



Brussels Rural Development Briefings
A series of meetings on ACP-EU development issues

Briefing session n°14

ACP Agricultural and Rural Development: why Media matters?

12th October 2009 – 14h30 – 18h30

European Commission, Borschette Centre, - Rue Froissart, 36, Room 0A

<http://brusselsbriefings.net>

Media: a development tool to be strengthened

The international policy circles including the 2008 World Bank development report and the FAO High Level Conference on World Food Security (Rome, June 2008) have brought back agriculture to the development agenda. However, investment into agriculture and rural development is still lagging behind and does not yet receive the priority it should deserve in order to respond to the many challenges: exponential population growth rates, food insecurity, climate change....

Media have to play a key part in raising both policy decision makers and the wider public's awareness about the role of agriculture. Although in many countries media are primarily reporting on agricultural related topics in case of natural hazards, flooding, droughts, food shortages or high food prices.

Why is that so? In most cases, journalists do not have an agricultural background. Indeed, they do miss adequate training but also relevant equipment and transportation means. Sometimes, this phenomenon might be explained by distrust between journalists and government representatives.

CTA believes that increasing the use of the media can contribute to correcting the current trend and provide a strategic link in the information dissemination and transmission chain that brings together the different protagonists in the agricultural and rural development sectors. One of CTA's primary goals is to encourage media in developing greater awareness among the public at large and the political bodies, in order to add to the positive image of agriculture. This potential remains largely unexplored in ACP countries.

The Brussels Briefing n°14 is part of the discussions which will be developed at the CTA 2009 annual seminar on "The Role of Media in the Agricultural Development of ACP Countries".

It aims to:

- Contribute to preparing strategies in terms of media capacity-building with regard to access and dissemination of information relevant to the ACP agricultural sector;
- Strengthen communication links between the media and other key stakeholders in the agricultural sector;
- Contribute to the identification of programmes to support the media.

Media is a sector undergoing significant growth and changes due to democratic reform and globalisation.

Yet, the lack of significant research on media and as well as reliable information, is a factor constraining both private and public (donor) investment. De facto, media are serving populations that are growing, principally among young, rural and non-literate groups.

Radio dominates the mass media spectrum with state-controlled radio services still commanding the biggest audiences in most countries but commercial stations demonstrating the largest consistent increases in numbers, followed by community radio, where growth, although significant in certain countries, has been irregular. Television is less widely available, especially in rural areas, although it is seen as a growing force. Newspapers are mostly concentrated in urban centres with varying growth patterns across the countries. In the new media sector, the adoption of mobile telephony has been the most spectacular, far exceeding uptake of the Internet. Mobile telephony and the rapid roll-out of satellite channels have changed the way even very poor people consume information in developing countries¹. The Information Divide runs across technology, gender, governance and content and often globalised media is lacking in authentic voices from the developing world, while it is well recognized that the media can lead to the development of democracy and promote an inclusive public sphere².

Creating a favorable environment for the Media

Millions of citizens in urban and rural areas cannot access information and most do not know how accessing information can benefit them. Access to infrastructure is important because it enhances communication and makes it more effective. It also makes connectivity more affordable: in Europe 3% of disposable income is spent on communication; in Africa, 15%. Independent media can boost economic development by promoting good governance and empowering citizens. Opening up media legislation and creating a regulatory environment creates new opportunities as well as new challenges to social groups and communities. Media support needs to be mainstreamed far more effectively across both policy and practice. However, development agency engagement in media and communications assistance remains fragmented and marginal. Research on the impact of the media on the poor needs to be strengthened³.

Media and Global Issues: Building capacities

The lack of local media coverage of the external driving forces of change on poor countries - international trade, climate change and global health for instance - is generating deficits in governance through continued public disengagement in these issues. These deficits can be tackled, however, through concerted media and communications strategies, that include assisting developing country journalists⁴. Building media capacities goes beyond the mere availability of technologies and requires long term commitments and investments. Journalists and associations of journalists need to be involved in agricultural and rural debates as to better understand them. Media specialists need to know better the main sources of information. To be effective, media monitoring and journalism training need to be part of a long-term, comprehensive strategy. Community media has a vital role to play in

¹ BBC World Service Trust, African Media Development Initiative, Research Summary report, 2006
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/AMD/AMD_summary_Report.pdf

² Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), Media matters. Perspectives on Advancing Governance & development from the Global Forum for media development, 2008
<http://www.internews.org/pubs/gfmd/mediamatters.pdf>

³ GFMD, Media matters, cit., <http://www.internews.org/pubs/gfmd/mediamatters.pdf>

⁴ GFMD, Media matters, cit., <http://www.internews.org/pubs/gfmd/mediamatters.pdf>

providing access to voice and communication for poor and marginalized groups, which frequently are excluded from mainstream media⁵.

The media must ultimately lead and sustain their own activities. This requires human resources and organizational capacity within the media which is often lacking due to problems such as limited finances to employ qualified staff, weak management skills and lack of appropriate training or learning opportunities. It is widely discussed that the future of media in ACP lies with the adoption of new ICTs that makes new demands on managing financial, technological and human resources.

Debates should focus on ways in which the media might overcome time and resource limitations to achieve the training, organizational change and networking that is necessary to be vibrant development actors and to improve the coverage of agricultural and rural development issues.

Specific questions to be addressed include:

- What do the media offer in terms of contributing to agricultural and rural development knowledge sharing, empowerment of rural communities and the improvement of national institutions?
- What is the current status of media capacity building in ACP countries today?
- What challenges do journalists and other media specialists willing to address agricultural and rural development issues, face in their daily work?
- More specifically, do young media professionals consider agricultural and rural development related issues as important to them while building their careers?
- Are the media sufficiently involved in strategic partnerships for agricultural and rural development?
- What expectations may the media have for their future role and involvement in agricultural and rural development?

Topics such as media capacity building needs, inter-linkages between different types of media at local, national, regional and international levels, opportunities for various types of media in the agricultural sector and also, the role of new media in efficient and effective information collection and communication will be addressed.

Global challenges affecting the ACP media and development actors

- The concentration of media ownership, especially in private hands.
- Increased segmentation: more and more different types of media are targeted at different audiences (the Internet, and satellite TV broadcasting).
- The electronic media threaten the economic profitability of the traditional media.
- Increased competition to be first which leads to less and less context, especially in broadcast media.
- In the developed world, 30–40% of young people are getting their news from non traditional media but from the Web and blogs. Confusion between news and editorial roles/opinions. The rise of blogging and citizen journalism is fundamentally affecting the public's relationship with media. In many countries, the public is no longer a passive recipient, but is actively engaging with the media, generating content, tailoring consumption to meet personal interests and passing comment on the work of professional journalists.

⁵ FAO and World Bank, World Congress of Communication for Development. Lessons, challenges and the Way Forward, 2007, <http://go.worldbank.org/HZ9K9XO7L0>

The future: Mainstreaming media in development

The rise of an information and communications economy and culture has reached, at a different pace, most of countries. Globally, there is an emerging awareness of the need to integrate the media into the development process, rather than ignoring the media or treating them as a threat for policy-makers and the development community. A 2008 study by Internews Europe and the Global Forum on Media Development (GFMD)⁶ has made a very strong case for state and donor support of the media to grow into national institutions, contributing to development. The media industry can facilitate an enabling role for stakeholders to monitor aid and enhance the ability of poor to make their voices heard. The GFMD is suggesting that media development become a component of future aid to developing countries⁷.

Objectives of the Briefing

In order to improve information sharing and promote networking, CTA, the EC-DG Development and EuropeAid, the ACP Secretariat, Euforic, Concord and IPS organise bimonthly briefings on key issues and challenges for rural development in the context of EU/ACP cooperation. The briefing on 12 October 2009 will discuss "ACP Rural Development: why Media matters?" in order to (i) raise awareness on existing and emerging key challenges; (ii) promote exchange of information and expertise; (iii) feed in the debate various perspectives on the role of media for the future of ACP rural development.

Target group

More than 100 ACP-EU policy makers, representatives of EU Member States, civil society groups, researchers and development practitioners, international organisations based in Brussels.

Available material

Input and comments before, during and after the meetings will be included in the Briefings blog: <http://brusselsbriefings.net/> . A short report and a Reader in printed and electronic format are produced shortly after the meeting.

⁶ GFMD, Media matters, cit., <http://www.internews.org/pubs/gfmd/mediamatters.pdf>

⁷ Amos Safo, Do the media matter? 2009, http://www.ghanaweb.com/public_agenda/article.php?ID=13474



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13h00-14h30 Registration

14h30-15h00 Introductory remarks: *European Commission, ACP Secretariat, CTA*

Synthesis of e-discussion: *Susanna Thorp, Laurence Lalanne, WRENmedia*

15h00-16h15 **Panel 1 – Mainstreaming media in development: the way to go?**

Globally, there is an emerging awareness on the need to integrate the media into the development process. This session will discuss the role media play in rural development and their relevance to international development. Should media development become a component determining future aid to developing countries? Moreover, what should be the policies and legislation in place to facilitate this process? This panel will look at the expectations arising from the agricultural and rural development sectors on the role of media.

Panelists: Round table discussion

- *H.E.Ms Brave Ndisale, Ambassador of Malawi in Brussels*
- *Hon. Ignatius Jean, Representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Guyana*
- *Thozì Gwanya, Director-General of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, South Africa*
- *Dr. Krishendaye Rampersad, Media and Literary Consultant, Trinidad*
- *Jean-Philippe Rapp, Director of the International Forum Médias Nord-Sud*
- *Dr. Hansjörg Neun, Director of CTA*

Discussant: Tumi Makgabo, African Broadcasting and Media, South Africa

16h15-16h45 Coffee Break

16h45-18h30 **Panel 2 – How media can better serve rural communities?**

This panel will discuss the challenges the ACP journalists and media specialists face when addressing agricultural and rural development issues in their day-to-day work, including the need for strengthening their capacities. We will look at how agriculturally-dependent rural communities perceive and (actively) participate in the media. Finally, we will question about how improved interactions and alliances among journalists and other stakeholders can enable improved knowledge-sharing on global issues.

Panelists: Presentations

- The needs and challenges in strengthening ACP media capacities
Sayouba Traoré (RFI) and Violet Otindo (KBC-CNN Award Winner, Kenya)
- Linking media with local communities
Wilna Quarmyne, Ghana Community Radio Network
- ACP media and the global challenges: bridging the gap
Tumi Makgabo, African Broadcasting and Media, South Africa

Discussant: Dr Eugenia Springer, Director of Eugenia Springer Productions Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago

Conclusions

19h00 Cocktail