthy community.

Time and again delegates demonstrated their skill at arbitrating between perspectives. Even though consensus was not always reached and debates were sometimes heated, there was no evidence of views being marginalised or delegates being sidelined. Thus by the way they conducted the debate, lekgotla participants truly 'walked the talk' and in the process allowed space for alternative perspectives and understandings to emerge.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, reflects:

There is an element of leadership that we can borrow from democracy: be accommodating of dissenting views. You should have the vision to see the opportunities in what others are saying and then come up with something that takes account of everybody's view. It is not true when there are a hundred of us there will be a hundred different opinions, nor is there some magic formula for consensus. It's healthy to hear people out, but in the end, the leader must take responsibility – rise above and see the opportunities even in the ideas that you think are 80 percent wrong. There might be 20 percent chance that you want to bring that idea in.

Many organisations represented at the lekgotla, and by association their leaders, are extremely successful at promoting diversity. Their challenges and accomplishments are detailed in 'Development and Diversity' (p.177).

Educating people about the role of media

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, says:

Unless we educate our people – our clients, audiences, government and even donors – to understand that media is business, and that therefore the services it provides must be paid for by somebody, we will continue to have a big disadvantage – we will be seen as non-profit organisations and philanthropists.

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, remarks:

It is a weakness of media in our region that the print industry has failed to create the market for its own business – in many places we expect people to buy the newspaper but we have never told them what a newspaper is and what it is there for! In certain zones all over our region, not only rural zones – many people are totally ignorant about the function of media because the media

industry has failed to actively create a market – this happens in many cases, certainly in my country. Illiteracy in the population and poverty don't allow people to be proactive enough and most don't have basic skills to be able to read what is being written in newspapers and in magazines, which we then expect them to buy. If people don't understand the content or what we are saying to them then of course they don't show any interest towards what is being written.

On a different note, Samantha Kalisa editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner*, a South African publication, recalls a criticism that is often levelled at media – that they report crises and humanitarian atrocities, but do nothing about them:

People should know that's not our job, our job is to expose what's happening and to return to it and say 'We highlighted this three weeks ago, look, nothing is being done'. Our job is not to solve the problems; our job is to show the problems.

Enhancing democratic processes

Related to the previous two roles – promoting diversity and educating people about the media – Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, agrees with Samantha Kalisa's comment above: "You can only bring about change when you make people aware of issues." He goes on to say: "I think it is incumbent on each of us to make it clear that a multiplicity of media – radio stations, TV broadcasts and print media – actually enhance democratic processes."

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, adds that a key leadership role is ensuring that multiplicity is extended to the range of perspectives:

Rather than being sensational, chase after fact, and make it a point that all sides in the stories are given a chance to be heard. Then people can decide for themselves. That is central to a democratic reality.

Collen Hans, ex *Josi FM* and now businessman and *IAJ (Institute for the Advancement of Journalism)* free-lance trainer in South Africa envisions a vigorous broadcasting mandate:

Take it to the people. Design programmes that are directed at them, programmes with educational value. Deliver people from illiteracy and get them to an average point where they can negotiate, where they can communicate without any difficulty or fear that theirs is not the voice of a specialist.

Samantha Kalisa agrees: "Radio can be the theatre of the mind. For those who cannot read, let them learn through radio."

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, warns:

We should look at ourselves as media, at our role, instead of throwing it back to our listeners or readers. Many of our journalists have been trained to slam governments, they don't report positive development, they report on very few positive things – it's mostly what's bad about Africa, our leaders, our states. We need to shift that.

These themes are expanded on in 'Development and Diversity' (p.177).

Networking and partnering

Effective networking that mobilises political, commercial and economic relationships was repeatedly mentioned as a key leadership role.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, observes:

Growth in sectors other than media is driven partly by the ability of business people to get together and create bigger markets across borders. And I think we as media people should not restrict ourselves to just our interests in our area. Look at *The Nation* group in Kenya – they are just creating bigger business across borders. We should all take advantage of the economic dynamics and business environments within southern regions. To a great extent, much of that is completely lost on media, and we are not part of those processes.

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, adds:

Anything we do is interdependent with what other people are doing. Any leader is interdependent to other leaders in various ways. If the leader does not know how to network this means he does not share his vision with others and does not borrow from their wisdom, and this shows that his leadership is very weak.

More on networking in 'Business Matters' (p.104).

The bigger picture, and getting staff to see it

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, talks about balancing on-the-ground needs and perceptions with the bigger picture:

Journalists rise up and become editors, but they often lack management skills. You'd expect that

once a person has reached editor level – whether it’s as a line editor, news editor or business editor – the person will look at issues much more holistically. But I have found that not to be so.

In Zimbabwe, for example, we had a serious problem when government imposed a price freeze on all goods and services, including newspapers. I was very reluctant as chief executive to abide by it. But I found a situation where my management team was saying to me ‘Well, if you don’t, then what is going to happen? We have to comply.’ Complying seemed the easy way out, but the way I looked at it was, ‘What is it going to do to our revenues? What is it going to do to our expenditure? How are we going to source this, how are we going to source that, and how will we pay for future expenditure from reduced revenues?’

Then at another level you have your management saying ‘We need salary reviews.’ And I say ‘But guys, you were telling me we should immediately abide by the government regulation to freeze prices! Where do you think the salaries are going to come from?’

Leadership requires one to rise beyond one’s peers. It also calls for those in leadership to have a much broader and wider understanding of the overall business. In most newsrooms there is little appreciation of business and that can become a serious problem.

Broadening the analogy, Raphael continues:

Quite often journalists do not understand the long term implications of what they have written. Often they write stories but fail to connect them to how the issues they raise or fail to raise apply to their everyday lives, to business incomes and expenditure as well as the company they work for. This to me demonstrates serious lack of leadership.

Identifying and exploiting opportunities

Cape Town editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner*, Samantha Kalisa, says the leadership role entails constant assessment and research:

Being in a managing or a leadership position you have to continuously evaluate whether you’re doing the right thing, whether you’re hitting the target or should be reviewing your readership – researching and weighing up new possibilities. A lot of companies now have what they call ‘new business opportunity managers’. I think that’s a big part of what a leader is. You’re always researching, always adding something new, you’re ensuring that the organisation can adapt to every new challenge and every new opportunity that comes your way. That’s your job – taking the company forward while making sure that the business survives.

Milupi Silumesii, emerging media programme officer of *SAIMED* in Botswana, thinks:

Any effective leader should be excited about ideas. Once I'm able to get an idea and convert it into opportunities which will work for the betterment of an organisation, then I'm an effective leader.

These ideas are explored further in 'Business Matters' (pages 77, 88 & 98).

Maintaining order and discipline

The task of developing disciplinary codes and other strategies for dealing with difficult staff is regarded by many delegates as being key to leading. This role is an example of where boundaries between leadership and management blur.

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications*, an advertising and publishing company in Swaziland, points out: "There should be guidelines in place, and irrespective of the position a person holds, you should follow those guidelines, otherwise we will have staff controlling us."

But as Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* says, guidelines are not always adequate to handle the intricacies of larger-than-life media personalities such as celebrity radio presenters. Nor do guidelines necessarily help to deal with personal actions and traits that are not strictly against the rules but have the potential to offend and disrupt:

How do we deal with these guys? The point is the last thing we want to throw at them is the disciplinary process or the procedure. As a leader you want to get in before that happens. How you do that, and when do you do it, and on what pretext?

Discussions on questions of discipline are detailed in 'People Power' (p.122).

Taking responsibility

Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, sums up this leadership role when he says:

For a lot of people you lead, you're lucky if they're very committed. For many of them it's just a job, it's just a salary: they go home each day and that's the end of it till tomorrow. As a leader you can't be like that. You have to take responsibility and that doesn't stop at the end of day. Leadership is something that sets you aside from seeing your work as just a job.

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, says:

It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that where there is doubt and problems the ship stays afloat and heading in the direction you want it to go. There has to be power sharing as well, and delegation is directly linked to that. Ultimately the leader must take responsibility for what happens, because even in the process of delegation you are at the centre of it and should things go wrong it remains your responsibility.

Kennedy Otsheleng points out that systems should be in place to manage responsibility:

A key leadership role is to ensure that your team members are accountable to the key performance indicators that you have created as a company. Our organisation keeps performance indicators like trade receivables, sales, customer retention, and many others that are salient to keeping the business afloat. As a business leader you must make sure that your team members are accountable to those key performance indicators.

Lekgotla delegates agree that leaders set the tone (p.31) and responsibility starts with them, but that even with systems such as Kennedy describes, ultimately responsibility also ends with them. This issue is explored in the section 'The buck stops here' (p.113), while delegation is discussed in 'People Power' (p.131). Another dimension of leadership is social responsibility, discussed in 'Issue-focused visions' (p.71).

Leading by example

Leading by example was discussed earlier (p.39). It also emerged as a theme in many stories delegates shared during storytelling sessions.

Ensuring succession

Empowering people was mentioned on p. 42 and is discussed in more detail in 'Development and Diversity' (p.177), 'First Principles: Visions and Mandates' (p.69) and in 'People Power' (p.137). Here delegates talk about empowerment as it relates to planning and strategising for leadership succession.

Servaas van den Bosch, who edits the monthly Namibian street paper *The Big Issue*, remembers:

At one point in our organisation we had one or two very dedicated people, who were also hands on, suddenly leave. That, combined with a non-functioning board, put us in a major crisis, to a point where we almost had to close. People hadn't learnt how to take responsibility or what to do. It's is a huge problem if you don't empower people to take up leadership roles.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, adds:

You should be able to walk away and be sure that you have delegated, you have nurtured people to the level where they can take charge and the ship still runs. Part of our role as African media leaders is to establish institutions that will stand the test of time. Leaders should plan to hand over at some point and move to the next level – become the board chair, for instance, where you can still provide leadership for the company, you can still add value.

Identifying and developing talent was identified as a key leadership role in relation to succession. As Peter du Toit of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* points out:

There's only so much that the educational institutions can do. Media organisations can't expect that in three years one is going to turn out a fully-fledged journalist for instance. Organisations need to have their own mentoring as well – that's my personal view.

Delegates agree that mentoring is a good tactic and key leadership role, but only two detailed examples were offered – one of mentoring within the organisation, and one of mentoring other small media (p.144).

Setting up and maintaining appropriate governance

In relation to organisational governance, M. Leepile, of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, points out:

Issues of governance are critical to the success or failure of an organisation. From what they have said, 60 percent of the people here don't have properly functioning boards. Once you don't have a functioning board it means there is no buy-in at the top.

Lekgotla delegates do, indeed, report a high incidence of governing boards which do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities, or which show no real engagement with the organisation and its functioning. Tried and tested solutions were shared and new ones generated. These are detailed in 'Business Matters' (p.77).

Managing people

Rory Wilson, veteran South African media leader and now an independent consultant to the industry, sums up the people management role when he says:

When I started life as a manager it was all about results and vision and goals. And the more I worked as a leader, the more I realised that in fact it's not about those things at all. Leadership is much more than that: leadership is about my people. It's about the led, the people you lead and how you motivate them and inspire them, because they're the people who make the difference ultimately. Put it this way, if you don't have people who make the difference, you've got to make the difference yourself, which means you're going to be working an 18-hour day and you're not going to sleep very well at night. So that seems to me to be the challenge – to work effectively with people.

Managing people was mentioned earlier (p.32) and is discussed in detail in 'People Power' (p.109).

Passing on the passion

According to Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, passion is an essential ingredient of success:

Be passionate about your project, because your passion spills over to the rest of your team. We're in an industry where we need creative input from everyone else. If there's no passion, if you don't believe in your product or are not proud of it, it's going to filter through.

More on passion appears in Chapter 7, 'Empowering and inspiring' (p.137)

Solving problems

As mentioned earlier (p.31) the way in which leaders strategise is often related to the size of their organisations.

In the view of Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, itself a large organisation:

You are accountable for the actions of all your people. But you have line managers, departmental heads, and so forth – they must deal with problems. They should only come to you on policy issues or if a problem is beyond them. And again, you are not solving the problem, he or she must provide the solution or at least bring a range of possibilities to the table. The whole system must be such that problems are solved throughout.

Planning

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, a commercial station that “we started from nothing” in a “depressed, rural area”, describes how planning enabled his company to grow and to keep all departments “in sync”:

What has helped us to build the business is our planning activity, which is quite rigorous and vigorous. Of course we have a long-term view, the vision and mission, and we move toward that with a monthly planning regime for the station as a whole. First of all, each department has a monthly plan. We review the monthly plans of all the departments and see how these fit with the monthly station plan. We revise the departmental as well as the station plans and then come up with an integrated plan for the coming month. We find that we are always dealing with priorities, with the important issues – there’s no being taken by surprise. And we know exactly who is doing what. We find that News will be co-ordinating with Programmes, because during their planning session there are things that agreed, that matched. And Marketing and Sales will also be in the loop, because while we are producing the news and the programmes, we are finding marketing opportunities. So far the system has truly worked well – it helps us function in unity.

Succession planning (p.199) is another key role that Iekgotla delegates identified.

Chapter 4

Starting Media Organisations and Being Promoted

Being promoted or taking over as leader

As in all business sectors some people in media get promoted to positions for which they have little interest or expertise. Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, remarks:

Journalists rise up and become editors, but they often lack management skills. In turn editors move into senior executive positions, which might not be where their skills and passions lie.

Lekgotla delegates are all successful media leaders, and none of their stories have ended in failure. Nonetheless, several speak of the difficulties, and sometimes shock, accompanying their rise to the top. Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, remembers:

We started in July 1993. I was in the founding team and came on board as chief sub-editor. Three months later, the editor left unceremoniously so I became editor. Fifteen months later – I was in Taiwan at that time – my editor-in-chief left unceremoniously as well. So I had to come back. I was told: ‘Now you are editor-in-chief’. That was it! No handovers.

Adapting may have been difficult, but as Alfred says, “I’ve managed to steer the ship.” He continues:

At that time we were coming out twice in the week. I think our paper was just eight pages thick. Today we have *The Nation*, which is a daily paper coming out five times a week, Mondays through Fridays, and it’s normally between 32 and 36 pages minus supplements. We also introduced *Week-end Nation*, which comes out on Saturdays – that’s roughly 72 pages thick. Last year we introduced

Nation on a Sunday, about 36 pages. From starting in 1993 we are now the highest circulating newspaper in Malawi, and I feel proud to say that.

The stories of Samantha, Pheello and Kennedy, told below, all share a common factor. Prior to their taking up new leadership positions, their staff had not been properly informed about the leadership change nor had they been offered a profile detailing the credentials and experience of their new leader. Leaders who plan to move jobs and those who recruit new staff need to be cognisant of the implications of this omission and take steps to avoid it.

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, remembers:

I always think of myself as being a reluctant leader. I started off as a journalist and thought I'd be a journalist forever but then I got the opportunity to take the editing position at *Bignews for the Business Owner*. You take this position but you don't always know what it's all about. I can empathise with Servaas [see his story on page 79] because you wake up one morning and realize with absolute horror that people are actually looking at you to show them the way. You look around and you think to yourself 'I don't even know where I'm going'.

I first came in for short while as a senior writer and then they offered me the editor post. The editor who was there at the time was the founding member and he'd been editor for ten years, so this was literally his baby. Unfortunately he and other senior execs didn't properly inform the staff of their intentions. So one minute I was a senior writer and then next minute I was editor. And the staff was all male. At that time there was only one other woman editor in South Africa – Ferial Haffajee of the *Mail & Guardian*. I was the second one.

So here you've got a staff of fairly mature males and this pipsqueak comes in from nowhere and she's now the boss. They also weren't properly informed of my credentials, so they felt that they were better qualified for the job than I was, plus they'd been working there for so long. There was a huge amount of resentment. They weren't going to accept me overnight, this I had to realise.

I got so sick of hearing 'Oh, but Barry used to do it that way' or 'We used to do it that way.' I realised that it was going to be a question of proving myself to them over a period of time. So I called them together and said, 'Look, I'm not Barry, I come from a different environment, these are my credentials.' I had to call in the CEO to talk to them the way he should have spoken to them at the beginning. And I had to lay out my plans – what we were going to do and how we were going to do it together – assure them that I wasn't here to upset the applecart, but that we could find better ways of doing things. There were a few problems and one or two journalists left, but we got other journalists in. And the newspaper just got better. Within my three years there we were bought into by BDFM [*Business Day Financial Mail*].

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, shares his story:

I write for the *Public Eye* in Maseru, a weekly, and I'm currently the political editor, a position I came into when we were hoping to have a huge shake-up of the paper. For ten years or so before my appointment as political editor, I'd been writing for the paper as a contributor and regularly as a columnist. Things had been pretty smooth and casual and off-handish among myself and the rest of the staff and editors. But immediately after I was given the desk of the editor, things started becoming very sour indeed. There was not a proper introduction of myself as political editor and I took it for granted that I would have been told the state of events.

From time to time I would assign people very critical jobs with strict deadlines, only to find that they are not on the ball. When I asked 'Why is that story not in?' they would tell me that another editor had since assigned them something else. And so I decided to demonstrate why it was that my decisions could add value to the establishment. If I gave somebody a story to do and they did not do it, and if that person did not have a valid excuse, or said that he or she had got instructions from elsewhere by people who should be sharing the brief with me – well, I would just go ahead and do the story.

As you know, the jump from writing opinion to writing news is quite a challenge – you have to be more like a camera when you write news, as opposed to being like a sports commentator. So it was hard, but after a time, I started making regular headlines, which people used to expect a follow-up on. So I was becoming like a reporter instead of becoming an editor. But simply by demonstrating that I can do it and getting regular attention from the readers, the people who were supposed to be working under me came along and they actually started volunteering to get assigned tasks. Everything has since gotten back in order. I think the moral of my story is that sometimes, however big you think you are, you must demonstrate why it is that you are worth anything.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, tells of his debut as a media leader:

My story comes from my first encounter at *GABZ FM*. I joined on the first of July 2003. I came to the office for the first time at eight in the morning and at around ten past eight I was told that deputy sheriffs were at the door – they had come to lock or close the radio and begin the process of selling the assets. And I had been there for ten minutes.

The sheriffs had come with the matter from Avis. I called the manager of Avis and said 'Listen, I'm the manager of *GABZ FM*, I was employed ten minutes ago, there's nothing I can tell you right now, but please take away the deputy sheriffs. You will not regret making that decision.' And I dropped the phone. Immediately I called a staff meeting. I had to immediately tell the staff members that 'Oh, by the way,' because I had been appointed in a rush-rush way, 'I'm your new manager. You will get to know a bit more about me in future, but what I can tell you now before we go too far is

that you must expect that there will be a lot of changes and they will happen in a very short time.’ I found out that the employees had not been paid for the previous month. So one of the first questions I got was ‘Should we expect that some of us are going to lose our jobs?’ And I said ‘Yes, a lot of you are going to lose your jobs.’ It was my first encounter with being a leader of a company that’s under distress. And I had to be very honest and straight with people.

Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue*, a monthly street paper in Namibia also joined his organisation when it was in a very bad state and near to closure. With the previous editor’s departure, the board had not taken up any of the responsibility for the organisation. Servaas says, “They considered it as someone else’s baby.” The paper now reaches the street regularly and business is running more smoothly. But he is quick to acknowledge that moving forward comes with personal costs and is an uncertain journey: “It’s a very stressful and wavering kind of process.” For his full story see ‘Governance’ (p.79).

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, speaks of his station’s experiment using an organic approach to allow for the natural emergence of leaders:

My story is about an issue that is confronting our station and management now. Ours is a start-up organisation and when we set it up we felt that the best way to proceed was not in a hierarchical arrangement of positions and ranks but with a flat organisational arrangement. Later we saw that there were people who began to show leadership capability, so they were given responsibilities to perform, but they weren’t given formal appointments to those positions.

What became apparent was that people who had been allocated leadership responsibilities did not want to assert themselves fully. And on the other hand, the other people didn’t think them qualified enough or experienced enough to be supervising. So you have this situation where those who should be supervising want to remain with the ranks, not move over completely, or make definite decisions and ensure that things are carried out. The result was that people were working largely on their own.

Our way of solving that issue was to begin to appraise the work of individuals, and it was very evident in the Programmes department that in fact those who were leaders were performing at a much lower, poorer level. In fact, their performance was at the level of volunteers! Very recently we decided that those who wanted to perform like volunteers should be treated like volunteers. We got everyone to set their own performance indicators. We’ll see what happens within the next six months, when based on their own performance indicators, we can decide who should take up leadership positions.

Beata Kasale offers a word of advice: “You need leaders who are not just leaders by name – give them power, authority.”

Starting up a media business

Entry into media for Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, was a response to a calling:

I got into journalism by accident – because of a man who was revered by most of Lesotho at the time – the editor of a church newspaper called *Leselinyana la Lesotho*. He was a pacifist but was assassinated by government hit squads because he was seen to be working against the regime. The death of Edgar Mahlomola Motuba inspired me to go into writing because I felt there was a vacuum in Lesotho with regard to political writing. It took me a very long time because I did not even have high school qualifications. I had to start from scratch and then go to college in the UK to study journalism. When I came back I had nobody to employ me – even the people who sponsored my studies would not give me money to get started. I started with the little money that I had. (His story is continued in ‘Politics, Independence, Law’ on p.162).

Mike Daka, of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, responds:

As Anton van Zyl pointed out (p.48) setting up an organisation takes courage. The fact that very few financial institutions support media initiatives means that individuals get into the industry not because they think that they can make money but because they think it is a calling. They have passion and commitment. Some even use up all their savings in order to build up these institutions! Also, given the political situations in most of our countries, and the need to create environments where media can operate freely without hindrance, being a media leader takes a lot of courage.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, disagrees to some extent:

Passion and commitment are important, yes, but if you look at the history of newspapers, they were never started by a bunch of journalists, they were started by people who wanted to make money.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia agrees that the business aspect is a driving factor:

If you look at people who are setting up newspapers and radio stations in my country, they’re not journalists, they’re people who think that there’s money in it. And the perception of media as a business investment opportunity in Zambia is growing. Some entrepreneurs are very successful.

There is a lady [Gillian Baker] who lives in Mukushi – a farm area in Zambia – she is producing about four or five different magazine titles. She started off with a development magazine bringing the

plight of rural development to the attention of policymakers. And she worked that niche, targeting people in the development area: the government, the World Bank, different NGOs. Then she went on to introduce a beauty magazine and she's now taken up a finance magazine as well as a marketing magazine. So the environment is conducive and people are unearthing real business opportunities in the industry.

Some of the challenges

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, says media leaders in rural areas across the region struggle with the lack of good practice examples and benchmarks:

If you are going to start a radio station in South Africa or in Botswana today there are some benchmarks you can assess yourself against – standards have already been set. The level of competitiveness, the skills base – those are there – and you can develop your own vision by learning from developments that you see. But if you're going to start in some remote rural area where there is nothing, benchmarking is a major challenge.

Clearly leadership at the start-up stage requires a lot of initial footwork. Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, recommends:

Amongst your staff and colleagues you need to put down the vision and discuss it so that everyone can bring in his or her own knowledge and experiences. It is also very important that you meet with as many people as possible outside the organisation – government, other regional and national media organisations, support structures and so forth – in order to borrow as much information as possible. Information is power.

Mike Daka, of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, agrees. Based on experience, he advises start-up leaders to conduct initial research followed by ongoing monitoring and evaluation:

Before you set up your organisation you need an audience survey that gives you an understanding of what services people in your target area are getting, and what they are happy and unhappy with. That helps us to find our proper niche. Thereafter we must ask our readers and listeners for regular feedback. After a couple of years you go back to do another proper audience survey. Many of *Breeze FM's* ideas, the types of programmes we air and how we approach programmes, have come from ordinary villagers.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa poses a question: "Will the radio stations be able to start out without donor funding?" Mike Daka replies: "Sure, we started up with me selling my house." But Kennedy Otsheleng is not so sure that the media, whether print or

radio, can do without donor funding: “I know very few independent, community or commercial enterprises – especially outside South Africa, but even in South Africa – that were not started either directly or indirectly with money from a donor source. I think this is a weakness in our industry.” Donor funding is discussed in ‘Business Matters’ (p.86) and in ‘Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change’ (p.198).

Finance and competition are clearly considerable challenges during the whole life cycle of a media organisation, and explored in ‘Business Matters’ (p.77). In Namibia, for instance, Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)*, tells of the start-up of government owned media conglomerates, which have restricted the flow of capital into community and other independent media organisations. This has negative implications for new media organisations. It also impacts on media diversity in the country – discussed under ‘Development and Diversity’ (p.177).

In some countries media entrepreneurs also face political and legislative restrictions. These are more fully explored in ‘Politics, Independence, Law’ (p.157) and in ‘Legislation and litigation’ (p.169).

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, raises a more personal and emotive dimension of being a new leader – the tension between power and popularity:

The first thing that happens when you become a leader is that when you say something slightly funny, people laugh. When that happens, you better know you’re in a very dangerous place. Those are the little signals. If people are laughing at your silly jokes, think very carefully about what’s happening in front of you. You’ve probably got a relationship problem, a status problem, a genuineness problem of some sort.

When I was at *Independent Newspapers*, I would walk through the building on Monday mornings and talk to people to find out what’s going on – trying to make contact. I soon realised I would say anything to make them laugh, and that’s terribly dangerous. It corrupts you.

Mike interrupts with a question:

When do you know whether they are laughing *at* or *with* you? Because at the same time it’s important that it’s not just work, work, work and direct instructions and what not, but that there is a human side, that you can talk to them about the ordinary things – like sharing a joke. That’s important too because it shows that you have a sense of humour.

Rory replies:

I’d like to think that you’d probably know that. You have to get back to the servant-leader’s perspective and ask yourself ‘What am I really here to do?’ And you can see it broadly as two leadership styles: you can say, ‘I’m the boss here, I run the show’, you know – that style. Or you can say, ‘I’m

here, I have a job to do like everybody else, my job is to be the leader.

I sometimes hesitate to make this point, people don't always take it seriously, but I say it because it's important: we're all mortal, we all want to be popular, and it's easy to be seduced by things that are not real. But don't allow yourself to be fooled.

Chapter 5

First Principles: Visions and Mandates

Vision statements often sound like unreal dreams, too ambitious to be achieved. But they are necessary dreams. As leadership theorist M J Wheatley¹ points out, without a clear sense of identity and direction people and organisations drift, potentially losing power to act in and on the world.

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, cautions:

The problem with every discussion on vision is that it's hard to argue against it. If the editor says, 'Let's run a campaign on the safety of our children', nobody in the newsroom is going to say 'No', but that doesn't necessarily mean it's a good idea. The Americans call this sort of thinking 'motherhood and apple pie' – nobody criticises motherhood and nobody criticises the national pudding, apple pie. The other part of the problem is the person inside the business who actually doesn't like apple pie – it's hard for that person to say anything. So you've got to be very careful that you don't assume that someone's silence means agreement.

An associated problem is that the vision sometimes becomes so big and grand that your people say, 'Well that's great, but now let's get on with the real world!' So I always get a little uncomfortable about the word vision, because it can be a bit too obvious. I'm not saying vision is not a good thing, just that we must be mindful.

Delegates view the ability to create and carry forward an organisational vision as a key leadership role and attribute, as discussed on pages 30 & 37. This chapter elaborates on their insights.

Creating the vision

In a statement broadly reflecting the strategies of all the lekgotla delegates, M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, says:

I firstly try to establish a vision and sense of purpose of where I want to take the organisation. The next important thing is to effectively communicate that vision down through the rest of the organisation so that there's understanding of where we are and where we are trying to go.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, adds: "As leader of an organisation you must make sure that you inculcate the vision."

Getting buy-in to the vision

Some delegates speak of the benefit of a consultative approach in which they negotiate the group's vision. As Wheatley says, if a leader can harness the myriad interpretations staff have of the organisation, its context, resources and functioning, the organisation will "become more intelligent."² Sebonomoea Ramainoane of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* emphasises the value of creating space for this to happen: "Everyone must bring in his or her own knowledge and experiences."

Mike Daka, MD of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, also favours a consultative approach. He first presented his vision to his team, then after negotiating it, he and his team formulated a list of shared values to guide their mission statement. It was their planning process (described on p.57) that enabled them to break their mission down into bite-sized chunks. He says:

In fact, it's the individual employees in the different departments that are saying, 'This is what we are going to do. Yes, there is a grand vision, but our contribution over this weekend was this and during the week it will be that'.

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, recounts how she had trouble getting staff to buy in to her vision for the paper:

They were not keen on the vision and mission statement, they saw it as immature, stupid. It wasn't fancy; it was only one sentence for both the mission and the vision: 'To become the most popular newspaper in Botswana.' We had come in when the other papers had been there for a long time and staff were thinking, 'How can we possibly be the most popular paper, there is no way we can beat that paper or this one, it's impossible.' They wanted us to change it; it always cropped up in the meetings. With a vision like that what do you expect? I mean we were printing 3 000 copies in the beginning when others were printing 20 000, and on top of it we were in the second city, not Gaborone.

But since we reached the position of second most popular paper, I see a lot of change. Staff buy-in has been really overwhelming, it's awesome. Now people understand why they should comply with the strict cost controls we brought in ['Money matters', p.91]. In the end they understood where we were coming from and they saw the big picture. Now I have got full conviction that we'll reach our second mission and vision statement – to become the most profitable newspaper in Botswana.

Bignews for the Business Owner editor Samantha Kalisa comments: "We all talk about a vision, but a vision isn't something that's static. As your environment changes you need to revisit your vision – it's a vital part of being an effective leader." Regarding organisational vision being disputed, she says:

As Rory said, the vision might be there but your vision might be crap. And there's this one person, the only one in the organisation brave enough to stand up and say, 'Listen we've tried this before, I've been here long enough and this isn't going to work and this is why.' You need to create a channel where that person can feel free to say that.

In response Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* in Malawi adds:

Most of the time when you enter an organisation, the vision is clearly defined. So probably it's not exactly disagreeing with the vision, but disagreeing with the strategic or immediate planning. I think as leaders we should listen to the person who says, 'Hey, that's daft, how about doing it differently?' That guy is really adding value and you may not agree with him but you need him because those people who just sit and clap hands and help you carry your bag when you are entering the office are helping with nothing.

Editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, Pheello Selinyane, sees a different situation in reality:

If I put in my \$20 000 as a start-up investment for a company and a colleague who joins says to me 'No, that way's wrong', I'm not going to listen. Actually, I think it's unlikely to happen – I don't think the person would have the strength to say, 'Sorry but you've got a bullshit mission statement.' An employment criterion is that you accept the vision that's there.

Issue-focused visions

Issue-focused visions have to do with transformation and equipping and empowering those being led to positively change the world around them.

During the storytelling session Siphwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications*, an advertising and publishing company in Swaziland, tells of her organisation's issue-based vision:

In Swaziland there is a high prevalence of sexual abuse of, and amongst, children. In 2003 my husband and I saw that and we came up with a publication to educate children on abuse and other related issues affecting them such as HIV and AIDS. It's called *Super Buddies* and it engages children by using a comic format. We felt it was a social responsibility. We originally intended to open a small company consulting to other companies, but soon the magazine gained so much popularity that the children wanted to be involved in peer-education.

My husband is still employed but he helps me, as an accountant and an advertising consultant, to manage what is now a huge NGO – the *Super Buddies Club*. It's all over Swaziland and popular. Demand is growing but is not really generating income because it's distributed for free – to schools, NGOs, national libraries, etc.

In Swaziland the culture of advertising is not as progressive as in South Africa so the advertisers were reluctant to support a children's magazine. I find myself in two roles now – I run a company that must make profit, and I must manage this NGO. I have never been in any NGO, I have been in media all my life! I have to write proposals, I have to go out and fundraise. My company is being affected because the NGO consumes most of my time. Not that I am complaining. I enjoy helping the children in every respect – a lot of it is dealing with their problems as well, because some of them look up to you and think, 'This is a huge organisation that will help us, not only educate us.' So they come to you and tell you, 'I've been chased from school, I'm an orphan, I have no one to pay for my school fees.' So then you go out and source funds to pay for school fees. It's a leadership challenge that's exciting because you are reaching out and making a difference in people's lives. But sometimes you find yourself stressed because, without resources you cannot do it as much as you want to.

An unexpected consequence of the success of *Super Buddies* and one that is common to many, many organisations with issue-based visions is that they begin to suffer a 'bleeding mandate' – energy and resources are diverted into aspects of a problem that are unexpected, emerge over time and are difficult to ignore. At what point do people engaged in humanitarian work say 'no'? As pointed out (pages 30 & 87), some delegates think that philanthropy and media business are not easy companions.

Collen Hans started his media career at *Jozi FM*, which has a development and empowerment, or issue-based, vision. He takes this vision forward in his work as a freelance trainer for the *Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ)* in South Africa. He likens the roles of the broadcaster to that of the parents of young listeners:

All media sectors need to educate children and do it in a fun way. Create products that challenge children to engage with realities they face at home, in their communities, in the environment. Design a mindset game where children find themselves in a space where they have to solve a real life problem, or at least think creatively about it – but let it be a game. And parents – especially

parents in the media industry – should mould their children, decide which programmes they should watch, not just to leave the gadgets and decisions to them.

Asta Rau, research consultant to the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, points out that many delegates are involved in programmes that empower children, so the lekgotla provides good opportunities for networking and information-sharing. She adds:

There are also many websites featuring child development programmes and innovative interventions that address gender, racial and language inequities, environmental risks, issues of health and abuse, and so forth. All it takes is some online research – you don't have to build programmes from zero. As a researcher and as a friend of people with children who access these sites – I know there's lots of good stuff out there.

Editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA* in Lesotho, Sebonomoea Ramainoane, adds:

Other media institutions have youth as television presenters, but we have kids and I think that's a leadership accomplishment. We have two programmes on the weekend, one presented by an 11-year-old – and he is just not doing a presentation, he's actually teaching Sesotho and English on the programme, and he is more popular than the rest of us! Another kid teaches science subjects on a Friday evening. We also have people who would not get a media job because of their education. Some of them have hardly gone through primary education but we have trained them to become very good presenters. Most of them have left us to join rival media organisations and they are now key presenters, presenting key issues.

Business-focused visions

Kennedy Otsheleng is one of several delegates who advocate for a more business-oriented approach: "I don't create the vision for the organisation but I am the facilitator in the process of meeting the vision of key stakeholders in the organisation." (p.47).

MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine in Lesotho has both a strong business ethic and a strong empowerment ethic. Editor-in-chief Sebonomoea Ramainoane notes:

You have media that support conservative politics, those that are liberal, those that are socialist, those promoting social responsibility. Irrespective of their vision and what is underlying it, is the knowledge that we are here for business – we employ people who have to get their salaries, health benefits, pensions and so on.

Swaziland's Siphwe Nkambule, who told earlier of her difficulties balancing philanthropy with business,

acknowledges: “You have a vision and then you have objectives, one of which is sourcing funding. If you don’t have money, your vision – however creative it is – won’t take off.”

From visions to mandates

Irrespective of where organisations lie on the continuum between issue-focused and business-focused visions and mandates, mutual benefit for the organisations and their audiences is the common denominator motivating media’s functioning.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe which produces the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, says that it is vital for the company to have a vision of the sort of society Zimbabwe should become. *Zimind Publishers* should exercise a key leadership role, setting the national agenda on issues of press freedom and democratic reform. He explains: “We strive to say, ‘These are the issues we think the nation should be focussing on.’ And then we move the debate and stimulate contributions on articles that focus on those issues.”

Kennedy Otsheleng responds:

I don’t see my role as creating any national agenda because we are a private company and I owe my mandate and my responsibilities to the stakeholders who own the company. So I’m not out there to solve national issues, but rather to lead the company towards goals set by the owners of the station I run.

According to Lesotho’s Pheello Selinyane, *Public Eye* does not consciously set public agendas, nonetheless, through systematic investigative journalism the paper has created a market for readers interested in particular issues. Pheello says, “We have found ourselves sort of locked around two pillars of focus – the issue of anticorruption and reform.”

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini*, a faith-based media institution in Tanzania, raises a moral dilemma:

We started in 1994 and are the oldest private station in Tanzania. Our vision is to air programmes that educate and are profitable for the listeners – innovative programmes catering to children, women and many areas of interest. And we are not just for Catholics – in most Muslim homes people listen to our stations. But the new radio stations that come up in Tanzania are not working for the sake of the people, they are working for the sake of money. And when it comes to getting ad-spend they are serious competitors. So it becomes a matter of choice – a religious vision or a business mandate.

Rifts between visions and mandates can be truly problematic. Collen Hans, *IAJ* trainer, says:

Major problems appear when corporations begin assessing the development of a community-owned media organisation as if it's an instrument for monetary gain ...to a point that communities become up in arms saying: 'What are you broadcasting? Have you forgotten the mandate saying that this is our radio station?'

But the corporates come in with a financial agenda and with content that supports it. They say, 'Your organisation is sitting on gold, but you guys don't understand what you're doing.' But actually, coming from a different world, they have no clue or any background knowledge of where community radio stations are coming from. They can't grasp the fact that if the leaders of a community-owned organisation start forgetting that they are there because of the people, then the people have the right to say 'Give us the key, you must leave because you're not serving us'.

Mandates are also frustrated when leaders of community-owned media stay too long in their positions. They forget that they took up the job for a cause. Once in the system for too long they start believing that it's just business and 'Let's fatten my pay cheque.' It's a major problem.

Endnotes

1. Wheatley, 1999, p. 39.
2. Wheatley, 1999, p. 67.

Chapter 6

Business Matters

Business management is seldom the starting point or first interest of journalists. Many who become media leaders acquire their business skills ‘on the job’. Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, is a typical example, observing:

I have been very fortunate in my career – I did every job there was to do in a newspaper. I started out as a cadet reporter and a sub-editor, then copytaster, chief sub-editor, night editor for a while, managing editor, and then I ran the foreign news services for what was called *South African Associated Newspapers*. After that I slipped irrevocably into newspaper management. I spent a long time moving back into and back out of editorial, but really, when you’ve made that jump into management it’s hard to get back.

Governance and board members

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, sparked off the discussions about the business aspects of media by challenging the group:

I would like ask a simple question which should apply to everybody here. How many of you have boards of directors for your companies? And how often do those boards meet?

It turns out that almost 60 percent of the delegates do not have functioning boards. In a comment that broadly reflects the experiences of the delegates, M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana acknowledges this as a huge problem:

Once you don't have functioning boards it means there is no buy-in at the top. We are in a similar situation. I think our criteria of appointing were wrong. We realised a year later that these guys were not worthy of the position and it nearly cost us the licensing of the radio station.

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumbaini* in Tanzania, shares her story:

The people who founded the organisation appointed a board of directors, who are policy makers. But the management of my radio station falls under the Catholic Diocese and we meet four times a year. The board was formed to help raise funds, but all they do is come to the quarterly meetings and listen what you have done and so forth. Some have their own interests and their input is really no help at all. Worse is that the institution has very young employees who are impressionable and vulnerable to some board members' agendas and interests. Certain of these youngsters are very conversant presenters, and they use that gift to spoil – they understand the situation but can't solve the problem and so they make unrealistic proposals. Afterwards you find yourself having to do all the work – find money, write proposals, etcetera. It becomes such a burden that you feel, 'I should just step down or this is going to destroy me'.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, agrees:

I think it is the case everywhere. We hired our board based on their expertise: 'You from a financial institution will help the financial department, and you will help the marketing because you are a specialist in that field.' But the board decided to run everything. They allocated what groups would report to me and said 'You will do 1, 2, 3 to help this group to sustain itself.' But then management comes with its own proposals to the people on the ground and sometimes they give a false report saying, 'This must be done because the board agrees'. Come the AGM, everything is exposed. The board starts to say, 'We didn't know about this issue. How did he launch the brand without our consent?' When somebody is playing chess with people's lives, it is a leadership problem.

As Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, wryly observes:

You often find management creates that situation of lack of interest because a lot of managers don't want a board that's too interested or committed or who looks too much over their shoulders.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, says:

I sit on two other boards as a volunteer and it is the exact same problems. Sixty to 70 percent of the board members do not prepare for meetings – they arrive there and go through the agenda and then try to make an input, which is mostly counterproductive. In one of the companies I saw the CEO coming in with a very decent proposal, well worked out. And suddenly everybody has something to say about it and it gets shot off the table. A month later the same thing comes in again and

suddenly it is approved because they have realised that what the CEO was saying makes sense.

Anton draws attention to a helpful document:

In South Africa we have the 'King report of Good Corporate Governance'. It's a fascinating document, with guidelines on ethical values, social responsibility, and so on. The guidelines are relevant to even the smallest company and I've found the report very useful.

Servaas van den Bosch of *The Big Issue*, Namibia, shares his board problems with the group:

I have had so many problems in the past couple of months and I can relate them all back to a single issue – governance. When I came into the organisation the editor had just left, the director had just left, so there was no leadership. And the board basically didn't take up the responsibility. We have the magazine, which I am running, and we have the whole social development component, which is our core activity because that's what sponsors fund.

The sponsors were saying they couldn't work with the organisation any more because of trouble with the board. The only solution that I could think of was to take charge and ask the board to vacate their seats. They'd been sitting there for five years, they hardly ever met and when leadership was called for they didn't show the commitment – so they were more of an obstacle.

Meanwhile, my first priority was to raise funds to buy time for the organisation to recover and so staff wouldn't have to worry anymore about salaries – as they had during the time of no leadership. I mean, the board was there to look for funds but they hadn't. And I saw that there was a kind of looting of the organisation in a time of insecurity – people were no longer showing up regularly at work and they stopped taking responsibility. I had to fire four people. Right now we are climbing out of the pit but it's been a very stressful time.

The only thing I can do is take one step at a time – first, crack down on bad work ethics, then get the funds, then get new people in, and then finally start focusing on the magazine, on the content and all.

Servaas' plan is to send out letters of interest, handpick some board members, and then monitor them for six months to see who is dedicated and who adds value. Only then will he formally invite them to the board. He invites the group to comment.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* did not seem happy with the fact that *The Big Issue*, the paper which Servaas edits, does not have an executive board, but a board of trustees. But Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, says she has a board structure similar to Servaas:

We must also still establish a board, but in the meantime we have a group of trustees who help us. It's important to have somebody above you – an extra pair of eyes telling you why the business is not running well and to help you to grow.

As Anton points out, at least Pat's board delegates responsibilities, which Servaas' board did not do. M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana comments:

I don't necessarily think changing boards is a solution – there are ways of involving boards, through board committees for example. There is a difference between a board of an NGO and a board of a huge paper, but the principles are essentially the same. From my experience one of the first things you should do as leaders after appointing a board is to plan a workshop for them.

Alfred Ntonga supports this wholeheartedly: "And they must be thoroughly workshopped!"

Anton van Zyl asks Servaas if his board members are paid. Servaas replies: "No, it's a voluntary directorship. We couldn't pay a sitting fee that makes it attractive, but also it goes against the philosophy of the organisation." Anton remarks: "By not paying you are potentially getting the worst of them all. They have to believe in your cause – a semi-commercial cause – otherwise what's in it for them?"

Anton's organisation is well known for its social responsibility and involvement in the community.¹ Sadly, with some boards a selfless ethic is not always in evidence. Accounts of people on a board who distort its purpose for their own agendas, bear this out. Alfred Ntonga comments:

They will do that, they will run someone down. You can have the best people, the best CEO, but I'm telling you it starts with the board and the board can say, 'I dislike this woman from the way she walks, I'll run her down'.

"Let's twist this a little bit," suggests M. Leepile:

If I am the majority owner of a company – I have 51 percent – the first thing I would do is make sure that I have a board chairman who agrees with me. The moment you don't do that, nothing will happen or ever take place, you'll spend most of the time disagreeing.

Esther Chilambo echoes many of the delegates' sentiments when she says:

But if you are going to make your friend a board member you could destroy the company, innovations may be blocked and you won't develop. That's what's happening now in Tanzania – people with certain interests will say 'I don't want to advertise in this paper.' If the others agree just because his or her share is bigger than the others, or because they are friends, or share a particular interest, then it's a problem.

M. Leepile concludes:

I think we can talk about this thing forever but what we need to emphasise is that this is reality. The majority stakeholder usually wants to get his or her own way and I don't think it necessarily means wanting people to sing along. If you are going to run an organisation you should accept that other people have views.

And of course there are ways of appointing boards that are balanced – you need to decide, depending on the size of the organisation. Even in complex organisations like De Beers, if you look at their hierarchies you will see its beginnings – it belonged to the Oppenheims then and it does now. And look at who is chairman – the friend of the Oppenheims' father. It doesn't matter who has 49 percent in De Beers, the Oppenheims will always have control. Because there is a tradition, a tried and tested model they lead with – it is their business and they understand it well.

So I think we need to think about these things and not just run away from them. Accept the challenges, and if you are committed to making change in your organisation and you provide strong sustainable leadership, just bite the bullet and know that there will be challenges surrounding you. Don't always look on the negative side.

Money matters

It is clear from the Iekgotla discussions that money is a cross-cutting issue. It reaches well beyond generating and managing revenue and sourcing funding, to impact on independence, diversity, litigation, democracy, internal and external relationships – in short, every aspect of the media industry. Some commentary on how leaders think about and deal with money matters was presented earlier (pages 29 & 47). This section offers a more comprehensive discussion: it covers perceptions of the financial climates in which media operates and debates on challenges such as risk management, changing mindsets, foreign exchange and donor funding.

Some delegates think that media is a 'poor cousin' to other industries; whereas others think media does well in relation to other business sectors and that opportunities abound for the creation of wealth. The maturity of an organisation clearly plays an important part in where it is positioned along a continuum ranging from financial struggle to financial stability to wealth.

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, observes:

We have a big number of registered newspapers, but most of them are not on the street because of financial constraints, not because of political impediments.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, adds:

The fact that we are not on the money markets I see as a huge weakness – although Kennedy spoke about some advantages to that [p.47]. It's really difficult to get money from the banks. You can't get it from the private or corporate sector either – they're not interested in investing in the media.

Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)* in Namibia, also points out that the arrival of large media conglomerates means resources are beginning to circulate at only one level of the industry, compromising diversity (p.161). And the story of Sphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* illustrates the financial constraints attending an organisation implementing an empowerment or issue-based mandate (p.71).

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, takes both a short- and long-term view:

Every year, everybody is measuring their success, not by their ability to grow wealth, but rather by the ability to survive. As long as you are operating, it means you are a big success, but we're not growing and we are not helping ourselves to grow. So unfortunately, at this point of time media does not generate enough income – does not have the financial muscle really. As media leaders we need to recognise the power we wield – keep that vision and be persistent in where we are going. It's only a matter of time and we will be big and make money.

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, remarks:

I have actually found that the media in my country is making a lot of money. I've been re-engineering this other company and now they are making money after a year – lots of it – and it really boils down to leadership. The board did not know their rule was creating opposing turfs and confusing management. On my first day and I said 'I want to see the manager' and nine people walked in! I trimmed the managers down to four. Soon I found out they did not have a layer of middle management and had not built solid management systems and processes. When these are in place and the structure or hierarchy is clear, business will start running smoothly. The media might not make the same money as government or corporates but they can compete, and compete very well.

During the storytelling session M. Leepile shares an experience that integrates many leadership themes – finance, risk management, innovation, business relationships, diversity, and growth. His story epitomises Rory Wilson's advice to media leaders: "We've got to make mistakes because we learn from those mistakes...we've got to share our mistakes so others can learn from them".

Leepile narrates the story of the newspaper *Mogkosi*:

Mogkosi means 'Clarion Call' in English. In Botswana's 50 years of media history, it was the first

newspaper of its kind. A group of Batswana had done research and found that over 90 percent of the country's population speak Setswana – it's the lingua-franca. They concluded that to publish a newspaper in Setswana would be a great idea and that it would be very well received.

So about eight people got together and *Mogkosi* was launched in 2002. About a year on I asked them how far they were with the idea and they hadn't put money into the project – they had only raised about 10 to 15 thousand Pula, whereupon I told them that maybe what they needed to do was get a critical mass of about 50 people to set up, as allowed by the company law.

They duly recruited about 40 people who paid contributions, but who did not put in any more. I did not initiate the idea, but agreed to project manage for them for a year. And I bought into it. I took money from my own pocket – about 50 thousand Pula [a Pula is roughly equivalent to the South African Rand in buying power] to help them to pay for printing costs and consultancy fees. I advised them to get no full time staff but just use consultants – a consulting editor, two people in advertising, and someone to oversee distribution.

Within its first eight months this paper was a success. It won major prizes in its first year – the Journalist of the Year Award, the Newspaper Design award, the Photographer of the Year award, an Environmental award, and another prize. I myself, a year later, won the Press Freedom award because of that innovation. And then we said, 'This is a bankable project', and we went to the bank to show them the figures. The bankers said, 'This is good, exciting stuff – we'll give you money and six months.'

At that point it was going well – advertising support from the government was fantastic and we were paying bills on time. I got refunded my personal loan and then put in another 50 thousand as bridging finance till the bank loan kicked in. At that time the paper came out fortnightly, and when the money came in we decided to expand to a weekly. That was a big mistake – we started having to deal with administration, circulation, support, equipment, and of course, the loan. A totally unexpected problem was that some politicians began to see the paper as a huge threat, to the extent that they came up with a strategy to deny all government advertising to the private press. They saw *Mogkosi* as a paper that spoke the language of the people and we didn't realise some of the dynamics associated with that. *Mogkosi* got up to 80 percent of its advertising from government so that was a big blow.

The lessons I learnt as a leader and manager were many. Avoid being too passionate about a project. However popular a project is, or you think it is – don't assume there's national consensus on that, because I actually found the project revealed certain aspects of our society that were not on – people felt their languages were not being sufficiently supported and they took vent on government, even though our project was a private, independent initiative and had nothing to do with government.

As project manager, never put your money into a project – you are either an investor or a project manager, don't mix the two. Rather come in purely as a consultant and let other people pay. I think I am a great proponent of sweat capital but even if it's a great idea, don't rush to go to the back and put in too much work.

Don't be too trusting of people – I would rather go with three or four people in a project than forty. In our case we had a great, visionary board which chaperoned the project and put their hearts into it, but when things got difficult they didn't get support from the so-called shareholders – in fact the directors were perceived as the owners.

And finally, the biggest mistake we made was that the moment we realised this project was a success and we had a winning model, we should have outsourced the paper's production to an established outfit like *The Voice*, or recommended somebody to run it on our behalf. We should've continued with the governance process where the board of directors of the company directed the philosophy of the paper and it would've stayed a winner. But two and a half years later we went bust.

On hearing M. Leepile's account of the figures involved: "the paper lost 3 million Pula, I personally lost 700 thousand, and my chairman who'd guaranteed the bank loan for 800 thousand got taken to the cleaners," delegates gasped. Nonetheless the story served as a great stimulant for discussion and debate.

Risk management

Risk management one of the issues that M. Leepile's story brings to the fore. Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa comments:

A common problem among a lot of publishers is that they start to rely too much on one sector of business. In *Mogkosi's* case it was the government – once they pulled the rug out from under them, the main revenue stream was gone. Someone had to manage those risks right from day one. Preferably it should be objectively managed – it shouldn't be your own risk.

In response to Anton's questions "Did it go according to what emerged in the feasibility study? Did you really work on something that was going to lean on government advertising so much?" M. Leepile's said: "No. That was not planned. Government people suddenly saw a vehicle through which they could sell their messages, to them it was a godsend – they were giving us double pages."

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, takes up the theme:

Look at *The Post* newspaper in Zambia. They nearly collapsed a few years ago. Today they are one

of the strongest newspapers in the region outside South Africa. What they've done is diversified. They've invested in real estate. They've set up a circulation company that takes their paper every morning to almost everywhere in Zambia, which is a sizable country. They've created a company that's an Internet service provider. It might be the only paper in our region opening bureaus in places as far away as Havana and Cuba. I think the most important thing is *The Post* has developed a strong business side to their operation and that is what's driving the editorial work and programmes and activities. We need to learn from examples like that.

Mike also refers to conversations on the potential to generate revenue through the promotion of local music, which he, M. Leepile, and Sandra Williams agree is a lucrative new industry for media entrepreneurs to invest in (p.185). Commenting on this opportunity to diversify Mike says, "We're not only depending on advertising and sales of our publications and I think that gets us into a much stronger future."

Pat Mwase weighs up the risks entailed in taking out bank loans:

Financing from a bank can actually be a huge burden and the way you manage that financing is so important. It's all well and fine getting the money, and it feels good to have it, but the business might not be able to accommodate that level of debt, especially with interest just rolling and rolling. Use the bank, but use it wisely and do your math – it might be better to grow organically till you get to the point where you can more easily manage that debt.

Foreign exchange

Most of the 10 countries represented at the Iekgotla – Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – struggle to some extent with the cost of foreign exchange. In the case of Zimbabwe, foreign exchange is practically unavailable. Raphael Khumalo CEO of *Zimind Publishers*, which produces *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, says that this translates into an inability to purchase basic resources such as newsprint and equipment. An exception is Lesotho: Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* says: "The Chinese, the Americans and the Europeans are pouring in money into the country." Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi says:

There was a time when the Kwacha was very unstable. This, in combination with all the costs and disadvantages of being a land-locked country, led most of our commercial media houses to bring in the concept of advertorial.

The growing trend towards advertorial is discussed in 'Ethics and Independence' (p. 154).

Donor funding

As Kennedy Otsheleng observes (p.64-65), donor funds to the region have accelerated media growth and most media organisations have benefited from donor funding in some way, either directly or indirectly.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia points out:

If you look at community radio generally in the region, very few of the communities operate or sustain the operation of the community radio stations, which impacts on the growth of media diversity. When you operate in large rural areas you have to get to as many villages as possible and you need support for that. So either the money must come from governments or from donor agencies.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa says part of the problem is that donor funding is seldom augmented by a strong commercial model. You need business acumen and leadership capacity to support and sustain donor start-ups.

Mike continues:

In Zambia Scandinavian governments set up a Media Trust Fund [MTF], which helped to provide support, and we also had the regional level AMARC [World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters] helping, but it went down and now the stations and community outreaches that were getting support from it are stuck. There's no new renewal of funding or new resources coming in. And the Media Trust Fund is not putting back into old institutions, they're supporting new start-ups. So there's a crisis where before reaching the stage of maturity organisations are struggling, they're going down.

Mozambique is a case where donor funding has been erratic. A fund in Maputo of 5 million US dollars was set up in 1995 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) to support private media or independent media and that gave birth to several new radio stations. Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, explains:

In the, 80s and, 90s there were a lot of financial resources available from the international community to fund media projects and that's how many organisations started. Shortly after 1997, the international community stopped financing media initiatives. So that's where leadership comes in – how to survive in an environment where the international community is no longer financing media initiatives, government is not providing any facilities for you to survive economically, and the business sector won't support you because you don't have enough collateral to engage with them.

Another constraint of donor funding mentioned by Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, is that donor agencies prefer to fund social upliftment initiatives rather than media per se:

The social development part of our organisation is the most important – donors don't want to fund a publishing house, they want you to do street kids so that becomes your core activity.

Delegates agree that while donor-dependency remains a reality for media in the region, it is an area of weakness. A plenary presentation of focus group findings summarises:

We need to see a more concentrated and more holistic approach in the region to donor funding of new media organisations. Let's graduate 10 or 20 fledgling organisations rather than open 300 new ones, the majority of which are going to die. There must be some rethinking around that.

Changing mindsets

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, picks up on Servaas van den Bosch's comment above about donor preferences:

Apart from South Africa, donors are the region's primary media support and they view us as an NGO service. Most people treat media not as products that they consume on a daily basis but as some kind of human rights extension. They don't understand that we are business enterprises that work, that create jobs. The human rights element of media has been fantastic in stabilising the environment and bringing initial funds into the region. But on the other hand the NGO mentality kills us because we are reporters first, we're supposed to report, it's our job. In Zambia when you talk to potential investors and potential partners they don't buy in. People expect you to produce radio, to produce newspapers, to produce magazines, but they can't quite grasp the concept of the enterprise side of the business.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, adds:

People say, 'Oh but we tune into the national radio and we don't have to pay. The Catholic station down the road is broadcasting and they don't ask us to pay.' Setting up a private radio station in a rural area of Zambia I found that nobody, not the government, not the companies, not the NGOs, not the ordinary people, knew or realised that they needed to pay for the service.

Here's a private institution – a commercial station – with a public service mission because it's dealing with issues that concern the people. But nobody understands that they must advertise or sponsor programmes. It's taken five years for us to build meaningful levels of advertising. The point is that unless we educate people to understand that media is business, and therefore the services it

provides must be paid for by somebody, we will continue to have a big disadvantage – we'll be seen as non-profit organisations and philanthropists. *Breeze FM* is setting a precedent now and if others would follow that, then the situation will improve.

Bringing a different dimension to the discussion, Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, considers the extent to which media enterprises should be involved in social protest action:

If you are running a media enterprise you have overheads and bills to pay. But what happens if you are leftwing or an oppositional organisation and you're advocating that people shouldn't be working for three days? You become part of the regime of people who say, 'Let's go on a stay-away'. And at the end of the month how are you going to pay your bills? I think we should move from that, there's nothing wrong in criticising government, criticising business and criticising everybody else, but becoming part of the people who say, 'Let's pull everything down even to the detriment of our very own selves', doesn't help. We have to move from that.

In relation to the social dimension of media, South Africa's, Collen Hans observes:

There is still a struggle mindset. The very people that you were in the struggle with continue fighting – even the system that they chose. Now we find ourselves waging economic warfare.

Innovative strategies for generating revenue

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente*, tells of his newspaper's innovation:

In Mozambique all the private print media publications are black and white. We realised that there's room for improvement and that it's possible to go beyond what is being done in Mozambique. So together with a few other people I started colour publication. By taking advantage of ICTs [information and communication technologies] we can write the newspaper in Maputo, send it by e-mail to the printing house in Nelspruit where they print it in the day. They then ship it to the border and we pick it up.

All these activities work out much cheaper than printing a black and white paper in Maputo! We are selling a page of adverts at double the price of black and white ones in Maputo, and all the other media houses are paying more than we are for printing. So I think a key leadership role is to introduce innovations that are sustainable in terms of costs.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, comments:

The media sector has completely lagged behind the regional model adopted by most businesses and institutions, which are integrating the local and the global. For instance, M. Leepile was saying that if you took Sipiwe Nkambule's children's magazine *Super Buddies* [p.71] and made that a franchise – like Zambia's favourite soccer magazine *Lucky Strikers* – she could make some serious money. Franchising works for biscuits, sweets, shoes, pizza and everything else, so why not for *Super Buddies*?

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, agrees:

The environment is conducive to that. Because of technology it's possible to distribute *Super Buddies* across the world within a matter of seconds.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia adds:

We've done well to create awareness of media issues over the last 20 years, and to come up with the SAIMEDs [*Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship*] and the SPIs [*Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*] but I think at a business level we've been very shy.

During one of the storytelling sessions Zambian CEO Pat Mwase tells delegates about how she used networking to manoeuvre her company out of a very tight corner.

In 2004 my company hit an all time low and we were near bankruptcy. It was down to skeleton staff – me, a graphic designer and an accountant – and we hadn't produced the paper for about 18 months. We'd got into this situation by being led on a wild goose chase by potential partners who had pledged to put in about a hundred thousand dollars rolled out over 24 months. I thought we were in safe place but when push came to shove not a single penny was put on table.

One October day I opened the gate to my home office and there were the bailiffs – come to take everything away. It was just terrible. The sheriff was quite kind and said, 'OK between me and you I'll let you choose what to keep.' I said, 'Take the Mercedes, leave my computers, leave my printers.' I was in a panic, thinking 'What do I do now?'

I decided to move from Lusaka back to the Copper Belt. I couldn't let my two staff members know what was going on – I had to keep them believing in what I was doing. The graphic designer relocated with me – she left her home, her family, all of it. I asked her to go before me and see if she could start selling the paper in the Copper Belt.

Meanwhile I was busy battling with Media Trust Fund, trying to get a little bit of finance to keep us going. And you know the process of funding is just crazy, it's not real, it's not user friendly, it doesn't do any of us any good. I realized then if you don't have any money you aren't going to attract any, so I

quickly started leveraging.

I lobbied board members in the Media Trust Fund who are on the finance committee – I went to each one of the five, figuring that if I can get three of them on my side I stand a chance. I had to pick them carefully – one who was raised in the Copper Belt and knew the paper, one from the Media Women’s Association and the third, also from the Copper Belt, whose father had worked for the paper before. All I wanted was for them to give me something in writing saying that they would support the paper and then use the letters as leverage for UNESCO funding. I took one person’s written commitment to the next one, then took those two letters to the third one, then took all three letters to the advertisers saying: ‘We’ve got this paper, can we do a dummy?’ And all the while I’m wondering if this is going to work and I’m praying and praying.

Then I went into this depression and thought ‘I am going back home’. I called my dad to tell him and he said ‘Come home, sit down and we will sort it out.’ I’m a single mom with two kids at a private school and it’s almost Christmas, so two thousand dollars of term fees are due. That Christmas was hell, I hated it. But I said to myself, ‘You have permission to feel depressed for 30 days!’ I didn’t go anywhere, I stayed at home moping around, all grouchy.

At the end of the 30 days I said ‘Now I need to make a plan’. My dad lent me money to pay the kids’ school fees so they went back to school. Then this American woman called from Arizona saying ‘We got your name from so-and-so, we have funding to bring you to our conference.’ And I realised ‘That’s it, that’s my launch pad!’ I got to the conference and started selling advertising to Atlas Coco, Barlowworld – I targeted all the big guys. That’s how *Mining Mirror* was re-launched – no money, just letters and leveraging. I learnt that as a leader you really need to think on your feet. You also have to keep your eyes open for the right opportunities – they don’t say ‘Hello, here I am!’ They sneak up on you. You have to see it and ride that wave.

Money and staff

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia echoes the views of many of the delegates when he says:

Journalists are not conscious or aware of how much it costs to carry out their work, so if they rise up and suddenly they are editors or managers, they are oblivious to the issue of cost – that comes up all the time. You know, things must be done, they must do their stories, the paper must come out, but how all that is done – they don’t seem to pay serious attention.

Staff members impact in many ways on an organisation’s ability to generate and manage money. Some ideas on how to create incentives for saving among staff, as well as ideas for generating revenue are pre-

sented in 'People Power' (p.138).

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, found:

We had huge amounts of money being spent, especially over the weekend, for entertainment and covering political rallies. I think most of it wasn't going to the purpose it was intended for. We had to find some way to control this. What we did was to record each and every petty cash slip for each staff member over a period of six months, after which a summary was presented in an open meeting. It was agreed to allocate people a certain amount of money for airtime, cell phones and transport. If you exceed that, it's your own cost. And we saw costs go down. Our staff bought into the idea because they understood that if we save money, they will get better salaries.

Another strategy Beata employed aimed to cut down the day-to-day running costs of the company was to stipulate that:

You must bring a notebook which is full before you're issued a new one otherwise you have to buy it for yourself. We do this for all our basic things – even a pen. I don't hear people complaining about that because it's something which we all share and they know that whatever we save is going to be the best for all of us.

Some delegates were uncertain about this strategy. Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, put forward his doubts:

Earlier we talked about 'vision' and that it can be a very soft thing: 'We want to be the greatest paper', you know, something broad and high. Now I would argue that your cost measures are a very good way of managing the business and it obviously works because you've cut your costs. But does that relate to the vision of the newspaper? I'm not arguing with you, I'm just saying that one has to be very careful.

Beata responds:

In the beginning, staff did not believe in our vision – to become the most popular newspaper in Botswana. But when we achieved that, I think they understood that part of our success was being careful with money and saving for the important things. I see a lot of change and their buy-in has been overwhelming, awesome really.

Two commonsense examples of bankrolling large purchases are offered by Pat Mwase and Sebonomoea Ramainoane. The *Mining Mirror* needed a vehicle to deliver the paper to the streets on time. Pat says:

I could have gone to the bank and got a loan, but I sat down with my staff and asked them for sug-

gestions. Together we looked at our financials and our options – leasing, saving to buy in cash later, raising a loan – none of which we could afford. Then we found an avenue that’s working well. Our advertisers had tied up 12 months of advertising and we decided to dedicate that revenue stream to servicing a loan – all we have to do is guarantee the purchase of the vehicle with the bank, then ensure that we service the loan.

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, had a similar situation:

My advertising manager is one of those enthusiastic, dynamic people who want things done now. He felt his position demanded a laptop rather than a computer but we didn’t have the money to buy one and this matter kept coming up. I asked for quotations and was presented with three. I saw that there was a quote from an advertiser in one of our magazines. I suggested to our advertising manager that he should approach the client for a barter deal and if he could arrange that, we would try and make up the difference. The advertising client agreed, our accounts paid the cash component and gave the advertising client evidence of payment. So we did our part and our advertising manager did his.

Advertising

Delegates acknowledge that it is extremely difficult to balance advertising and editorial independence. In the words of Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, “I find myself faced every week with the decision of how to approach people for funding and advertising yet still remain independent.” Although the issue of editorial independence underlies this section, it is more comprehensively explored later (p.147).

Lekgotla delegates say that during the last few years, media expansion in South Africa has been putting increasing pressure on other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Servaas comments: “It seems like South Africans have rediscovered Namibia as a market and it’s tough for us to compete with their big names, big titles and big money.”

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia identifies another significant change in media contexts:

Technology has radically rocked the industry. Your quality and systems of production change, speed and efficiency changes, even investment changes because you need less space and fewer staff but more sophisticated IT skills and equipment. The expectations of consumers have increased because they’ll say, ‘When I read this on Dow Jones’ or ‘When I read this on Reuters’ – so you must start competing with big news agencies and create your space around these guys with more and stronger technology.

Pheello Selinyane's *Private Eye* in Lesotho has responded to this challenge by opening news bureaus in three provinces of South Africa (p.182). Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, speaks for most print media delegates when she says that the online edition of *The Voice* competes with the printed newspaper:

Students and government employees accessing *The Voice* online meant our sales started dropping. So now we just put blurbs online and those who access us internationally have to subscribe.

Challenges and opportunities associated with technology are discussed in 'Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change' (p.202).

An increasingly popular strategy to generate advertising revenue is via advertorial (pages 85 & 154). Although this emerges as a common theme in media research² and is often viewed as a negative development, lekgotla delegates said surprisingly little about it.

Advertising and governments

The focus in this section is on the intersection of advertising, government and media. Political climates and the relationship between government and media in terms of freedom, access to information, and legislation and litigation, are discussed in 'Politics, Independence, Law' (p.157).

Most delegates expressed a degree of grievance with how, and how much, governments are encroaching on what media leaders regard as their business turf. This is a recurring theme in media discourse with several media barometers³ and research reports⁴ confirming that competition from governments threatens the financial sustainability of media across the region. Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)* in Namibia, speaks about how the flow of money to media in the country is being channelled into a few conglomerates, most of which are owned by politicians (p.161). This compromises the access to advertising revenue for media organisations operating outside these mega-companies.

Delegates also heard from M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy*, about how government denied advertising to the private press in Botswana, effectively putting the fledgling newspaper *Mogkosi* out of business after it inadvertently awakened national discontent (p.82). And Mike Daka speaks for several delegates when he notes: "They compete with us, but in my country we are doing what government's national radio should be doing, but aren't. They should be offering us a subsidy."

Not all delegates experience financial friction with governments in their countries. For instance South African delegate Samantha Kalisa, editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner*, says: "We've got a sort of uneasy partnership where as long as we don't criticise government on the same page that their ad is on, we're free to do so anywhere else in the paper."

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice*, gives some background information on Botswana:

For many years the government ran a radio station and a newspaper, but not commercially. Four years ago they decided to go commercial and this has been a real blow to us, especially from the advertising point of view. Government gets all the advertising from the ministries, which is massive, and from the private sector as well, because there have been many instances where government media don't call in monies owed to them, so people are much happier using them. The private sector is also keen on advertising in government newspapers because of their circulation – it's about five times bigger than other newspapers.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* expands on Beata's comments:

One of the biggest threats to media leadership in Botswana is the government media sector. Government says we are a free market economy and that they want to stay away from business. And they have kept their word to the extent that they've stayed away from every business except media. We're expected to be profit-making entities – at least in my case where I run a private radio station – but it's very hard for me to get through to potential customers when they can go across town and get media services for free, or almost free, from government. The playing field is not level and that threatens our ability to operate.

Beata acknowledges that at least there is one positive spin-off of government's expansionist agenda in Botswana – media no longer depends on government advertising. As we saw earlier, dependency on one source of revenue is one of the lessons M. Leepile learnt to avoid ('Risk management', pages 81-84).

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye*, tells of how government advertising affected his organisation in Lesotho:

We had general elections last year and it's become almost a custom in Lesotho to have recurring problems between media and government after general elections. And we are still experiencing the repercussions of that friction. Just last month we had to retrench five staff with Bachelor's degrees because of the withdrawal of government adverts, which is our main source of revenue.

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine*, also in Lesotho, responds:

Despite our popularity, our revenue base is very small. And that's because some 11 years ago government blacklisted us for our political stance. Pheello experiences this after elections, but we've been living with it since 1995. We couldn't get anything from the government, not advertising, not press releases. Nothing! To the extent that we decided that we're not going to report whatever they are doing. We just work with our communities, so our revenue is very, very weak.

The situation in Zimbabwe is similar. Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers*, which produces *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, says: “Right from the word go, when the two independent newspapers started in 1996 and 1997, we never had government advertising, largely because we are seen as opposition newspapers.”

Mike Daka of *Breeze FM* in Zambia thinks media leaders can be proactive in changing mindsets: “As leaders we must work really hard to change that mindset, not only in audiences, but across a whole range of institutions.” Sipiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, takes up this thread:

Media fails to market itself to government. We are viewed as enemies instead of partners. They see the negative side of the media instead of seeing it as contributing to the economy, poverty alleviation and the development of a country. Leaders should take the initiative to educate them on what we are all about.

Advertising and the private sector

“The big mining interests are just as bad as the government when it comes to having a suspicious relationship with media,” says Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia:

Our paper is owned by a very large mining conglomerate and for the past two years most of the mines don’t want to talk to us because they think we’re there to cause trouble for them. Over time they have started realising that media has to be there, we have to bark when things are a problem. But it’s taken a lot of time and self-marketing to drive home the realisation that we’re not their public relations organisation, we’re actually doing our own thing.

As happened often in the Ikgotla Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, pointed out the positive outcome of the threats:

What I find interesting about what Pat says is that it reflects the state of development in a given setting. Sometimes we would get calls from government, big mines and big businesses saying, ‘Don’t air adverts for so and so’. But what we see now is that because of the greater diversity of media these big powers get so bombarded and look so bad in the public eye that they invest money to deal with it by producing counter messages to project them as being good. Obviously that has implications for media independence, but from a business viewpoint, media makes a lot of money from these counter messages.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, remarks:

Advertising from any corporate is good, but one must always try and avoid over-dependence on one corporate advertiser because they have their own interests which may not coincide with those of the newspaper. It is thus important for any newspaper to be the mirror not just of the political set-up, but of business as well, and to expect business to live by good business ethics, just as much as politicians are expected to do. This can only be achieved if newspapers avoid over reliance on one advertiser be it business, political party or individual.

About the South African situation, Samantha Kalisa editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner* comments:

The increasing power advertisers have over the media is really becoming alarming. We're a business publication specifically aimed at the small business market. We've been recently bought into by the corporate sector and for the first time we're expected to make a meaningful profit – not just a profit to survive. They tie financial targets to the publication and in turn the publication ties targets to your personal job contract so you've got all this pressure on you to perform financially. And there's so much competition for such a limited amount of advertisers that business gets quite cutthroat. I think that ethics and integrity might start losing a foothold. If a major motor vehicle advertiser puts a 30x6 in your paper and you write a review, do you say the bike's a piece of crap and lose the ad?

Deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, Alfred Ntonga, agrees:

The corporate world buys advertising space with us, but if you don't praise them they'll pull out their advert. They expect you to look the other way when things are going wrong, or if you don't, to tilt stories to please them. They also try to claim space: 'Your reporter gave us only five paragraphs. Please look into that otherwise I might decide to take my business to the competition'.

Pat Mwase concedes that although the advertising industry is generally growing in the region, this does not automatically benefit all media sectors:

Many media houses are not getting any of this advertising pie because a lot of the money is going to outdoor advertising. This poses a big challenge to content-based media because billboards are visible, they're right in the eye. Most of the outdoor advertising is handled by big business houses. I think that ties up with the fact that print media remains static, it's not growing.

She says a large share of outdoor advertising is in the hands of South African businesses, although one Zambian businessman, Gary Rutherford, is "giving the South Africans a run for their money." Namibian editor of *The Big Issue*, Servaas van den Bosch spoke earlier (p.92) about competition from across the borders in the form of media expansionism in the South African print sector. A growth area in Zimbabwe, according to Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers*, is in universities, but he says:

They hardly advertise in our newspapers as we are viewed as mouthpieces of the opposition. So for fear of losing budget support from the government their advertising is mainly directed to the state controlled press in which government has a major shareholding.

In South Africa, advertisers resist spending on advertisements in small independent community media that target small communities and focus on local issues, because local populations are perceived as not having the money to spend on advertised goods.⁵ As research shows, this trend also occurs in other African countries.⁶ One exception is Zambia where, according to Pat Mwase:

We have seen a proliferation of media – it's like a media baby boom. There are radios coming up everywhere and to a large extent it's a good thing because the advertising industry is beginning to recognise the small media. Eight years ago if you had a small newspaper they wouldn't talk to you, but now the big national advertisers like the CelTels and the MTNs are putting a lot of money into community radio stations. So it's becoming more competitive and people are striving to improve standards.

There are also significantly more advertising avenues to choose from because of the online options that the Internet has opened up (pages 90 & 202).

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, remembers resistance to her publication:

The Voice is a tabloid, and when we started we were reporting about traditional things – witchcraft, sex scandals, you name it. This was not being done by the other papers because they were more mainstream. Advertisers said it wouldn't work so we didn't have any support from them and the painful bit was that staff themselves didn't believe it would work. Eventually we got buy-in, but it took about 10 years. So I say to media leaders: Dare to be different!

A troublesome factor in the radio sector is managing popular radio personalities who have a high following amongst listeners and thus amongst advertisers. Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana explains:

An advertiser will come in and say 'I want my advertising on so-and-so's show and that's it'. So the presenter now becomes key to some of the sales decisions you make. As a leader it's not wrong to create personalities, because in the process you spin these icons into sales value – companies sponsor them and offer them cars and so forth. And we build on the hype saying: 'We have this personality, his name is X, and he's a hot presenter. This is the car he drives, this is the roll-on he uses every morning, this is the toothpaste – so if you want to be like him you better use the same products.' And we want premium from advertisers for letting them attach themselves to this icon through our station.

This dynamic becomes a problem when it comes to staff discipline. This, as well as tensions between staff editorial staff and sales and marketing staff, are discussed in 'People Power' (pages 115 & 122).

Marketing

Finding your niche: research and feedback

Celebrities and celebrity staff can open up marketing opportunities in radio, but this does not happen at *The Voice* in Botswana, a newspaper published by Beata Kasale, who says:

We don't publicise prominent people, nor do we 'make' celebrities. We saw a gap in the market for a tabloid that would give voice to ordinary people and reflect what's in our society as it is today. It was a new thing ten years ago and as I mentioned before, we had problems getting advertisers. Eventually *The Voice* proved popular, not with white-collar workers or CEOs, but with people in rural communities where everyone has some sort of relationship to the people we write about.

As Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa says, part of leading a successful media organisation is about "...finding your niche." Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)*, adds: "It has everything to do with knowing your market and giving them what they want." As Samantha Kalisa (p.52) and Mike Daka (p.64) point out, finding your niche and identifying what clients want, entails conducting initial market research and following this up with regular monitoring and evaluation. But such research is not an industry norm. Few media organisations in the region conduct systematic and regular audience or readership surveys – this is especially true of smaller organisations, which have less liquidity and cannot afford formal research.⁷

When it comes to taking people's wants and needs into account, Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, raises several issues:

I'm going to play devil's advocate here. When I was in college there were two movies showing: *Darwin: Theory of Evolution*, and *James Bond: From Russia with Love*. Guess where the so-called intellectuals went? They went to see *From Russia with Love*! How do you distinguish need from want? When we listen to people, what do we do with that information? And how do we balance the interests of an organisation with its wider social mandate?

Delegates agree that the trick is to balance entertainment with education. Mike Daka suggests: "If you know your audience well, you'll find a good balance for what they want and what they need."

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, remarks:

You have to learn to extract the positive from the criticism. Radio is such a powerful communication tool – you get a lot of opinions and people respond almost immediately to what you present. Sometimes when a criticism of government is aired, I'll almost immediately get a call from the president's private secretary complaining. Others argue about the music – one likes this; another wants that. We encourage letters, and air two programmes a week just dealing with these letters. We have our 'Gogo' who goes around on a bike collecting them. It's crucial, though, to strike a balance between all the different opinions.

Part of striking a balance, warns Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*, is not to get caught up by the opinion of the last person you spoke to:

Beware of individual anecdotal stuff. Editors make this mistake all the time. You'll be in the pub with somebody and he'll say that a programme is rubbish, and you'll want to change it. It's also good to remember that in the radio sector only 1 percent of your audience will ever call the station in their lifetime. What do the other 99 percent think? So it's important to find a way of capturing the anecdotal stuff systematically over time so you can see and analyse the information afterwards. You need to design a system that enables you to do that. One great way to do this in radio is to ask a caller a few quick questions before they talk. A wise editor will figure out what to do with this information.

This suggestion could fit well with the policy of Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM*:

We have two hour-long programmes, one on Friday mornings and the other on Monday mornings, when listeners phone the studio direct. On Friday it's like an opinion page – they tell us what they think of the stories we broadcast. On Monday they tell us where they've been and what's been happening. We find a lot of wisdom and direction in what they say.

The director of *Radio and TV Tumbaini* in Tanzania, Esther Chilambo, describes their strategy: "On Mondays and Fridays we normally ask people to tell us what their problems are. The rest of the week we ask them what they think about what government is doing."

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, which produces *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, says they introduced a column for sms messaging. So did Samantha Kalisa editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*: "We'll have a controversial article and at the top we'll ask a question related to it – usually a 'yes' or 'no' question. People sms their responses and we publish the results in the next edition."

But, Samantha adds, cell phone costs in South Africa prohibit the use of sms messaging to generate revenue: "Sms messages are charged at R1.50 and if you charge that amount you don't make a profit, you just cover costs. You'd have to charge R3.50 to make a profit – and then no one will sms."

One delegate suggests arranging a 50-50 split of charges with mobile cellular telephone companies. But this is not an option for Raphael Khumalo, who says that telephone companies in Zimbabwe are reluctant to sponsor columns with people's comments because they are mostly so controversial.

An easy and reliable way to tap into audience preferences in the print sector, according to Peter du Toit of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*, is to pay attention to people lower down in the organisation:

*Grocott's Mail*⁸ once brought in their distribution guys for feedback and found that they knew the paper backwards. Actually, they probably knew more about what a certain sector of the audience thinks than the managing director!

Delegates agree. Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia says, "At one time we were selling solely through vendors, and when we asked them for feedback on our cover it was usually helpful." Anton van Zyl adds:

We're largely dependent on the newspaper vendor. For instance for the *Limpopo Mirror* we would go to a taxi rank where vendors gather. They take one look at the front page and decide how many copies they want. That outlet probably constitutes about 25 to 30 percent of our circulation.

Unfortunately feedback from on-the-ground vendors is not always an option for large media houses and those outsourcing distribution.

Irrespective of the niche that media leaders work in, they have to be open to new markets and trends and to the opportunities or threats these present. Sphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager at *Miles Communications*, an advertising and publishing company in Swaziland, sees a strong trend emerging for media to present the world and social issues as seen through the eyes and experiences of youth and children. Sebonomoea Ramainoane of Lesotho stated earlier that child presenters on *MOAFRIKA*'s radio programmes are proving more popular than the station's regular presenters (p.73). Sandra Williams notices the same trend in her country: "There's a huge market in the youth in Namibia. A youth magazine recently launched in Namibia called *Shambuka* just took off. It's the most in-demand magazine in the capital [Windhoek]."

All delegates mention the acceleration of the Internet as a new avenue for all media sectors – a full discussion of this can be found in the chapter entitled 'Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change (p.202). Networking also has implications for borrowing ideas and expanding market reach (p.104).

Capturing audience

Delegates all agree that regionally the print sector is under pressure to maintain its audience share, not

only because of rapid media growth, which has increased the options of media platforms, but also because of changes in the expectations, attitudes and tastes of readers. Beata Kasale publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, declares: “We’ve noticed that news is just not enough.” Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, agrees:

Those of us who are 30-plus probably trained in a very ‘pyramid’ format and we’re stuck with it. And who wants to read our comfortable, straightforward reporting? Nowadays people don’t like that – obviously it’s getting boring. Readers want you to capture more of what you see – the mood, the subtleties. In other words we are getting into a more difficult, sophisticated type of writing.

Besides the normal tactics of competitions and giveaways, delegates have developed some well-targeted strategies for securing a good audience share. Editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, Pheello Selinyane, uses investigative journalism to capture and retain readers:

We have found ourselves sort of locked around two pillars of focus – the issues of anti-corruption, and reform. We might have a story on Highlands Water corruption or some other improper conduct on the part of government departments. What we do is get our people to keep individual diaries on each story. That person must go to the bottom of the story and stay with it as long as possible. They must keep up their contacts and seek assistance – even from outside the newsroom – to make sure that the debate continues. So, it’s creating a market for listenership on a particular issue, which is also a national priority. We tell people that an issue is not closed until they’ve heard it from us. Perhaps that’s the only way we can survive the onslaught of the web.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, tells the delegates about how he puts shared borders, cultures and a common language to good use to market his station, capture audience and bring the area to life:

When we started up in a remote rural area we knew some of the constraints so we chose the Chin-yanja triangle, which combines north-western Malawi, Eastern Zambia, and the Mutete province in Mozambique. Our signal spreads up to 70 kilometres. The three regions share the same language and we have taken advantage of that. The very first thing we did was to conduct training, which I had done before. I go into Malawi to provide management training, aimed at helping media to operate properly. Of course there is also financial benefit to us from that.

From the training we get stations asking to come to us to exchange ideas and show them what we do – right now we have two people from *Angonia* radio in Mozambique, two from *Kotakota* community radio station in Malawi, and two from Zambia at our station. Now we are beginning to exchange programmes too – because they’re produced in a common language, we can pass them on to the other stations after we broadcast them. We are also recording music, which we hope to share, so that brings in common traditions and cultures. Instead of operating in a small area, I am

now operating in an area where there is a population of 12 million people, and it's just fantastic.

Magazine Independente in Mozambique also uses language to position and market itself. Editor Salomao Moyana explains:

All publications in Mozambique are in Portuguese, the official language. We introduced an English supplement that gets placed inside every edition of our paper. This grabs some market because English speaking people in Maputo now buy our newspaper. Within a few months we've become a leading weekly.

Besides its investigative niche, the *Public Eye* in Lesotho also harnesses market share through language. At one stage editor Pheello Selinyane and his colleagues started a daily in order to cope with content and issues that could not wait for their weekend edition. He elaborates:

The daily – called *The Mosotho* – didn't receive a lot of patronage in the market and couldn't stand on its own. But it had a Sesotho title and had attracted a number of vernacular writers from local papers. So we brought it into the main paper as an insert so that people who used to patronise *The Mosotho* when it was a daily know they can still find it there. We started a magazine too, which we've since converted into a giveaway – it's an advertorial type publication but also with a lot of stories – just not ones with political commentary.

Delegates are divided on the issue of media organisations overtly adopting a political position. The interface between politics and media is discussed in 'Politics, Independence, Law' (p.157). To illustrate the potentially negative impact of political positioning or campaigning on audience share, Mike Daka and Alfred Ntonga offer two accounts.

Mike begins:

As Kennedy was saying [p.97] radio is about characters and personalities. People will tune in especially to listen to particular characters – it's their slot and you change that at your peril. The name of our station is *Breeze FM* and the oldest member of our staff is known by everyone as Gogo Breeze. Any member of our community who has a problem will write to him – it can be about marriage, retirement benefits that haven't been paid, the nursing at the health centre, all sorts of things.

At one time he decided to stand as a candidate in the government elections. While he was away campaigning and trying to become a member of parliament, our listenership dropped. The public started asking, 'Where is this guy? What happened? You must have sent him away!' Fortunately the station didn't lose him, probably because he's mature – if he was a young guy he'd have been snapped up by Lusaka. Still, we lost listeners and popularity for a while.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, gives his experience:

In 1999 we endorsed [national election candidate] Elson Bakili Muluzi for the second time. Apart from endorsing him, we came up with a series of articles to explain why we felt he was the best amongst the lot. Some people agreed with us – most of them people who knew him – and others did not agree with us. What we saw, maybe because politics in Malawi is along regional lines, is that our circulation in the northern region went down drastically. In the central region it went down significantly. In the southern region, which happened to be his stronghold, our circulation went up only slightly. But what it meant was that we had to work extremely hard after the elections to regain the confidence of people who felt that we'd led them down – people who were saying: 'Aha! All along you were hiding your true colours.' It was really a problem for us. It's not an exercise that you want to go into any time soon!

Product development, branding

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, asks:

What about the demand for products? I think it's a weakness, but also an opportunity. Media leaders don't do enough in terms of exploiting technology and putting it to use (p.202). We should create more products that work across platforms and take up associated commercial opportunities.

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, observes:

In marketing management there're these concepts of the idea, idea development and product life cycle. You spend a lot of money to develop your product to a particular stage. But there are some people who don't go into product development, they'd rather wait until you introduce the product onto the market and then if it proves popular, they just change the cover and run with it.

But delegates also see other, more positive outcomes of all the hard background work it takes to develop a media product or programme. This raises the issue of branding.

"It's about growing a brand," says Pat Mwase, "You have to develop it, take it back into research and development so that it can appeal. Use a formula like *Time* magazine does, for instance, but make it country or region specific." To illustrate, Pat reminds delegates about Gillian Baker, the media entrepreneur who produces several titles from a rural area in Zambia [p.63]:

She started up the magazine *Zambian Beauty* and she hasn't looked back since. She has a very basic formula – not much in terms of content, but lots of pictures. Her magazine attracts huge advertising. And she publishes it in a rural area and then sells it into the cities – not the other way round!

Packaging has got a lot to do with any beauty magazine's success – it must look great, it must be glossy, it must have beautiful people. It must be relevant to local trends and social dynamics, so there must be a Zambian celebrity on the cover. We don't know the celebrities on *You* and *Drum* but Gillian's magazine uses local celebrities and talks about local issues and that's what makes it so powerful. People say, 'I'll take *Cosmopolitan* for my international celebrity news, but I must take *Zambian Beauty* too because I need to know what's going on here'.

This example stimulated ideas about franchising, discussed earlier in 'Innovative strategies for generating revenue' (p.88).

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, observes:

Some radio stations in the region are very innovative. I've seen them packaging information in such a way that people want to go out and be heard; they buy sports to convey certain messages through interviews or conversations. Some stations are making a killing out of that. It's a big industry and people are recognizing that it's creating wealth, it's creating jobs, and it's promoting the recognition that media benefits society and is a big part of the social landscape. All this is very positive and shows that local media is maturing.

Another delegate advises that an effective way to grow your market is to develop local content:

It's a niche that big competitors from international houses with international titles can't take from you. That's an enormous advantage. But we must make sure that we don't grow local content that's a lot of rubbish, but be very innovative and creative in how we develop those products.

Networking

One of the main aims of the lekgotla was to provide a space for media leaders to forge new alliances, communicate information on challenges they face and share solutions.

Delegates agree that networking is critical to success in the industry. Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, comments on how networking provides information on the state of media in different countries:

This information is critical because it helps in shaping the mindset. I had the occasion to talk to a colleague here from Botswana and ask about the control that government has, if at all, over the content of live broadcasts, including news and how it works. This question was very important to me as in Zimbabwe there are no private radio and television stations. Although legislation enabling them to exist is there, the provisions are so stringent that no private individual or organisation has

been licensed. I learned a lot from that conversation.

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, adds:

I've attended many conferences and acquired a lot of contacts and knowledge which I use to grow and sustain our organisation. It is very important that you meet with as many people as possible outside the organisation – government, other regional and national media organisations, support structures and so forth – in order to borrow as much information as possible. Information is power.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, agrees:

You have to latch onto other efforts and programmes that are going on instead of trying to reinvent the wheel or try and create innovations that will be difficult to replicate. I went to the World Association Newspapers Congress and it just blew my mind. The congress has been going on for 60 years and they bring media managers or owners together to talk about innovation, research, integration, convergence, everything. It also gives you a nice business environment so you're not just talking about oppressed freedom, or trade unions, you're talking business in general.

Networking is a cross-cutting issue and this book is permeated with examples of how networking benefits the media industry generally and organisations specifically. Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, for instance, told how his station used training as an entry point into networking arrangements with other media organisations in Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. He described how this helped partners to exchange expertise and programmes, and how it benefited the region and its people by promoting local cultures and music (p.101).

It was suggested that networking could help to address gaps in understanding between media and government (pages 51 & 95) as well as between media and the private sector (p.95). In 'Money matters' (p.88) Salomao Moyana explains how he used cross-border partnering to launch and sustain an innovation to his weekly *Magazine Independente*, while Pat Mwase told earlier of how she leveraged networks to save *Mining Mirror* from closure (p.89). Delegates pointed out that Siphwe Nkambule's children's publication *Super Buddies* is a prime candidate for franchising across the region (p.89). Networking and communication within organisations has also been mentioned (pages 32 & 57) and the theme is elaborated further in 'People Power' (p.117).

It seems that for organisations that have issue-focused visions (p.71), networking for growth and personal or organisational enrichment is not enough: networking also needs to advance empowerment and other developmental agendas. Several delegates have harnessed networking to this purpose and some of their innovations are showcased in 'Development and Diversity' (p.177).

Endnotes

1. Milne *et al.*, 2006; Rau *et al.*, 2008.
2. See, for instance, Milne *et al.*, 2006.
3. MISA, 2005; IREX, 2007.
4. Milne *et al.*, 2006; Rau *et al.*, 2008.
5. Milne *et al.*, 2006; Rau *et al.*, 2008
6. AMDI, 2006.
7. IREX, 2007; Milne *et al.*, 2007.
8. A small independent community newspaper in Grahamstown in South Africa.

Chapter 7

People Power

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, sums up the essence of the lekgotla discussions:

I would say that 99 percent, possibly 100 percent of the ideas and examples of good leadership surfacing here do not necessarily come with a title, they come with how you behave and how you respond to people.

This chapter gathers together experiences, insights, challenges and solutions associated with a pivotal leadership role – balancing the needs of staff with the demands of business. We begin with an exploration of how leaders feel, as opposed to how they think and act. We then move through various aspects of self management and staff management and link these to responsibility, accountability and transparency. Delegates all acknowledge that they are accountable to their institutions as well as to the public and wider media community – their role as custodians of media mandates and social responsibility is discussed in chapters 8 (Ethics and Independence), 9 (Politics, Independence, Law) and 10 (Development and Diversity).

Challenging stereotypes

A common perception is that leaders must be strong and push feelings aside in favour of thinking and doing. With this in mind, the lekgotla dedicated a special session for delegates to analyse their personal leadership styles and explore how it feels to be a leader. Veteran media leader Rory Wilson facilitated the session using specially designed exercises, provocative statements and examples from his own leadership history to encourage reflection and debate. A selection of insights is presented here.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, tells of his response to the political aspirations of a star presenter, Gogo Breeze:

He's the personality of the station, he speaks in the local language and galvanises all the village people. During the last elections he decided to get into politics but he didn't even announce that he's standing for elections. When I found out I spoke to him and I said 'Look your gift and your job is working on radio, not becoming a politician. You know, the people won't forgive you.' I also reminded him that there's a standard code of conduct – when you're in radio and want to stand for elective office, it's a private initiative. You have to distance yourself from the station and take leave. So he went. The election campaign was six months and when his [leave] days ran out he had to use his own time.

It was hard because for a while the station lost some of its popularity. At first the community thought the station had sent him away, but because his name was connected to the election campaign, they soon realised that he had made the choice himself. And indeed, they were very unhappy with him. Anyway, he lost and he came back.

It takes Rory several repetitions of the question, "Mike, how did you feel?" before Mike stops talking about the practical aspects of his dilemma, and concedes:

Badly! Honestly I was let down. I felt very let down. I was disappointed because I realised that he didn't understand the role he was playing in the community. So it wasn't that I was being selfish in my thinking. Losing him to Lusaka would have been a loss, not just to the station, but to the community. Because he is the eldest member of our team I wanted him to have understood the role of the radio station and his part in that. I felt sad.

In response Rory says:

The reason I ask you how you felt, Mike, is because this is one of the things leaders don't want to talk about much – how it feels to sit with a personality who is bigger than life and you're thinking to yourself, 'Maybe he walks out. How am I going to explain that? I'm going to be responsible and what are my colleagues going to think?' You know, being the leader can be one of the loneliest things in life. I've been married for 38 years now and I don't know how I'd have coped if I didn't have somebody to go home to at night and talk to about how all the responsibility makes me feel.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, adds:

I have had similar situations. We have a columnist at one of our papers and there have been occasions when I have felt he is moving too much to the right and seemingly espousing views of the ruling party. I have often felt an urge to discuss my views with him openly but have had to retreat

fearing he may take it as a personal attack on him. So I have decided to leave it to our readers instead to deal with him through the letters pages.

Leaders often feel bad when they have to reprimand staff. As Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, said earlier “Sometimes I’m too worried about people’s feelings and that actually stops me from doing things that I should do.”

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, observes that staff may sometimes feel that when a leader shares an opinion they are being reprimanded:

We have a morning show where topical issues are discussed and sometimes I’d tell presenters that they were a bit biased in not allowing people to air their views. This is purely an opinion, not a reprimand, but I find staff won’t allow you to be human if you are their leader. They always take it as some sort of authority talking down.

So I’ve become very conscious of the way I communicate and every once in a while I have to clarify what I mean. You know, some of the people I lead are not too far off my age, and as much as I’m a leader I also want to be a normal person with them. But I find my position doesn’t allow me to be ‘me’. One of the ways I’ve tried to deal with this is to make every Friday my casual day – I go to work in jeans and takkies and don’t confine myself to my office – the atmosphere is very relaxed and we meet for drinks after work. So these are ploys I use to try and shift perceptions of me as a stiff person, opinions that formed when I came in, when hard decisions had to be made and I was the one who had to make them.

Rory replies:

It seems to me very sad that you don’t have a way of expressing an opinion because you’re the leader. There’s a richness that’s going to be lost if you don’t have a platform to do this. Maybe a possible way of doing this is through language, finding a way to signal that you are expressing an opinion.

Rory shares a story of his own:

I have been in moments of absolute crisis, absolute pain, and I’m going to share with you something that happened to me when I was managing director of *Sowetan*. I was a white managing director and South Africa was moving towards change – around 1992/1993. I wanted to build and capacitate the company so that a white man did not run it – it was one of the first BEE [black economic empowerment] initiatives in the industry.

I appointed two young men, both with MBAs, into positions below me. The idea was that one of

them was going to succeed me. They were both black and brilliant. One day the one young man's car broke down at work and he couldn't get home. So he went to the transport department and said, 'Please can I have a company car.' The guy in the transport department applied the rule – which is that you never use a company vehicle for private purposes – so he said, 'No, you can't have a car.' The next morning the new guy came in and told me, 'I've been insulted. I couldn't have a car. You were not able to be flexible in your rules and I'm leaving.' Nothing I could say could dissuade him.

About an hour later, I was sitting in my office, very upset and very worried about what had just happened and the second young man came in, big smile on his face, and said, 'I want to talk to you – I'm resigning.' I asked why and it soon became clear that he had just come to blackmail me into promising him my job, which wasn't in my power to guarantee anyway. So what do you do in those circumstances? I was terrified. My reputation was going to be destroyed because people would say, 'Why did two black guys not want to work for this white general manager?' I bit the bullet and told the young man 'Fine, if that's your choice.'

At that stage all the staff used to gather weekly in the newsroom and the editor and I would answer questions and talk. The meeting took place at the end of that day and I stood in front of the whole company and told them what had happened. Reporters particularly asked, 'Are they leaving because you are a white racist?' And I had to deal with all of that stuff. It was the worst moment of my life. It was a terrible time because I was a complete victim of circumstance.

Being victims of gender stereotypes and prejudices is also a painful experience, as women delegates attest. Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania, finds leading in a male-dominated context a challenging task (p.39). Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, remembers:

We decided to go weekly in 1999. Around that time my business partner went on a sabbatical to write a book and the printers were a bit worried because they thought I was not going to make it – you know, I'm a woman, I'm black, and I'm going to accrue more printing costs.

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, had trouble with male dominance when she took over the publication (p.60). It is an indictment of the industry when she comments:

I find it amazing to come to this Ilegotla and find women publishers from Africa. You know, Africa's supposed to be this advanced country, but you don't find a lot of women leaders in the industry. Historically media has been very male-dominated and when a woman comes into that situation, you have to come in flaming red, because if you come in accommodating, they will walk right over you. You've got no authority, you've got nothing. You've got to come down like the law at first, and only later, once you've proven yourself, can you soften up. But there's always a piece of you that's

watching, checking.

While Samantha agrees with Peter du Toit's observation that "In a sense you're becoming like a male stereotype," she finds it a distressing situation, saying: "And that's terrible. We don't want to be that way."

Firing someone can be a very emotionally draining experience. Samantha recalls:

I've had to do that twice and, you know, it's the most heartbreaking thing when you can see someone's potential, but there's nothing you can say or do that will make them want to use that potential. It's not easy because the people talk about the poor dismissed person who was fired, but they don't talk about how the person who did the firing feels. You go home and you sit there and think: this person's the breadwinner. I know it's not your problem but you're still human, you tend to worry about things like that.

Having been 23 years in the industry has taught M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, a harder stance:

You should not even involve the heart ... you need to protect the interest of the organisation. Your problem is making sure it remains profitable, and if someone is compromising that objective, he or she must go.

Kennedy Otsheleng agrees: "One of the things I say to myself is that we run corporates, not co-operatives, so at the end of the day the buck stops with you."

The buck stops here

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, offers a comment that is broadly representative of all Iekgotla delegates: "A leader has to be humble enough to take the blame and the credit, each at their appropriate times, and not to pass the buck when things go bad."

M. Leepile concurs: "Ask yourself what you could have done to make a difference. It's easy to blame others but it's hard to stop and say, 'Was I part of the problem?' If you take it from this vantage point you're in a better position to find solutions."

But Alfred Ntonga argues, "Shouldn't staff be responsible for their actions? Because you could take that to the extreme and take all the blame – particularly as we're emphasising delegation and sharing of responsibility. At what point do you pass the buck?"

This prompts Peter du Toit to clarify, “Passing the buck means you’re not placing responsibility where it belongs. My experience has been that a lot of managers pass the buck and staff members don’t respect or trust them.”

Sebonomoea Ramainoane interjects, “The two points go hand in hand but what is left if for us to draw the line. We should be realistic. I have the right to pass the buck when something was explained clearly from the beginning.”

Samantha Kalisa enters the conversation, “That’s not called passing the buck, that’s called discipline. If you know about what you have to do and agreed to do it and then you don’t do what you’re supposed to do – well, I have the right to discipline you.”

Anton van Zyl returns delegates to earlier conversations where they spoke about the injunction to lead by example (pages 31 & 39). So when leaders take responsibility appropriately, they are role models for their staff. He adds:

Your actions and the decisions you make will affect you, people around you, and the financial welfare of the company. You have to decide, do I need my golf on Wednesdays? You have to weigh a decision to invest in new infrastructure against the possibility of laying-off some people. If you act improperly or make a bad decision, you cannot blame anyone else.

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, is adamant that any decision taken without consultation it is invariably wrong, regardless or whether or not the course of action decided upon is correct:

If you make a decision on your own, nobody else is going to buy into it. You need to take decisions together with others – that’s what locks them in and makes them feel part of it. Then as leader you sit back and watch. If you isolate people from decision-making processes, then you’ll have to fight tooth and nail to impose your will on them. You need to understand decisions as processes – journeys you have to go through. Don’t rush people into decisions...take it slowly.

Most delegates are in favour of a collaborative leadership style, but as one person points out, it is not without problems, particularly in an industry with tight deadlines and a fast pace:

You do get situations where you try to empower people to make decisions, but then they vacillate, while in fact you know what the right decision is! Do you just sit back and wait and think, ‘Oh well, they’re not making the decision’?

Again, it is a matter of setting appropriate boundaries and of being careful about who to involve in which decision-making processes. Rory emphasises:

Nothing I've been saying removes us from the fundamental fact that as leaders we must lead. You are still in charge. You are still taking ultimate responsibility. You need to facilitate the decision-making process.

But problems can arise if people are included in decision making processes and are given choices, when in fact their input is sidelined, or final decisions reflect little of their suggestions and deliberations. As one delegate remarks: "Better no power sharing than a false front."

Internal frictions and factions

Arbitrating between conflicting needs and views is an integral to management. Leaders need to be open to unconventional or challenging perspectives as these can be sources of innovation, but it sometimes happens that dissenting views are not innovative but merely motivated by one-upmanship. As Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, remarks:

As a leader you have to walk steep paths and jump many obstacles but some people just frustrate the process willingly. You have to find a way around them – that can get very complex and use up a lot of energy.

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania speaks about interference from the top-most leadership level:

In an institution such as ours you can find yourself having to deal with board and management committee members who try to intervene in the execution of your day-to-day work. You try to do things well but they upset the workflow and divide the team.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi observed earlier (p.56 'Governance and board members'): "You can have the best people, the best CEO, but I'm telling you it starts with the board."

Disagreement between marketing and editorial staff is a relatively common phenomenon, as research shows.¹ Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, offers an example:

You have your marketing department working very hard to get some very difficult supplements – often human rights related supplements – but for some or other reason the editor is uncomfortable with the content and blocks the initiative. Now that affects your bottom line.

The notion of editorial independence, and editors behaving inappropriately under its guise, is explored in 'Ethics and Independence' (p.148). Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, tells of trouble originating

further down in the ranks:

We had a senior reporter who felt he was more qualified and more important than our editor. He tried his hardest to undermine the editor and was really disrespectful. That reporter became incredibly difficult to manage, but fortunately for me his tactics backfired and he left. People like that undermine teamwork and pull back progress.

As mentioned earlier, radio presenters who become like icons to their listeners often attract advertising revenue (p.95 & 97), but their status in the eyes of the public and their status as income generators within the organisation, can make them very difficult to manage. As Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, says:

In radio we create very strong personalities. In as much as you always emphasise that everybody is part of a team and all contributing towards the common team goal, in radio it's not always the reality. There are extreme cases where it's a very simple to make a clear-cut decision about what to do with them – fire or retain – but as Mike said, you're dealing with bloated egos who blow hot and cold depending on which side of the bed they wake up. Some days they can be very good people who arrive, work and leave. On other days they come in like prima donnas and upset the whole organisational atmosphere. It's tricky to know what to take, how much to take, and when to tell them to just drop off, because there are financial considerations to the decision.

Another delegate takes up this thread:

A lot of presenters end up thinking that they're irreplaceable and that builds a comfort zone. From the comfort zone they now become like chief politicians who do anything – they can throw their dirty linen on air and then say that ICASA [regulator for the South African communications sector] has passed an amendment saying everybody has a right to free speech. The minute you start feeling you are bigger than the system, you shouldn't be there.

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, appreciates that radio personalities are unique and to some extent irreplaceable, but as he points out:

To a great extent these personalities are products of the stables in which they were cultivated. Look at the BBC – there's a bottom line, a standard, beyond which presenters do not sink and anybody who comes in is groomed around that. I think this turns on the tradition of the brand, really. We have something like five stations in Maseru and I have witnessed in the last ten years, since we first started private-licensing, that people know the width of the bend they can travel within the established traditions of the particular station. I have seen people who have gone from being firebrands to neat lamps when they change from one station to another and vice versa.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, closes the discussion about egos and teamwork:

I think allowing or condoning a culture where somebody feels indispensable is something we have to balance against the interest of building a team. In a good team, no one can take the ball from defence, go all the way with it, score and then expect people to say: 'That's a superstar'. Really, he should learn to pass the ball. If people feel indispensable or they think they're great, and they're playing by the rules and pulling in the same direction as everyone else, then it's okay – some problems here and there are normal. But if they're dragging the system down, then we must be able to make the call. That's what being a manager or leader is all about.

Communicating and arbitrating

A leader, and particularly a media leader, has to have an ability to communicate. And as Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, says, "You have to communicate with respect."

Jacqueline Kabeta, executive director of *SAIMED* in Botswana, remarks, "Communication can be a very elusive concept. It can be implied, for example when we go to a meeting every Monday, some take that as communication, but others don't use this as a platform." Rory Wilson offers an excellent example of implied communication and the tension between power and popularity (p.65) when he used joking and laughter to bond with staff. He says relational foundations are shaky when they are built on a need to be accepted, regardless of whether this need is conscious or unconscious.

Meetings are common communication platforms used by all *lekgotla* delegates. But as Jacqueline Kabeta says, some people do not contribute to discussions. Rory Wilson cautions:

Silence is never agreement. Classically people sit in meetings and say nothing because they are not courageous enough to disagree with you, but when the time comes for implementation they don't want to be part of it. So make sure that at every point when a decision is made, every person speaks. Even if they disagree, make sure they speak.

It is rare that consensus is reached on every decision – as mentioned earlier (pages 32 & 49). Mike Daka, of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, comments:

You'll have one or two people who don't agree and they feel very strongly that they're right. Even when you reach consensus, they'll continue opposing a decision and selling their views to colleagues in other departments.

Rory puts forward a solution for reaching and then adopting resolutions that is used by many businesses

and political organisations:

It's called the principle of loyal opposition. The rule is that in this meeting anybody can say anything they like on the subject. Then we agree by vote or consensus, but outside this meeting you cannot disagree with the decision made here.

Mike asks for clarification: "Is it [loyal opposition] a form of collective responsibility?" to which Rory replies:

Loyal opposition will only apply to the group in the meeting, so if you are going to empower people to take a view which they don't believe on the outside, it's going to be impossible for them to do that. I don't think this happens very often, but it's potentially very problematic.

Despite this limitation, delegates are impressed with the tactic. Several say they intend to try it out. Pat Mwase remarks: "It's a way of 'gelling' people – you are not an individual, you are a collective group making a collective decision. Having a united front is important."

Rory Wilson warns leaders to send managers back into the organisation to spend time on the floor, speaking to staff and listening to what is going on:

The view from the top of the organisation is that it's very functional, it works. But it works mainly because it works for us, the leaders. Few leaders can tolerate admitting that his or her organisation doesn't work very well – they must assume that this thing actually works. But if you could get a tape recorder stuck under the lapels of all the most junior people in the organisation, you'd hear a completely different story. You'd hear the disagreements between parts of the organisation – editorial against advertising, advertising against circulation, all these parts of the organisation almost at war with each other.

Soliciting feedback

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, initiates a new discussion: "What we've discussed so far is about us and the folk that we work with, but is there a way in which we can get feedback? Is there a way we can see our own faces?" Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, has a wry response: "It's a brave leader who asks for feedback from his staff!" He continues:

At the end of last year a staff member resigned and relocated to the city – so her leaving had nothing to do with the Institute. But just before going she said, 'I always knew when I had done something wrong because you behave in a particular way, but you never say it to me.' We worked

together for a year and it was only when she was leaving that I became aware of this. So I learned from that. Perhaps I should have asked for feedback at the beginning of the year.

Rory Wilson responds:

Feedback is very important but it's not easy, and I often hear it said in business that the trouble with asking people what they think is that they tell you! Some of it is inconvenient, some of it is difficult, and some of it is quite irrelevant. So it's important to be careful about how you ask for feedback and what you ask for.

Delegates nod vigorously at this, and one says:

My boss is one for major communication. You must communicate! So in an effort to do so I said something about accounts – in the old days I would have got the secretary to do it. The responses that flew around were really nerve wracking. At what stage do you stop communicating?

Rory continues:

You have to contextualise feedback because the difficulty is, for example, that if somebody says 'Let's change the name of *The Guardian*, to *The Watchdog*' you've got to take it seriously, even if you and many others think it's a crazy idea. So be careful about how you phrase your questions. You want answers but you don't want a whole lot of answers that are patently inappropriate or irrelevant. The discussion needs to be focused, sensible and appropriate.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana agrees:

It's true that you have to contextualise feedback. If you don't then you're bound to hurt some people. We have regular staff meetings where people are allowed to express themselves and sometimes I get feedback I believe is not really necessary. For example, one of the staff members recently complained that they were not getting enough feedback on what the station is doing with the signal rollout of broad coverage. And I had to tell them that questions of transmitters are management decisions and you don't need to know. I might have hurt a few egos but I told the truth.

The discussion moves on to consider the flexibility of leaders in times when there has to be integration of new ideas. Collen Hans, ex *Jozi FM* and now businessman and *IAJ* freelance trainer in South Africa, comments:

A problem is that many leaders are not there for the development of other people, they are there to say 'Follow me'. We won't grow new leaders unless the existing ones understand that it's good to have young people coming through who don't necessarily have to echo your sentiments, but can

say ‘I look at it this way and I believe it would be better to do this’.

Collen elaborates with an example of a newsroom being sued because stories are not properly investigated – always a strong possibility given delegates’ comments about an industry-wide lack of properly skilled, trained and knowledgeable staff (p.142). He points out that these are the very newsrooms being asked to mentor or provide internship to media students:

The first thing that a professional young person studying media realises when he or she comes into a newsroom, is that all these years the organisation has been doing things wrong. Are those interns going to last past the first day that they question anything? Or will they be told ‘Don’t come back tomorrow’?

Delegates are clearly not in favour of a leadership style that represses fresh input. There is consensus that alternative perspectives need to be heard and given due consideration if media is to move with the times and ensure sustainability and growth. Challenges to organisational vision, structure and functioning, and responses to these challenges, were discussed earlier (‘Promoting diversity’ p.48, and ‘Getting buy-in to the vision’ p.70).

Organisational culture plays an important role in determining how people react when the status quo is challenged. As Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, remarks:

As leader you are part of an organisational culture and if everything is running well, then the culture is bigger than the leader. But when new people come in, obviously they have to fit into that culture. And maybe that is why it shouldn’t be surprising that the same type of people come back into an organisation time after time – as Leepile was saying in relation to De Beers and the Oppenheimers (p.81) – it’s because they fit into the culture and that makes the company a success. I don’t think it’s a bad thing.

There is some dispute about whether organisational culture can be changed. M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, thinks that organisational culture tends to be deeply entrenched: “You can’t change the culture, it stays there.” This may be partly why radio personalities who are like “firebrands” at one radio station turn into “neat lamps” when they join a different one as mentioned earlier by Pheello Selinyane. Pheello cites the *BBC* as an example of staff conduct and quality broadcasting being determined by clearly defined minimum standards.

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, takes up the organisational culture theme:

Besides a disciplinary code that’s transparent, you should have a code that sets out your company values. I mean, if somebody’s individual goals clash with something that was always there,

then what are they doing in the organisation? It's a recruitment issue; you're going to have a very unhappy employee creating havoc.

Another delegate responds:

And then how do you inspire them? There should be willingness from their side and inspiration to work with you. Now if they are not able to work with you, there's a need also to revisit the organisational culture. That develops over years and as we know can cause a lot of problems within organisations. No matter how many people are hired and fired – if the organisation doesn't change, then it becomes a problem.

Samantha says there is a way to shift a rigid organisational culture:

One of the key roles of the leaders is to always revisit the vision and strategise to find more and more viable ways of doing things and getting everybody bought into new concepts. From those discussions you'll be able to judge if your people are ready to move in a particular direction or not, and you may be able to see ways to motivate them to change.

People and change

Rory Wilson asks delegates to cross their arms in the opposite way to which they normally do. Everybody feels some discomfort. "If it's that hard to change simple things about ourselves", says Rory, "then how much harder is it to make big changes and to change others?" He elaborates:

There are two aspects to change management that are useful to know. Firstly, people change only when it's more uncomfortable to stay the same. Secondly, the key factors to change management are *discomfort*, *vision*, *first steps* and *resistance*. Discomfort plus the appeal of the new vision must be greater than resistance to it plus the first steps that must be made. You can represent it in an equation: $\text{discomfort} + \text{vision} > [\text{is greater than}] \text{resistance} + \text{first steps}$. If you are battling to get change to occur it's useful to ask yourself where the discomfort is, and if there is enough of it. You need to know where you are going: the new vision must be thought out and convincing, and the first steps worked out.

"What are the first steps?" asks Rory:

Business people talk a lot about risks; we are told that we must take risks, and that risk-taking is good, but the minute we take risks and fail, we are condemned or punished! I say: Let people take sensible risks and when they fail, applaud them.

Rory stresses that mistakes are an important part of ongoing learning, just as it is important for leaders to own up to their mistakes:

...because you want your people to be able to admit it when they make mistakes, and you want them to be able to make a mistake without you coming down on their heads – so long as the issue around making the mistake is well intentioned and genuine.

Discipline

A large part of the discussions about staff and working with people focused on positive aspects like empowering, persuading, motivating, power sharing and collaborating. However M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, says there comes a time to draw the line:

Do I have to sit there and babysit somebody whose mission statement is to work for me, and now they're dragging everybody down? Isn't time a factor here? You can talk to them, motivate them and so on and so forth, but patience has a limit. If you want to play lazy why don't you go home and do that!

His statement prompts Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, to recount how he dealt with a wayward staff member:

I had a situation where the editor hired a proof-reader when in fact he should have hired a sub-editor. The chief-sub-editor appeared to have earmarked somebody for the position and he was very unhappy, saying that he was concerned about the new employee's performance – she was not measuring up to her job. The chief-sub-editor had a point – I observed that a lot of the time she spent reading the daily newspaper. I wanted to express my concern but decided not to go to the editor because he doesn't report directly to me. So I went straight to this lady and told her, 'You did not come here to read *The Herald*, your job is to do what you are paid to do and I expect you to do it.' Later in the day the editor was on to me, and that gave me the opening to tell him that she was not measuring up. From that day on I saw a complete change in her performance and we've had no further problems. Sometimes you really have to weigh up situations.

Journalists who drink on the job are not uncommon in the industry as research shows.² Raphael Khumalo gave this example:

When we had the run-up to elections we sent a reporter out to cover the process. The guy got himself drunk, decided to sit under a tree and write up as if he had covered the election. What should the editor do – kick the fellow around? And what are the consequences? You start thinking of how Zimbabwe's state media will react, or other publications. But you just have to stay the course and

say, 'This how this newspaper operates and all those employed by it.' So it was not a difficult decision for the editor to show that employee the door.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, adds:

It also has to do with long hours, where work time and free time get mixed up, with the result that issues of discipline and indiscipline are there all the time. Sometimes the person feels very big and beyond reproach, especially when he's the guy getting you front-page news all the time. It becomes a problem to raise issues and say 'You were drunk the other day' or 'You didn't report for work on time'.

Peter du Toit has a good suggestion for Mike's dilemma and others like it: "Sometimes you need to ask them what they would do in your shoes. Do a bit of a role-reversal."

Setting standards and codes of conduct

In a comment broadly representative of all the delegates, Sipiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, declares: "There should be ethical and disciplinary guidelines in place. Irrespective of the position a person holds, you should follow those guidelines, otherwise we will have staff controlling us."

Delegates agree that the disciplinary code must be transparent and made known by everybody in an organisation. But as Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, points out:

Obviously your disciplinary code will cover specific issues and you can use the code to call people to account immediately. But the problem comes in where there are grey areas. Sometimes your rule book doesn't speak to the particular problem you've got – for instance, a person who comes in surly every morning and is just not pleasant for other colleagues to be around. You can't tell someone they must come in smiling, but you might want to get rid of them because they don't. A harsh issue that came up on a course I attended recently had to do with body odour. One person had a personal hygiene problem that was making life impossible for everybody else in the organisation. Disciplinary codes don't say anything about body odour. How do you talk to someone about that?

Troublesome staff members rarely restrict their infringements to single episodes or situations. Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* had an employee who regularly went off sick:

There's nothing in the book to deal with this – the book says 22 weekdays for sick leave, another 22 on half pay. Another thing, the cars she drives break down regularly and you begin to wonder

who has been driving them. The company rules say no children may drive company cars, only your spouse. How do you tell? She's got six children and one of them is married to a motor mechanic. How do you deal with this elderly lady who you suspect is not being entirely above-board. It's a challenge because the rules don't cover these issues. Sick leave is a legitimate, legal right. And you have no grounds to charge anybody because the company cars they are driving are always breaking down.

I've learnt that when you are leading or managing you can't work on suspicion, you must work on substance. The way to deal with the frequent illnesses is to discuss them with her. It's a question of getting the records and showing her the evidence. She's in management so I can challenge her to think about how to resolve this – let her be part of the solution and then agree on a way forward. Before taking drastic action, there has to be some kind of good frank chat, so that there can be a realisation that what they are doing is a mistake. Regarding the car problem, what I did was to ask the garage division for reports on the two cars. Then I said to her, 'Please give me a report on the two vehicles sitting in the garage, and how they came to be there?' So I am undertaking a proper investigation and gathering evidence, and based on that, I may call a disciplinary hearing.

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership*, responds to the issue of absenteeism:

If a person is absent all the time but is good, really good, at his or her job, others say 'Why should we be regular at work and you only come for twenty days when you're supposed to come for thirty days?' No matter how good that person is, he or she is not good for the system.

Kennedy Otsheleng of *GABZ FM* notes that disciplining staff can be minimised by making sure you attend to a key leadership role, which is to design key performance indicators that are "salient and important in keeping the business afloat." You also need to set up proper systems and communication channels to monitor and make sure that team members are accountable to those key performance indicators. He adds:

I must stress that when I talk about leadership, I don't necessarily mean just the CEO. When setting key performance indicators, you will need to involve different stakeholders and staff members. The head of Sales will make sure that the sales team is accountable to their targets, the head of Programming will make sure that the presenters are accountable to their targets, and so forth. Then, moving upwards, the division managers will account to the CEO – so at the end the whole organisation is accountable to the key performance indicators.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, is now using performance indicators set by staff themselves, as a way of gauging which staff members show leadership capacities and who will move into leadership roles (p.62).

Another delegate adds:

It's important to communicate, record and agree on expected performance levels. Sometimes we assume people know what is expected of them but it's a good exercise as a leader to sit with someone and spell out what's expected of them. You can negotiate to a certain degree, but remember to confirm your final agreement.

Mike Daka says *Breeze FM*'s planning meetings provide a platform for people to understand their work and establish how, and by when, tasks should be done – so setting standards and maintaining them resides in the people themselves. He finds this an effective way to work with people: "It's not the leader who is saying: 'Do this, do that, do it over this period; do it like that; consult with this person.' They must be the ones designing all of this and taking responsibility."

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, printed pocketbook replicas of the *Sunday Times* ethical guidelines, which are signed for by journalists and displayed on newsroom notice boards.

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana has a strategy for curtailing litigation and its costs: "Journalists must pay litigation costs for any article they bring in which is not properly substantiated. I don't think we've had a lawsuit this year." But Rory Wilson counters this with an interesting and provocatively different way of viewing and dealing with litigation (p. 169).

Beata Kasale's company also has a strategy for controlling staff who abuse their expense accounts. After six months of closely monitoring their spending, a fixed sum of money is allocated to each staff member for fieldwork and other expenses. If they exceed that sum, they have to pay out of their own pockets. (Details of this intervention and staff responses to it were discussed earlier under 'Money and staff', p.90).

Fairness and favouritism

Alfred Ntonga's story about gathering factual information before making accusations (in 'Setting standards and codes of conduct,' p. 123) demonstrates a systematic and reasonable approach to a problematic situation. Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia observes:

When you deal with cases of discipline, you must be seen to be fair and not favour some over others. Also disciplinary measures must be dealt with speedily. I think that fairness can also be maintained if you deal through committees. Then it's not just you, the main leader, dispensing justice. When there is a committee, people will accept when they have erred and disciplinary action is taken against them. But as soon as you show any sign of favouritism you can run into very serious problems. All sorts of things get thrown around – they'll think you're favouring the other person because she's a woman, or in our communities they'll think the person who gets a soft deal is

related to you. Committees help to prevent this sort of thing.

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, says:

I find that as leaders we have a soft spot for some team members. But if you want to see progress, treat them as equally as possible. They shouldn't feel that there's favouritism because that creates division and when there are divisions there is no progress.

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, shares a hint:

Friends of mine in the Management Department at Rhodes University talk about the hot stove principle. The idea is that if I've put my hand on the stove, I get burnt. If Rory puts his hand on the same stove, he'll also get burnt. Everyone gets treated in exactly the same manner. The problem is that some people are worth more to the organisation than others and it's difficult, very difficult to handle that.

It means you have to keep track of what you've done in the past. Once I gave one student a bollocking for coming late to class. Three days later someone else came late and I was too busy attending to what another student was saying to notice it. They thought it was completely unequal treatment and that there was favouritism going on, but that wasn't the case at all.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, agrees:

I also think it's difficult to treat people equally because their input is different and you interact differently with them as individuals. So as much as you think you're being equal, you're not. And it's those subtle signals like body language that show favouritism. So equal treatment is an ideal – if you can define it then maybe you'll be able to apply it.

A metaphor of leadership that occurred throughout the *lekgotla* was the notion of 'family' and 'leader as-parent'. It is reflected in Alfred Ntonga's comment about fairness and favouritism: "Some children are more loved than others. We don't all want to admit this, and we may not agree, but it happens."

Reprimanding and congratulating

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, advises:

As a leader you shouldn't allow yourself to be seen as a negative person who is always reprimanding people in public. Motivate them and make them believe that success is being sustained. If a

member of staff has problems, or is not behaving appropriately, please make sure you reprimand him or her privately. When people are reprimanded publicly, they don't get the benefit of concern and advice. Instead they get resentful and then it's you who's in the wrong.

As always, different contexts call for different strategies. Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, offers an example:

Yes it's good to reprimand privately, because my experience has shown that when people are reprimanded publicly they normally react by resisting what you say. However there are instances where public reprimanding is necessary. When someone continuously repeats an offence, the only alternative you have is to expose them publicly and then they might change. There's a lady I worked with – she was my junior – and she had a habit of sleeping at reception. She had not heeded my warnings so I had to address the issue publicly.

Alfred Ntonga suggests that public reprimand may be appropriate when a number of people are causing a problem: "Sometimes people develop a habit, for example, at my work place we are meant to start at 8.30am on Sundays. Last Sunday I went in at 9am and no one was there. Do you reprimand them individually or collectively?"

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, cites a common problem in many organisations: "If you find a staff member playing solitaire or watching pornography with a whole crowd around him what do you do? Do you speak to him individually?"

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, has a canny solution for abuse of the Internet:

We found a solution to people accessing dodgy content that has nothing to do with work. We have a proxy system that's open to everyone, so anyone can see who is accessing what, at any time. Is that not another form of public reprimanding?

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, enters the debate:

I think reprimanding publicly, irrespective of how big or small the offence, cannot be an excuse, it's not allowed, it's just wrong. Radio presenters, for instance, are very sensitive and a culture exists in the industry whereby irrespective of what you want to say, you need to follow protocol, the idea is: 'You cannot talk to me, the person to talk to me is my producer.' Even if you are able to highlight very crucial points which can help him tomorrow, he'll resent it because it is an opinion.

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, gives a dif-

ferent perspective: “The strategy you use will depend on what you want to achieve. Sometimes you need to make a point that everyone understands, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that you need to critique the individual.”

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, agrees that the form a reprimand takes depends on what the manager needs to achieve. He emphasises that reprimanding has both monitoring and formative functions:

We have a planning meeting on Mondays and Fridays. You find that at times you must reprimand, for lack of a better word, because you are reviewing what has or has not taken place. We use that opportunity to correct things that have not been done properly – for instance when a news bulletin is delayed. Actually, you’re not really reprimanding, you want to correct what’s been done wrong so that it doesn’t happen again.

Firing, hiring and redeploying

Firing someone is seldom an easy task and takes diplomacy and tact. Collen Hans, ex *Jozi FM* and now businessman and *IAJ* freelance trainer in South Africa, acknowledges this but in his opinion, diplomacy can be taken too far:

We’re reluctant to sound politically incorrect. In the old days we would speak of problems. Nowadays we say challenges. We don’t say fraud anymore, it’s mismanagement of finances. C’mon! fraud is fraud, you’re productive or you’re not productive! The problem, I think, is that Africans get caught up in man’s compassion to man – ubuntu. Humanity guides us in everything that we do and we’ve brought ubuntu into our management systems. Before you make a concrete decision, you have to think, ‘He’s an uncle of who?’ and that really disturbs progress. And when you fire a person maybe you’re asked to give a reference, but what do you say? He’s a good person? Are you going to spoil that person’s opportunity to be rechanneled into something else? You cannot.

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, adds:

Crazily enough they give you as a reference and people phone you and you look at this and you think ‘What do I say?’ Do I say ‘Rather you than me.’ You sit with a dilemma – do you lie and make them someone else’s problem? Or do you tell the truth and shackle the person?

Challenging Collen’s interpretation of ubuntu as a principle governing African leaders, M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, presents a decidedly business-oriented argument:

You have a person who's losing the company 20 000 every month and he or she is not adding value to cover that, so it's just money down the drain. You're digging yourself into a hole by compromising and asking whose uncle this is. That's not your problem. You need to protect the interest of the organisation. Your problem is making sure it remains profitable, and if someone is compromising that objective, he or she must go. If labour law says you're allowed to fire someone and settle them with three month's pay, then do that. In six month's time you'd have recovered triple the 20 000 or whatever you spend on the settlement. Then you're free of somebody who was possibly starting to sow the seeds of very negative cultures that you don't want in your organisation. So it doesn't matter whether he's the uncle of the president or whatever.

But making clear-cut decisions, as M. Leepile advocates, is not so easy in certain contexts. Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, finds he is caught between organisational pressures and community demands:

I spent all my working life elsewhere and was socialised differently – we butted heads and people got fired. Now I'm in my hometown and in community media. You cannot just use good judgement or the rulebook to guide decisions, because everyone else is affected and involved. The community holds sway. The moment a person is off air for a certain period of time you get letters and phone calls asking, 'Where is this person?' Internally we have a culture of talking very openly, and decision making is a fairly transparent process. For instance, we have a lady on maternity leave having some problems and she decided to extend her leave. It's been going on for too long and now other staff are saying 'Have you fired this person yet?'

Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, comments: "I've learned that you don't dismiss people offhand. Even when they are not doing their jobs, there are lots of ways to tell them that they have to jack up their act or they will get fired."

Rory Wilson warns:

The danger is that you don't do anything. You tolerate it until it becomes absolutely intolerable and then you deal with it. Usually you wonder why you didn't do it six months earlier! Some leaders don't think it's a problem to fire. But it's very tough, and in leadership this is where we are truly tested. The key is that if you decide to take this ultimate step, you have to do it in a compassionate civilised, sensitive, careful way.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, adds his perspective:

With a really difficult person I don't usually hesitate to fire. I just tell the person 'I'm the boss here. If you can't share the vision and we've tried to workshop the vision, too bad, you've got to go.' It's better than continuing to allow your game plan to be messed up because then your whole organi-

sation looks like it's leaderless. But regarding this point about compassion, one of the easiest ways I've found to handle a situation where a person is good, but has been there for 15 years and is not necessarily adding value or can't fit into the new organisational culture, is that you give the person work from the organisation. You outsource – it's compassionate and everyone's happy – the person adds value to the organisation in a different setting within given frameworks.

"I want to add that even if you want to get rid of somebody, there're so many laws that govern the work environment – the legal framework can prohibit you from taking the final step," says Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia:

It's really difficult to get people to work in a certain way, you know, to build that team and then one person can just break everybody down and that's really bad. It's very stressful. It keeps you awake. I had a situation with a journalist who kept undermining his supervisor and undoing the team. Then one day he did a really silly thing – he lost the battery of the camera and we had to order another one from South Africa. In the meantime everyone else has to take pictures or you have to hire photographers to fill in. I just cut it off his pay saying, 'This is your problem. Do you have a police report for this?' Eventually he eliminated himself from the team, but it may have been incredibly difficult, with the labour laws, to fire him.

In South Africa the law specifies that before an employer can fire someone, he or she needs to have issued the person with three written warnings that record three different occasions when the employee transgressed company rules. So a legal system and processes are in place. But a leader needs to be alert to difficulties experienced by managers further down in the hierarchy who may be reluctant to begin formal disciplinary action. Alfred Ntonga, from Malawi, notes: "Line managers will usually say so if they see a rotten potato in the group – and they know what to do. But if within a given period they have not taken action, I usually take action."

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, gets edgy: "We're throwing around 'fire, fire, fire,' but I've had to do that twice and you know, it's the most heartbreaking thing." Alfred Ntonga responds:

I wanted to say that firing is something that you need to have at your disposal, but we should always be careful and make sure that before we resort to such an extreme measure we've done our best to resolve the issues and that the best interests of the organisation can in fact be served by firing the person.

"One of the things that we tried," says Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho,

is to keep people in departments other than editorial – in advertising and in marketing – on a free-lance basis. People must choose – if they're not going to be allied to the vision or the team then

they must go freelance. Everyone must know where their salary comes from, so if you don't go out there and get the adverts from the corporates you're not going to get a salary. We have seen that strategy turn things around.

M. Leepile used a similar strategy with the fledgling newspaper *Mogkosi*. Initially no permanent staff members were employed and the paper was run by consultants. It proved an effective strategy and one he later regretted changing (p.82).

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, raises an issue that was mentioned often during the Iekgotla (pages 51, 59, 90, 142): "Many of the people who rise through the ranks to senior positions are actually incapable of running those institutions as businesses. So people come in from other business sectors to take over leadership positions." But this is not a new development, as pointed out earlier by Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa: "If you look at the history of newspapers, they were never started by a bunch of journalists. They were started by people who wanted to make money."

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, observes:

The in thing in the USA, and probably the UK, is to kick this one out, buy that one in. If you look at corporates in the capitalist world you'll find that there's no reproduction of leadership in organisations. Instead the board of directors and whoever is responsible is always on the lookout for a good leader elsewhere.

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, says dismissal may be the most constructive route to follow:

It's sometimes a strategy and sometimes a mark of visionary leadership. If you see someone's weaknesses obscuring his or her strengths and you have intervened to help but get no good results, what do you do? It is a key position and there's somebody out there who you think can make a difference. It's not only in the USA or in the UK – it's in business – you make a decision to remove that person and you hire someone from the outside. Quality from the outside can turn around a company that's sinking and make it float.

Delegation and teamwork

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, says:

It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that where there is doubt and problems, the ship stays afloat and heading in the direction you want it to go. There has to be power sharing as well,

and delegation is directly linked to that. Ultimately the leader must take responsibility for what happens, because even in the process of delegation you are at the centre of it and should things go wrong it remains very much your responsibility too.

But delegates agree that a vital precursor to delegation is staff buy-in to the organisational vision and mission (p.70). Mike Daka, of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, comments:

It's important to be clear about what we are doing and why we are doing it, so whether it's vision or purpose or just having an idea of what we want to achieve, I think it is important that you share that. Because without that it becomes much more difficult to delegate and to do the day-to-day work.

Effective delegation also requires having systems and levels of management in place. M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, found an absence of these to be a major problem in a company he was restructuring (p.82). And, as Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi points out, (p. 56) responses to problems should be encouraged at every management level, so that problems are referred to higher levels only when line managers have already tried to address them.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, draws attention to an important issue regarding shared responsibility:

A leader must add value to the company – if he or she does not add value to the company there is no reason for his or her existence. If you are so successful in delegating all your powers that you end up doing nothing then you are just a burden. You must evaluate your own role, see how much value you add to the company – if it is zero, then you have a problem.

Some delegates have a different problem: not enough staff. Sipiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, who started up the a magazine which then led to the formation of the highly successful *Super Buddies Club*, speaks for most delegates who run small businesses, when she says: “We don't have enough resources to hire people so most of the things we do ourselves with the help of very few people.” Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, also reports having to multitask because of a shortage of staff, but in his organisation the situation came about because of the sudden withdrawal of their main pillar of support – government advertising:

People who used to have to oversee the different sections of the paper now have to do other administrative duties, and even write. That stretches us out and handicaps individual development, because we aren't able to oversee the remaining staff and make sure they are cultivated well.

Delegation is often spoken of as something that does not come naturally but must be learnt. Beata Kasale,

publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana shares an early experience:

A weakness I had for several years before I overcame it, was multi-tasking and not delegating enough. You think no one else can do it better than you. For many years I wasn't a very good leader because I was writing, editing, taking pictures, doing the accounts, collecting debts, distribution – I was in everything. When people came to get cheques signed and stuff like that I would shout at them, 'Don't you see I'm busy? We're doing the paper; it has to go today; this is more important!' Meanwhile no one was really steering the company. After my partner and I appointed an editor, a financial manager and a distribution manager, things became much simpler, we had less to do and I think that contributed to our success. Importantly, staff members became empowered and developed confidence in themselves.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi has a similar story:

I came into management by accident, and at that time I saw problems in all my colleagues but not in myself. It was like ... if I'm not there to push, nothing gets done. I didn't fully understand the merit of delegation, sharing responsibilities and trusting colleagues, until I developed high blood pressure in 2000. Then six months later I discovered I was diabetic so I knew I was losing it. I started asking myself, 'Can leadership be so stressful?' Then I realised my biggest problem was that I should've passed on some of the work to other people. If you don't communicate, if you don't recognise that others also have something to offer, you behave the way I did, and it will take you to an early grave. To be a leader or manager you have to come up with ideas, in consultation, and then see how best they can be executed together with the team. Then you have peaceful sleep, you are healthy, you are fresh, and you go on with your life. So my philosophy is: Don't push, lead.

He continues:

Let's look at another issue. I've heard it said so many times that this thing would not have happened if so-and-so was not on leave; that thing would not have happened if the boss was not attending a meeting in South Africa, etcetera. If you don't groom people to step in and take over day-to-day management then you move with your office in your briefcase. The bottom line is that my organisation should be able to run whether I am in South Africa or on leave or wherever. Many of us fear that if we allow talent space then people will think, 'But this one is much better than the boss'.

Again Anton van Zyl questions: "But if you are going to delegate and you can be in South Africa or wherever and you can come back and everything is perfect, you are obsolete."

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, retorts:

Not necessarily. Because I think a good leader has the ability to nurture the best out of very ordi-

nary people and be able to still keep the ship going. You don't have to do everything; the company should not close when you go to Johannesburg or when you go to Malawi for two days. Look at companies that have been there for generations like Gillette, Johnson & Johnson, Anglo America, De Beers – they have succession plans, or they employ people from outside who can make people do their jobs irrespective of whether or not the person who created the company is there. You should be able to walk away and be sure that you have delegated, you have nurtured people to the level where they can take charge. Part of our role as African media leaders is to establish institutions that will stand the test of time, it shouldn't be that you die and then your paper is closed.

You must hand over at some point and move to the next level. Bill Gates is always trotting all over Africa, do you think he has time to run Microsoft? No! He employs a CEO but he's still the board chairperson and still providing leadership at that level.

M. Leepile asserts: "As leaders we need to be aware of and recognise our own people." By knowing your people – their talents and weaknesses – it becomes possible to delegate duties to appropriate people and forge teams that will mobilise and complement the different skills and capacities of staff members. Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, illustrates:

Marketers are always optimistic and always see the best in everything. If you've got a person like that on your team, you've got to know that everything you put on the table ... if it's a great idea, they'll want it to be even greater. If it's a terrible problem, they'll try to make it more palatable. The point is that you need to start recognising tendencies in individual people, including leadership tendencies. It's important to think about the people on your team, where they fit, how they contribute. If you've got too many people who are forceful, or too many optimists, or too many who are cautious, you've got a big problem. A balance of talents is what you need.

Several delegates identify the ability to establish and work effectively with teams as the factor that makes them good leaders (p.40). Delegates also say that it is vital to appreciate that leadership does not reside exclusively in the person who is the designated leader (p.28). Direction can come from multiple sources. A story from Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* in Malawi illustrates all these aspects:

The story I want us to share relates to one I introduced yesterday, about demystifying the newsroom [p.41]. When the paper started in July 1993, most of the editorial people were above me. There was the editor-in-chief, the editor, and then me as chief sub-editor doubling as the chief reporter. Later on I brought in a reporter under me. At that stage the general manager, the accountant – almost everybody – was playing one role or another in editorial. We wanted to build our name on investigative journalism, so we would be asking questions like 'What happened when three ministers and an MP disappeared mysteriously?' People do not think about whether or not it was their role – they would ask for a questionnaire, take a dictaphone, and go out there and investigate. We'd try to build a case using the questionnaires and follow-ups and we came up with some

good stories by working as a team.

Later on, when we grew to become a weekly and a daily, the editorial staff started saying, 'This is intrusion, we don't need these outsiders coming here and meddling in the newsroom.' They insisted on independence and the other staff members stopped being involved in editorial. Then came a lawsuit. The general manager and others who used to be involved were very unhappy and felt they were on the receiving end of something they didn't know about. It was a problem.

One day we decided to investigate a story about finances and the economy. When we were discussing it in editorial I saw an opportunity for somebody from the accounts section to come in and help. So I asked the editorial people, 'Is it okay if we ask the accountant to come and tell us what all this means?' 'Ja!' they said, 'what a brilliant idea.' Some time later we were looking at hierarchy in government so I asked them, 'Is it okay if we ask the administration and human resource manager to have a look, it's his area, probably he can shed some light on it?' And again they agreed.

And so a system emerged where the general manager and anyone who was interested and had the time, could come and discuss ideas with us. Ideas would originate in the newsroom as synopses with some suggestions for key sources. We'd meet as a group and ask people to look at what we wanted to do from the point of view of the reader or the layperson, or from technical point of view, and so forth. They would start asking questions and making suggestions. Of course some of it would be wild but a lot of it was very interesting. When I asked my editors what they thought about the sessions they said, 'They are brilliant!'

If you come to *Nation Publications* you'd see that there's a time for discussing story ideas for *Week-end Nation*, another for discussing ideas for *Nation on Sunday*. The good thing with the system is that we are all together and nobody feels as if we've sprung a surprise on them. They see that the paper exists because of what the editorial staff produce, but they also know that they have a stake in it and influence what we are doing.

Delegates appreciate the story and M. Leepile responds: "It's important to be flexible and to give other people space." Mike Daka relates it to his own experience: "Working through teams, we are able to do things that perhaps others would think almost impossible." This echoes Pat Mwase's earlier comment: "It's also about breaking a fragmented approach to working and making sure that people understand they're a team and therefore achieving common goals."

Motivating staff

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, speaks from his own experience about motivation:

You need to be clever about getting things done in ways whereby people enjoy doing them. You're the critical dimension because in a way you hold the lives of your people in your hands. You have the power to make their lives a misery. You have the power to make them happy, inspired, motivated people; a huge amount of it is in your hands.

His philosophy is that people will act in keeping with what the leader or manager believes about them:

It's about the assumptions in the mind of the manager. If the leader believes that people don't want to work, that they're lazy, untrustworthy, must be controlled and threatened, that they actually want to be directed and naturally dislike taking responsibility – that manager's going to have to be tough and have tight control. Another leader may believe that people enjoy being at work, that they want responsibility and will automatically direct themselves if they are committed to the organisation – then all the manager has to do is create the right environment and people will just find their way, the right way.

The message is that people will behave in the way they are perceived and thus treated. This is only a theory, of course, but I've seen very good functioning newsrooms, especially a sub-editor's department, turned upside down by the attitude of a new leader who treats people like children.

Rory's theory prompts Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, to recall:

In the media generally, in the '60s, '70s and '80s, editors were controlling. When I went into the newsroom for the first time, early '70s to '72, you couldn't sit in the newsroom because the news editor would come and ask what you were doing in here – get out and get the stories. So you get out and find the stories, you may even start faking stories to try and cover up for yourself. You write the story, and the guy looks at it and says, 'What is this? This is not a story!' And then he runs it on the spike. So the whole day he's pushing you. When we became editors, we reproduced that attitude. I was news editor for ten years and I drove my guys hard. Later you kind of soften up – you get older, you gather experience, you learn to change your attitude. But in the old days, we learnt that you got results by hard control, we all thought it was the way to lead. The media was a very bad place to work.

Staff motivation and readiness to go along with the organisational vision (pages 32-33, 70) is crucial. Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, stresses that a key leadership role is to get everybody to understand and buy in to the idea that "The success of the company is their own individual success. Our organisation's major strength is that we have committed employees who have bought into vision and believe in what they do."

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, found that internal resistance to her vision for a new magazine was strong: "There was no confidence. And surprisingly it was the journalists who actually didn't

think that it would work.” Beata Kasale (p.97) had a similar experience. Samantha Kalisa (p.60) and Pheelo Selinyane (p.61) found that it was only after proving themselves that staff stood firmly behind them.

Empowering and inspiring

Motivating staff involves getting them to believe in and stand behind the leader and the organisational vision, and encouraging them to produce high quality work. But the real triumph is when staff reach beyond the boundaries of their jobs and become proactive, creative, and innovative participants in organisational growth. To accomplish this, leadership has to broaden from motivating staff to empowering them. Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, offers an insight:

For me the simple formula is that if you want more power, give it away. The word empowerment is a little bit clichéd now and means a lot of things, but I’ve found it to be true that if you share your power, you empower others and become more powerful or influential yourself.

But as Beata Kasale pointed out earlier, before leaders can give or share power, they themselves need to be vested with “real power”. An important phase in this process is making sure that a new leader is properly introduced to staff, as clearly illustrated in the experiences delegates shared about starting media organisations and being promoted (p.59).

As delegates pointed out earlier (pages 40 & 55) the ability to empower staff is a key leadership *role* and *attribute*. *Strategies* for empowering staff are described throughout this chapter and include shared decision-making (p.113), opening channels for dissenting views (p.115), communicating and arbitrating (p.117), soliciting feedback (p.118), helping staff to work with change (p.121), and delegation and team working (p.131).

Participation is the pivot on which staff empowerment turns. Leadership theorists (p.33) claim that participation frees people from the narrow confines of their job descriptions and unleashes their creative potential. When people participate, multiple interpretations of an organisation’s reality emerge, and this increases its innovative potency. As Wheatley says, “...an organization rich with many interpretations develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done. Such organizations become more intelligent.”³

Passion – having it and communicating it – is a quality most delegates see as being key to inspiring staff participation, to motivating and empowering them. Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, comments:

I mentioned having some fairly inexperienced staff and I think it’s a problem that a lot of us have. What makes me passionate is the producing. Inexperienced staff make it more difficult to produce

something, but prouder of it when it gets out. You have to train them and instil in them the pride and the passion and that's part of it. Ultimately you get a better product. So passion is not only about product, it is also about process.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, affirms:

Be passionate about your project, because your passion spills over to the rest of your team. We're in an industry where we need creative input from everyone. If there's no passion, if you don't believe in your product, or are not proud of it, it's going to filter through.

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, agrees: "If you love your product it's easy to get others to love it." Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of Nation Publications in Malawi, adds:

Take cookery – even if you've got all the right ingredients, if you're not passionate about what you do, you can end up with a pancake instead of a cake. Tell me, with media work, do the long hours and the stress pay? The only thing that keeps us there is that we're passionate. So when you judge your staff you'll keep people who are passionate because even if they make mistakes, chances are that they'll learn and they'll carry on. The one who is not passionate is the one you must get rid of very quickly. You need that passion because it's the driving force.

Kennedy Otscheleng is not convinced that passion is a substitute for good pay, or that passion should even be associated with money – unless it is passion for business and for making money, which he and other delegates consider to be another reason why many enter the media industry (p.63). Mike Daka disagrees:

If you rank professionals, you find that media ranks quite lowly the world over. It's not only the pay – there are also the long hours, the conflict as you try and produce programmes and papers – very few fields have the kind of stress you have in media. So unless you are passionate about it and see it is as a calling, you won't last. I mean this is my 35th year and I'm looking young. You know why? Because I love it!

Incentives

On a more pragmatic level, delegates share several tips and strategies they use to motivate staff. Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia begins:

In radio, presenters normally have a presenter's or announcer's fee – so when you get sponsored work this will normally be built into the presenters' salaries. We felt that the sponsorship fee should not only benefit presenters – everybody does all sorts of work that contributes to the end product.

So we built a factor into our costing that allows us to share that money across the board every three months. Your salary might remain the same but there is always money from the additional revenue that comes in, and that is shared. We also build in an individual commission for anyone who brings in business that lasts for 13 weeks or more. So individuals with initiative also benefit.

Pheello Selinyane says his organisation, *Public Eye* in Lesotho, has staff awards linked to monetary incentives:

If you're going to motivate staff to report beyond the average and take the time and dedication to follow up stories and go that extra mile, then you need to incentivise them. Our staff compete for an award as well as material benefits.

Creating a competitive environment amongst the staff is also a strategy used at *The Voice* in Botswana. Beata Kasale finds:

Motivating staff can be quite a killer, but we've found that giving people in sales benefits for reaching their targets helps to push the numbers up. We also use trade exchanges with hotels so staff members win holidays when they exceed their targets.

The Voice also rewards its journalists for bringing in front page stories. Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, points out:

If you have a young reporter and he or she has done a cutting edge story, you put it on page one. You don't need financial incentive, page one is incentive enough. I remember once on a Friday, when everybody was supposed to be in the office at 10 to go through the paper, the editor said he was sure the young reporter would be late because he'd be going around the street with his paper!

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, identifies with the young reporter: "I remember watching my first front page lead come off the paper. I stayed at the office to watch it get printed and you should've seen the smile on my face as I drove to work the next day with my billboard and my story. It was *my* newspaper that day!"

Clearly, recognition is an excellent motivator. And one form of recognition is to compliment or congratulate. Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* in Malawi thinks this should be done publicly. But Peter du Toit warns:

You need to congratulate appropriately. At a newspaper I worked at, we used to have merit awards. I came in to the office to find that I'd got the merit award for something I knew I didn't deserve. It's not my fault that the editor made this decision, but I was just so embarrassed. One of my other col-

leagues who had worked her butt off that week and had not got the award was in tears. So leaders must be quite strategic about this, because you set the bar for company standards.

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, has a different view on giving compliments:

When I was managing director of *The Argus* and the *Cape Times*, the editors asked me, 'Why don't you ever praise us when we do great things, like picking great stories or producing great editions?' My answer to that was 'You can't have it both ways: if you don't want managers to interfere with your operations (which I don't think they should) or criticise you, then you mustn't ask them for praise'. I think in our industry there is too much mystique surrounding these issues and not enough hard debate.

Human resource challenges

Human resource issues related to training and to lack of skills are explored below in 'Training and mentoring' (p.142). The link between low pay in the media industry and government influence is also discussed later, in 'Chequebook journalism' (p.154). Two human resource issues briefly discussed here are poaching, and problems associated with working in multiple mediums.

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, speaks for many of the delegates when she says:

Poor salaries in the industry are a threat, because a lot of media leaders and journalists move to the more lucrative private sector or to top positions in government. To sustain our businesses we need to find ways of paying staff competitive salaries.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM*, points out that Botswana's media industry suffers because of higher salaries in the corporate sector:

Many media sectors dedicate considerable time and money to grooming leadership talent and training staff. But in Botswana a lot of blue chip companies never invest money in training public relations officers, for instance, they simply poach from our newspapers, radio stations, and television companies. We train staff in the hope that they'll take over posts and maintain a continuity of leadership, but they get head-hunted and offered big money elsewhere.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia comments:

It's not just government taking up our human resources, especially journalists. It's also the NGOs,

multinational agencies and big corporates. They snap up the strong people by offering them as much as four, five thousand dollars, which is really difficult for media to match.

Jacqueline Kabeta, executive director of *SAIMED* in Botswana responds with an observation that is confirmed in findings of several research projects⁴: “There is an argument that the industry itself has failed to absorb the journalists and other skilled staff, and that we are failing to employ our own people.”

Earlier we heard about how staff shortages lead to multi-tasking, which can be counterproductive to good leadership, and delegates shared some solutions – in ‘Delegation and teamwork’(p.131). This leads us to a new issue which has implications for multi-tasking, delegation and teamwork – the pressure of having to work in multiple media.

MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine’s revenue is sourced mainly from the Lesotho communities in which it operates. For this reason editor-in-chief Sebonomoea Ramainoane says, “Our revenue is very, very weak ... and as a result we are not able to employ staff to work in various departments of the newspaper as well as in the radio station.”

Samantha Kalisa, editor of *Bignews for the Business Owner*, brings in another dimension:

When there’s a newspaper and a website, how do staff members write for both? The web is a different medium, so how do you retrain some of them, particularly if they resist change? Do you employ more people and put more pressure on your financials? The Internet holds opportunities, but it’s also a double-edged sword.

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, adds:

TV, radio and online are having an impact because these mediums deliver news in a more timely and colourful way. Many of us are caught in a situation where we’re producing the facts, but our readers want more, and people in print are not necessarily skilled or equipped to provide them with it. That impacts on the sector’s ability to compete. It’s a training challenge, it’s a mentoring challenge, but it’s a matter of vision as well.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, sees another weakness affecting the training and retaining of staff:

Generating resources from programming is limited because programming sponsorship has not grown or developed to the level where it can sustain that aspect of operations. There’s clearly a need for a lot more training – from production, to production of adverts, to management – that will enable people to design strategies to help their organisations survive firstly, and secondly, move into a global future. Of course ICTs [information and communications technologies] are helping in

many ways to get these guys to do a lot more things, but unless something is done to help them understand where they're at, and unless we come up with career strategies to move forward with reduced donor funding, insufficient revenue and other resources, and weak management systems and structures, we may see a lot more organisations going under.

Training and mentoring

Delegates discussed training in a general way. Detailed findings from a media leadership training needs analysis of the SADC region – recently conducted by the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* – are readily available on the institute's website.⁵

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, says inexperienced staff present both a burden and an opportunity:

Young journalists are a bonus in that you can mould them and train them. But they can also be such a burden to the credibility of your newspaper. Who wants to read a newspaper full of inaccuracies? And it's not only spelling errors – we're a business publication: if figures or other facts are incorrect, readers react negatively. In South Africa many experienced journalists have moved to the corporate sector, or retired. You don't have subs anymore with years of training and who can spot an error a mile off. You've got people fresh out of college or those who were juniors five years ago now suddenly becoming subs. The training isn't what it should be – you've got all sorts of fly-by-night institutions popping up. Anyone with a pen in their hands can call themselves a journalist and anyone with a cell phone is a photographer.

When I started out as a journalist and you covered a big political event and knew nothing about it, you'd go and read up – you didn't go there knowing nothing and just report. Sometimes I think the fault lies in their training, because the lack of general knowledge young journalists have is shocking. They don't read, they don't research, they just go out there and cover a story and take whatever anybody says to them as truth! We are a monthly so I can afford to look at a story and say, 'This is nonsense, go and do it again!' But I can understand the pressure that the editor of a daily must suffer – you can't put a big notice in the newspaper saying 'Whoops, sorry, rubbish today!' You just have to trust your journalists and trust that what they are doing is right.

And as Alfred Ntonga pointed out earlier ('Capturing audience' p.101) journalists need more than basic writing skills and factual accuracy. Nowadays "a more difficult, sophisticated type of writing" is called for, that conveys subtleties such as the mood and atmosphere of stories. There is some specialist training such as mainstreaming gender issues into news reporting – as Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana offers. But delegates agree that specialist skills such as those required for investigative journalism are thin on the ground.

An additional problem identified by Beata is that journalists are trained to view Africa as ‘bad’ and this is reflected in their reporting: “They slam governments irrespective of whether they are doing good, because that’s the mentality.” This point is elaborated further in ‘Politics, Independence, Law’ (p.167).

Formal training

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications*, an advertising and publishing company in Swaziland, is one of several delegates who acknowledge that the industry has seen an improvement in the empowerment of media practitioners. She points out: “Institutions like *Sol Plaatje*, *NSJ*, *The Southern Africa Media Training Trust*, and the *IAJ [Institute for the Advancement of Journalism]* train journalists and other media professionals in areas such as journalism, finance management, marketing, leadership and so forth.” Even so, Jacqueline Kabeta, executive director of the *SAIMED* in Botswana says training in the region may not be sufficiently targeted to emerging needs:

It’s one of the challenges MISA [*Media Institute of Southern Africa*] has to address because MISA’s mission is promoting diversity. So if we are going to consolidate and adapt, I think MISA will have to remodel itself to reshape training to be more specific to southern African needs.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana responds:

I was about to say that the issues raised in this lekgotla are a challenge to *SAIMED [Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development]* too – because the consensus here is that we need to start developing entrepreneurship amongst our leaders, we need to generate bankable ideas which will sustain our businesses, which will grow our businesses. Part of the process of doing that is learning to think in such a manner that you can identify an opportunity when it exists, for example franchising.

The idea of franchising *Super Buddies*, Siphiwe Nkambule’s publication, and *Super Buddies Club*, its allied NGO, are opportunities identified during the lekgotla (‘Innovative strategies for generating revenue’ p.89).

In ‘Starting Media Organisations and Being Promoted’ (p.59) and ‘Money matters’ (p.81) delegates repeat their concern that journalists who rise up through the ranks lack financial acumen and management skills to steer media organisations to success. In a comment broadly representative of lekgotla delegates, Mike Daka says:

In the southern African region, when you see examples of failure, you can usually relate these to a lack of leadership training. We need much better preparation at the pre-service level. At the moment training institutions teach people to be reporters and journalists, but what happens after

a few years when they find themselves in leadership positions?

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, points out that beyond the formal training they give to journalists, media organisations themselves have a “coaching and mentoring duty, even if it just entails being inducted into the culture of a particular organisation and learning how that organisation works”.

Mentoring and coaching

In the view of Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia:

The region has a large number of leaders to pull from. They come from diverse cultures and multiple sectors, and you can easily cross-breed through exchange programmes and share experiences as leaders. So there is a skills base – you’re not working with people who have absolutely no skills.

Identifying and developing talent was highlighted as a key leadership role fairly late into the lekgotla, even though it is clear that numerous delegates are proactive leaders in this regard. Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, uses training as a springboard to networking and cross-border collaboration (p.101), while Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, says “I’ve trained a lot of people who are now editors of different organisations and I’m satisfied that people who were my juniors are now editors of good publications and are able to compete with me.”

Alfred Ntonga of *Nation Publications* also spoke proudly about the spillover of trained staff from his organisation into the wider media arena in Malawi (p. 42). And Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa says “The greatest successes I’ve personally seen are the various projects we run, some of them mentoring projects, assisting other small newspapers which turned out to be very successful.”

Alfred Ntonga introduced a peer-mentoring system at *Nation Publications* in Malawi:

People work in sections, like sports, features, current news, and so forth, which are overseen by the current news editor or features editor, business editor, etcetera. Staff come up with ideas, and colleagues in their section will try to straighten out and extend their thinking by asking questions – essentially by playing devil’s advocate – so that the person gets feedback and can begin to see where their ideas can be improved.

There is also another element. We believe that for our credibility, projects and issues need to be followed through properly, and written up in such a manner that readers will regard our paper as being definitive – the final word. As leaders we select a project manager, look at our calendar and at

important issues in society, and we get together and brainstorm. Section heads then come together to examine the issues we come up with, and to criticise and add value to the ideas. The ideas are then taken back to the reporter who will also have the opportunity to respond to their part of the project and contribute to the whole if they wish.

What I want to emphasise is that coaching or mentoring is collective. Sometimes we bring in skills from non-editorial members, so if I see that what we're doing is likely to need or benefit from the input of, for instance, the accountant, I'll rope him in. This system means that many people within the organisation have a chance to influence and add value to what we do.

Talent may not necessarily reside within a media organisation, as the initiative of Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, demonstrates. *MOAFRIKA* trains children and older community members who have hardly gone through primary education, to become presenters (p. 73).

Endnotes

1. Milne *et al.*, 2006; Milne *et al.*, 2007; Rau *et al.*, 2008.
2. MISA, 2005.
3. Wheatley, 1999, p. 67.
4. AMDI, 2006; IREX, 2007; Milne *et al.*, 2007.
5. See the Research page on SPI website: <http://www.spiml.com> or <http://www.spiml.co.za>

Chapter 8

Ethics and Independence

The lekgotla discussions abound with references to ethics and editorial independence, indicating that these are big concerns in the region's media industry. We begin this chapter by looking at these concerns and then move on to discuss credibility and neutrality, corruption, and associated grey areas such 'cheque-book journalism'.

In an earlier section entitled 'From visions to mandates' *IAJ* trainer Collen Hans pointed to disjunctions between community media mandates (to serve community interests) and the corporate interests that some community media end up serving (p.75). In fact, throughout the lekgotla it was clear that in all media sectors across all the countries represented, financial and editorial independence (or dependence) are inextricably intertwined. The issue of in/dependence as it relates to the demands of corporate and government advertisers was discussed earlier in the 'Advertising' section of Chapter 6 'Business Matters' (p.92).

Complications arising in the workplace from tensions between marketing and editorial also impact on editorial independence. These are touched on in this chapter as well as in Chapter 7 'People Power': 'Internal frictions and factions' (p.115). Challenges to independence are also presented in the section 'Human resource challenges' (p.140). Politics, policies and politicians have a huge influence on editorial independence, particularly given media's broad social mandate. This is explored in Chapter 9 'Politics, Independence, Law' (p.157), where other issues relevant to independence are also raised such as 'Infiltrating, opposing, victimising' (p.164) and 'Legislation and litigation' (p.169). Finally, 'Solidarity and support' (p.179), discussed in Chapter 10 'Development and Diversity' has a bearing on media's ability to regulate itself as well the capacity of media organisations to stand together and lobby for their independence.

Editorial independence – tensions inside the organisation

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, opens the discussion by offering the example of an editor who, based on his personal preferences, rejects a marketing supplement for which the marketing department worked very hard to find sponsorship (p.115).

This prompts Rory Wilson to explain why he feels that the meaning of editorial independence needs a lot more exploration and debate:

I think one of the big difficulties, certainly in newspapers, is this notion of editorial independence. I am a very, very strong supporter and advocate of editorial independence, but it has to be very clearly defined. My experience of editors is that they think – not intentionally, but inadvertently – that editorial independence means ‘Leave me alone, I do what I have to do in my area and management mustn’t interfere with this part of the operation.’ And that’s nonsense, because editorial independence in my view is the content of the paper – it’s not about how you treat your staff, it’s not about whether you understand the financials of a newspaper, it applies only to the editorial content of the newspaper.

What I did with my editors – and I can tell you it took a lot of courage and a lot of pain – was to sit with them and say ‘I value your editorial independence. You are editorially independent of me. But the notion of editorial independence doesn’t give you all sorts of other rights.’

Frankly I think a lot of editors have behaved quite badly under the guise of editorial independence. So that’s why I’ve always said: ‘Let’s define this thing, let’s understand exactly what it is and exactly what it isn’t.’

Credibility, neutrality, reliability

Collen Hans, ex *Jozi FM* and now businessman and *IAJ* freelance trainer in South Africa, says that more and more frequently, stories are published without their factual bases being properly established:

I think it’s got something to do with the flood of youngsters into the industry that often you read newspapers and the first question that springs out is, ‘Is this the truth?’ Because in some articles all sorts of political issues get thrown at people without any investigation whatsoever. You wonder, ‘How did this story get here? Did this person decide to just go for it and publish?’ Eventually it’s going to come to a point in South Africa when government and the people will turn and say, ‘Enough is enough. You give us garbage. You don’t investigate. You don’t know what you’re talking about.’ It seems that whenever a journalist is called and told, ‘This is what is happening now’ it suddenly becomes front page news. I think we’re going to have to re-examine democracy’s stance

that everybody's got a voice irrespective of what they say.

Litigation is often an outcome of free speech. Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, agrees: "You don't know if what you are reading is true or correct, because people are using journalists to fight their own personal battles." But as described on p.173, Beata has found a way to control the litigation fallout by holding journalists financially responsible for statements that they are unable to substantiate.

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, spoke earlier about the blows dealt to accuracy and journalism standards by inexperienced staff who lack general knowledge and do no research (p.142). Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe says about such blunders:

We take the issue of inaccuracies very seriously. We've had cases where we've actually fired journalists. Unfortunately you see journalists you got rid of for this kind of inventiveness sitting in another newsroom and happily writing front page stories.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, points out that in East Africa strong media councils play a role in monitoring the ethics of journalists:

They have very strong media councils. I think reporters know that even if they're good at what they do, when they're dismissed from one newspaper or media house for corrupt actions, it will be hard for them to get a job elsewhere. Then ethics becomes an issue that they take more seriously.

Samantha Kalisa points out that new technology allows non-journalists to record events and 'publish' them, which means the perspectives of journalists are increasingly under scrutiny:

Before, when something appeared in a newspaper it was accepted as fact, but nowadays when you're at a scene reporting on an incident, you're not the only reporter there. The ordinary reader, the ordinary person in the street, is also a reporter. If you look at the Internet, practically everybody has a blogspace and the immediacy of response is amazing. If you publish something that's incorrect, in a snap of the finger someone will sms your hotline and tell you, 'No, that was rubbish, I was there and it didn't happen that way.' The public is much more involved in the media nowadays and I think that that's something we've got to take cognisance of. It's a good check on media.

Reporting truthfully, particularly in relation to articles resulting from investigative journalism, can have unintended consequences, as Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, found. His organisation became very unpopular with government and competitors after it published an article on media ownership (p.161). Nonetheless, he sees huge opportunities for the independent press in Zimbabwe, "largely because we are independent [and] are not directly linked to any political organisation in the country." He says:

People want an independent voice, so the opportunity for growth in the circulation of our papers is quite big, and readership is there. We have basically said 'We are the leaders in delivering information as accurately as possible.' But no one in any media sector has all the knowledge. We couldn't write an article on, say, the legal impacts of price control, because we don't have that expertise. We'd get more support and more credibility if we got a judge and a leading economist to come in to help. People can then see that the piece is written with expert knowledge and they'll say, 'This is a credible newspaper I'm going to buy it.' This way you empower internally but you also empower your readers.

Using expertise, financial or artistic, that is already present within an organisation is a strategy used by Alfred Ntonga, of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, not only to improve accuracy, but to mediate internal dissent (p.134) and to mentor journalists (p.144).

Objectivity is not viewed by delegates as a panacea for credibility, as demonstrated in debates on the issue of independence and adopting a particular political position ('Media's broad social mandate' p.157). Alfred Ntonga comments:

When we came onto the market in 1993, in the run-up to the transition from a one-party state to a multiparty system, we realised that most of the newspapers were obsessed with a kind of euphoria of Banda-bashing. We said there has to be some sanity in the media. So instead of being sensational we decided to chase after fact. We made a point of reporting on all sides of the political divide and that really delivered a miracle to our status.

There was one hiatus in this philosophy when Alfred's organisation took a strong political position and endorsed a leadership candidate. But the media house soon felt the impact on their bottom line, and reverted to an ethic of neutrality. *Nation Publications* survived the consequences and, says Alfred "from an initial ten people we now number over 200, so our growth has been very rapid." He adds, "When people hear something on the radio they think, 'I'm going to get the full picture tomorrow in the newspaper'."

This prompts Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, to remark:

You find most of us on radio burn our bridges because we forget that in broadcasting, our purpose and mandate is not to take sides, irrespective of how wrong a person may be, but to sit on the fence and leave opinions to the public. When you come onto radio you don't bring on your personal experiences and state your opinion for the whole nation.

A vital aspect of ethical business practice in the media is meeting the expectations of audiences by reliably delivering the product. Several delegates agree with Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia, when he says, "What I've learned as an editor is that what counts most is to get that magazine

onto the street.” Sometimes this is easier said than done. Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente*, a weekly in Mozambique illustrates with a story:

On a Sunday afternoon two week ago, six armed men forced the guard to open the door to our offices where four reporters were working. The men didn’t fire their guns but used them to intimidate reporters – they were told to get down and then they were tied up and put in the bathroom with the guard who’d been injured in the lips. The six men then stole all twelve computers from the newsroom, plus the laptops belonging to me and my deputy editor Mr Josias.

It was a day before our deadline for printing the paper, which every Monday gets sent by Internet to the printer in Nelspruit in South Africa. It was a terrible situation. Immediately after I heard about the assault, I rushed to the office to phone my deputy editor, all our other reporters, and our technicians, and asked them to come in immediately. We process the news and do the pagination in the newsroom, but fortunately we have a backup system at my home. So I had a second copy of everything that had been stolen. Luckily there were two computers in the administrative department which were not stolen, and we hired another two from people outside. Then we got working.

Four police teams came asking us the same questions and I finally told them, ‘Okay, please, let us work because you are asking us the same questions and time’s running out and we have to guarantee the edition tomorrow.’ We had no sleep that Sunday night. We worked straight through in order to make sure that the following day we’d have our edition. Fortunately we managed to publish as normal. So I think that was an act of leadership, to be able to secure the edition, although we had this terrible problem.

Another level of reliability is achieved when a media organisation reaches a level of sustainability where its presence is well established. Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, comments:

Our strength is partly due to the fact that we’ve been in the business of media much longer than most privately owned newspapers in Lesotho – in other words those not belonging to the Church or to government. And we’re definitely the oldest when it comes to using vernacular language.

Corruption

The matter of corruption is hard, if not impossible, to isolate from politics. As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, information in this section is interlinked with issues raised in the next chapter ‘Politics, Independence, Law’ and particularly ‘Politics and problems’ (p.159).

Earlier Siphwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland,

suggested that if media paid journalists competitively, they would be less susceptible to corruption by government and corporate clients (p.140). But several delegates disagree. Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, comments: “Corruption is a state of mind, a way of thinking, and a corrupt person will be corrupt, regardless of how much money he or she makes.”

Delegates agree that well formulated and consistently implemented ethical standards and codes of conduct are more effective than simply raising pay. Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, picks up on the theme of payment:

I once talked to UNDP [*United Nations Development Programme*] project managers in our country – they wanted to find out how best they can use media to disseminate information about their projects so that people can know about their services and use them. I told them that we don’t require sources to pay for giving us information that we publish. And everybody raised their eyebrows and said, ‘This is strange, because reporters will come to us, interview us and then say I need to be paid before I can publish this.’ I was surprised and said ‘Everybody knows that if you do that you will lose your job instantly.’ They said ‘But national reporters do that, MBC [*Malawi Broadcasting Corporation*] reporters do that, television reporters do that, other media houses do that.’ So I said, ‘My concern is our credibility as the media.’ I taught them that news is not for sale. We spend so much energy concentrating on becoming the best, the most popular, the most profitable, but we don’t always think about matters of integrity. Corruption in the media is really a regional issue and it should be seriously looked into.

“Sometimes corruption of journalists does not necessarily take the form of hard cash,” adds Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*:

There are more subtle ways. For instance, you’re covering a story or you’re sent out to review something and you get offered a weekend. And suddenly your story or review turns into something positive – that kind of thing. It’s something as leaders we’ve always got to be careful of. Suspicion is one of the main things that should govern the journalist’s life. Question everything, don’t take everything for granted.

Financial factors

This section is best read in tandem with ‘Advertising’ (p.92), in Chapter 6, ‘Business Matters’.

Illustrating the conflict between moral values and economic risk, Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, tells this story:

Last year one of our reporters picked up on a story about a small business that was locking in their

workers during office hours. The premises were quite small – probably an old factory – with high windows and burglar bars. The lady in charge said that the workers steal if she lets them out, so for the duration of the day they have to stay inside. Now obviously there's the danger factor – say a fire breaks out – but also the law does not allow you to lock workers in. And besides that, you just can't treat your workers that way.

Anyway, the reporter interviewed the workers through the window; got the whole story, got the photos – that was on a Wednesday, and we go to print on Wednesdays and Thursdays. We got hold of the employer and he made a few comments, but wouldn't comment as owner of the business. So that was it, we had the details and we couldn't access additional information. The police were called out and they investigated the case, so it was cut and dry.

The next afternoon I get a phone call from a lawyer saying he's on his way to Pretoria to request an urgent court interdict to stop us from publishing. I say, 'You've got no legal grounds to stop us from publishing. This article is the truth.' He says he's convinced he'll get the interdict; he knows a judge in Pretoria; we better pull the story. So I say, 'Tell your client that I refuse and that he's going to be held accountable for costs.' But now you're sitting with a conflict. Twice during the past few months the SABC [*South African Broadcasting Corporation*] managed to get a court interdict against the *Mail & Guardian* [an independent newspaper in South Africa]. Apparently the judge ignored all previous precedents and just went ahead and granted the interdict. Now if that happened to a small paper like ours, we'd lose advertising confidence and a lot of advertising revenue, which could cripple the company.

Is that story worth the risk? Our solution was to negotiate – we agreed to take out the name of the business and the reference to the employer. It upsets one, but with a company like ours you can't risk a court order against you.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, speaks for all the delegates when he responds to this dilemma: "It's a leadership issue that challenges you all the time. You want total independence but how do you build that without the resources? Yet without independence you'll not provide a good service anyway!"

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, adds:

It's important to have total independence – financial independence and editorial independence. I know in newspapers we find ourselves compromising our principles because of advertisers who bring in money. Some stories won't be published because so-and-so is a big client. If we're financially stable and financially independent, we wouldn't find ourselves being denied our editorial independence as well.

One way of cultivating financial independence was suggested earlier – to diversify and extend a media organisation’s business interests to those outside the industry (p.84). M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, reflects on diversification *within* the industry:

What we should appreciate is that as our media becomes more complex due to processes like privatisation, which influences policy. Other institutions use media to [get] their agenda across. Increasingly we see it in the form of sponsored talk shows, advertorials in newspapers and the increasing worldwide use of ghost-writers. We need to interrogate the issues. Is it chequebook journalism? Or is somebody trying to ‘spin’ – as you call it – trying to influence policy? These are our new realities and I think it shows our media is maturing and is growing.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana replies, “We call it spinning. We do it all the time.” In an earlier discussion he explained how radio stations allow advertisers to use their star presenters to increase sales (p.97). He continues: “I think it shows the level of maturity of our media that somebody out there may not like us, but they recognise us to the extent that we put our people to good use.”

Advertorial is a growing trend in media. South African research shows that advertorials supplement income from regular advertising, but nevertheless compromise editorial independence and the overall quality of media products.¹ Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, takes up the topic:

The costs of being a landlocked country are high. And there was a time when our currency – the Kwacha – was very unstable, the cost of newsprint extremely high, and circulation low. That actually led us, and most of the commercial media houses in Malawi, to bring in the concept of advertorial. So it’s a case of ‘You give us business and we’ll spoil you with a good write-up.’ At the top of the text I clearly indicate that this is not a business story, this is an advertorial. But my conscience isn’t really clear. It’s a question of how do you strike a balance? How do we survive in such a hostile environment?

Chequebook journalism

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, opens this topic:

The idea of journalists getting paid to write stories is ubiquitous across the region. I see chequebook journalism growing everywhere in Africa, destroying African democracy and African journalism. It’s not just an ethical problem, it’s a business problem as well. My argument is: if I can pay your reporter to write a story, why would I bother to pay your paper to run my ad? The same thing applies to radio and television. Can we talk about what you as leaders do about it?

“This is becoming a very big issue in Botswana,” says Beata Kasale who publishes *The Voice*:

Loads of companies and even politicians are ‘buying’ journalists. Coming back to the problem raised by Samantha earlier about older journalists getting absorbed into public relations and communications [p.142] and inexperienced youngsters coming in – you know, these youngsters are very easy to intimidate, very easy to buy. So you don’t know that what you read is true anymore.

Earlier on, Sipiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, argued that low pay is a motivator for corrupt practices, an idea that met with some resistance. But she explains:

The allegation that journalists receive backhanders comes in largely from a newsroom where there is no ethics. Interaction, not at editorial level but at management level, has a very critical role to play in stemming the problem and making sure that your journalists keep within acceptable standards of media ethics. We should also bear in mind that ethics outside and within the organisation do not exist if media laws are weak – then you can have very serious problems.

As delegates point out in the next chapter, chequebook journalism is fuelled by government recruiting media leaders into their political ranks, by covert tactics of infiltration and surveillance of media organisations, and by issues of ownership.

Endnotes

1. Milne *et al.*, 2006; Rau *et al.*, 2008.

Chapter 9

Politics, Independence, Law

Considering that the Lekgotla hosted only 18 delegates, this text cannot be representative of the bigger African political picture. For readers interested in knowing how different countries compare in relation to media freedom, laws governing media, politics, support mechanisms, journalism standards and media diversity, there are several research initiatives which publish comprehensive reports on an ongoing basis.¹

Rather than offering detailed information on the state of media in the 10 countries represented, we focus in this chapter on delegates' direct experience of their media-government relationships. Lekgotla discussions are grouped below under the headings, "Media's broad social mandate"; "Politics and problems"; and "Legislation and litigation".

Media's broad social mandate

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, comments:

In the region in general there is a clear ability of the media to build a broad alliance of civil society, and I see more sympathy towards media from that quarter. The issue of media freedom is now on the agenda all over the region and that's a real strength. Even most of our political leaders realise that the media must be free, and even those who don't accept that know deep down that it's true. There is also a clear and broad realisation that media and media freedom are very important factors to take into consideration when talking about the development of countries and the democratisation of the region.

While delegates agree with Salomao's view that media freedom in the region is currently more widely supported than before, there are some cautionary stories in the next section 'Politics and problems' which show how some politicians work against media freedom.

Another delegate declares:

I think our role as media leaders and owners is to create open societies. It is our job to become the mirror of society. A prime minister is not exempt from criticism – he is also an ordinary citizen like all of us. And it's the duty of the media to highlight that, and the duty of every other media is to defend our right to highlight it. Media must not pass judgement – rather all media should reflect the views and aspirations of the ordinary people and move debates forward.

Some delegates, notably those leading with issue-focused visions (p.71), extend this view to actively working for societal change – this is explored in the next chapter. Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, returns to the issue of government:

I've been listening to a lot of discussions about media and government. I've always held that provided there are sufficient grounds, it's the job of the media as the fourth estate to question government. Not necessarily fight, but question decisions, policies and legislation. I always say the language of our newspaper is money, we're all about business. So when government makes a decision about small business and we feel that it's not conducive to a good business environment, we question that. We ask the ordinary person, what do you think? That's what we're about – we provide a platform to take all the arguments, put them out there, and say: 'Listen folks this is what it is. What are you going to do?'

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, adds to these thoughts about media as business:

You have media that supports conservative politics, those that are liberal, those that are socialist, those promoting social responsibility. Irrespective of their vision and what is underlying it, is the knowledge that we are here for business – we employ people who have to get their salaries, health, pensions and so on.

This remark sparks a debate on whether it is acceptable for media organisations to assume a political stance. Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, comments:

It should be tolerated as a right of everybody to express or not to express his or her political association without fearing intimidation. I'm not promoting it as a strategy but I'm saying that it's constitutionally allowable and tolerable and should not be seen as something that is unthinkable or untenable in our midst.

While not disputing the right to align one's organisation politically, Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi reminds delegates of a story he told earlier ('Marketing' p.103) of when the financial implications of backing a political party proved to be detrimental:

Once you align yourself with different political groupings, or go public and say 'We endorse the acts of this person as a viable candidate and a strong leader and we feel this is the right person,' then what can happen, as it so often does in our societies, is that the person sooner or later reveals that they've been involved in all sorts of negative activities. So you then have to apologise for having endorsed somebody who is not as noble as you thought he was. We have to reflect on the fact that as a newspaper or radio or TV station, we are opinion leaders and we create perceptions in the public.

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, argues there is nothing wrong with assuming a political position or endorsing a particular candidate at any given moment:

I personally feel that just because it's not being practised in our part of the world, it doesn't mean that we can't do it. This is encompassed in media leadership – to take a principled position in a particular political dispensation at a given point in time. I personally don't see anything wrong with endorsing a party or a leader. It does not necessarily mean that you agree with the policies of those parties, but if it's a personal policy and you agree with the virtues of this person, then I think media houses can endorse those people. It's an exercise in leadership.

Politics and problems

One of several problems delegates experience in the media-government relationship is the negative impact of governments entering the commercial arena and competing with media for advertising – as covered earlier in 'Advertising and governments' (p.93). Another problem is the poaching of media professionals by government departments ('Human resource challenges' p.140). There is also the issue of chequebook journalism ('Ethics and Independence' p.154).

Alfred Ntonga starts off on a positive note: "In Malawi we are given the political space to say what we want to – we're not pushed by politicians," although he qualifies this by adding "...it's not a complete hands-off."

Like many delegates, Anton van Zyl points out that government tends to be suspicious of independent media. But fellow South African Samantha Kalisa says:

I'm realising how fortunate we are in South Africa with the relationship between media and government. Not that it's ideal, but we've got a sort of uneasy partnership where as long as we don't

criticise government on the same page their ad is on, we're free to do so anywhere else in the paper.

Some delegates are very vocal about difficulties in their political environments. Earlier we heard from M. Leepile (p.82) about how the Botswana government first supported his vernacular publication *Mogkosi*: "Government people initially saw us as a vehicle through which they could sell their messages and to them it was a godsend." But on discovering that it was growing in popularity while not being afraid to voice opinions critical of government, the government suddenly withdrew all advertising support.

As is the case for many delegates, governments and politicians are quick to react if they think themselves slighted. Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana comments: "Sometimes when a criticism of government is aired, I'll almost immediately get a call from the president's private secretary complaining."

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania says:

People like to listen to our station because they can phone in and we'll air their questions and grievances. But you know, the people don't worry about government, so sometimes politicians will call us and ask, 'Why are you letting people say that?' We tell them that it's the people who are putting things in the open so politicians can learn what the people's needs and problems are.

Pheello Selinyane mentioned earlier (p.94) that "...it's become almost a custom in Lesotho to have recurring problems between media and government after general elections." This is borne out by Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, who speaks of the typical about-turn in attitude of a person when appointed to a powerful government post:

My brother here talks about consulting someone who at first was a politician then ends up a very big person in government. But the moment he's up there he suddenly sees *MOAFRIKA* as an enemy because this Lesotho media house now has power – it's communicating directly with the people and politicians don't like that.

Referring to the problematic relationship between media and government in many African countries, Zimbabwean Raphael Khumalo asks:

Really, could there be a good working relationship between independent media and government? Can we really bank on that relationship? It doesn't seem to be working from the examples that I've heard and I know my own experience is similar to what some of my colleagues here have said.

Problems with ownership

Few delegates spoke directly to the issue of media ownership. Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katura Community Radio (KCR)* in Namibia, is one:

Three quarters of media in Namibia is owned by political parties, and that for me is a very uncomfortable thing. Interestingly, they've also gone for the commercial market, obviously it's the business arms of politics, but I think that because of this their level of influence at the regulatory body is hampering development of other types of media.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, which produces *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers recalls:

We had one of our leading journalists break a story on media ownership in the country. This entailed a direct attack on some of our friends and competitors. Part of our information was that ownership of a group of newspapers that published a Sunday and daily editions had been taken over by the Central Intelligence. The reaction from our competitors was that by breaking this story we were merely getting back at other newspapers as we were losing advertising support. But we did not rest and continued with a series of the articles. During this period a serious row had developed between the group's founder and Central Intelligence over the extent of the spy agency's share ownership after providing a financial rescue package. This row resulted in the founder being kicked out and a series of court battles that only came to a halt after the collapse of the two newspapers. So sometimes saying that we have to set a national agenda and that we must be truthful, honest and investigate, brings consequences that might not make us very comfortable.

Suspicion

Suspicion is an uncomfortable factor that is unfortunately endemic to relationships between independent media and government. Collen Hans, ex *Josi FM* and now businessman and *IAJ* freelance trainer in South Africa, expresses the most radical view of all the participants:

My observation is that government and hierarchies of any country will always try to maintain ignorance. When you start they'll support the initiative, but once people listen to you more than them, you automatically become a threat; that's how power operates – their main idea is to maintain ignorance.

Siphiwe Nkambule comments about the Swaziland government response: "There is often a hostile attitude of government towards media. Because of it we have seen the closure of many newspapers, especially in Zimbabwe, but we have seen it also in Swaziland."

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana reflects: “That by and large stems from the fact there is paranoia or some sort of fear that government has of media, as opposed to other sectors.”

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa responds:

It isn't always a case of hostility or being afraid. It's that media has a watchdog function, and they view the watchdog with scepticism. Instead of saying 'OK, whenever it barks let's see if what they say is worth looking at, or if it's just barking.' It is definitely a huge problem in this country where the local government municipalities view the media as a threat and then criticise them, instead of seeing them as a responsible watchdog.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, suggests how politicians think about the media:

Where politicians are concerned it's not a complete hands-off but they tend to either see you as being for them or for the rival, even if you say, 'I want to be non-partisan and walk the middle line.' In Malawi it's a case of 'If you are not for us, then you are for them,' but we've managed to live with that.

Managing to 'live with that' is hard for Lesotho media professionals, according to Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine*:

The political situation in Lesotho is very difficult, and it's a major threat to any institution whether government, media, church, private. It's a threat because there is too much hooliganism within the political scene – there is too much polarisation – you are either for this or you are for that; there's no middle ground. If you are seen to be pro-government, you cannot report on opposition party meetings – they'll chase you out and beat you up. The same thing applies if you are known or perceived to be an anti-government reporter – you can't attend the ruling party's meetings, conferences and so on because they'll chase you out, they'll beat you up.

Having studied journalism in the UK, Sebonomoea returned to Lesotho and tried to get a job as a political journalist. Finding himself unemployable, he scraped together the little he had and started his own newspaper (p.63). “Let me tell you a story”, he says. “Its title is: You cannot trust a Lesotho politician.”

I started with the little money that I had. The newspaper folded after a few editions because the advertising community wouldn't assist. But more so because I was writing after Edgar Mahlomola Motuba [a pacifist who had been assassinated by government hit squads]. The dictatorship was now a military one, although the civil servants were still the same – and my very first publication had the photograph of Dr Ntsu Mokhehle of the Basutoland Congress Party, who was the enemy of the ruling BNP [Basotho National Party]. So from the very beginning everybody aligned me to the

BCP [Basotholand Congress Party], and it stuck.

When I'd run out of money I went to Mokhehle – the very man I'd featured in the interview – and said, 'Could you assist me with some money to get started?' He said, 'I don't really have the money but I'll give you advice: whenever you get started, make sure that you articulate the views and aspirations of the people. You never know where you'll get your money, but if you start with a lot and you don't articulate the aspirations of the people, the money will just disappear.' That was the advice. No money.

A lawyer friend of mine came to my rescue and gave me five thousand Maloti – equivalent to five thousand Rand. I got an old computer from an expatriate who was going back home, I bought another computer, and began to write. People would queue for my newspaper. I was still not getting advertisements but I was getting enough from the cover price for printing costs and to pay salaries and other overheads. But down the line, the politician Mokhehle, who had advised me to articulate the masses' aspirations, saw red in the way I was writing and he went public on radio saying that people shouldn't buy my newspaper because it's a pack of lies. He was very powerful and I went down because of that. I couldn't expand, I couldn't get professionals to join the staff, and so on. Two of the ministers and others who were in his camp have since left Mokhehle's party to start their own parties and they came to say that they want to work with me. So I pointed out that, 'You're the same old people, I am the same old journalist who you saw as a liar.' Then they started to re-label me saying, 'No, no, no, you are really this and that.'

So my story illustrates that with politicians, you will never get it right, especially Lesotho politicians. I've been through all the courts – the people who have taken me to court are all politicians, and I've lost a lot of money through that. Last year government scrapped the eleven-year moratorium preventing me from getting advertising, but I'm still not getting it, because the civil service is so politicised that despite government lifting the ban, the civil service sees it the other way round and they are the ones who are the procurement officers. I'm still stuck but there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Still, it's risky to read *MOAFRIKA*, which is one of the reasons we've decided to keep its A4 size – it looks like you're reading from a book.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, picks up on the metaphor:

African governments read from the same hymn book. They deliberately threaten circulation to hit you where it hurts most. *MOAFRIKA*'s circulation is affected because it is referred to as an opposition newspaper, and the circulation of our two newspapers in Zimbabwe is affected because they are seen as independent. Readers of our newspapers need to be bold – anybody just holding them is seen as an opposition supporter. This has its advantages, but its major drawback is that often our papers are restricted to the urban areas where people feel relatively secure. In the countryside the situation is different – people are at the mercy of party thugs who decide which paper should be

read or what radio station must be tuned into.

Raphael also views as a threat various interest groups, government for example, labelling the press ‘foreign owned and pursuing a regime-change agenda’.

Infiltrating, opposing, victimising

The tribulations Sebonomoea Ramainoane describes above have brought him to the point where he prefers his newspaper to focus on cultural empowerment and business success. As he pointed out earlier:

Looking at it from a cultural perspective I think the real change we need is especially of attitude. What happens if you are a left-wing or oppositional organisation and you’re advocating that people shouldn’t be working for three days? You become part of the regime of people who say, ‘Let’s go on a stay-away’. And at the end of the month, how are you going to pay your bills? I think we should move from that, there’s nothing wrong in criticising government, criticising business and criticising everybody else, but becoming part of the people who say ‘let’s pull everything down even to the detriment of our very own selves’, doesn’t help. We have to move from that.

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, offers a polite but potent challenge to his countryman’s philosophy:

Let’s explore this role of media in setting a national agenda. Right now in Maseru we have a situation where the national army has been unleashed on the nation – they go out of their way to terrorise, kidnap and keep away in unknown places ordinary citizens associated with the opposition. Everybody knows about disappearances in Latin America, Argentina and Chile – we don’t want that revisited on our people. Representations to government have been made by the Media Institute, by the Law Society and the NGO Council about the disappearances. Twice we’ve had NGOs calling stayaways in protest against them, once in collaboration with opposition parties.

But the minister’s response is not to talk to the nation – instead the people who address the nation are the commanders of the army, not even the police. It is virtual anarchy. I have survived bullets, and at least two radio stations have had people brutalised by the army. Still, the government said absolutely nothing until delegations were sent to SADC. As I speak we have people who escaped being brutalised by coming to South Africa. And the Law Society and NGOs are speaking to Pretoria requesting that they should not be repatriated to Lesotho where our government is labelling them thugs and criminals.

Now in this is a situation we have to choose as media. I don’t want to talk back to my Lesotho brother Sebonomoea when he mentions that we should be setting an agenda of change, not an

agenda of oppositionalism. My brother could very well choose the politics of economy and no stay-aways. But as a person who very nearly lost my life – at my age and with children who are hardly in primary school – I know I have to stand, not only as a supporter but as a survivor. That is a call that has to be made very boldly in our times.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, illustrates how his organisation sets and reinforces national agendas:

In my country, government called a price freeze on newspapers. We wrote a big front-page story in the Friday paper saying ‘Government action is illegal.’ The next day the government paper’s front page had the president saying, ‘Oh no, our actions are not illegal.’ The following week they came up with a different issue relating to the archbishop – clearly they decided that the story on the price freeze was bad for them so they tried to deflect the nation’s attention from it.

We followed up with a full article from a retired judge saying that government action in relation to the price freeze was illegal and that a statutory instrument exists to provide for all the shops that incurred losses, because they were forced to sell below cost, to go to court and sue for damages – they had the right.

Returning to the issue of media ownership, Raphael explains:

There is open government entry into media ownership, for instance where government has a 51 percent share holding in *Zimpapers*, publishers of the country’s only daily newspapers. Then you have covert entry – the use of secret state agencies to enter media. This covert operation at state level stifles any cooperation between independent media.

Salomao Moyana, editor of the *Magazine Independente* weekly in Mozambique, speaks about his country’s government:

There is a government strategy to recruit some media leaders and transform them into powerful leaders or ministerial press officers with good positions and high pay. But they are no longer true leaders of independent media. Some of them work for private media organisations but at the same time they are collaborating with government – and you can feel that in the content of their messages. For instance there was a problem a year ago when the American ambassador to Mozambique pronounced a very controversial statement on the American [Independence] day 4th of July. Instead of the Mozambique government responding to that, they called together some ‘convenient’ independent media leaders and talked to them. With the result that all of them wrote editorials against the American ambassador. So instead of government speaking to the ambassador, they used their goons in independent media to criticise the Americans. This tactic seems to be working very well to threaten independent leadership in media, not only in Mozambique but in many countries across

the region.

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, adds:

The infiltration of media by government intelligence agencies is a worldwide phenomenon. It was definitely the case that in South Africa under apartheid times there was a security branch operative in every newsroom. Sometimes you knew who it was, sometimes you didn't.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia adds:

Regarding corruption on the inside, there is the problem of governments recruiting informants through the training institutions. Media organisations employ these people thinking they are journalists but they operate as government agents who are actually collecting information about the operations of our institutions – even things that have to do with how we manage, run and finance businesses. This individual actually gets paid by government, and paid well, while also getting a salary from our institutions. This completely undermines the efforts of our institutions to grow and operate with good businesses. Each time you want to engage government over an issue related to your plans for growth, you find the response you're getting is completely negative and you don't know what is going on, but it's because they have people within our institutions that work not only for us but for governments.

Two additional problems arise from media-government relationships. One relates to the constitution of Zimbabwe's editors' forums; the other to government constraints on the functioning of Lesotho's media ombudsman and police investigative powers. These are both discussed in 'Solidarity and support' p.179).

Positive views, possible solutions

Delegates did not exactly agree on the relationship between media and government. On the one hand we have the observation made by Collen Hans that in South Africa a struggle outlook persists in the sense that "...we find ourselves waging economic warfare." On the other hand Sebonomoea Ramainoane suggests that there needs to be more networking with government and other interests in order to strengthen organisational access to information and thus power.

Pheelo Selinyane is wary about networking with government, which is not surprising, considering his story of the Lesotho government's use of army brutality and victimisation to impose its will (p.164). But Sebonomoea, also from Lesotho, remains firm on the issue:

We should be able to network with the government much as we network with our friends in Namibia, our friends in Botswana and elsewhere. If you network with everyone it could bring a

major change in your organisation with regard to growth because you borrow from others.

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania, agrees that networking with government could help address a serious deficit:

Most media people don't understand or know how their government operates. Media institutions sometimes face problems because they fight with government instead of knowing how to go about the issue in a way that all parties can agree or come to a compromise.

As pointed out earlier there's a tendency for media not to market itself to government, which leads to mutual misunderstandings ('Educating people about the role of media' in 'Key Leadership Roles and Responsibilities' p.49, and 'Advertising and governments' p.93).

Despite his problems with the Zimbabwean government Raphael Khumalo says:

We have to learn to work with government. It doesn't help being seen as their adversaries all the time because, like them or not, we have to work with them if we are to operate. And that is what we are trying to do in Zimbabwe. It's also important to know which arm of government to refer to at any one time rather than to merely generalise, as it could be the fault of a particular ministry or department. There is a general tendency to make sweeping critical statements.

For Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, this raises the issue of Afro-pessimism:

We find most of our journalists have been trained to slam governments, they don't report development, they don't report positive things. Of course I'm not saying we should say Mugabe is a saint. But we must address this problem of journalists trained to see Africa as bad.

Raphael replies:

I am reminded here of *The Post* newspaper in Zambia. What happens after the government you have bashed for years is now out of power? In Zimbabwe we find that sometimes Mugabe or Tswangirai's picture on the front page doesn't sell and you must look for other issues to write on because the nation has to move forward. I think this is a major challenge that all of us in media must always face – we need to move the nation forward. And how do you do that? By agenda-searching.

Raphael tells how he learned to work with government:

On an annual basis, newspaper publishers and journalists in Zimbabwe are required to register with the Media and Information Commission. From time to time, people or organisations make complaints to the chairman of the Commission, Professor Tafataona Mahoso, about stories that are

published. Sometime in September 2005, Mahoso raised a query about a story that we had published. It stated that his tenure of office had not been extended or renewed. He wrote to us refuting our claim. Around December the government-owned newspaper, *The Herald*, carried a little story to say Mahoso's tenure had been renewed in June along with that of other commissioners.

But before that, we had already applied to the Media and Information Commission for the following year's accreditation for ourselves as publisher and for journalists. In January 2006 our journalists from our one paper, *The Standard*, (which did not carry the story questioning renewal of his tenure) had no problem with registration and were given their media cards. But the journalists from our other paper, the *Zimbabwe Independent* were told, 'Mr Khumalo knows there are issues to be sorted out.' Journalists being what they are, immediately started ringing alarm bells saying, 'These guys are closing us down.' I told them 'No problem, I will deal with the issues.'

I called someone who used to be a manager at the *Daily News* and asked him if he had ever dealt with Mahoso. He said, 'Well only after court or in court do I say "Hi", but otherwise, no.' After putting down the phone, I thought 'This guy's a fool. I'm going to phone Mahoso', which I did. He was talking at the top of his voice but I decided to be cool and listen. He said 'Remember that story you published, and my letter to you?' And I replied 'But Prof., that letter was written well before your reappointment became public. At the time we didn't have that information.' So he said 'Okay you can come to a meeting with me.'

When my editor and I got there, normally we would be led to his office, but we were told to go to the boardroom. When we got there, we found lots of people sitting around a long boardroom table. When Mahoso started introducing each one of them I thought, 'Now this is trouble, this is the end of us.' He started listing several issues. I clarified our position on each point, including queries about our shareholding, saying 'Actually I've got this document for you, that document for you.' And the person who was supposed to be taking down the minutes just stopped writing.

Then we started talking about other things that had nothing to do with the matter. At the end of the day we were all happy and shaking hands, and I thought 'This is how matters are resolved. Engage people and don't have a big ego.' What was interesting is that the next day Professor Mahoso phoned me to say, 'Mr Khumalo, I had a call from one of your journalists from the *Standard* wanting to know the status of the *Zimbabwe Independent*.' He told me her name and I said, 'That's strange because that particular reporter only writes health stories, not political stories. She should not have been even following that unless she was doing it for some online publication.' You see, in the course of our negotiations Professor Mahoso and I established rapport, and we continue in that way. I think it's due to that kind of relationship that our papers are still publishing.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, responds: "I have friends in the region who deliberately play the hero or create problems for themselves so that they are recognised. Saying

what you believe in may not be amusing to government, but it's not necessary to fight them unless there are problems like in Lesotho, which Pheello shared with us [p.164], then I would say we have to fight it out." Part of doing so effectively, says Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, is for "... media to develop solidarity and learn to lobby effectively." This theme is picked up in 'Solidarity, support' (p.179).

Legislation and litigation

Although this section is about legislation, the delegates did not discuss the details of media law. The focus was rather on delegates' direct experience of it – and not all delegates comment on the topic. For details of the law, readers are referred to the comprehensive reports and ongoing research initiatives of AMDI (The African Media Development Initiative), IREX (International Research Exchange), Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa), all of which examine media law and its impact in the ten countries represented – Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.²

Contexts and frameworks

Picking up from the recommendations in 'Positive views, possible solutions' (p.167) at the end of the previous chapter, Alfred Ntonga advises leaders: "Know the legal framework in which you operate in your country."

In Mozambique, according to Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente*:

There are some gaps but we mainly have a good legal framework for media. The political environment is also very conducive for the freedom of media and because of that there's been systematic growth in the industry since the early '90s.

Although South African delegates do not speak to the issue, media law and media freedom is governed by the South African constitution, widely recognised to be the most advanced in the region.

Pat Mwase, CEO of Zambia's *Mining Mirror*, speaks of the Zambian government's attitude to the print sector: "Zambia has a very tolerant legal system and environment. Our government is not hostile, and if you go to Lusaka now you'll see lots of different magazines and different newspapers."

The only laws which Pat sometimes experiences as onerous, are labour laws (p.130) – but this is likely to be a common complaint in all business sectors and across all countries. Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, adds:

Media benefited a lot from the change in our political dispensation from a one-party system to a multi-party state. The broadcasting sector, which had been solidly in the hands of the state broadcaster, was opened up and this liberalisation of the airwaves gave us a real growth spurt.

However, as he points out later, there is not real press freedom in Zambia, as the Freedom of Information Bill has been stopped in its tracks while the broadcasting sector remains stifled by government control. Delegates from several other countries point to problems with media laws or inadequate legislation. Siphwiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, speaks for several delegates when she says:

The existence of unfriendly laws is a big threat in the region because some governments use those laws to shut down our businesses. And if media laws are weak, then ethics inside an organisation do not exist – this can give you serious problems.

Access to information

Alfred Ntonga, deputy managing director and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications*, describes information access in Malawi:

Government allows for a free press but it is not willing to pass a bill giving access to information, so to get any information is a privilege really. But should we get it wrong, then the courts say, 'Ah ha! If you cannot prove to our satisfaction then the one reason why you published that story is to tarnish the honourable gentleman's image so that you could sell newspapers.' I tell you, it's really difficult.

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente*, describes the situation in Mozambique:

MIZA Mozambique proposed an access of information bill to parliament in 2005. But parliament is not yet discussing it, despite very frequent pressure from media and other civil society organisations. So that's one threat to media in our country.

Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue*, says of Namibia:

A very specific threat in our country is that we don't have a legal framework protecting us or giving us opportunities. We don't have freedom of access to information. And worse, government and the Information Department are actually blackmailing the industry saying: 'We'll only start even thinking of such a bill when you guys clean up your own houses,' which basically means that they feel we're being too critical and too much in their face. The debate has been going on for ages and I don't see any quick solution. Meanwhile we are very restricted in ways to get info.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana says: “It’s a threat in Botswana too. We don’t have access to information.” And it is worse in Lesotho where, as Sebonomoea Ramainoane told us earlier (p. 162), journalists sometimes get beaten up when they arrive to gather information at political functions held by rival powers.

Licensing and opening up media channels

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM*, fills delegates in on the situation regarding licensing in Zambia:

Three bills were presented to parliament – one reforming the national broadcaster into a public broadcaster; the other one was to set up an independent broadcasting authority, the third was the freedom of information bill. The first two bills were passed into law but implementation of the first has been piecemeal, in that only a system for licensing has been put in place. So the state broadcaster is now getting money from members of the public through licences. It has no independent board and hasn’t improved its service – it still just promotes and supports government.

With the IBA – the Independent Broadcasting Authority – again the issue has been stuck on appointment of members to the board, because the minister wants a say on who could be appointed, when the whole idea of the IBA was that it would be independent. The Freedom of Information bill was actually withdrawn before it even reached the third stage of reading and could be enacted into law. The media associations took government to high court and then to the Supreme Court, which took a truly revisionist decision – it ruled in favour of government and against the media associations. So we made three steps but went back two and we’re still stuck. This is a major threat.

Because government has not facilitated the creation of the idea, the Ministry of Information is responsible for licensing, so you can imagine what’s going on. Our station has been denied repeat licences to cover our region fully. We are hearing now that when new applications are made to broadcast beyond the Lusaka area, the ministry will withdraw licences from those already holding them. This will affect the growth of the broadcasting sector seriously. The national broadcaster is kept very strong because it’s getting money from licences as well as the laager of advertising from government agencies and everyone else. Private stations can’t compete, so it’s not an equal playing field at all.

“Botswana only started liberalising the airwaves in 1998,” says M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlaseyo IMS Consultancy*:

It happened at the same time they liberalised telecommunications. Radio benefited immensely like

all other media from the cellular industry and it made a lot of money, especially in the first couple of years. We now have four national broadcasters granted national licences – the state one, Radio Botswana, which has two channels, and Gabz FM, Yarona FM, and Duma FM which are independents. Gabz and Yarona only broadcast in an eighty or hundred kilometre radius but I think there's a change coming in the next couple of months, so let's see what's going to happen. A drawback is that for its own reasons government is reluctant to award renewal licences to community radio stations. And until now, the state stations are monopolising broadcasting to the rural areas.

Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and Malawi television are still being closely regulated, but as Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications*, points out, this is "helping our cause" in the print sector: "When people hear something on the radio they think, 'I'm going to get the full picture tomorrow in the newspaper'."

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers*, which produces *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard* newspapers, told a story illustrating how by simply communicating with a government official he managed to overcome difficulties with accreditation of his journalists (p.167). He says about the broadcasting sector:

There was a case in Zimbabwe where organisations were asked to file applications for radio licences. The amounts that were required were so huge several organisations couldn't afford it. Some went ahead, but they received no response to their applications – only an article in a daily newspaper saying none of them had qualified, and that was it.

Our major challenge really is freeing and making space available for media, be it print media or broadcast. In Zimbabwe we have four or five radio stations, all belonging to the government. And they are jamming the airwaves, basically to make sure that people can't access foreign radio stations. This is a major challenge. Another is marrying the demand for independent newspapers, against how much it costs us to produce the newspapers, against our ability to deliver those newspapers to the people. Demand for print media in Zimbabwe is great. And if the airwaves were opened up, it would be absolutely heaven in terms of the number of TV stations that people would be able to access. So that is the picture, our challenge is to get government to listen and open up.

As Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho told delegates earlier, there is mayhem in Lesotho's political environment, where - they observe - citizens answer to a brutal army and lawlessness reigns (p.164). Media professionals are victimised, and there is scant recourse to media law. Pheello also mentions media regulation in the person of an ombudsman:

Government established the ombudsman, but the ombudsman can only investigate the government sector. There is a police complaints authority but that can't work unless you get a sanction from the police commissioner for it to work.

Litigation

Rory Wilson, independent consultant to the media industry in South Africa, challenges delegates to question negative assumptions about litigation. His strategy echoes leadership theorist Wheatley, who points out that to mobilise opportunities, stimulate innovation and manage change, organisational leaders should operate like “equilibrium busters ... deliberately looking for information that might threaten stability, knock [us] off balance, and open [us] to growth.”³ Rory illustrates:

When I was at the *Argus* newspaper in Cape Town, we leaders felt that the paper had to get more feisty, excuse my language – have more balls, you know. And so we set a higher budget for legal costs. Come the end of the year the editor hadn’t spent on legal costs and I reprimanded him saying, ‘I put the money aside, why are you not spending it?’

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana comments:

Cape Argus can afford to have a budget for litigation. *The Voice* is the highest selling newspaper in the Botswana – about 32 000 to 33 000 copies – but that’s nothing compared to the *Argus*. We don’t generate the type of money that allows us a litigation budget. We take insurance, which helps a bit, but we felt that our journalists were getting out of line and that we had to bring them back in.

The price of writing a tabloid is quite high – we have lots of litigation, to the point where some of our journalists were being used by people to hit at others, especially in our gossip column. Other departments were not amused by journalists putting the company into jeopardy with litigation costs. So we said we will deduct from journalists’ salaries litigation costs for any article where they cannot substantiate what they write. I don’t think we had a lawsuit this year!

In Malawi, Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* says, “...the onus is on you to prove that what you have published is true.”

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers*, brings in a different kind of legal issue:

One of the problems in Zimbabwe is the politicisation of the judiciary. Most of the experienced judges are being thrown off the bench and judges are coming in who have never served as lawyers in practice. Some of them are good academics but they’ve no understanding of how to deal with media issues.

Say our newspaper was sued by X, and evidence points to a judgement in our favour based on the argument that the information we published was for the benefit of society. They are more inclined to say ‘Oh well, you were all out to embarrass, to humiliate X.’ With an inexperienced judiciary there is less chance of winning, so one of our key leadership aims is to minimise litigation.

Largely because of our peculiar position as an independent press organisation, 99 percent of litigations come from politicians. They feel safe because they know you'll not be able to get the witnesses to go and stand in court, even when you have good evidence. One of the things we've done is to adopt the *Sunday Times* guidelines on media ethics. This year we spent quite a lot of money printing pocket-size booklets of the guidelines for each reporter and it's a human resources function to ensure that every new journalist is given one and signs for it. In addition, we had the guidelines printed in large formats which we display on notice boards in our newsrooms.

"The litigation that goes on in Lesotho is enormous," remarks Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine*:

I don't know of any newspaper, radio, or other media organisation – government or otherwise – that's not sitting with some form of litigation against them. Costs run into the millions, so if a case is won against you, paying up is really, really difficult.

In some countries help is available. In Botswana, for instance, notes Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM*, "Through its defence fund, MISA has contributed money to fighting certain cases."

Endnotes

1. AMDJ: <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org/amdi> IREX: <http://www.irex.org/>
Konrad Adenauer Foundation: <http://www.kasmedia.org/> MISA: <http://www.misa.org/>
2. AMDJ: <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org/amdi> IREX: <http://www.irex.org/>
Konrad Adenauer Foundation: <http://www.kasmedia.org/> MISA: <http://www.misa.org/>
3. A term coined by Jantsch (in Wheatley 1999: 83)

Chapter 10

Development and Diversity

This chapter focuses on how delegates perceive and experience media development and diversity in terms of social responsibility, solidarity and support, culture and language, and readership and reading. Several reports and ongoing research initiatives offer detailed, and often comparative, information on media development and diversity in the region.¹

Salomao Moyana remarks: “In the region in general there is a clear ability of the media to build a broad alliance of civil society.” Such an alliance is indispensable, given that development and social responsibility – which used to be predominantly the domain of government and other public institutions – has now shifted to become the privilege and burden of all.²

The leaders at the lekgotla identify promoting diversity (p.48) and enhancing democratic processes (p.50) as key leadership roles. Some say that contributing to the wider media community and empowering people (p.41) are pivotal to their personal success as leaders. Most delegates agree on the fundamental aspects of media’s broad social mandate (p.157) and concur that media are key to democratisation, helping to create open societies by accurately reflecting what is happening in them. Some delegates go beyond this, involving themselves more actively in bringing about and supporting change.

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, says:

Twenty years ago we started activism aimed at promoting greater pluralism and entrepreneurship. In those days media in most countries was dominated by governments, which took their time to act in sync with the new free information era sponsored by the United Nations. But over the years we’ve seen an improvement in diversity, which is very, very important. Our region has now pro-

duced many sustainable media enterprises invested in continuing, competing and creating – and it's from them that we get our leaders.

Diversity yields opportunities as well as challenges. Excepting in countries where the political climate continues to curtail media growth (discussed in the previous chapter 'Politics, Independence, Law') delegates report a proliferation of media enterprises in the region, particularly in the print industry. Donor funding (p.86) accelerates growth and promotes diversity, but raises sustainability problems (p.198). A threat as well as an opportunity of diversity is the escalating use of Internet communication technology (ICT) to launch myriad new communication platforms ('Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change' p.202).

Anton van Zyl remarks: "We need diversity, we need more voices, we need communities to be able to report what is happening to them. That's what being part of a community is all about, and what makes a community a healthy community." Development and support of community media, particularly in rural areas, is painfully slow in some countries, for instance Botswana and Zimbabwe, but vibrant in others. According to Mike Daka, community media in Zambia has grown rapidly over the last ten years, shifting the media industry from one that is "urban based but also urban biased" to one that is more inclusive, both geographically and demographically. He attributes this growth to the increasing use of vernacular languages in media – another aspect of diversity that has been put into practice by organisations led by him and several others – M. Leepile from Botswana, Pheello Selinyane and Sebonomoea Ramainoane from Lesotho, and Salomao Moyana of Mozambique.

Greater exposure of indigenous languages also supports the development of local culture and talent. Delegates say that in some countries, for instance Swaziland and Namibia, youth and children are increasingly in the spotlight. Regarding gender, media in the region is male-dominated. Despite this seven organisations represented at the Iekgotla are led by women – Beata Kasale, Esther Chilambo, Jacqueline Kabeta, Pat Mwase, Samantha Kalisa, Sandra Williams and Sphiwe Nkambule. In her other role, as consultant to the industry, Beata trains journalists to mainstream gender issues into news coverage and coaches newspaper management and journalists on how to report HIV/AIDS effectively. These successful women leaders challenge gender stereotypes, even if this sometimes happens at personal cost (p.109).

Raphael Khumalo thinks the media "has a duty, particularly in Africa, to teach people about tolerance." *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, led by editor-in-chief Sebonomoea Ramainoane, interlinks two different objectives – harnessing business and challenging xenophobia:

We are seriously working on building relationships between the government, the people of Lesotho, and the Chinese community, which has flooded Lesotho, as I understand that they have done all over the world. In Lesotho they are an economic powerhouse – from the small shop, to the supermarkets, to the factories. They are not understood by the people in Lesotho and it's just a matter of culture. Basotho wish them away. We have to learn to live and work with the Chinese people and they have to do the same with us. So we have a programme that we have begun in

Lesotho – it's from Beijing – and we are now working to reach an understanding between the two cultures.

Social responsibility

Several delegates lead media organisations which have issue-focused visions (p.71) and are resolutely committed to promoting diversity and empowering the readers and audiences they serve. Sebonomoea Ramainoane of Lesotho comments:

We work at empowering the community at grassroots level about various issues: local and national development, and local and national politics – the importance of participating in an election and accepting its results, and importantly, understanding one's culture and making good use of it ... because it is only at university level that this is really covered.

The station also empowers children (p.73), an activity also undertaken by Siphwe Nkambule's organisation in Swaziland, whose *Super Buddies* comic educates children about abuse and related issues such as HIV/AIDS (p.72).

Even those organisations guided by a more business-focused ethic (p.73) tend to be influential social development actors. Anton van Zyl's *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa has several outreach activities and interventions including regular education and health supplements aimed at improving community life. Mike Daka of Breeze FM in Zambia, a commercial station situated in a depressed rural area, remarks:

People have realised they can use radio for their benefit, all missing children are brought to the radio station, all missing old people are brought to the radio station and we don't charge for that, that's our community service.

Esther Chilambo, the director of *Radio and TV Tumbini* in Tanzania, began as a volunteer with the organisation. She consistently demonstrated her abilities and dedication until she became the organisation's leader. Her success shows that voluntarism can benefit the industry and also open the doors to a career.

Solidarity and support

Media solidarity

Solidarity for financial growth and development amongst organisations across the region was discussed in Chapter 6 'Business Matters' under 'Networking' p.104. Mike Daka of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, for instance, uses training as a springboard to build cross-border collaboration (p.101).

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, believes that much more cohesive collaboration is necessary, at least in his country:

I think a leadership weakness in the region – definitely in Botswana – is a serious lack of effective lobbying amongst different media leaders in the country. Our leadership seems to be disjointed in that you find media owners fight their own little wars and never come together to say, ‘What are our common interests?’ That’s why we’ve been ineffective, really, in fighting some of the challenges and prejudices from government. You’ll find that a newspaper group like *Guardian* will receive government threats to withdraw advertising whenever the paper is seen as reporting negatively on government. Media owners and leaders should be coming together and saying, ‘This is something that could affect us in future, so we are going to fight it as a block, as a strong lobby group.’

Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue*, talks of the need for media to stand together and overlook competitiveness:

In Namibia we started a media forum, it’s still very new. And you can see that people are quite uncomfortable being in the same room – after all the guy next to you may be your competitor. I think a part of leadership is not being short-sighted and thinking ‘How can I cross this guy?’ but rather being mature and thinking ‘How can we network?’

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye*, reminds delegates that the unifying ethic of cooperative forums can be destabilised:

In Zimbabwe for example, there are two forums, one for the state editors and one serving independent editors, which was formed to minimise the effects of covert and overt government interference. So the ability of newspapers to tackle one issue in a joint way becomes impossible.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror*, is more positive than Kennedy Otsheleng about the prospects for media organisations to unite effectively:

In Zambia we have grown to a level of maturity where every time there’s a media issue to be fought, we get together and fight it – in groups like the Press Association of Zambia (PAZA), Women in Media, the Union of Journalists, and MISA. For example, when VAT was slapped on newspapers and newsprint we lobbied government together to get those new taxes thrown out. So for us in Zambia, that is a huge strength, the fact that the media organisations can get together. I’ve seen it in Kenya as well, where there’s a big issue with government bringing in new legislation to prevent people from having multiple media enterprises under one ownership, and the association of media owners are apparently getting together to fight that cause.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, reminds delegates about

the value of media councils for creating cohesion and alignment on ethical issues (p.149). Media councils would help to ensure that practitioners fired for corrupt practices have less chance of re-entering the industry and perpetuating bad practices in other organisations. He concludes: “I think that our industry needs more solidarity so as to protect our organisations and the general credibility of the media.”

Media support

Some delegates are of the opinion that media in the region is often looked upon as an NGO service, depending on donors for its survival rather than functioning as a business. This was explored in ‘Donor funding’ (p.86) and ‘Changing mindsets’ (p.87). One of the Iekgotla focus groups notes:

We had an example of the Media Trust Fund in Zambia. They will initially support you with two computers and a camera or transmitter but thereafter they don’t follow your progress or give business advice, so you begin to grow but you don’t quite mature, because you’re weaned too fast and then the support just dries off. That’s a big problem we identified.

Legal support, or the lack of it, was discussed in ‘Legislation and litigation’ (p.169). Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye*, broaches the matter of media regulation in Lesotho: “Government established the ombudsman but the ombudsman can only investigate the government sector. There is a police complaints authority but that can’t work unless you get a sanction from the police commissioner for it to work.” In South Africa ICASA (the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa) is the body regulating media. In the opinion of Collen Hans, IAJ freelance trainer, ICASA does not always rule fairly, which he says, resulted in people from *Josi FM* “getting suspended for raising their views – so here we are with one institution that fails its own people but forever gets acknowledgements.”

Although the region has seen an increase in the number of media development agencies such as MISA (the Media Institute of Southern Africa) and South Africa’s Media Development and Diversity Fund (MDDA), as well as specialist training institutions, their interventions many not be well targeted enough to meet the region’s emerging needs. This was discussed earlier (‘Formal training p.143).

Most Iekgotla delegates are actively involved in media associations formed to support and improve media in the region (delegate profiles, p.15), and some work to bring on-the-ground improvements to the industry. Training and mentoring (p.142) is one way of doing this. Anton van Zyl, for example, has developed open source software for grassroots publishers, such as an advertising booking system and a distribution management system.

News agencies

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, comments:

Our colleague Alfred Ntonga from Malawi was talking about the impact of globalisation and the ease with which we are now able to pick up a newspaper from abroad, for example the *Zimbabwe Independent*. To broaden the discussion about regime change in Zimbabwe we ran an article that we picked up from Moscow.com saying that Zimbabwe's problems are not just our own problems as Zimbabweans, they have regional implications. If we can use articles coming from New Delhi.com, or from some little village newspaper writing about Zimbabwe, it shows other views on our country. Potentially globalisation impacts on how we operate in the region.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, responds:

None of us are telling the Zimbabwean story very well and we base most of our reports on Reuters – an institution based in Johannesburg. But the *Post* [a newspaper in Zambia] has opened an office in Harare – so that's a clear example of what is possible.

Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, adds:

Recently we had former US President Clinton and Mr. Gates coming to one of our smaller towns and opening a clinic there, and while our guys were busy trying to get into contact with the people responsible, the story was already on the net, on the Afro website. So the challenge is always trying to find an angle that has not been explored. We have since tried to devise an ethos where our readership knows that an issue is not closed until they have read it with us.

Pheello's organisation has gone one step further:

We have also since taken advantage of the interest in the affairs of Lesotho expressed by people in the neighbouring provinces of South Africa, especially the Eastern Cape and the southern Free State, to open some bureaus in those provinces, and we have also just opened another bureau in Johannesburg. This is working quite well in terms of developing sizeable credibility as a voice of affairs in Lesotho.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia concludes:

The next business ethos and thinking that media development agencies should start focusing on is developing news agencies because right now we're competing with BBC or Reuters. But we are actually on the continent – it should come from our own agencies.

Printing and distribution

Paper shortages are problematic in several countries in the region. Alfred Ntonga says of the paper supply situation in Malawi:

Sappi and Mondi in South Africa told us Malawians to look elsewhere because they could no longer supply us with tabloid shaped newspaper due to increased demands in the South African market. All they can offer are off cuts – very small pieces at the end of a roll – like miniskirt size newspaper. Even supply of that was totally unpredictable. We tried to do a deal with Mutare in Zimbabwe, but they also find that demand has risen and they're just as difficult to buy from right now.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* explains to Alfred:

The reason why you're not getting the newsprint you want is largely because of foreign currency constraints. Mutare Board and Paper Mills (MBPM) has a mill, but you need a certain amount of pulp to mix with your local timber to come up with newsprint, and there's not enough pulp in the country. So MBPM has to import pulp from Norway, Canada, and elsewhere to get the mill in Zimbabwe to operate.

Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, tells a story about printing:

The Voice was started in 1993 as a magazine called *The Francistowner*, and in 1999 it became a weekly newspaper. Around that time my business partner went on a sabbatical to write a book and the printers were a bit worried because they thought I was not going to make it. Previously they would give us a 60-day extension on our debt and transport our newspaper from the capital Gaborone to Francistown, about 400 kilometres away.

But just before the first weekly edition went to press they met me and said, 'For one, we are not going to give you 60 days. We want you to pay for this paper as you go along. Two, we are going to stop transporting it to Francistown. And three, we want you to pay everything you owe by tomorrow.'

So there I was – I didn't know what to say to staff members so I didn't say anything. I went home and just sat, I was really devastated. Then I watched a movie of Ayn Rand's book *The Fountainhead*. There was a quote from her book: 'Throughout the centuries there were men who took first steps, down new roads, armed with nothing but their own vision.' I was so inspired. I went back to the office the next day and organised trucks and people for the distribution. It was month end, so staff had not been paid, so I got their payroll to pay the printer. After we printed the paper and sent it out on the trucks I faced the staff and told them the whole story.

I think what made staff more sympathetic is that they saw it as the printer's fault and took it as us now fighting with the printer – a battle they were very determined to win. They were very understanding of what I did and were paid a week later. That incident gave us a boost with the printer and led to a very nice relationship with them – after that they offered to transport the paper again and I could see they trusted that I could run the business.

Siphiwe Nkambule of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland believes that the sooner publications do their own printing, the better:

Many emerging print media enterprises are shutting down because of high printing costs. I think that as we grow as media organisations we must focus ahead and look at investing in our own printing presses that not only print for your newspaper or your magazine but also for other companies.

Raphael Khumalo responds:

We don't own our own printing press, but are dependent on other people for our printing, although in the last two years we bought a small shareholding in the printing. We still have a handicap in the sense that the owners have a much larger shareholding and we can't do the normal things we'd do if we owned it, such as getting the repairs done. A major threat obviously is also the unavailability of foreign exchange in Zimbabwe to get spares.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, responds to Siphiwe's suggestion:

I think immediately of very basic printing technology coming out of India, China and Korea, designed for small print runs. As entrepreneurs we need to start thinking about that, and stop looking at the hand-me-downs of Heidelberg and Kord 64 – the big expensive European technology.

But Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, challenges the self-printing ideal: "What is your business? Printing or media?" In his opinion, small media owners "should not go that route." M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana agrees:

Worldwide, publishers recognise the futility of owning presses individually; worldwide they have come together and co-own presses. So if you think you need a press you might as well start talking to Pat or somebody and say let's come together.

Pat responds: "There's only one company that uses the government printing press in Zambia, and they will never print for anybody else, so you also have to be very realistic."

One of the innovations at *Magazine Independente*, where Salomao Moyana is editor, has been starting up a colour publication (p.88). He says:

By taking advantage of ICT [information and communications technology] we can write the newspaper in Maputo, send it by e-mail to the printing house in Nelspruit where they print it in a day. They then ship it to the border and we pick it up. All these activities work out much cheaper than printing a black and white paper in Maputo!

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, has done something similar:

We are involved in a project 500 kilometres away from us – another newspaper, about as small as you can get. Technology allows them to send us news stories and everything else. The whole production side is handled by us using ICTs [information and communication technologies]. We arrange for the printing and then it gets sent back to them. That would've been unthinkable a couple of years ago. Nowadays we're talking digital cameras – take a picture now, link to your laptop, send it, and a couple of seconds later it's travelled all the way around the world. Where previously this one-man operation in a township area couldn't have produced a viable newspaper, he now makes a lot of money out of his publication and in a good way. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

Most commentary on distribution centred on information technology, discussed in Chapter 11 (p.202).

Localisation: music and language

In 'Marketing' (p.98) delegates shared perspectives on the issue of audience needs and wants and spoke about numerous strategies and products they use to attract readers and listeners. This section deals more specifically with diversity and development in terms of local music and language.

Music

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, points to the importance of local music:

Radio and television have created new industries. In recent years we've seen how they promote local music, to the extent that we now even have a very strong national association of musicians. A few years ago our radio stations didn't play local music, but I listen to all of your stations and I'm amazed that these days 80 percent of the music played is local. I see it on television too – I've heard people calling in saying 'Why are you playing all these outside videos?' Some radio stations in the region are very innovative. I've seen them packaging information in such a way that people want to go out and be heard; they buy spots to convey certain messages through interviews or conversations. Some stations are making a killing out of that. It's a big industry and people are recognizing

that it's creating wealth, it's creating jobs, and it's promoting the recognition that media benefits society and is a big part of the social landscape. All this is very positive and shows that local media is maturing.

Sandra Williams, Station Manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)* agrees:

In the Namibian scenario it's also true that we as community radios are actually very much a part of the growth and promotion of local music. In the last five years hardly any South African music is played on local radio stations. Five years ago we wanted to hear South Africans and that's all we played, but now only local musicians are heard. It's a major market and anybody who wants to make an investment in it will make a killing in Namibia right now.

In Zambia, promoting local music has taken a further step, Mike Daka of *Breeze FM* explains:

Most of the music we're producing in our countries is modern – from urban areas – but we're producing traditional music for the first time, and it's just amazing. We have six tribes in our region and we've produced music from one tribe so far. We've also seen the opportunities of working in the sub-region because of the common language in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. Our idea is to record music for the three countries and we anticipate that the market for that music will be even wider because we'll make it available to stations in the other countries. So we're not only depending on advertising and sales of our publications, and I think that gets us into a much stronger future.

Language

Earlier on, Mike Daka commented on how *Breeze FM* uses its positioning in the Chinyanja triangle, which has common borders with Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, to capitalise on and promote community interests and the region's common language (p.101).

Sebonomoea Ramainoane is editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine*, based in Maseru the capital of Lesotho. Since its inception in 1990 their weekly paper has used the vernacular, Sesotho. Their radio station, which started up in 1999, does the same. He comments:

We have since become the largest in terms of vernacular coverage in Lesotho and in South Africa's Eastern Cape and Free State. We are also global – the only radio station in Lesotho that is on audio streaming, so you can tune to us almost anywhere you want in the world.

While indigenous languages offer opportunities, they can also be problematic. Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* finds that, "In Namibia the market is very fragmented. We have so many tribes, and

14 to 15 languages, so to find a group of readers and to grow your market is immensely difficult.” On the other side of the spectrum, Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* in Lesotho, remembers that when the paper had a Sesotho title, *Mosotho*, “The response of readers was overwhelming.”

In Botswana, M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy*, spearheaded a vernacular publication called *Mogkozi* (p.82) in 2002. A groundbreaking initiative at the time, it was published in Setswana, the lingua franca of about eight million Batswana and of many people in Namibia and South Africa. M. Leepile comments: “English is said to be the official language, and Setswana is said to be the national language, but there was really no effort to develop our national language.” Initially well received and supported by government, *Mogkozi* soon ran into trouble with politicians, who withdrew advertising, causing the paper to fold. One of the lessons M. Leepile learned from the experience was:

You should never be presumptuous. However popular a project is, or you think it is, don’t assume there’s national consensus on that. Because I actually found the project revealed certain aspects of our society that were not on – people felt their languages were not being sufficiently supported and they took vent on government, even though our project had nothing to do with government.

Issues of identity and marginalisation begin to surface as discussions of language intensify. Sebonomoea Ramainoane from Lesotho voices his concerns:

It has become fashionable in my country to speak English. If you don’t speak English and you don’t speak it well, you’re up to nothing. Whereas the country is Lesotho, the people are Basotho and the language is Sesotho. English is foreign. What’s wrong with me being conversant in my mother tongue and speaking it all the time? Why should I be judged on the basis of the foreign language I speak? I think that’s something the media industry should address. If you decide to go with English, it has to be pure English and this is another problem.

You find that in South Africa you don’t really know what language the black people are speaking. They joke that with eleven official languages in the country they have to go through all of them in one sentence. But the white South Africans don’t do that – sometimes the white South Africans are conversant in many languages, even African languages. But when they speak amongst themselves and with others they speak proper English; if they speak Portuguese they speak Portuguese; if they speak Afrikaans they speak Afrikaans. Why do the black South Africans mix everything and then rationalise it by saying, ‘We are a rainbow nation, a country of 11 languages’? I think it’s very wrong because it erodes the culture. Unless you are very strict on your language there’s no way you can have your cultural roots.

Collen Hans, businessman and *IAJ* freelance trainer in South Africa, responds:

Maybe South Africans and Namibians didn’t need the phrase ‘Affirmative action’. Maybe they

needed an appropriate Afro-centric approach that says, 'In our country this is who we are, and this is what we want to achieve as compared to the rest of the global world.' Maybe it would have been understood better in our indigenous languages as 'ubuntu'. That would have been more in line with enhancing ubuntu, because ubuntu is the language we know.

Ubuntu is a philosophy rather than a language, but Collen's reference to it as a language brings to mind the intricate interlinking of philosophy, language and power.

Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, brings the debate back to business practice. He points out that not every market will be responsive to the use of indigenous languages:

If Sebonomoea is writing *MOAFRIKA* in Sesotho it follows that he will conduct himself in a particular manner. He's going to align himself with all the issues that take place within that culture because that's what he's about. If you're writing or are responsible for a business newspaper like I am, then I'll concern myself with what's happening on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. I'll be looking at 81 listed companies and those are the people I'll align myself to. I will go further and look for ways to enhance my relationship with banks and banking issues, with mines and mining issues, with insurance companies and their issues. These are my various building blocks and they take my newspaper forward. It's a matter of where you are placed in the market. You can't apply one formula across the board.

But Sebonomoea Ramainoane challenges this:

There is nothing to suggest that if you're writing in indigenous languages you cannot report on the stock market, on business, on engineering. German is an indigenous language, Russian is an indigenous language, Mandarin is an indigenous language, and they're all reporting, studying and living in those languages. What I am saying is that the lingua franca in Lesotho is Sesotho and it should take centre stage.

Raphael replies:

If you have a newspaper, you choose what to report on, it's entirely up to you – the sky is the limit. It's about who reads your product. If Sesotho readers have matured to such an extent that they understand the processes of dealing in the stock market, that's good. Similarly if my readers understand how the black market works in Mbare – which is a big township within Harare – then that's fine, I'll deal with those issues.

Promoting a reading culture

The injunction that media needs to create open societies (p.157) and enhance democratic processes (p.50) converges with two of Samantha Kalisa's earlier comments: "Our job is not to solve the problems – our job is to show the problems... Radio can be the theatre of the mind. For those who cannot read, let them learn through radio." Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* responds:

In Zambia it seems to be an accepted fact that people have stopped reading. So OK, we say, let's go to the radio format. I have a problem with that, because the moment people don't read, then they become totally illiterate, they know nothing about anything and cannot substantiate things by saying 'I read it in this book, in this article, in this place.' It reminds me of an e-mail that I got saying 'If you want to hide something from a black man put it in a book.' What that meant for me is that we have a serious problem.

You listen to radio in Zambia nowadays and these people are not speaking English, they are speaking some mixed-up language that's really weird. And I think that comes about because they can't read and write and they don't read and write. Even if you go on radio, if you don't read and write you cannot express views properly, you cannot inform people properly. We should keep people reading, like the Japanese do, like the Swedes do. They're big consumers of print and have amongst the highest literacy and reading rates in the world. Case studies and stats in the US show that a high number of their population doesn't read – it's just go, go, go. We're becoming like that.

In 2005 Anton van Zyl's *Limpopo Mirror* became only the second South African newspaper to win the World Young Readers award, an annual event at which the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) awards a trophy for projects that encourage young readers to use newspapers. This is a significant accomplishment in a region where delegates say reading is on the decline, partly due to the changing expectations of audiences and largely due to the inroads made by the Internet. Delegates, particularly those from the print sector, agree that media leaders need to harness the power of ICTs [information communication technologies] in order to survive "the onslaught of the web," as Pheello Selinyane puts it. (This is discussed in the next chapter, Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change).

Educating people about the functions and purposes of media was identified as a key leadership role (p.49), but some pointed out that the industry fails to do so. Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, thinks media must take its share of responsibility for not attracting audiences:

Look at the content of our news. Newspapers have become sort of blind, we don't have in-depth articles, we don't research, content on some radio stations is appalling. We should also look at ourselves as media, at what our role is, instead of throwing the blame back on our listeners and readers.

Nonetheless, leaders shared several strategies they use to capture audiences and by association, to encourage a culture of reading. Amongst these are: conducting timely audience research, establishing a good reputation for reliability and integrity, providing in-depth investigative journalism, assigning different high-quality reporters to report on an issue from different angles, promoting local music and languages, and developing local content relevant to the tastes and needs of audiences.

In 'Marketing' (p.98), delegates discussed perceptions of what audiences need, as opposed to what they want. This prompted an examination of the role of media in society and the tension between providing education as well as entertainment. Delegates agreed that as leaders they must ensure that writing and programming is relevant to young people. Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi comments:

Unfortunately old people like me want to do it *for* the young people. We don't have time to sit down with them and shape their future because we believe the young people don't know much and need to be led. How do we get young people involved in radio, in television, cell phone technology and print?

Esther Chilambo, director of *Radio and TV Tumaini* in Tanzania, observes:

Schoolgirls and boys don't listen in class because all their minds are now focusing on the Internet. After school they rush to the Internet cafes. The characters of the young ones are changing so abruptly and the culture is dying. We are trying to educate the parents so that they can play their role in educating their children.

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, agrees:

Our children operate in the world of cyberspace. A term I've heard for them is 'digital natives'. Children are going online, using Facebook and My Space, and as parents often we don't understand that world. So part of it is helping parents understand the world their children are living in.

Collen Hans, *IAJ* freelance trainer in South Africa, thinks that parents should help children to engage with the adult world:

Media has to go back to the drawing board. My belief is that the formation of human character develops from the parent, so we should go back to our own homes and encourage a culture of education. For instance as professionals we can get our youngsters to watch the news with us, instead of distancing ourselves from the content they are watching and allowing them to be swallowed by stuff that gives them nothing of any real value.

Interestingly, the conversation did not turn to censorship. Instead several delegates spoke to the issue by shar-

ing how their organisations actively involve young people, and even children, in media and its production.

Endnotes

1. Rau *et al.*, 2008; AMD: <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org/amdi> IREX: <http://www.irex.org/> Konrad Adenauer Foundation: <http://www.kasmedia.org/> MISA: <http://www.misa.org/>
2. Fourie, 2005.

Chapter 11

Into the Future: Growth, Sustainability, Change

Insights and opinions on growth, sustainability and change filtered throughout the Iekgotla discussions, clearly demonstrating that these are crosscutting issues. This chapter gathers ideas that have been raised before, but also introduces new ideas.

We begin by looking at patterns and problems of growth, including the impact of donor funding on sustainability. We then present the debates that took place on leadership succession planning, empowerment, and training. Finally, delegates discuss Internet and information communication technology (ICT), which they all regard as a pressing challenge facing the media.

Changing media landscapes

Not all delegates chose to comment on media growth in their countries. Delegates from South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania did not do so, nor did those from Lesotho, whose stories tell of a hostile political climate for media growth ('Infiltrating, opposing, victimising' p.164). Readers interested in research on media growth in the region can find research initiatives and reports on all the countries represented at the Iekgotla.¹

Experiencing, engendering and managing change are challenges media leaders must engage with if they are to move themselves, their people and their organisations towards success. Insights on these aspects were presented earlier (pages 29 & 45). All delegates agreed that leadership requires a continuous engagement with changes in wider social media contexts, changes within their organisations, and change in their own personal and professional growth. This is explored in 'People and change' (p.121). But as one del-

egate points out, no matter what the calibre of the leader, or how many people are hired or fired, “As long as an organisation doesn’t change, then you have a problem.”

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, begins:

We started with a single newspaper coming out five days a week. That came with another one for Saturday and one on Sunday. So there was security. But you also need to grow because if you just stabilise, chances are you’ll go down.

So how do we grow? We tried a magazine, it didn’t work. We created a separate company called *Imagination*, something like a news agency. But we discovered that people resist your monopoly as a major newspaper that at the same time wants to take business from news agencies. We also discovered that for the agency to work effectively we needed some kind of sheet machinery and stuff like that. So we have the numbers in terms of people, but technologically we’re at a disadvantage. We have some parts of the business, we don’t have other parts, plus we have resistance, and it’s affecting business, which means growth in that area is not really certain.

He goes on to discuss current changes in the media world:

When we started the newspaper it was a lot easier, because most of us had bankable ideas, it was our field, and it worked. When we move into other areas we find we have a knowledge gap. Our immediate challenge is the advent of television in Malawi, which is fairly new – maybe only seven years old – but already it’s had a very big impact. You see things breaking, people just going in and beaming the picture: colour, movement, action!

Peter du Toit, deputy director of the *Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership* in South Africa, adds some thoughts about the pressures on print:

TV, radio and online are having an impact because these media deliver news in a more timely and colourful way. Many of us are caught in a situation where we’re producing the facts, but our readers want more – and people in print are not necessarily skilled or equipped to provide them with it. That impacts on the sector’s ability to compete. It’s a training challenge, it’s a mentoring challenge, but it’s a matter of vision as well.

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* a weekly in Mozambique, believes that the proliferation of media can only be good for press freedom:

We have a large number of registered newspapers. But most of them are not in the street because of financial constraints, not because of political impediments. We have around 42 community radio stations in Mozambique and over 20 commercial and religious radio stations. There’s an environment

conducive to media freedom – government interference is diminishing day by day and the voice of the media is growing every day. So I think there's a very good balance of forces in our country.

M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy*, outlines the situation in Botswana:

Traditionally the main media was print, and at one stage there were about 15 tabloids. Right now we have about eight publications, six of which are weeklies, and two of which are dailies. But one foresees in the next five to ten years a period of consolidation – the market is constricting and new media has emerged. While ad-spend has increased in real terms, it's the amount that's going to print that's constricting the price overall – because now they're competing with radio, they are competing with television and with Internet, which is a huge area of development we're seeing.

According to Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror*, there is a similar boom taking place in Zambia:

We have seen a proliferation of media – it's like a media baby boom. There are radios coming up everywhere, and to a large extent it's a good thing because the advertising industry is beginning to recognize the small media. Eight years ago, if you had a small newspaper they wouldn't talk to you, but now the big national advertisers like the CelTels and the MTNs are putting a lot of money into community radio stations. So it's becoming more competitive and people are striving to improve standards.

Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM*, a Zambian commercial radio station situated in a rural area where the borders of three countries meet, offers some background:

For a while the economy wasn't doing so well and people didn't have the money to buy publications. In the '70s circulations were the highest, and publications had figures of up to seventy thousand a day. That dropped towards the end of the 80s to maybe thirty or so thousand. Now circulation figures have started to go up again. The agricultural sector is also doing reasonably well, there is new life in the economy and new minds are opening up.

Mike adds that community media is the sector in Zambia with the greatest growth over the last ten years:

That's significant, because the so-called national media were for a long time urban-based but also urban-biased, and so a big chunk of the country was totally marginalised. What's suddenly happened is that people who did not know media, did not participate in media, and whose issues were not articulated in the media, are key players today, particularly due to the use of local languages. As Pat said, the beginning was a little difficult because advertisers were thinking 'Why the hell?' But led by the cell phone companies, you now see advertising going across the sectors.

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia calls for regional networks:

I can't understand why more cross-border partnerships are not happening. We need to become more aggressive in Africa-to-Africa business. If you look at growth in other sectors, it's the ability of business people to get together and create bigger markets across borders. So as media leaders we need to start to talk to each other, not just about the problems that we face, but about how can we make more money together, how we can use what we have to grow and to stand strong in our business. Look at *Super Buddies* [p.71 & 89] for instance; that could turn into a regional franchise.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa agrees:

Technology makes it possible to distribute all the *Super Buddies* material within a matter of seconds all across the world, whereas ten years ago it was simply not possible. People can contribute from anywhere. So I totally agree, we have to move towards more cooperation.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, adds: "We've done well to create awareness of media issues over the last 20 years, and to come up with the *SAIMEDs* and the *SPIs*. But I think at a business level we've been very shy." Nevertheless initiatives such as *Breeze FM's* cross-border collaboration (p.101) show that cross-border partnerships are in fact happening.

Cross-border cooperation is not without its problems. Delegates believe that during the last few years, media expansion in South Africa has been putting increasing pressure on other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Servaas van den Bosch, editor of *The Big Issue* in Namibia comments: "It seems like South Africans have rediscovered Namibia as a market and it's tough for us to compete with their big names, big titles, and big money." Related to 'big money', Sandra Williams, station manager of *Katutura Community Radio (KCR)* in Namibia has noticed a growing monopoly of large conglomerates diverting funds from smaller organisations and thus impacting on diversity (p.161).

One solution to this new pressure may lie in improving community solidarity and establishing more structures of support (p.179). Delegates from Namibia and Zambia say that cooperating and engaging with local communities has improved diversity of local music, languages and youth issues, which is a market that delegates see growing in the region. In addition, local networking and cooperation have positive spin-offs on the bottom line (p.185). M. Leepile sees that because of their community focus, some organisations "are making a killing ... It's a big industry and people are recognizing that it's creating wealth, it's creating jobs, and it's promoting the recognition that media benefits society and is a big part of the social landscape. All this is very positive and shows that local media is maturing."

As pointed out earlier, the length of time a media organisation has been operating signals both its reliability and its sustainability. The story shared by M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana (p.22) offers several lessons, one of which is that rapid growth can be one of

the most dangerous things. He reflects: “We shouldn’t get carried away with initial success, but cultivate a long-term vision.”

“What I have found to be really, really critical at this lekgotla is the information,” remarks Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe:

I can rightly say that the vast majority of people of Zimbabwe do not know, for example that in Tanzania they have 14 radio stations and that in Lesotho, as small as it is, they have 10 private radio stations. Information is critical in getting the mind set right. Once people know what their neighbours have, they will demand the same from their governments.

Altering mindsets

Like Salomao Moyana (p.157), Raphael Khumalo believes that media diversity and growth in the region contributes to political change:

You can only bring about change when you make people aware of issues. Information is power, in Zimbabwe the government controls all the airwaves. I think it is incumbent on each of us to make it clear that a multiplicity of media – radio stations, TV broadcasts and print media – actually enhances democratic processes.

Changes in media diversity and growth need to be accompanied by changes in journalists’ attitudes to government. Some believe that journalists are too ready to be negative. Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana, noted earlier that journalists are trained to slam governments and do not report on positive developments (p.167 in Chapter 9, ‘Politics, Independence, Law’). Collen Hans from South Africa also commented on the impact of entrenched struggle consciousness on economic growth (p.88). Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, declared: “We should get into the politics of business, the politics of economic growth.” But these views are not uncontested. Some delegates are very vocal about real difficulties in their political environments which are not good for media-government relations (p.159) and should not be veiled by a conciliatory stance. And several speak about financial and business constraints and tensions (‘Advertising and governments’ p.93).

It is generally agreed, however, that media leaders and professionals must improve their knowledge of how their governments work so that they are in a position to engage more effectively with them. M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, illustrated earlier how simple dialogue can divert trouble and lead to a better working relationship with government officials, without compromising principles (pages 167-168).

All these factors relate to media’s broad social mandate debated earlier (p.157), with some noting that

because of the broad alliance that media has built with civil society there is increasing understanding of the influential role of media in democracy and development. In 'Development and Diversity' (p.178) it was suggested that African media has a duty to teach people about tolerance. But in relation to government policies and practices, delegates caution: tolerance is a two-way street.

Shifting dependence on donor funding

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland notices that in her country:

A major change is that we are seeing journalists taking the leap and starting publications of their own. Of course, because there's no access to finance, some struggle, and some eventually shut down, but I think it's a good thing that's happening.

Pat Mwase says most of the new media organisations in Zambia are started up by entrepreneurs rather than media professionals, a trend Anton van Zyl says is being dominant throughout the history of media.

Whatever the difficulties, the general impression from the Iekgotla discussions is that media in the region is expanding, with many new start-up organisations in all sectors of the industry. But the question is repeatedly raised: are they sustainable? Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia, comments:

We're at a point now in the media life cycle where we saw the birth of many different newspapers and radio stations and there's certainly been some growth. But I'm wondering if we're reaching the third stage, which should be maturity. And I'm saying this because at one level, why was this growth possible? It was possible because there was a lot of donor support. In Zambia Scandinavian governments set up a Media Trust Fund [MTF], which helped to provide support, and we also had the regional level AMARC [World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters] helping but it went down and now the stations and community outreaches that were getting support from it are stuck. There's no new renewal of funding or new resources coming in. And the Media Trust Fund is not putting back into old institutions, they're supporting new start-ups. So there's a crisis: before reaching the stage of maturity, organisations are struggling, they're going down.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror*, says that the situation in South Africa is the same:

The problem is that many started off with donor funding and there was never a strong commercial model on the table. But I regard it as a lack of media leadership and the failure to create strong business bases. Fine, you'll publish, fine, you're going to open a radio station, but what is the busi-

ness model that sustains your enterprise – for now, in the short term and the long term?

Delegates acknowledge that much development has occurred because of donor funding, but they are acutely aware that reliance on such help needs to be curtailed, and that they, as leaders, need to find ways of ensuring that enterprises become self-sustaining.

Salomao Moyana, editor of *Magazine Independente* in Mozambique, observes:

We had this boom of new radio stations and newspapers in the early 1990s, but towards the end of the decade there were problems with their sustainability – management was not good, there were problems sourcing advertising revenue. Those that survived are now the most important means of communication in the country, not only because of improved management but also because of international support.

A fund of five million US dollars was set up in 1995 by UNESCO and UNDP to support private and independent media in Mozambique. But then, Salomao continues:

Shortly after 1997, the international community stopped financing media initiatives. So that's where leadership comes in – how to survive in an environment where the international community is no longer financing media initiatives, government is not providing any facilities for you to survive economically, and the business sector won't support you because you don't have enough collateral to engage with them.

Succession

Ensuring succession is identified by delegates as a key leadership role (p.54). One focus group summarised it like this: "Our group talked about institutions that came up and then just went down the drain because we do not prepare properly for succession to ensure those institutions stabilise and grow."

Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, points out:

The region has a large number of leaders to pull from. They come from diverse cultures and multiple sectors, and you can easily cross-breed through exchange programmes and share experiences as leaders. There are lots of them and in diverse sectors – from community, commercial and even government institutions. In Zambia alone there are close to 35 radio stations, and weekly papers are growing. So you have a nice tidy gene pool to work with in as far as media leadership is concerned.

Kennedy Otsheleng, CEO of *GABZ FM* in Botswana, sounds a note of caution: "I think one of the challenges

to media leadership is a failure in succession planning. One of the reasons is that we train staff in the hope that they'll take over posts and maintain a continuity of leadership, but they get head-hunted and offered big money elsewhere." Other participants, including Jacqueline Kabeta, executive director of *SAIMED* in Botswana, see it differently: "There is an argument that the industry itself has failed to absorb journalists and other skilled staff, and that we are failing to employ our own people." This view is confirmed in findings of several research projects.²

Sebonomoea Ramainoane, editor-in-chief of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, observes:

The in thing in the USA, and probably the UK, is to kick this one out, buy that one in. If you look at corporates in the capitalist world you'll find that there's no reproduction of leadership in organisations. Instead the board of directors or whoever is responsible is always on the lookout for a good leader elsewhere.

But M. Leepile, managing consultant of *Motlabaseyo IMS Consultancy* in Botswana, counters: "Quality from the outside can turn around a company that's sinking and make it float."

A problem mentioned several times is the inability of people, particularly of journalists who rise through the ranks, to lead effectively. Sometimes this is because they lack leadership training, sometimes because their passion may not lie in leading but in writing, sometimes because they are socialised into thinking as a group and do not understand or appreciate the bigger picture. Almost always, their failure of leadership comes about because they lack business acumen (pages 51, 59, 63, 90). Mike Daka, owner and managing director of *Breeze FM* in Zambia remarks: "These guys were good reporters yes, but they're not managers and they're not leaders and so they lead their institutions nowhere." Clearly there are exceptions to this, not least the Iekgotla delegates themselves, most of whom began their careers as journalists.

M. Leepile puts forward a strategy for recruiting new talent into the industry that is linked to building diversity into an organisation:

Some organisations are very innovative. Then you find others that have been weeklies for twenty years. What for? You can go daily, you can have magazines, you can have a children's publishing division, you can have radio – and then you have a little bit of an empire that people can look at and say 'Now I can develop my career in this or that' or 'I can work for this or that newspaper'. What Kennedy is saying is very, very important, we need to be a little bit more introspective and work on succession planning, but we must also make scope for expansion and for growth and our people must see that and buy into that.

Metaphors of parenting, and media leaders as 'parents' to their audiences often emerged in the discussions. As parents they need to craft products that balance education with entertainment, they must set agendas and establish standards. Collen Hans remarks:

We can't separate leadership from parenting. My belief is that we tend to see the parent as the one who maintains children, just like the leader is the one who maintains followers. So we are lacking the finer points in reproducing or redeveloping leaders.

Several delegates identify empowerment of people as essential in producing good leaders (p.42). Pat Mwase, CEO of *Mining Mirror* in Zambia, finds that empowering staff to take responsibility is personally gratifying as well as good for the bottom line: "It's about being able to take the underdog – not the bright lights of media, not the best editors, not just journalists but very basic people – and make them believe that they can do anything; make them reach deep into themselves to perform." Her comment relates to two vital aspects of succession: appropriate delegation (pages 53 & 113) and building effective teams (p.131).

All the delegates mentioned passion and its capacity to communicate itself, not only in terms of turning out good quality products, but also as a motivating factor in staff performance (p.137). Passion can also be part of the succession process, as the comment of Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi suggests:

When you judge your staff you'll keep people who are passionate, because even if they make mistakes, chances are that they'll learn and they'll carry on. The one who is not passionate is the one you must get rid of very quickly. You need that passion – it's the driving force.

Setting an example was identified as being constitutive of leadership (p.31) and emerged as a theme in many stories delegates shared ('Starting Media Organisations and Being Promoted' p.59). Exemplary leadership is seen as both communicating passion and demonstrating good business practices and ethics.

Siphiwe Nkambule, marketing manager and co-founder of *Miles Communications* in Swaziland, integrates her passion with a strategy for succession planning:

An important leadership role is to empower, not only our staff but also the people out there. For instance, I have a passion for children. I think they are neglected in many ways. So, through my magazine they're given the opportunity to participate in writing articles, and we take it a step further by involving them in producing the magazine so that their vision, and ours, doesn't die when we retire or when we pass on. So we'll soon be partnering with an organisation in the UK to empower the children with ICTs [Information and communication technologies], so that they are able to produce the magazine themselves. Maybe we'll even go beyond that and expand into radio and TV, and train them to produce their own programmes there. So I think it's important to look outside to ordinary people if you want to keep your vision alive.

MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine in Lesotho, where Sebonomoea Ramainoane is editor-in-chief, trains youth and children as presenters:

We have two programmes on the weekend, one presented by an 11-year-old – and he is just not doing a presentation, he’s actually teaching Sesotho and English on the programme, and he is more popular than the rest of us! Another kid teaches science subjects on a Friday evening. We also have people who would not get a media job because of their education. Some of them have hardly gone through primary education but we have trained them to become very good presenters. Most of them have left us to join rival media organisations and they are now key presenters, presenting key issues.

Mentoring and coaching people was discussed in detail earlier (p.144). Some leaders involve the wider media community (p.41) in succession and see these activities as benefiting community members. Others concentrate on mentoring and coaching within organisations. For instance at *Nation Publications in Malawi*, Alfred Ntonga introduced a system to improve reporting accuracy and comprehensiveness, but it also functions to diminish internal frictions, and furthermore, acts as an effective method of peer mentoring (pages 134-135, 144).

A significant aspect of leadership succession is formal training. Delegates hope to see an expansion of media leadership and management training in the region. Positive and negative aspects of this factor in succession are discussed comprehensively in ‘People Power’ (p.143).

Internet communication technologies: the coming media

As Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi asserts: “Growth presupposes ideas coming in.” Internet/ Information communication technology (ICT) is one of the new ideas that give media leaders the most headaches. Alfred rubs his head:

I think the issue of technology is a challenge not only of our newspaper but probably facing the media in general and definitely in our country, being such a small poor country, and technologically lagging behind. It will be more pronounced in the future, but it’s already there.

Samantha Kalisa, editor of the South African publication *Bignews for the Business Owner*, adds: “There’s a lot of debate in the print industry – they can feel it very clearly: Is the print media viable?”

Some leaders, such as Pheello Selinyane, editor of *Public Eye* an independent newspaper in Lesotho, turn to investigative journalism “to survive the onslaught of the web” (p.101). Other have numerous strategies for encouraging a reading culture (p.189). But most agree that sustainability depends to some extent on engaging with ICT and developing products that capture some of the audience share that new media enjoys. Samantha continues:

We used to write for people who had just started out in business – they were fairly small, they weren't that formal, but we grew and they grew. They've become more and more sophisticated and they want more and more, which means that your publication now has to get into technology and the Internet. Nowadays you need a web presence, or your newspaper is not cutting it.

Anton van Zyl, editor/manager of *Zoutpansberger* and *Limpopo Mirror* in South Africa, responds:

The expectations of our listeners or readers have changed dramatically in the last five or ten years. People don't want to send you a letter and then wait for two weeks to see if you publish it or not. They want to send you an e-mail now and see it in the paper tomorrow with the full colour picture they sent in!

In relation to new media, most delegates agree with Samantha when she says: "I think the attitude we need to adopt is to be open." This stance has worked for several organisations including Mozambican editor, Salomao Moyana, who told delegates about a technological innovation which has benefited *Magazine Independente*, where he is editor. With the help of ICTs they are able to have a colour magazine printed in South Africa and shipped back to the border for less than it would have cost to print a black and white paper in Mozambique. Anton van Zyl tells a similar story of how, by using ICTs, his organisation is able to entirely produce a publication for a one-man operation in a township area 500 kilometres away ('Development, diversity' p.185). Delegates also pointed out that ICTs could streamline the franchising of *Super Buddies* and make money for all involved should Siphwe Nkambule choose to go this route (p.88). And the radio arm of *MOAFRIKA Radio and Newsmagazine* in Lesotho, where Sebonomoea Ramainoane is editor-in-chief, audio streams its broadcasts, potentially reaching audiences worldwide.

Samantha Kalisa continues:

There's a lot of talk about the fact that the younger generation aren't reading as much as they used to and in our country most of the time you see a child of 14 playing around with a little PDA or Blueberry, accessing the Internet on the cell phone. Then very weirdly you see a youngster pick up a newspaper and read. We have to find ways of maintaining the readership, and I think the challenge is adapting our newspaper. For instance, have them use the cell phone to access extra information. The *Sunday Times* launched their new daily, *The Times*, where they just give you a little blurb and if you want the full story you have to go to the website or SMS a number. I see IOL is doing the same thing. Technology opens the world to people.

As research shows,³ this world of possibilities is closed to people who cannot afford the technology, and this limitation is thought to be marginalising large segments of the population in many countries and widening the divides between rich and poor, urban and rural.

One delegate points to the pressing problems that new media pose for running parallel systems: "How do

you channel traffic from the one to the other? Do you come up with a new editorial team to run an online publication at the same time that you have your own print media?" Beata Kasale, publisher of *The Voice* in Botswana adds:

Our biggest challenge is that our online edition is competing with the newspaper. How do you keep up with the news to make sure that your online publication earns you revenue? Quite a number of us run weeklies but once you've done your paper, what's happening with your website? How do you convince advertisers to come on board?

One solution is to offer limited content on the website. But this does not address the issue of generating advertising revenue. Yet many companies, large and small, have harnessed the power of the Internet to good advantage, both in terms of visibility and the bottom line. To do so requires specialist skills, which are in short supply in many of the countries where delegates work. Raphael Khumalo, CEO of *Zimind Publishers* in Zimbabwe, confirms this:

One of our major problems in our newsrooms is that we have two weekly newspapers and both of them have websites. Our strategy has been to say, 'OK first we'll finish the weekly paper then upload it onto the website.' But news happens on a daily basis and we're unable to then update fast enough. One of the things we realized is that an online edition has to have a dedicated editor who will write and edit news stories before uploading them to ensure the integrity of our sites. This is a major challenge for us as our websites have not started generating sufficient revenue to pay wages. Another issue is limited resources – technology and the skills it requires are expensive.

Alfred Ntonga, deputy CEO and editor-in-chief of *Nation Publications* in Malawi, concludes:

One of the biggest challenges that we face is globalisation and what it entails. Today most of the activities and interests of various groups in our country, particularly business and government, are going beyond borders of the country. We're talking more about the SADC regional grouping, which is becoming an important factor, trickling down to shape even the interests of individuals and to impact on their lives. Lately we're getting the feeling that some people are becoming impatient with Africa as it is, and are trying to bring our countries even closer. We don't know how soon that will become a reality, but definitely it's a sign that the focus will probably shift towards people wanting news, not only to be informed about what's happening, but also to get news that has a functional value to their lives. And of course there are also relations at the world level and how we relate to that. I think working with technology and the changes it brings is key if we are going to effectively capture opportunities and make sure that we place our countries and their interests closer to what everybody else is doing and not become a marginalised people. I can see that as a challenge now and one that's growing with time.

Endnotes

1. AMDI: <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org/amdi> IREX: <http://www.irex.org/>
Konrad Adenauer Foundation: <http://www.kasmedia.org/> MISA: <http://www.misa.org/>
2. AMDI, 2006; IREX, 2007; Milne et al., 2007.
3. AMDI: <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org/amdi> IREX: <http://www.irex.org/> Milne et al., 2007;
MISA: <http://www.misa.org/>

Signing Off

Media in Africa is in an exciting, challenging phase of development, and we have talented, resourceful media leaders to shape its visions, values, goals and roles. But the region's capacity to support the ongoing professional development of current leaders, as well as train and groom new leadership candidates, is limited. Nevertheless there are several experienced leaders in the region who have much to teach us. This is why we hosted a media *lekgotla* – a space for some of these leaders to raise the important issues, discuss current challenges and share solutions. This book takes their collective wisdom into the wider domain.

References

NOTE: All websites were accessed between November and December 2007

AMDI (The African Media Development Initiative). (2006). SADC Country reports. Accessed from: <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org/amdi>

Babbie, E., Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research* (South African ed.). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Benton T. & Craib I. (2001). *Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. Hampshire: Palgrave.

Capra, F. (1989). *Uncommon wisdom*. London: Flamingo.

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative Analysis. Practice and Innovation*. London: Routledge.

Fourie, P.J. (2005). Towards linking normative theory, communication policy and audiences in South African communication research. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 31(1):13-32.

Greenfield, T., Ribbins, P. (Eds.). (1993). *Greenfield on educational administration: Towards a humane science*. New York: Routledge.

Grice, S., Humphries, M. (1997). Critical management studies in postmodernity: Oxymorons in outer space? *Journal for Organizational Change Management*, 10(5), 412-424.

IREX (International Research Exchange). (2007). Country reports. Accessed from: <http://www.irex.org/>

Konrad Adenauer Foundation. (2007). *SADC Media Law: A Handbook for Media Practitioners. Volume 2: A comparative overview of media laws and practice in Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia*. [Also laws in other SADC countries]. Accessed from: <http://www.kasmedia.org/>

Milne, C., Rau, A., Du Toit, P., Mdlongwa, F. (2006). *Key Editorial and Business Strategies: A Case Study of Six Independent Community Newspapers*. Grahamstown: Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership & MDDA (Media Development & Diversity Agency). Available from <http://www.spiml.com> or <http://www.spiml.co.za>

Milne, C., Rau, A., Du Toit, P., Mdlongwa, F. (2007). *Media management training needs assessment within the SADC region*. Grahamstown: Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership & NiZA (Netherlands institute for Southern Africa). Available from <http://www.spiml.com> or <http://www.spiml.co.za>

MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa). (2005). *So This Is Democracy? Report on the state of media freedom and freedom of expression in Southern Africa*. Namibia: MISA. Accessed from: <http://www.misa.org/>

NiZA (Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa) (2007). Accessed from <http://www.niza.nl/>

Rau, A., Milne, C., Du Toit, P., Mdlongwa, F. (2008). Positioning Independent Community Media: Findings from a case study of six small South African newspapers. *Communicatio*, 34(1), 95-112. Pretoria: Unisa/Routledge.

Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R.B., Smith, B. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building an organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Wheatley, M.J. (1999). *Leadership and the new science*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

