

Rotary



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Title:

Media for Peace: Peace and conflict-sensitive reporting in Zimbabwe

Location:

Zimbabwe – National

Start and Completion Date:

01 March 2024 – 28 September 2024

Abstract:

The project aimed to enhance the capacity of media professionals to contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Zimbabwe. Given the country's historical context of political violence and socio-economic challenges, media is critical in shaping public perceptions and narratives around conflict and peace. This project focused on training journalists and media practitioners in conflict-sensitive reporting techniques, emphasizing the importance of ethical journalism and responsible communication. Workshops and training sessions covered identifying and mitigating hate speech, promoting accurate information, and fostering dialogue among diverse community groups. In addition to training, the project established a platform for collaboration among media outlets, civil society organizations, and conflict resolution experts. This collaborative network will facilitate sharing of best practices and resources, enabling media professionals to produce content that promotes peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion. The project's expected outcomes included improved reporting on conflict-related issues, increased awareness of the media's role in peacebuilding, and stronger partnerships between media and civil society. Ultimately, this initiative sought to empower Zimbabwean media to act as a catalyst for positive change, fostering a culture of peace and dialogue in a society marked by divisions and tensions. Through responsible and sensitive reporting, the project aimed to contribute to sustainable positive peace in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Background

Zimbabwe has a complex historical and socio-political landscape characterized by periods of intense political violence, social unrest, and economic instability. Since its independence in 1980, the country has experienced multiple electoral crises, notably the violent aftermath of the 2008 elections, which highlighted the detrimental impact of divisive rhetoric and misinformation propagated through media channels. The media, while holding the potential to foster dialogue and reconciliation, has often been used as a tool for inciting violence and perpetuating divisions.

The Zimbabwean media landscape is marked by a dichotomy between state-controlled and independent media. State-run outlets frequently disseminate propaganda that reinforces government narratives, while independent media faces challenges such as censorship, harassment, and limited resources. As a result, the public often receives conflicting messages about political and social issues, exacerbating tensions and mistrust within communities.

Given this backdrop, the need for peace and conflict-sensitive reporting has become increasingly urgent. Journalists and media practitioners play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and influencing perceptions of conflict and peace. However, many media professionals lack the training and resources necessary to report on sensitive issues in a manner that promotes understanding and reconciliation.

The "Media for Peace" project aimed to address these challenges by equipping journalists with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in conflict-sensitive reporting. By focusing on ethical journalism and responsible communication, the project sought to transform the media's role in Zimbabwe from one of division to one of unity and peacebuilding.

Additionally, fostering collaboration between media outlets, civil society organizations, and conflict resolution experts created a supportive network that encouraged the sharing of best practices and resources. This collaborative approach is essential for building a media environment that prioritizes peace and constructive dialogue.

Ultimately, the project envisioned a media landscape in Zimbabwe that not only informs the public but also contributes to the healing and reconciliation necessary for sustainable peace. Through effective training and collaboration, "Media for Peace" aimed to empower journalists to become agents of change, fostering a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding in a society striving for stability and unity.

Problem Statement:

Zimbabwe faces significant challenges in its media landscape, particularly concerning the role of journalism in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The historical context of political violence, social unrest, and economic instability has resulted in a media environment that often exacerbates tensions rather than alleviating them. Many media outlets, particularly state-controlled ones, perpetuate divisive narratives that fuel political polarization and social conflict. This reporting often lacks the sensitivity required to address the complexities of Zimbabwe's socio-political environment, leading to an escalation of tensions rather than promoting dialogue. Journalists and media practitioners frequently lack the training necessary to engage in peace and conflict-sensitive reporting. Coupled with the proliferation of misinformation and propaganda which undermines trust in media institutions and exacerbates conflict. Independent media in Zimbabwe faces numerous challenges, including censorship, harassment, and restricted access to resources and information. This environment stifles diverse perspectives and hinders the media's ability to act as a constructive force in society. The lack of collaboration among media outlets, civil society organizations, and conflict resolution experts limits the effectiveness of media initiatives aimed at promoting peace. This fragmentation prevents the sharing of best practices and resources necessary for fostering a cohesive approach to conflict-sensitive reporting.

Goals and Objectives:

Expected results are both in the long and short term and these include:

Improved Journalistic Practices: The project aims to enhance the journalistic skills and knowledge of reporters in covering peace-related issues and conflicts. As a result, journalists are expected to demonstrate a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics, ethical reporting standards, and the importance of promoting peace in their work.

Accurate and Balanced Reporting: Through the training provided, journalists are likely to develop the ability to report on conflicts in a more accurate, balanced, and unbiased manner. They will gain insights into the complexities of conflicts, enabling them to present multiple perspectives and avoid sensationalism or misinformation that can escalate tensions.

Conflict Sensitivity: The project aims to promote conflict-sensitive reporting, where journalists consider the potential impacts of their coverage on peace and stability. Journalists will receive training on analyzing the context, identifying sensitive issues, and using appropriate language and framing to avoid exacerbating conflicts. This approach can contribute to reducing societal divisions and fostering dialogue.

Increased Awareness and Understanding: By promoting peace-oriented reporting, the project seeks to raise public awareness and understanding of conflicts and peacebuilding efforts in Zimbabwe. Journalists can play a crucial role in informing the public about the underlying causes, consequences, and potential solutions to conflicts, leading to more informed and engaged citizens.

Dialogue and Reconciliation: Through responsible reporting, the project aims to create a conducive environment for dialogue and reconciliation. Journalists can help facilitate constructive conversations among stakeholders, promote understanding, and contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives in Zimbabwe.

Strengthened Media Ethics and Standards: By emphasizing ethical reporting practices, the project can contribute to strengthening media ethics and professional standards in Zimbabwe. Journalists will be encouraged to adhere to principles of accuracy, fairness, and impartiality, which can enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the media sector.

Peaceful and Inclusive Public Discourse: The project's implementation is expected to encourage peaceful and inclusive public discourse on sensitive issues. By promoting responsible reporting, journalists can influence public conversations towards constructive engagement, tolerance, and understanding, fostering a culture of peace within Zimbabwean society.

Collaborative Networks: The project may facilitate the formation of collaborative networks among journalists, media organizations, civil society, and peacebuilding actors. These networks can provide ongoing support, knowledge sharing, and opportunities for joint initiatives, further enhancing the impact of peace and conflict-sensitive reporting efforts.

Challenges and mitigation strategies:

Key challenges along with corresponding mitigation strategies:

1. Challenge: Lack of Training in Conflict-Sensitive Reporting

Mitigation Strategy: Comprehensive Training Programs

To address the skills gap among journalists, the project implemented comprehensive training programs focused on conflict-sensitive reporting techniques. These programs included workshops, seminars, and online training resources that covered topics such as ethical journalism, recognizing and avoiding hate speech, and understanding the dynamics of conflict. Collaborating with experienced trainers and conflict resolution experts to enhance the quality and relevance of the training.

2. Challenge: Censorship and Governmental Pressure

Mitigation Strategy: Establishing Safe Reporting Networks

To counteract censorship and governmental pressure, the project created safe reporting networks that allow journalists to share experiences, challenges, and strategies for navigating the media landscape. This network provided a platform for journalists to support each other, share resources, and develop collective strategies for reporting under restrictive conditions. Additionally, advocacy efforts were made to promote media freedom and push for policy changes that protect journalists.

3. Challenge: Misinformation and Propaganda

Mitigation Strategy: Media Literacy Campaigns

To combat the spread of misinformation, the project implemented a media literacy campaign which was aimed at educating the public about recognizing credible sources and understanding the impact of misinformation. The campaign involved one community workshop. By enhancing public awareness, the project aided in the reduction of the influence of false narratives.

4. Challenge: Limited Resources and Access to Information

Mitigation Strategy: Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

To address limitations in resources, the project will engage in resource mobilization efforts, seeking partnerships with local and international NGOs, academic institutions, and media organizations. These partnerships can provide financial support, access to training materials, and opportunities for journalists to attend conferences and workshops. By pooling resources, the project can enhance its capacity to deliver effective training and outreach.

5. Challenge: Fragmented Media Landscape

Mitigation Strategy: Building Collaborative Networks

To overcome fragmentation in the media landscape, the project will focus on building collaborative networks among media outlets, civil society organizations, and conflict resolution experts. These networks will facilitate the sharing of best practices, resources, and strategies for peacebuilding. Regular meetings, joint initiatives, and collaborative reporting projects will promote solidarity and enhance the overall effectiveness of media efforts in promoting peace.

6. Challenge: Resistance to Change within Media Institutions

Mitigation Strategy: Engaging Media Leadership

To address resistance to adopting conflict-sensitive reporting practices, the project will actively engage media leadership and decision-makers. Workshops and discussions will highlight the benefits of peace-oriented journalism not only for social cohesion but also for media credibility and audience trust. By securing buy-in from media leadership, the project can foster an organizational culture that values and prioritizes conflict-sensitive reporting.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The role of media in peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive reporting has garnered significant scholarly attention, particularly in contexts marked by political violence and social unrest.

This literature review synthesizes key findings from relevant studies and frameworks that inform the "Media for Peace" project in Zimbabwe.

The Role of Media in Conflict and Peacebuilding

Research has established that media can play a dual role in conflict situations: it can either exacerbate tensions or contribute to peacebuilding. According to Galtung (2000), media not only reflects societal conflicts but also shapes public perceptions and narratives. In environments like Zimbabwe, where political affiliations often dictate social relations, media narratives can either reinforce divisions or promote understanding and reconciliation.

Conflict-Sensitive Reporting

Conflict-sensitive reporting is defined as journalism that recognizes the potential impact of reporting on conflict dynamics and actively seeks to promote peace (Thompson, 2007). This approach involves understanding the underlying issues of a conflict and framing stories in a way that avoids inflaming tensions. Studies show that journalists trained in conflict-sensitive reporting are more likely to produce content that fosters dialogue and mitigates violence (Landsberg, 2005). Such training is crucial in Zimbabwe, where journalists face the challenge of navigating a complex political landscape often marked by censorship and state control.

Challenges Faced by Journalists in Conflict Zones

Journalists in Zimbabwe encounter numerous obstacles, including harassment, censorship, and limited access to information. Raftopoulos (2009) discusses how the political climate in Zimbabwe has led to a chilling effect on the media, where journalists operate under constant threat of repression. This environment not only stifles free expression but also limits the ability of journalists to engage in conflict-sensitive reporting. Studies indicate that without adequate support and training, journalists may resort to sensationalism, further exacerbating existing tensions (Moyo, 2014).

The Impact of Misinformation

Misinformation plays a significant role in conflict escalation, particularly in politically charged environments. The proliferation of false information can incite violence and deepen divisions within communities (Harlow & Johnson, 2011). In Zimbabwe, both state and non-state actors have been known to manipulate media narratives to serve their interests, leading to a mistrust of media institutions. Research highlights the importance of media literacy initiatives to

empower citizens to critically evaluate information sources and combat misinformation (Mansell, 2018).

Community Media and Local Engagement

Community media, particularly radio, has been recognized as a valuable tool for peacebuilding in Zimbabwe. Moyo (2014) emphasizes the role of community radio in facilitating local dialogue and providing a platform for marginalized voices. These media outlets can promote peace by addressing local grievances and fostering a sense of community. Collaborative initiatives that engage local journalists can enhance the effectiveness of media in peacebuilding efforts.

Collaborative Approaches to Media and Peacebuilding

Successful peacebuilding initiatives often involve collaboration between media, civil society, and conflict resolution experts. The establishment of networks that facilitate the sharing of best practices and resources can enhance the capacity of media to contribute positively to conflict situations (Baker, 2014). In Zimbabwe, fostering partnerships among various stakeholders is essential to creating a cohesive approach to peace and conflict-sensitive reporting.

The literature underscores the critical importance of media in shaping conflict dynamics and promoting peace in Zimbabwe. Given the challenges faced by journalists in this context, the "Media for Peace" project aims to address these gaps through targeted training and collaborative initiatives. By equipping journalists with the skills necessary for conflict-sensitive reporting and fostering partnerships among stakeholders, the project seeks to transform the media landscape from one that exacerbates tensions to one that promotes dialogue and reconciliation.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical underpinnings of the "Media for Peace" project draw from a diverse array of frameworks that highlight the critical interplay between media, conflict, and peacebuilding. By integrating concepts from conflict transformation theory, framing theory, agenda-setting theory, social responsibility theory, peace journalism, and constructivist theory, the project empowered journalists in Zimbabwe to engage in peace and conflict-sensitive reporting. This approach not only enhanced their reporting practices but also contributed to the broader goal of fostering a culture of peace and dialogue in a society marked by historical divisions and tensions.

Conflict transformation theory emphasizes the need to address the underlying causes of conflict rather than merely managing its symptoms. According to Galtung (2000), conflict is not a static entity but a dynamic process that involves social relationships and structures. This theory posits that media can play a pivotal role in transforming conflicts by fostering dialogue, promoting

understanding, and facilitating reconciliation. The project aimed to empower journalists to report in ways that contribute to conflict transformation, focusing on narratives that encourage peaceful coexistence and address underlying grievances.

Framing theory explores how the presentation of information influences public perception and interpretation of events (Entman, 1993). The way media frames issues can significantly impact how conflicts are perceived and managed. For instance, media that emphasizes division and conflict can perpetuate hostility, while frames that highlight common ground and shared interests can promote peace. This project guided journalists in adopting conflict-sensitive frames that encourage dialogue and understanding, thus mitigating the potential for conflict escalation.

Agenda-setting theory posits that media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By prioritizing certain issues and narratives, media can influence public discourse and policy outcomes. In the context of Zimbabwe, the project aimed to encourage media outlets to prioritize peace-oriented content, thereby shaping public attention towards constructive dialogue and reconciliation. This aspect of the project involved training journalists to identify and highlight peace-related stories that resonate with their audiences.

Social responsibility theory asserts that the media has an obligation to serve the public good by providing accurate, fair, and balanced information (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). This theory underlines the importance of ethical journalism and the media's role in fostering an informed citizenry. By promoting responsible reporting practices, the project sought to ensure that journalists understand their role in contributing to social cohesion and peace, thus enhancing the media's credibility and public trust.

Peace journalism is a specific approach that advocates for reporting practices that promote peace and conflict resolution (Lynch & Galtung, 2010). This framework encouraged journalists to focus on the causes of conflict, highlight peace initiatives, and provide platforms for diverse voices. By integrating peace journalism principles into training programs, the project equipped journalists with the tools to report in ways that contribute to peaceful outcomes and facilitate dialogue among conflicting parties.

Constructivist theory emphasizes the role of social interactions and shared beliefs in shaping identities and relationships (Wendt, 1999). In the context of media and peacebuilding, this theory suggests that narratives constructed through media can influence how communities perceive each other and their conflicts. The project encouraged journalists to craft narratives that promote a collective identity centered on peace and reconciliation, thereby fostering social cohesion in a divided society.

Change theory and how it was applied:

The application of Change Theory in the project provided a structured approach to transforming media practices in a challenging environment. By focusing on awareness, motivation, capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and feedback, the project aimed to create a sustainable impact on how journalists report on conflict, ultimately contributing to a culture of peace and understanding in Zimbabwe.

Key Components of Change Theory

Understanding the Change Process: Change Theory emphasizes that change is a process rather than an event. It involves several stages, including awareness, motivation, and action. In the project, this understanding informs the approach to training and capacity-building for journalists.

Identification of Barriers to Change: Recognizing the obstacles that hinder change is crucial. In Zimbabwe, these barriers include censorship, lack of resources, and entrenched practices of sensationalism. The project actively identified these challenges to devise targeted strategies for overcoming them.

Stakeholder Engagement: Successful change requires the involvement of all stakeholders, including journalists, media organizations, civil society, and the community. Engaging these groups ensured that the change process is inclusive and considered diverse perspectives.

Feedback and Adaptation: Change Theory recognizes the importance of feedback mechanisms to assess the impact of interventions and adapt strategies accordingly. The project incorporated regular evaluations to refine training methods and reporting practices based on real-world outcomes.

Application of Change Theory in the Project

Awareness and Education: The project began by raising awareness among journalists about the importance of peace and conflict-sensitive reporting. Workshops and training sessions were designed to educate participants on the impact of their reporting on conflict dynamics. By providing evidence and case studies, the project cultivated a deeper understanding of how media can either exacerbate or mitigate tensions.

Building Motivation for Change: To motivate journalists to adopt peace-oriented practices, the project highlighted the benefits of conflict-sensitive reporting—not only for societal harmony but also for enhancing their professional credibility and audience trust. Success stories from other contexts where media positively influenced peace initiatives serve as powerful motivators.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/opinion-analysis/article/200030946/gukurahundi-hearings-where-from-and-possible-outcomes>

<https://www.chronicle.co.zw/gukurahundi-hearings-an-opportunity-to-bury-a-painful-past/>

Capacity Building: Practical training sessions equipped journalists with the skills needed for conflict-sensitive reporting. This included techniques for ethical journalism, understanding conflict dynamics, and employing peace journalism principles. By enhancing their reporting capabilities, the project facilitates the transition from traditional reporting practices to more responsible and constructive approaches.

Creating Collaborative Networks: The project fostered collaboration among journalists, media organizations, and civil society. By establishing networks that encourage the sharing of resources and best practices, the project created an environment conducive to sustained change. Collaborative initiatives, such as joint reporting projects on peacebuilding efforts, reinforce the importance of unified action in promoting peace.

Feedback Mechanisms: Regular evaluations and feedback sessions were built into the project framework. Journalists were encouraged to share their experiences and challenges in implementing conflict-sensitive reporting. This feedback loop not only informed ongoing training but also helped adapt strategies to better meet the needs of journalists and the communities they serve.

Sustaining Change: To ensure that the changes in reporting practices are sustained over time, the project includes follow-up support and advanced training for journalists. Initiatives such as mentorship programs and refresher courses help reinforce the skills learned and keep peace and conflict-sensitive reporting at the forefront of journalistic practices.

Methods and Design:

The project was structured into several key phases, each designed to build upon the previous one:

Phase 1: Needs Assessment

Phase 2: Training and Capacity Building

Phase 3: Implementation of Conflict-Sensitive Reporting

Phase 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback

Phase 5: Sustainability and Follow-Up

Phase 1: Needs Assessment

Methods:

Surveys and Interviews: Conduct surveys among journalists and media professionals to identify current practices, challenges, and training needs related to conflict-sensitive reporting. In-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including media executives and civil society leaders, will provide qualitative insights.

Focus Groups: Organize focus group discussions with journalists from various media outlets to explore specific barriers to conflict-sensitive reporting and gather ideas for effective training.

Expected Outcomes:

A comprehensive understanding of the current media landscape and the specific needs of journalists in Zimbabwe.

Phase 2: Training and Capacity Building

Methods:

Workshops and Training Sessions: Developed and conducted a series of interactive workshops that covered:

- Principles of peace journalism
- Techniques for conflict-sensitive reporting
- Ethical considerations in journalism
- Strategies for fact-checking and combating misinformation

Peer Learning and Mentorship: Establish a mentorship program pairing experienced journalists with emerging reporters to provide ongoing support and guidance in applying conflict-sensitive practices.

Expected Outcomes:

Enhanced skills and knowledge among journalists, leading to more responsible and constructive reporting.

Phase 3: Implementation of Conflict-Sensitive Reporting

Methods:

Collaborative Reporting Projects: the aim was to facilitate joint reporting initiatives that focus on peacebuilding stories, community dialogues, and conflict resolution efforts. This encourages collaboration among journalists from different media outlets.

Media Campaigns: Launch campaigns that highlight positive stories of reconciliation and community resilience, showcasing successful conflict resolution efforts.

Expected Outcomes:

Increased production and dissemination of conflict-sensitive content that promotes peace and understanding.

Phase 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback

Methods:

Monitoring Tools: Develop monitoring tools to evaluate the quality of reporting produced during the project. This may include content analysis frameworks to assess adherence to conflict-sensitive principles.

Feedback Sessions: Organized regular feedback sessions with journalists to discuss challenges faced in implementing new practices and to share success stories.

Expected Outcomes:

Continuous improvement of training and reporting practices based on real-world experiences.

Phase 5: Sustainability and Follow-Up**Methods:**

Establishment of a Media Network: Created a network of journalists and media organizations committed to ongoing collaboration and the promotion of peace journalism. This network in the long term, can facilitate resource sharing and support.

Refresher Training and Advanced Workshops: These will offer follow-up training sessions to reinforce skills and introduce new concepts in conflict-sensitive reporting.

Expected Outcomes:

A sustainable community of practice among journalists dedicated to peace and conflict-sensitive reporting in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER THREE**Interventions and Activities:**

Activity	Target/Objective	Indicators
Meetings with the gatekeepers	Introductory meeting: to introduce the SCI and scope of the project, discuss work parameters, and roll out plan.	1 Introductory meeting held.

	Follow-up meetings with gatekeepers and stakeholders on program updates.	3 follow up meetings were held for program update, and final project close-out meeting.
Provincial stakeholder engagement Meetings	-Working with stakeholders and implementing partners on Peace Journalism and Conflict Sensitive Reporting Zimbabwe	2 stakeholder engagement meetings were convened in Harare.
Media sensitization workshops	Conduct Media sensitization workshops on covering Peace Journalism and Conflict Sensitive Reporting Zimbabwe	3 sensitization workshops were held to focus on Conflict-sensitive reporting. They were done in collaboration with Women in News Africa, Conflict Lab, SheRoars and Women Writers Support Network Zimbabwe

Key findings / impact:

The “Media for Peace” project has yielded several important findings that highlight the effectiveness of peace and conflict-sensitive reporting in Zimbabwe. These findings provide insights into the current media landscape, the challenges faced by journalists, and the potential for media to contribute positively to peacebuilding efforts.

1. Increased Awareness of Conflict Sensitivity

One of the primary outcomes of the project was a marked increase in awareness among journalists regarding the importance of conflict-sensitive reporting. Training sessions emphasized how narratives can influence public perception and escalate or de-escalate tensions. Participants reported feeling more equipped to recognize the implications of their reporting.

2. Enhanced Reporting Practices

Journalists who participated in the training demonstrated improved reporting practices. They began to employ peace journalism principles, focusing on the root causes of conflicts rather than sensationalizing violence. This shift has led to more nuanced coverage that promotes dialogue and understanding among different community groups.

3. Collaboration Among Media Professionals

The project fostered collaboration among journalists, media organizations, and civil society groups. Establishing networks for sharing resources and best practices created a supportive environment that encouraged collective action. Journalists reported feeling more connected and supported in their efforts to promote peace through their work.

4. Challenges of Censorship and Limited Resources

Despite the positive changes, journalists continued to face significant challenges, including censorship and limited access to resources. Many participants highlighted ongoing governmental pressure that stifles independent reporting. This finding underscores the need for continued advocacy for media freedom and stronger protections for journalists.

5. Public Engagement and Media Literacy

The project's emphasis on community engagement and media literacy proved valuable. Initiatives aimed at educating the public about conflict-sensitive media helped foster a more informed audience. Participants noted that communities began to demand more responsible reporting, through increased complains via the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe, which in turn encouraged journalists to adopt better practices.

6. Sustained Interest in Peace-Oriented Reporting

The training sessions sparked a sustained interest among journalists in pursuing peace-oriented stories. Many participants expressed a commitment to continue exploring themes of reconciliation, social cohesion, and community resilience in their reporting. This suggests a shift in the media narrative towards more constructive engagement with conflict.

7. Feedback Mechanisms as Tools for Improvement

The establishment of feedback mechanisms allowed journalists to share their experiences and challenges with implementing conflict-sensitive practices. This iterative process not only informed ongoing training but also built a culture of continuous improvement within the media landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR

General Conclusion

The “Media for Peace” project has demonstrated the potential for media to play a transformative role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Zimbabwe. While challenges remain, particularly regarding censorship and resource limitations, the project has laid the groundwork for more responsible and constructive journalism. These key findings highlight the importance of ongoing support and training for journalists, as well as the need for a conducive environment for media freedom, to foster a culture of peace in Zimbabwean society.

Recommendations / implications for Policy:

These recommendations aim to address ongoing challenges and promote a more constructive media environment conducive to peacebuilding.

1. Strengthen Training Programs

Expand Training Scope: Build on existing training initiatives by introducing advanced modules that cover topics like digital media literacy, crisis reporting, and the use of social media for peacebuilding.

Tailored Workshops: Develop specialized workshops for different media sectors (print, broadcast, online) to address specific challenges and opportunities relevant to each medium.

2. Advocate for Media Freedom

Policy Advocacy: Engage with policymakers to advocate for laws and regulations that protect journalists from censorship and harassment. Establishing a legal framework that upholds media freedom is crucial for independent reporting.

Support Networks: Create support networks for journalists facing intimidation or censorship, providing legal assistance and resources to help them navigate challenges.

3. Enhance Collaboration and Networking

Create Collaborative Platforms: Establish platforms for collaboration among journalists, media organizations, and civil society. Regular forums and workshops can facilitate knowledge sharing and joint initiatives focused on peacebuilding.

Partnerships with NGOs: Strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations working in peacebuilding to create opportunities for joint reporting on community initiatives and conflict resolution efforts.

4. Promote Community Engagement and Media Literacy

Community Workshops: Organize workshops in communities to educate the public about the role of media in conflict and peace. This initiative can empower citizens to critically engage with media content and demand responsible reporting.

Feedback Mechanisms: Implement feedback mechanisms that allow community members to provide input on media coverage, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability in local reporting.

5. Utilize Technology for Peace Initiatives

Digital Platforms: Leverage digital platforms and social media to disseminate peace-oriented content and engage younger audiences. Initiatives can include online campaigns promoting dialogue and understanding.

Mobile Reporting Tools: Equip journalists with mobile reporting tools and training on how to use them effectively for covering peace initiatives and community stories.

6. Monitor and Evaluate Progress

Ongoing Evaluation: Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of training and initiatives over time. Regular assessments can help identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes.

Research and Documentation: Encourage research on the impact of media on peacebuilding in Zimbabwe to provide evidence-based insights and inform future strategies.

7. Sustainability and Follow-Up Support

Mentorship Programs: Develop mentorship programs that pair experienced journalists with those seeking to enhance their conflict-sensitive reporting skills. Ongoing support can help sustain changes in reporting practices.

Resource Allocation: Secure funding and resources for long-term initiatives focused on peace journalism to ensure the sustainability of efforts beyond the initial project timeline.

Sustainability plan:

This sustainability plan outlines key strategies and actions to maintain momentum, support ongoing initiatives, and foster a culture of responsible journalism.

Capacity Building and Continuous Training

Ongoing Training Programs: Develop a schedule for regular follow-up training sessions and workshops to reinforce skills in conflict-sensitive reporting. This includes advanced courses that adapt to emerging trends and challenges in the media landscape.

Mentorship Initiatives: Establish a mentorship program pairing experienced journalists with emerging reporters to provide guidance, support, and knowledge transfer. This can help cultivate a new generation of conflict-sensitive journalists.

Establishing Collaborative Networks

Media Collaboratives: Form a coalition of media organizations, civil society groups, and academic institutions dedicated to peace journalism. This network can facilitate sharing of resources, best practices, and collaborative reporting initiatives.

Regular Networking Events: Organize regular forums, conferences, and roundtable discussions to keep stakeholders engaged and foster collaboration on peace-oriented projects.

Advocacy for Media Freedom

Engagement with Policymakers: Continue to advocate for legal protections for journalists and media organizations. Engage with government officials and stakeholders to promote policies that support media independence and freedom of expression.

Support Structures: Create mechanisms for providing legal aid and support to journalists facing harassment or censorship, ensuring they can operate safely and freely.

Community Engagement and Media Literacy

Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch ongoing community engagement initiatives to educate the public about the importance of responsible media and how to critically engage with news. This can create a more informed audience that demands quality reporting.

Feedback Mechanisms: Implement platforms for community feedback on media coverage, fostering accountability and encouraging journalists to remain responsive to community needs.

Utilizing Technology for Ongoing Engagement

Digital Platforms: Develop and maintain digital platforms (websites, social media pages) that promote peace-oriented content, share success stories, and engage the public in discussions around conflict and peace.

Training on Digital Tools: Provide journalists with skills to effectively use digital tools and social media for reporting and community engagement, ensuring they are equipped to adapt to the evolving media landscape.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish Evaluation Frameworks: Create a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the impact of ongoing training and initiatives. This will help identify successes, areas for improvement, and inform future strategies.

Regular Reporting: Generate regular reports on the outcomes of peace and conflict-sensitive reporting, highlighting successes and documenting case studies that can serve as examples for future efforts.

Resource Mobilization

Diverse Funding Sources: Identify and pursue diverse funding opportunities, including grants from international organizations, partnerships with NGOs, and potential sponsorship from private sector entities interested in supporting media initiatives.

Sustainability Grants: Apply for sustainability grants aimed at supporting long-term media projects focused on peace and conflict-sensitive journalism.

Integration into Media Curricula

Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Partner with journalism schools and universities to integrate peace journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting into their curricula. This will help institutionalize these practices and ensure that future journalists are trained in these essential skills.

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APPENDICES


Pictorials Max **5pgs** with descriptions



Caption: The collage of photos was taken over a two-day training with media practitioners and CSO communications specialist. The sensitization workshops

were part of creating a network of journalists who will spearhead the technical groups that aid in enhanced peace and conflict sensitive reporting in communities. From this engagement they participants agreed to set up a WhatsApp groups for communicators and journalists with keen interest in further trainings.



 Group info


Rotary

Positive Peace and Media Development in Africa

Group · 31 members

For Media and Communication professionals with an interest in learning about how our work connects with the 8 Pillars of Positive Peace. We will facilitate virtual and physical meetings with Rotary Clubs who are willing to share creative elements of building up compelling media narratives for development.



Group created by you, on 3/3/2024 at 8:01 AM



Caption: Stakeholder engagement meeting under the SheRoars Zimbabwe meeting with various women leaders. Guest of Honor (Seated: Second from right) Permanent secretary in the Zimbabwe Ministry of Women's Affairs Dr. Mavis Sibanda addressed the stakeholders on the nexus that exists between peace and development, and the critical role the media plays in engaging the communities.

CONFLICT LAB VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:



The Fellow was further invited to speak on international platforms which helped build her profile across the continent and world and has been engaged by various institutions on creating possible inroads of training journalists in various countries.

UNWOMEN: WOMEN FOR PEACE





With support from her supervisor Dr William Tayeebwa, the fellow was again invited to speak during a UNWOMEN two-day training workshop for female journalists in Uganda.

TRAINING GUIDE USED FOR THE SCI:

Proposal: Training Journalists in the Newsroom on Elements of Conflict and Peace Journalism

*This training will be conducted by **Rumbidzai Mashayahanya***

Background:

Journalists play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and narratives around conflicts, both local and global. The way journalists report on conflicts can either escalate tensions or contribute to peacebuilding efforts. Journalists must therefore be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to practice conflict-sensitive and peace-oriented journalism.

Objective:

The objective of this training is to equip journalists in the newsroom with the elements of conflict and peace journalism, enabling them to report on conflicts more responsibly and constructively.

Training Overview:

The training will be conducted over the course of one day and will cover the following key topics:

Understanding Conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definitions and typologies of conflict• Conflict analysis: root causes, dynamics, and stakeholders• The role of the media in conflict escalation and de-escalation	Principles of Conflict-Sensitive Journalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoiding language that polarizes or demonizes• Highlighting shared interests and common ground• Providing a balanced and nuanced representation of different perspectives• Focusing on the peace process and solutions, not just the violence
Principles of Peace Journalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasizing the voices and stories of ordinary people affected by the conflict• Exploring the underlying human and societal impacts of the conflict• Promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and non-violent approaches to conflict resolution• Highlighting peacebuilding initiatives and constructive actions	Practical Exercises and Case Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysing news coverage of a recent conflict and identifying opportunities for more conflict-sensitive and peace-oriented reporting• Developing story pitches and reporting strategies that embody the principles of peace journalism
Q&A and Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allowing participants to share their experiences, challenges, and best practices• Facilitating an open dialogue on the role of the media in conflict and peacebuilding	

Facilitators:

The training will be facilitated by experienced media experts and peace and conflict specialists, who have a deep understanding of the intersections between journalism and conflict transformation.

Target Audience:

The training is designed for journalists and editors working in the newsroom, including those covering domestic and international affairs, as well as those specializing in conflict reporting.



Expected Outcomes:

By the end of the training, participants will:



Fig. 1: Expected Outcomes

Participant Testimonies:

**Conflict Lab**
3,743 followers
4mo • 

Our recent webinar was an outstanding success, unearthing the nuanced dynamics of the intersectionality of gender, peace, and elections in Africa. Our exceptionally knowledgeable speakers led an impactful conversation, shedding light on critical issues and opportunities in this space.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our moderator, [Sandrine Diribe](#), whose exceptional coordination set a remarkable pace for the conversation.
Special thanks to our speakers:

[Imali Ngusale](#): Your insights on the challenges of women's involvement in leadership, drawing from experiences in East and Southern Africa, greatly enriched the discussion.

[OBAH ROSALINE](#): As always, your presentation on the unique challenges faced by women in conflict zones added a critical perspective to our conversation.


[Rumbidzai Mashayahanya](#): Your revelations on leveraging credible elections for peacebuilding uncovered unique avenues of opportunity.


[Lydie Mukasekuru](#): Your practical experiences in implementing Women, Peace, and

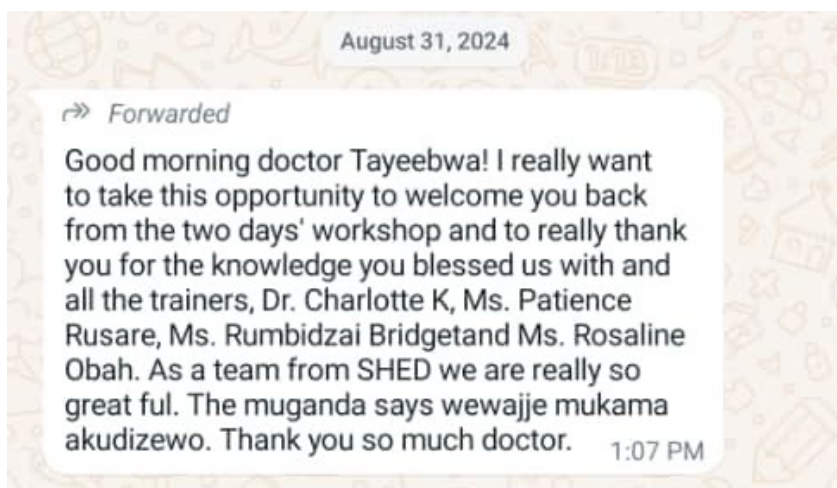
Conflict Lab feedback

Kad Initiative Uganda
We support vulnerable people to live purposeful lives throu

OCT 4

**Kad Initiative Uganda** • 4:05 PM
Thank you Ms Bridget for the insightful training you gave our young female journalists. Uganda is blessed by your knowledge and our journalists are ready to cobver the upcoming 2026 general election

**Rumbidzai Mashayahanya** • 4:09 PM
Thank you so much for the feedback. Please feel free



Feedback was also given in video format, which will be shared at the presentation of the SCI during the Capestone Seminar

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:

ACTIVITY & NARRATION	UNIT COST	TOTAL
Meetings with gatekeepers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airtime- communication Fuel Refreshments 	\$20.00 \$25.00 per meeting \$20. Per person*4	\$20.00 \$75.00 \$240.00
National stakeholder engagement meeting (Shared cots): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue hire 	\$150.00	\$150.00
Media sensitisation workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-day workshop with journalists - refreshments Venue hire Joint training with WIN-IFRA (transport reimbursement) 	\$50.00 per day \$50.00 per day \$10.00 per person – with 10 participants	\$100.00 \$100.00 \$100.00
Virtual engagements with Conflict lab and Women for Peace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data purchase 	\$40.00	\$40.00
GRAND TOTAL		\$825.00