

# Governance and the Media

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**A survey of policy opinion**

**Prepared for the BBC World Service Trust**

By Kathy Lines, The Fuse Group

APRIL 2009

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>INTRODUCTION &amp; SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PART I: PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANCE – MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>8</b>
How important is support for a free and pluralistic media to governance?	8
Has media changed in terms of the way it is prioritised by development institutions?	9
Reasons for media receiving more attention	13
<b>PART II: THE ENGAGEMENT GAP</b>	<b>15</b>
The conceptual difficulty	16
Issues of aid architecture – assessment and delivery	16
Lack of an institutional home	19
Media perceived as a ‘new’, ‘specialist’ or ‘niche’ area	20
Media is not part of the mandate	21
Environmental factors	22
A lack of serious research	23
<b>PART III: THE STATE OF RESEARCH</b>	<b>24</b>
What is the status of research in relation to media and governance?	24
What are the key pieces of research/debates?	25
What is holding back research on media and governance	27
Research and policy	28
A focal point for media development issues	30
<b>PART IV: ACTIVITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>34</b>
Theory and Policy	34
Programmatic Support and Delivery	34
Research and Shared Learnings	35
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>37</b>
Research method and sample	37
Key research cited	39
Research plans	40

# Governance and the Media: A survey of policy opinion

## List of Interviewees

**Ian Barber**, European Commission

**Thomas Carothers**, Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

**Robert Chase**, Demand for Good Governance Focal Point, Social Development Department, World Bank

**Eric Chinje**, Manager for External Affairs and Communications for Africa, World Bank; Chair, African Media Initiative (AMI)

**Christina Dahlman**, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

**Paul Collier**, Director, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford

**Ruth Emmerlink**, Senior Policy Officer, Human Rights, Good Governance & Peace Building, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Bjoern Foerde**, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, UNDP

**John Gaventa**, Director, Centre for Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

**John Githongo**, Former Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance, Kenya

**Gordana Jankovic**, Media Director, Open Society Institute

**Mustaq Khan**, Professor of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London University

**Mark Koenig**, Senior Advisor for Independent Media Development, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID

**Amadou Mahtar Ba**, Director, African Media Initiative

**Vanessa Mazal**, Program Officer, Public Affairs and Communications, Global Development Policy and Advocacy, Gates Foundation

**Habiba Mejri-Cheikh**, Spokesperson, Head of Communication and Information, African Union Commission (AUC)

**Sina Odugbemi**, Head of Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank

**William Orme**, Policy Advisor, Independent Media Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

**Mark Robinson**, Head of Profession Governance and Conflict, and Acting Head, Governance and Social Development in the Policy Research Division, Department for International Development (DFID)

**Klaus Rudischhauser**, Director DG for Development, European Commission

**Mogens Schmidt**, Deputy Assistant Director General for Communication and Information; Director, Division of Freedom of Expression, UNESCO

**Marguerite H Sullivan**, Senior Director, Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), National Endowment for Democracy

**John Young**, Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group, Overseas Development Institute

## INTRODUCTION

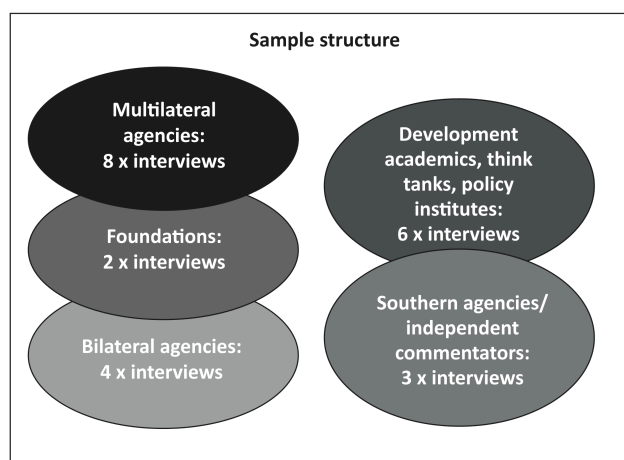
This report sets out to provide a fresh analysis of current thinking and practice about the role of media in relation to governance outcomes. Specifically, the aim was to discover from first principles – and without attempting to prove any particular thesis – what current thinking about media and governance is among a number of high level thinkers and policy makers from the governance, media and development communities. How important is media considered to be to governance and is it thought to be receiving the appropriate level of attention? Has the level of attention changed, and if so, are there any indicators which illustrate the shift? Or is there a gap between the importance ascribed to media in relation to governance and its reflection in policy, research or programmatic action?

The approach to this task was shaped by a number of considerations.

Most important was to present an independent perspective of the issues; this argued in favour of applying a standard qualitative research method which uses a structured interview guide administered by a neutral interlocutor across all interviews. This guide then becomes the basis of the analysis framework, ensuring that common themes or differences can be easily compared and drawn out. As a result, the report focuses exclusively on what was said in the interviews and deliberately does not draw on or engage with other literature in the field. The aim was to provide a review which contributes to the debate, but without being a prisoner of it.

In line with this approach, interviewees were chosen to reflect a range of different backgrounds and viewpoints and crucially – given the subject matter – to include those working in the field of governance as well as in media development. The aim was to present a spectrum of views on the issues under discussion. Finally, in order to ensure that this was a genuine ‘snapshot’ of thinking at the particular time (late 2008/early 2009) the interviews were conducted in as short a space of time as possible.

In total, 23 people were interviewed for this report, a mix of those from different parts of the development and media communities, from differently located organisations, and from those based in different geographic locations. The bulk of the interviews were with development agencies – multilaterals, bilaterals and foundations; six were with academics or policy institutes or think tanks and three were with southern organisations or agencies.



The report is based on an analysis of the transcribed interviews, and is structured as follows:

*Part I* examines how important support for media in relation to governance outcomes is thought to be and what degree of priority it currently has for the development community. We look at whether media is now prioritised more than it has been in the past, and set out some of the indicators of engagement which are presented. There is a brief summary of the key reasons found for media receiving more attention.

While there are a number of signs that media is receiving more attention, it was also apparent that there is a noticeable 'engagement gap'. In other words, the policy and programmatic attention that media receives does not equate to the importance it is perceived to have for governance. *Part II* focuses on the reasons there might be for this gap.

*Part III* addresses research in the field. The focus here was to understand how this particular audience views the status of research on governance and media. Importantly, this is not an attempt to review or evaluate the studies that are in the field, but to garner a topline view of how – and if – research is moving the debate forward, and to learn what gaps and deficits there appear to be to those we were interviewing.

*Part IV* identifies some activities for engagement which this analysis suggests. Again, they are not put forward as a comprehensive action plan; their key interest lies in the fact that they are a synthesis of ideas and thoughts from this audience of thinkers and policy-makers.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANCE – MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE**

- The importance of supporting free and pluralistic media in relation to governance – and development – outcomes is thought to be increasingly recognised by a wide range of policy makers, academics and practitioners. A minority who question whether good governance necessarily precedes economic development still recognise the importance of media in development generally.
- There is also some evidence to support the perception that policy makers recognise the central role that media plays in development more than they did formerly. An acknowledgement of media in policy documents and programmes, the existence of some research programmes, and a growing interest among programme and country officers in media are all cited in this regard. There is also a perception that budget allocation for media activities related to governance within some organisations has at least remained stable, although the current global financial crisis may provide a challenge.
- The reasons for media receiving more attention are thought to be: changes in political landscapes which can galvanise reactive responses; a growing focus on civil society and participation; the greater impact made by media NGOs and specialist media players and a greater focus on political economy and the governance agenda generally. Champions or leaders are also thought to be key; where interests are aligned this can bring about change, although these alignments may be temporary.

## THE ENGAGEMENT GAP

- It is widely acknowledged that media is not yet receiving sufficient attention from the development community, despite a growing perception of its growing importance as an issue. There is an 'engagement gap' between the value assigned to its role by policymakers and the practical provision made for it in development planning, thinking and spending. A number of barriers or constraints contributing to this gap are identified: these form the subject of this section of the report.
- *The conceptual difficulty.* Defining media in relation to governance presents a challenge and impacts on how it is dealt with at all levels – from policy level to programmatic support. Media in relation to governance encompasses multiple overlapping roles. Without a generally accepted definition, it is hard to monitor precisely what is being done in the field, and thereby to easily measure progress in terms of spend, programmes or research.
- *Issues of aid architecture – assessment and delivery.* Needs assessment, de-centralisation of aid, the demand-led nature of many programmes and issues about aid delivered via governments who may resist prioritising media are all identified as important barriers to full engagement. It is in the very DNA of agencies to talk to ministers, says Paul Collier of the University of Oxford, but there has been a lack of serious thought about the implications of a model in which citizens rather than agencies influence governments and donors and agencies support non-state actors, for example the media, in delivering governance programmes.
- *A lack of an institutional home.* A number of agencies have reorganised their media work streams and brought them more firmly under the governance work stream. While this is often perceived to be a positive step for media it is too early to judge the success of these re-organisations. It is possible that development agencies may – without specific workstreams or staff with expert knowledge of media – struggle to develop practical measures which appropriately and comprehensively address media related issues in governance.
- *Media is considered a new and specialist or niche area.* This perception covers a number of issues which concern the way that media is perceived internally within development agencies. Perceptions that media is 'difficult' or requires specialist knowledge may be magnified in organisations where there is no single workstream for media, and it can easily become 'someone else's problem'.
- *Media is not part of the mandate.* Media may not be perceived to be part of a development agency's mandate. Despite this, media does increasingly appear to be recognised as fundamental to governance and in some agencies this is reflected in high level policy statements. Such shifts in emphasis may take a long time to work their way through organisations, however.
- *Environmental factors.* A wide range of environmental factors affect the way the development community engages with media. The rapidly changing media environment, the current global crisis, and issues connected with global terrorism have all contributed towards media becoming a more 'difficult' or contested area for support.
- *A lack of serious research.* There is a view that a lack of serious research is a reason for strategic under-engagement with media among the development community. Issues concerning research are dealt with in the next section.

## **THE STATE OF RESEARCH**

- The status of research is thought to have improved over the last few years, but is still receiving insufficient attention. It is also thought that the research which does exist is insufficiently compelling; the research is too often focused on aspects of media which are not pertinent to governance, too case-specific or not holistic. There is a need for more research in the form of comparative analyses, tracking studies and evaluation of the impact which interventions have had.
- A number of reports, conferences and papers are mentioned as being significant in the field. Indicator sets such as the IREX Sustainability Index are described as being useful, though not sufficient in themselves. Some of the other research mentioned as significant is quite old – this could suggest a dearth of recent serious studies. Academics believe that there is not a significant body of work in this area.
- A number of factors are thought to constrain research on media and governance: The nature of media makes research especially hard to frame and execute; there are difficulties in attracting funders and partners for research and a lack of researchers in the field.
- Research is also failing to inform policy and action sufficiently. This is thought to be in part because of a failure by researchers to engage with policy makers. In addition, institutional inflexibility militates against new ideas being taken on board and means that some research in the area has little or no impact.
- There is no single organisation perceived to be a focal point either as a research hub or think tank or as a body coordinating governance-related media efforts. A number of different organisations or initiatives are mentioned as already taking a prominent role in this respect, however, including the BBC World Service Trust and the World Bank's Communications for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP).
- There is some appetite for more co-ordination of effort both in terms of sharing programmatic information and research - in particular a think-tank which could co-ordinate or help to disseminate work in this area. However, there is also scepticism about how well this might work in practice. In addition, there is a view quite strongly expressed that it is appropriate for media – by its nature pluralistic – to be represented by a number of organisations with diverse cultural values.

## **ACTIVITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT**

- A number of activities for engagement are suggested, in the fields of Theory and Policy, Programmatic Support and Delivery, and Research and Shared Learnings. Some of these are already being undertaken, others require further input.



## I. PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANCE – MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE

### How important is support for a free and pluralistic media to governance?

The starting point for this enquiry was to understand how important for governance the role of developing a free and pluralistic media is thought to be. It was not the intention to capture arguments for (or even against) media development, but – without making any assumptions – to take an initial sounding of views to form the basis for the rest of the discussions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, among such a diverse group of thinkers, policy makers and academics, the answer is not unqualified. Yet overall, there is a strong view that support for a free and pluralistic media is important – even central – as a means of achieving good governance outcomes. By enabling a ‘free flow of information’ between citizen and citizen and citizen and state, media plays a central role in accountability and participation; it is the means by which civil society becomes engaged with the political processes and debates and forms a relationship with the state.

*“I think it’s essential. A vigorous media is the first line of defence of people’s rights, the first line of defence when one is talking about issues of accountability.”* John Githongo, Former Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance, Kenya

*“Very considerable, really. I’ve done more work since The Bottom Billion, and I can show that in normal circumstances, elections do improve economic policies in the sense that elections discipline governments to be accountable to the electorate, and that depends upon the electorate having some clue. The electorate has to be able to be reasonably economically literate, otherwise governments will sell snake oil. So having an informed discussion is very important, so that ordinary voters understand the key issues.”* Paul Collier, Director, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford<sup>1</sup>

*“It’s of primary importance, priority one – I’m saying something different from media development per se – but the free flow of information is crucial to ensuring that resources are allocated appropriately and that through that appropriate resource allocation, good things happen in the lives of poor people. So ... it’s of very high importance to have free flowing information, and the development of different information is useful in doing that...”* Robert Chase, Demand for Good Governance Focal Point, Social Development Department, World Bank

*“There is a clear organic link between human development, economic development and the long-term interests of media.”* Amadou Mahtar Ba, Director, African Media Initiative

*“It’s hugely important and very different in countries all over the world, but I think one of the most important ways that society can hold governments to account is [through] a free and independent media.”* John Young, Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group, Overseas Development Institute

These views not only underline how important media is considered to be in relation to governance outcomes, they illustrate that it is perceived to have multiple roles in this respect – as a mechanism

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<sup>1</sup> Also author, *The Bottom Billion : Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, Oxford University Press, 2008

for 'free-flow of information' as the first line in holding governments to account, as a contributor to economic growth, or all three.

There is another view, however, about media's importance in relation to governance. William Orme, at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is "sceptical of the causality arguments that are often laid out with regard to media and development", and cites Hong Kong's absorption of China and China's robust economic growth, "the fastest in human history, manifestly without a free press..." to illustrate his point. Mushtaq Khan, Professor of Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London University, agrees. The reality of economic development, in his view, "is very messy ... if we look at the history of Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Indonesia – none of these countries were driven by the kinds of policies and the kinds of governance agendas that we are now advocating for Africa, for Afghanistan, for other countries which are not democracies."

While this study did not have the space to explore this broader question of governance and economic development, it is important to note that both Khan and Orme do consider that the media has an important role to play despite their caveats about the governance agenda. For Orme, "I think it's much healthier to view independent media from the point of view of human freedoms," and Khan, "allowing a system the time to sort out its own problems might be a much better way of progressing and there the media does have a very important role – if it was a very historically aware and developmentally committed media – which is a tall order because you can't do this to plan."

For the majority, however, (who broadly support a good governance agenda) support for media in this regard is deemed to be central. That it is deemed to be so is reflected in the way which some governments, such as Zimbabwe, "strengthen their grip on the media," says Mogens Schmidt, Director, Division of Freedom of Expression, UNESCO. "It's a kind of negative indicator in the sense that they are well aware that media could play a very strong role for the democratisation process". Nevertheless, it is clear that there is no consensus view on how – and why – media is central or what role it plays. This aspect of media – its complexity and the difficulty of defining what it is – is touched on later in this report.

### **Has media changed in terms of the way it is prioritised by development institutions?**

Having determined that the majority considers support for media to be central for governance outcomes, this exercise asked whether media is therefore being prioritised more or less by development actors. The question was asked broadly at first, and those in relevant positions were also asked to comment about their own organisation. Unsurprisingly, the picture that emerged was a multi-layered and sometimes apparently contradictory one. For clarity, this report reviews perceptions of a positive shift in terms of the attention given to media, and then turns to the deficits – the 'engagement gap' – in the next section of the report.

Many in the development community believe that even if there is a long way to go, there is "a growing sense of the understanding of the need to engage more with media," (Eric Chinje, Manager for External Affairs and Communications for Africa, World Bank) and a belief that media is receiving increasing attention from organisations. "We may not be mainstream, but at least we're in the picture" (Mark Koenig, Senior Adviser for Independent Media Development, USAID). The evidence for this perception is founded on a growing recognition of media within policy documents or strategic plans, a number of initiatives and research programmes with a media and governance focus, growing bottom-up demand and interest in media-related programmes and budget allocations:

*A growing recognition of media within policy documents or strategic plans.*

There is some evidence that media is increasingly recognised within policy documents or strategic plans both within agencies and in the declarations issued by fora.

- For example, the African Union Commission and the European Community Forum on Media and Development (Ouagadougou, September 2008) generated a high-profile statement of intent, or roadmap of activities. The Accra Agenda for Action, adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in the same month also acknowledged media. It may not have been with such a fanfare, but according to Mogens Schmidt, Director, Division of Freedom of Expression at UNESCO, it was an important – and useful – benchmark of progress: “One of the indicators could be that the media for the first time ever was introduced – just that one single word in the Accra Agenda for Action.”
- Within agencies, Bjoern Foerde, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, points out that not only is “the information and media agenda ... being discussed as a major issue,” but it is now reflected in the UNDP’s new strategic plan for governance, mentioned under the Inclusive Participation section of the Democratic Governance Strategy.
- Other high level policy documents mentioned include the Swedish Government’s recently published communication, “Freedom From Oppression”, outlining the rationale behind the government’s democracy support; within this document freedom of expression is specifically highlighted, as well as the political and civic aspect of human rights. The government is currently developing a policy based on this communication: “The signals are clear – there is a wish to place greater emphasis on this.” Christina Dahlman, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
- Robert Chase of the World Bank also speaks of a change of emphasis at strategic level: “just over a year ago, the World Bank put together a governance strategy that was very hotly contested ... which enshrines the idea that we need to support the demand for good governance and that this demand needs to promote transparency, accountability and participation.” Though media is not mentioned specifically in this regard, he believes it is a step-change for the Bank to recognise at policy level that promotion of transparency is a good thing. And Sina Odugbemi, heading the World Bank’s Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) also acknowledges this change, stating that “it’s not high up there, but there is a greater acknowledgement in policy documents that the mass media system in a country as an institution is one of the crucial ingredients for obtaining good governance.”

*Initiatives and research programmes with a media and governance focus.*

Evidence of the development community’s increased focus on media and governance comes in the form of a number of initiatives and research programmes:

- The Communications and Governance Accountability Program (CommGAP) located at the World Bank Institute and funded by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID).

- Three large programmes funded under the DFID Governance and Transparency Fund have an explicit media and governance focus.
- The African Media Initiative (AMI) – generated from the African Media Development Initiative – is an example of a high level programme of research and joint cooperation, and one owned by the African states who are contributing to it. According to Eric Chinje, Chair of AMI, the very existence of the programme is an indicator of progress in this area. He cites a failed attempt to launch a similar initiative 15 years ago to illustrate how far things have come:

*“I was involved in an effort almost 15 years ago to bring together a Partnership for Media Development in Africa – an initiative by the French Government, and five years later, this important initiative failed because we couldn’t find common ground – that common ground was the media in Africa – we couldn’t find it! So I think we’ve come a long way since.”* Eric Chinje, Chair, African Media Initiative

- The Joint AUC-EU roadmap for action produced at the conclusion of the Media and Development Forum, Ouagadougou, September 2008 outlines a programme of short-term objectives including the setting up of a pan-African Media Observatory, the elaboration of a charter on the rights and duties of the media and the creation and regeneration of a pan-African portal for all media. According to Klaus Rudischhauser from the EC and Habiba Mejri-Cheikh from the AUC this initiative is clear evidence of the fact that media in relation to governance has moved significantly up the agenda of both organisations. A dedicated workstream within the EC will be working to ensure implementation of the agenda.

*“There was always awareness that this was very important, and there have been activities in this area ... for many years, but it has definitely moved up both in terms of political visibility, but also in terms of a more systematic approach.”* Klaus Rudischhauser, European Commission

- The creation of a new entity created by the US Congress within the National Endowment for Democracy – the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) – is evidence of interest by US government in the area.

#### *Growing bottom-up demand and interest in media-related programmes*

Increased interest in and demand for support for media programmes from field, project workers and embassy staff are also noted:

- A growing interest in media-related activities is noted by interviewees from the UNDP, World Bank, and the Gates Foundation. This perception is in part based on anecdotal feedback and in part on data. For example, the UNDP carried out a survey in 2007 among country officers which found that 40 were carrying out significant media development programmes. Additionally, the UNDP has a democratic governance network which can be interrogated to see how many requests are related to media :

*“We have ways of measuring how many request or queries are relating to media. And if you look at that over time, my sense is – and I don’t have the statistics in front of me – but my sense is media in particular and access to information in general will also feature more,*

*probably as an integrated part of other types of programming...*” Bjoern Foerde, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

The increase in bottom-up demand is cited as giving a broad indicator of a growing appetite for media support in relation to an overall governance or development agenda. At the same time, however, it is acknowledged that much of the assistance requested is for activities intended to support specific development agendas, such as health messaging and which contribute only indirectly to the development of a free and pluralistic media. Despite this, as Mark Koenig from USAID reports, one can lead to the other. He observes that USAID is increasingly developing capacity on the back of development communications initiatives.

### *Budget allocation*

A consultation of this nature cannot provide robust evidence as to whether budgets for media in relation to governance have increased or declined, although this would be one of the more useful measures to register engagement in this area. On a macro-level, there is acknowledgement that a large amount of money has been devoted to media over the last few years. For example, Marguerite H Sullivan from CIMA refers to their inaugural report which estimated that some \$142 million is spent on the media sector in Africa and other countries annually by private and public donors in the US. However, she also points out that much of this budget is actually going towards communications campaigns such as health messaging, and is not utilised in a holistic way. Other assessments of budget allocation were:

- Gordana Jankovic at the Open Society Institute (OSI) says that media in relation to governance receives around 10-20% of the organisational budget, and is about on a par with other development areas that are being addressed. Her perception is that spend is relatively stable.
- Mark Koenig says that the USAID spend on media development initiatives is around \$50 million per annum and that his perception is that this has remained stable over the last few years. He adds: “Of course there are separate series of funding streams to go into the use of media to serve other developmental needs – for example, our global health division probably spends around twice that amount per year in getting out messages.” However, increasingly his department is able to build capacity on the back of global health campaigns, so stretching their spend by a back-door method.
- Mark Robinson from DFID believes that there is considerable spend on media – it “adds up to quite a lot” particularly in some post-conflict states: “I couldn’t quantify it because I don’t have those figures, but I know some country programmes - take DRC where we’re spending between £5 and £7 million on a media governance programme.”

If budget is a reasonable indicator of how well media is prioritised there is no strong evidence here that media is receiving any greater attention than formerly. But neither is it – on these measures alone – receiving any less attention. Going forward, a budget which flatlines may even be considered a powerful indication of commitment as the global financial crisis deepens. However it is important to note that budget alone does not tell the whole story. As Amadou Mahtar Ba (Director, African Media Initiative) observes, the large sums that have been spent in Africa on media development – “according to the figures that I have, every year close to 300 million dollars,” – appear to indicate that there is recognition that “media has a critical role to play”, but there is no guarantee that the argument is won, nor that things will not change: “Sometimes we have a very good development,

like everybody recognises media as key to development issues, and then the next day or month, or year, we have to come back and fight again for those same rights which were recognised a while ago”.

### **Reasons for media receiving more attention**

All the evidence above suggests that media is thought to be receiving considerable and in some cases increased attention from the development community. Although this is not the whole story, it is important to summarise at the outset the factors which this audience believe have galvanised change where it has happened. A number of reasons are put forward:

#### 1. *A change in political landscape*

Priorities change in response to external events. As democratic elections have occurred in a number of countries, there is an increased awareness of the importance of investing in the media. William Orme: “We have had one, two or three reasonably democratic elections in a row and a free press has been part of that ... the whole international community that is looking at governance in Africa have become very aware that an independent and professional, responsible and well trained media is a really critical institution if all their other investments and democratisation are going to pay off...” Orme’s view, however, is that crises drive resources more effectively and more quickly than anything else. An example is Kenya, where the post-election violence in 2008 (to which parts of the media were perceived to have contributed) stimulated support from the international donor community “It’s more the fear of the failed state and dealing with the consequences of that failure, as opposed to high-minded long-term ambition of building noble democratic institutions.” The result was an increase in resources devoted towards media and other institution building. A reactive response but one that may have long-lasting results.

#### 2. *Increased emphasis on civil society and participation*

A growing focus on civil society participation – with consequently greater emphasis on support for media institutions – is a recurring theme. For some this has been underlined following the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, which committed to deepen engagement with civil society organisations. Thomas Carothers, Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace says: “It’s part of the expansion of the governance agenda outward away from very top-centred institutional building programmes to programmes that take account of civil society, and once they do that, media begins to become a factor.” John Young, Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group, Overseas Development Institute, agrees. He observes that “donors are now concerned increasingly to fund civil society organisations and the media,” and comments that this might be at least in part due to a recognition that general budget support has “tended to over-empower government which has led people to recognise that they need to redress the balance slightly.”

#### 3. *Impact made by media NGOs and specialist media players*

Another reason given as to why there might be more attention on the media is the number of media players (NGOs) who have helped to focus attention on the sector. However, this can have its downside, according to Mark Robinson at DFID in that while a greater focus on media does “reflect the success of a more active presence” this also brings more

complications: “more players mean more expectations, it means multiple agendas [and multiple] organisations each pursuing slightly different agendas.”

4. *A greater focus on political economy and the governance agenda generally*

Shifts in the way in which development is analysed may be helping to prioritise media’s role in relation to governance. Sina Odugbemi of CommGAP considers that there is now a greater focus on ‘political economy’ in governance work, “a proper understanding of how these different political societies in which people are trying to produce good governance work.” Other development academics, such as Professor Paul Collier (University of Oxford) have also attracted attention by highlighting on several occasions the role played by media. These shifts are thought to help to create an environment where media receives more serious attention by policy makers.

5. *The importance of champions*

Champions or leaders are key in promoting the importance of media to governance. Champions within organisations and at the highest level of public life are both important. The recent EU-AUC initiative for example is a direct result of new Director-General Jean Ping’s championing of the cause of media and governance issues. Similarly, Sina Odugbemi points out that the CommGAP programme came about partly because of “a temporary alignment of senior officials who care about an issue,” coincident with the approval of the DFID Governance and Transparency Fund by the then Minister for Overseas Development, Hilary Benn. “We need champions at the highest level and champions who will speak out at the highest level,” comments Eric Chinje at the World Bank.

It is clear that for a number of those consulted, there is evidence to suggest that media is being prioritised more than in the past. It should be noted, however, that this evidence is not put forward here as being a comprehensive review or audit of what is happening in the field. Interviewees (in general) were not given advance notice of the questions they were to be asked, so that answers were not necessarily complete and reflect what was remembered or considered as indicative of progress at the time. The answers are significant, however, in that they identify indicators of this engagement which could, potentially, be measured in future.

Crucially of course, most indicators of progress, such as those described above suggesting engagement at policy level, focus on positive evidence; more policy statements, greater budget allocation, more resources and so on. An absence of progress or engagement is more difficult to measure, particularly without benchmarks to compare them with. Nevertheless, those working in this field were able to identify that though there is some evidence of a greater engagement, there is also another side to the story. And this is that, despite progress having been made, the development community is not yet sufficiently engaged with the role of media in relation to governance outcomes. The reasons for this gap – the engagement gap – are considered in the next section of this report.

## II THE ENGAGEMENT GAP

Media's role in relation to governance is widely seen to be central (if not sufficient on its own) by most of those consulted for this enquiry. Those who did not share this view still considered media to be important, but tended to express greater reservations or scepticism about the role of governance in the development agenda. There is a fairly robust sense, moreover, that media is receiving a greater share of attention – as evidenced by policy statements, initiatives and programmes – than has been the case formerly.

Despite this, there is a strong view that the development community is not yet sufficiently engaged with the role of media in relation to governance outcomes. Sina Odugbemi, Head of the World Bank's CommGAP programme, describes this engagement gap:

*"If you look at the major policy documents at the World Bank, DFID and all the major agencies of USAID – they have major policy documents on governance and democracy and so on – you will find routine acknowledgement that the mass media in a country as an institution is one of the crucial ingredients for obtaining good governance. But that does not necessarily translate into action."* (Sina Odugbemi, Head, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank)

Others share this view:

*"It's one thing to have the general governance policy, but it's important to learn how to translate these lessons both from analysis in countries into practical ways of working with media, or parliament or other actors. There's a gap. The traditional response has been training, but we're learning it's more complex than that. I would imagine it's a challenge for media players to translate these thoughts on governance policy into action."* Ruth Emmerlink, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

*"I truly believe that many would recognise that media is important, but ... recognising that fact is actually asking whether there is a gap, and there has not been sufficient thinking or sufficient action towards saying 'we've got to take care of the problems of the media.' Yes, media is important, that's just the first step. Many would recognise that media is important ... the development community and actually governments do not recognise media as being at the centre of any government process, the gap is still there".* Amadou Mahtar Ba, Director, African Media Initiative

What are the reasons for the 'engagement gap'? Why is media not receiving the policy attention proportionate to its perceived importance? Many of those consulted were able to identify explicitly the reasons which they believed may account for the deficit. Other possible causes were implicit in what was said. For example, the ways in which media is 'dealt with' institutionally in both development agencies and research institutes offer insights into the challenges which agencies have faced in locating and managing media. The key reasons suggested by this analysis<sup>2</sup> are:

- The conceptual difficulty

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<sup>2</sup> Some of these themes echo those identified in a previous analysis, "Towards a Common UN System Approach: Harnessing Communication to Achieve the MDGs", UNDP background paper prepared for 10<sup>th</sup> International Communication for Development Roundtable, February 2007.



- Issues of aid architecture – assessment and delivery
- Lack of an institutional home
- Media is perceived as a ‘new’, ‘specialist’ or ‘niche’ area
- Media is not part of the mandate
- Environmental factors
- A lack of serious research

Each of these issues is discussed below.

### **The conceptual difficulty**

Determining how engaged development actors are with media in relation to governance meets a challenge at the first hurdle – that of definition. While the research questions asked respondents about the importance of developing a free and pluralistic media in relation to governance outcomes, the answers reveal that institutions typically have a less clear cut approach to framing media in relation to governance. It can encompass free speech, freedom of information, access to information, support for institutions and participation in civil society. Media can be part of the drive to create “an enabling environment”, for “citizens to express their voice,” or to be a “platform for debating issues”. In each of these governance-related goals, media’s importance is seen to be crucial. However, the goals themselves overlap. Most imply a media component, but not exclusively so. As a result it is hard for many in the sector to unpick the exact nature of their support to media in relation to governance. For example: “Freedom of expression becomes not only a right in itself, which is important within good government and democracy, but also in terms of securing other rights.” (Christina Dahlman, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)

The wide-ranging nature of how media development is conceived, particularly in relation to the broader governance agenda, presents an *a priori* challenge, because without a clear definition as to the activities that it encompasses, it will continue to be hard to monitor how engaged agencies are in this area in terms of spend and progress. And without such a definition, there may continue to be a gap between what is said and what is done:

*“In daily governance I think the recognition is there, but the gap between the recognition of the need for media in daily work and development work – in terms of structuring the work of journalists, media, entering into the debate publicly – that’s not always related,”* Gordana Jankovic, Media Director, Open Society Institute

### **Issues of aid architecture – assessment and delivery**

One of the key themes identified to explain a lack of engagement with media is that of the architecture of aid and its delivery. Issues of needs assessment, decentralisation of aid, the demanded nature of many programmes and issues about aid delivery via governments who may have disincentives to prioritise media are all identified as important barriers to full engagement.

- Media can start to lose out at an early stage of many aid programmes in that – because of a lack of trained staff and diagnostic tools – the role and importance of media is not acknowledged in the Country Needs Assessment.

*“If they don’t have in their diagnostic tools a need to look at the media system then they won’t pick it up. Right now, they usually have things in there – when they’re looking at Nepal or Zambia to say ‘what are the governance challenges here that we should be putting into*

*policy dialogue with the partner government?’ They’re going to be looking at elections, the state of the judiciary, all the institutions like that. But if you look at the typical diagnostic tools that the agencies use, you won’t find media in it.” (Sina Odugbemi)*

An example might be SGACA<sup>3</sup>, the needs analysis methodology used by the Dutch government to develop its country strategic plans. This instrument – which builds on the Drivers of Change pioneered by DFID – allows analysts to look not just at institutions within a country, but at some of the underlying factors that influence how governance functions in a country. And while Ruth Emmerlink from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognises that within this “the media is not the only, but a very, very important part of the basic relation between the people in power and the broader population in society” the basic framework methodology does not appear to include media within it. Emmerlink also recognises that it continues to be a challenge to translate the findings from such analyses – which are not published – to policy development as far as the media is concerned:

*“What are the insights that we get from political economy analysis, whether it’s our SGACAs or the Drivers of Change DFID used to do ... what lessons do we get from there and how do we translate it to policy development – what does it mean for us?” Ruth Emmerlink, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Mogens Schmidt from UNESCO also comments on the failure of traditional analyses to recognise media:

*“I think there is an issue with UN systems – the political departments in the UN – I think they pay very little attention to media and I think they have a very traditional political science view on what goes on, which then goes to the central parts of the UNDP ... they are looking at the core political structure – how do you establish parliament and elections and not so much the enabling environment that media is part of.” Mogens Schmidt, UNESCO*

- There is as well a growing tendency for decentralisation, with agency resources allocated in response to demand from the field. In practice, this may lead to a major contradiction between what is stated at policy level and what gets delivered in practice:

*“If ... it looks like the major demands are coming in the area of decentralisation, local governments, public administration, justice reform or whatever, then core resources would be allocated to that.” Bjoern Foerde, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre*

*“Even now that the World Bank has included a governance strategy which enshrines the idea that we need to support the demand for good governance, and that this demand needs to promote transparency, accountability and participation, and even though this means we can give advice about information legislation, it has to be demanded by clients.” Robert Chase, Demand for Good Governance Focal Point, Social Development Department, World Bank*

- Importantly, there is also an issue about the way programmes are delivered; particularly when it is in the form of budget support where aid is delivered through governments – considered to be the prevailing model of aid architecture at the moment. Budget support is likely to result in less aid being delivered to independent media, because – for a variety of reasons – governments may not prioritise this sector. And while this may be because other

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<sup>3</sup> Framework for Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis (SGACA)

areas such as health are legitimately perceived to be more pressing, there is often a degree of discomfort for governments in supporting a medium which may act as critic and interlocutor. The result is that support for media in relation to governance receives less attention than it otherwise might, and this – according to John Githongo – is something which is inherently hard for agencies to address:

*“Agencies don’t have the internal structure to engage with the media in a way ... more fundamentally, their own internal incentive structure doesn’t facilitate them being proactive when it comes to engaging the media.”* John Githongo, Former Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance, Kenya

- Paul Collier also suggests that donors have not always worked through the implications of this situation as fully as they should:

*“It’s in the DNA of agencies to talk directly to ministers. Donors got keen on pushing elections but they didn’t push the things that are necessary for elections to work well including the media. So...they’ll pay lip service to it, but I don’t think they really thought through the full implications of a model in which, instead of them influencing government, it’s citizens who influence government and the donors and aid agencies help citizens to be well informed – that’s how it should work, but it doesn’t really...”* Paul Collier, Director, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford

- Within the World Bank, the challenge of responding to what governments request is particularly sensitive because – in accordance with its charter – it provides loans based on economic criteria. Governments have few incentives, and many political disincentives, to actively support a sector that is likely to criticise them, inevitably ensuring that what media development work does take place is financed through specific grants. This can mean that the work can be perceived as being less central to the Bank’s mainstream activities.

*“Our clients – I use business language for effect – are not always keen for the World Bank to push media. They’re not going to borrow money from us to promote free media. That partially explains the difference between what I think of as a high priority in the development business in this realm and the World Bank’s relative lack of attention ... But then there’s this interesting problem that if the World Bank is administering someone else’s money, it’s not mainstream to what the World Bank does. It’s viewed as a boutique sideshow.”* Robert Chase, Demand for Good Governance Focal Point, Social Development Department, World Bank

- There is also a perception that supporting private media is inherently uncomfortable for funders – and ultimately the public. The argument that media is ‘just another business’ which can be left to develop on its own is another barrier faced by those arguing the case for support for a non-state actor.

*“It’s not that people don’t think the media is important, it is that they feel it an inappropriate sector to be a major recipient of public money.”* William Orme, Policy Advisor for Independent Media Development, UNDP

So, even while there may be a greater sense of attention on the role of media to governance by policy makers, the realities of an architecture which is strongly focused on delivering aid to

governments militates against delivery matching this focus. In practice, many agencies work round this situation by delivering media aid through specialist NGOs: “When it comes to projects promoting the role of media or the organisation of the media, then we can work directly with relevant actors, and we do that in this specific case. So mainly we would look at the funds that are specifically set aside for activities with non-state actors.” (Klaus Rudischhauser, EC). The question is whether this approach encourages media to be viewed as separate from rather than integral to the overall governance agenda. At the least this area is one which warrants further examination by agencies in the field.

### **Lack of an institutional home**

If there are conceptual difficulties in determining what constitutes support for media in relation to governance it is unsurprising that this is reflected within development institutions themselves. Because media is seen as a cross-cutting area, it is often addressed by a number of different work streams. In the past there was a tendency to conflate PR and communications initiatives with media development work, but there seems to have been some effort – noted by the bilaterals – to separate the two areas. These recent organisational reshuffles may suggest a more central role for media in relation to governance, but they also suggest that some level of difficulty about where to locate media – how best to deal with it institutionally – still exists.

- At the time of the interviews, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs had both recently undergone internal reorganisation, and as a result, the governance-related media workstream had been relocated. At the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, media is now addressed both within the Human Rights department and the Good Governance department, while at SIDA, media is located within Human Rights under the Empowerment section. The result in both organisations is a multilayered and apparently complex approach to media in relation to governance:

*“We look at democratisation as a subdivision of democratic principles – the first one is representation, the second one participation, the third one accountability, and the fourth one human rights. For all those aspects of democratisation we see media development as an essential ingredient ... we also have a human rights policy which looks from the human rights perspective ... and independent media, the right to information, is one of the basic human rights issues promoted from the human rights perspective.”* Ruth Emmerlink, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Adding to the complexity, much aid is delivered via embassies where these departmental separations do not exist, and where money is spent according to priorities defined at country-level in their multi-annual plans.

- At DFID too, media did not have a clear institutional home for a while, according to Mark Robinson. However, a separation has now been made “between development communications for the promotion of DFID’s corporate agenda from communications media and governance work ... with the result that I think there’s more focus on both.” While there is no specific workstream dedicated to media, Robinson’s view is that this does not signal a lack of interest and he adds, “We don’t have someone who is the point person for decentralisation which is a far, far bigger area of spend than media.”

- At the Open Society Institute (OSI) Gordana Jankovic comments that “in the past we had more resources and there was more attention to the media, but nowadays since it’s very diverse and integrated in many other ways ... it’s a bit differently structured. The nature of media itself is changing as well, so I’d say that particular element of watchdogging over development work is taken by other civil society structures.” While support for these other civil society structures may attract more resources overall, Jankovic adds that arguing the case for media can sometimes be “a struggle within the organisation, our own and others that we’re working with.”

While organisations such as the OSI will continue to reframe how they deal with media, they retain media specialists who can continue to fight for its prioritisation. Within bilateral and multilaterals the case is different however. It is Jankovic’s view that the lack of a person with responsibility for media can impact on those agencies’ ability to engage with media and governance issues and lead to a fast turnover of staff, resulting in staff who cannot develop specialist knowledge:

*“With politically governed strategies, the attention is not paid to the human resources, and there is no recognition of the media development sector or media development knowledge, so what you have is extremely quick staffing changes, so you can barely turn around. You invest quite a lot with a person involved in the sector for a while, you point out the dilemmas, you explain why things should be done in certain ways and then the person is gone and you have someone new...look at DFID, look at USAID, look at the government-run agencies – there’s no recognition of the sector there, therefore the changes of the staff are extremely quick.”* Gordana Jankovic, Media Director, Open Society Institute

The integration of the media workstream within governance, democracy or human rights departments suggests on the face of it that media is more fully integrated with the mainstream governance agendas of these organisations. That certainly is the view of several of those spoken to, for whom the clear separation of PR and governance-related media activities is a step forward in the right direction. As yet, however, the jury is still out as to whether the organisational restructuring described by these different agencies will result in more effective programmatic engagement in terms of institutional support for media. The potential risk of ‘decentralising’ media programmes in this way is not unrecognised. For example, SIDA is aiming to actively support those agencies and NGOs who are evaluating the impact of media projects and developing indicators to monitor progress. They also plan to build capacity support within their organisation by recruiting staff who will focus on support for independent media and freedom of expression.

How this plays out not just in SIDA, but across other agencies, will be key. Will media be foregrounded now it is being dealt with under governance or democracy divisions, or will certain aspects, such as access to information, be emphasised in preference to other areas, such as support for independent media? Will the institutional framework support media engagement or will it be for NGOs or media organisations to ensure that media remains central to the governance agenda not just in theory but in practice?

### **Media perceived as a ‘new’ and ‘specialist’ or ‘niche’ area**

There is still a perception – despite the growing acknowledgment of the key role that media can play in governance – that it is a relatively new area, one which requires specialist and technical knowledge which agencies may not have. This plays out in a number of ways. For example, there is a view that agencies may not have appropriately qualified staff to translate policy into programmes. Supporting media as businesses, improving media laws, and investing in media institutions all

involve specialist knowledge which may be perceived to be too different and difficult for agencies to deal with, or outside the area of their core knowledge:

*“I agree with the perception that many people within the development community tend to feel that media is ‘someone else’s domain’. It appears to them as requiring technical knowledge that they do not have and which they assume someone else has.”* Thomas Carothers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

*“The big phenomenon in Africa at the moment is FM radio stations....radio is the single most important point I think. I don’t know whether the agencies are working up to that, but probably not. There’s a big age divide here – the agencies are run by people who aren’t young enough to have this in their DNA as it were.”* Paul Collier, Director, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford

- Media may be – within development agencies – something of a cul-de-sac. Though this may not be a key reason for the engagement gap, it offers an alternative view on what might need to change.

*“I think that it’s not a development hot spot – it’s not where all the development people want to be. They want to be in health, they want to be in education, they want to be in infrastructure, because those are the big ticket items. I think people in their own hearts and minds know it’s important but they will not focus on it because it does not give you bang for your buck in terms of helping your career to progress. Helping to support the media, you will get promoted a lot more slowly than someone who is building roads...”* John Githongo, Former Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance, Kenya

These issues may be exacerbated where media’s institutional home is spread across a number of departments, or dealt with by those without a close interest or knowledge of the area.

### **Media is not part of the mandate**

A key reason why media is not prioritised is that it may not be – or is not perceived to be – part of the organisation’s mandate; for example, UNDP does not have a ‘normative role’ in relation to free press and free expression, which UNESCO and the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) does. Similarly, at the World Bank, its institutional raison d’être reflected in its Articles of Agreement is to make lending decisions based on economic criteria. “Efforts to promote media, free and fair media, and some rights-based approaches that talk about the rights of information are viewed as, if not directly opposed to the World Bank’s articles, then at least in a grey border area, where the World Bank gets nervous about working this realm” says Robert Chase at the World Bank.

- Mark Robinson of DFID observes that – despite some hard lobbying from media players in the field for media to be made a special case – DFID is “not an organisation that does media and governance work, we’re an organisation that does work on state capability and accountability and we would frame our media work through that lens.” In addition, he considers that – following the Paris Declaration – there is a need for donor agencies to harmonise their work, and ensure there is not duplication. This view was also expressed by the EC. Avoiding duplication is clearly an important goal particularly as there have been criticisms of uncoordinated approaches to strategic development programmes in the past. Robinson continues, “We shouldn’t expect all donors to devote equal attention. Donors have to specialise and should.” Whether this happens and the impact it has on the degree of

attention paid to media in relation to governance will be an indicator of engagement in the future.

- Media – and governance generally – are also, it is argued, not even part of the Millennium Development Goals. According to Klaus Rudischhauser of the EC:

*“Don’t forget that the over-riding objective of development policy is to reach the Millennium Development Goals which don’t really cover governance. So right now, it’s clear that the attention is on providing access to health services, access to water and so on and in a way governance is only now getting increased attention, and in that same process, media is getting increased attention, obviously always in competition with the very strong priorities – so it’s a question also to shift a little bit in the programming process the priorities.”* Klaus Rudischhauser, Director DG for Development, European Commission

There are some apparent contradictions here. Media does increasingly appear to be recognised as fundamental to governance and in some instances this has been reflected in policy statements. But organisations may take a long time to reflect this change, especially if they perceive their overall mission or mandate to be in another direction. As Eric Chinje points out “Corruption was a word which could not be mentioned in the World Bank until the then President, Mr. Wolfensohn started talking about it publicly.” Once he did, “we became a bank occupied with governance.” If media is not acknowledged at a top level, the argument that it is not part of the mandate will remain.

While an organisation’s mandate may appear to be straightforward and unambiguous, there are clear signals here that the reverse is the case. Mandates can and have changed when leaders want them to. At least some of the confusion surrounding media’s role appears to stem from the conceptual difficulties mentioned earlier. ‘Free speech’ or ‘access to information’ can be recognised as key at policy level because they are suitably vague and overlapping terms, but translating these concepts into programmatic support for media is a more challenging and longer-term process for institutions.

### **Environmental factors**

Development does not take place in a vacuum. A range of environmental factors affect and are likely to affect the way that the development community engages with media.

- The rapidly changing media environment itself may have a particular impact on programmes supporting media. There is a feeling that the widespread democratisation of media – the advent of blogs, mobile phones and the subsequent growth of ‘citizen journalism’ – has to some degree made a support programme for media less important than it was. “I have arguments as to whether we should exist any longer! The argument is that citizen journalism is taking over.” (Gordana Jankovic, Media Director, Open Society Institute). However, new media can also provide a platform for support which bypasses official channels and Mark Koenig of USAID points out that the internet or international radio waves can provide new opportunities in this respect.
- The current global financial crisis may have an impact on the development world generally, although it is not clear how this will play out in relation to media:

*“The whole media environment is collapsing financially – here [in the US] it is in total crisis...the whole environment is going to change”* Marguerite H Sullivan, Senior Director, Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), National Endowment for Democracy

*“It’s hard to predict whether – with the economy right now – what the future will bring. I have the impression that there’s more interest in media, but whether that will be reflected in budgets I don’t know.”* Mark Koenig, Senior Advisor for Independent Media Development, USAID

- The importance ascribed to media may have shifted as prioritisation given to freedom of expression takes a back seat in the context of the post 9/11 world and with current concerns about terrorism and security. This point is emphasised by Mogens Schmidt at UNESCO:

*“Right now the media is a contested field especially for western countries, due to this unfortunate polarisation on media when it comes to this discussion between the Islamic world and what is called the west and I know that puts some restrictions on western donors in their quest to get into this area. So they’re trying to work on governance from other angles, downplaying the role that media plays a bit ... this is particularly relevant in African countries and Asian countries where there is a large Muslim population.”* Mogens Schmidt, Deputy Assistant Director General for Communication and Information; Director, Division of Freedom of Expression, UNESCO

These ideas were not dominant in the overall discussions but are important because they help illustrate how media’s role is perceived as increasingly complex and difficult to determine and potentially driven more off centre by events in the wider world.

### **A lack of serious research**

A lack of research is sometimes cited by policy makers as a reason for under-strategic engagement, although some of the other issues mentioned above are equally if not more important reasons for the engagement gap. Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement that there is a need for research, particularly to enable policy makers to understand more about the contributions which media can make in relation to governance and – more importantly for some – to allow them to draw lessons from previous media interventions. The question of research is dealt with in some detail in the following section.



### III THE STATE OF RESEARCH

The aim of this section of the report is to understand current views of the state and status of research into media in relation to governance. How well researched and debated is the field currently? Is significant research being undertaken and if so, what are the key pieces that have influenced the policy debates? What, if any, are the constraints limiting research or its dissemination?

#### **What is the status of research in relation to media and governance?**

This enquiry found that the status of research has improved over the last few years, but is still receiving insufficient attention.

*An under-researched area, though improving*

There is a fairly widespread (though not universal) belief among this audience that media and its contribution to governance is under-researched. Both academics and policy makers believe there are gaps in the research literature, although some claim simply not to be aware of what is out there which perhaps is revealing in itself. Development academics – though not working directly in media development – agreed that little serious research in the area comes their way, and some policy makers agree with this diagnosis. Others – for example, Sina Odugbemi at CommGAP, or Habiba Mejri-Cheikh from the African Union Commission – believe the debate has been well addressed, even though there is a ‘way to go’.

*“There is very little concrete and empirical evidence on the role of media, despite the fact that there is a standard assumption of the importance of non-state and civil society actors and ... in any policy document you will see passing reference to the media.”* John Gaventa, Director, Centre for Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

*“The role of media is relatively under-researched compared with other dimensions of governance and discourse,”* John Young, Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group, Overseas Development Institute

*“In mainstream development, [there is] not very much [research] as far as I know...”* Mushtaq Khan, Professor of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University

*“The debate has been ongoing for several years and is well addressed.”* Habiba Mejri-Cheikh, Spokesperson, Head of Communication and Information, African Union Commission

*“The interest in the World Bank stimulated academia in the US to look into this. Here it’s usually in the area of media, communications and governance, but it’s not yet on the agenda of development work, or the development agenda in academic circles. It’s not necessarily focusing on the media element still.”* Gordana Jankovic, Media Director, Open Society Institute

*Insufficiently compelling or comprehensive*

- The nature of the research that exists in the area of media’s contribution to governance is thought to be insufficiently compelling, or simply not sufficiently focused on the issues:

- Much media research is too often focused on a single aspect, such as its value as a medium for messaging (for example in a health campaign) rather than its broader contribution to governance
  - Research can be too anecdotal or case-specific for lessons to be drawn and applied to other situations – not enough comparative research
  - There is a lack of holistic research which analyses the role of media within societies and its contribution to the development process
- For most, the case has already been made as far as media’s role in governance is concerned: “the role media plays for democracy as a whole and for the development of society is uncontested here” (Klaus Rudischhauser, EC). What is thought to be lacking now is evidence which demonstrates not whether, but how this can be achieved:

*“There is a need for more debate in this area. Research tends to be ad hoc, issue based. Media is not just one issue, we’re talking about an enabling environment that demands attention to a lot of aspects – not just journalism training, not just content.” Christina Dahlman, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*

*“It is weak – there’s no systematic or comparative research providing insights of the value of media initiatives for governance.” Mark Robinson, Head of Profession Governance & Conflict, and Acting Head, Governance and Social Development in the Policy Research Division, DFID*

*“Yes we do know that there’s a positive correlation [between governance and development] but we don’t know enough exactly about the nature and the quality of the correlations and we don’t necessarily have a good enough baseline to monitor progress or redress in the area of media development on the governance area...” Bjoern Foerde, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre*

*“I haven’t seen a lot of good studies that look at what role newspapers, TV and others play in relationship to social movements and citizen movements who are trying to create more effective and responsive states – what role they play and under what conditions, and how those alliances are built, who controls them, and all those things. It may be there, but I haven’t seen it.” John Young, Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group, Overseas Development Institute*

There is a perception then, that while some progress has been made in the last few years, there is still a need for more evidence in the form of comparative analysis, tracking studies and evaluation of the impact which interventions have had.

### **What are the key pieces of research/debates?**

Interviewees were asked if they were aware of any significant or impactful research documents, publications or events which had impacted on policy or been important in moving media up the development agenda. The focus was not on media research specifically but on governance-related work which included a focus on media’s role; the aim to understand what development actors consider significant in the field and to learn why. It should be mentioned that most interviewees did

not have forewarning of the question and therefore their answers are spontaneous rather than considered. A full list of pieces referenced is included in the appendix. Interpreting what was and what was not mentioned presents a particular challenge without framing the answers in the context of a literature review – which was not the intention – and runs the danger of drawing too many inferences about what was mentioned or not mentioned. Nevertheless, a few broad observations can be made:

- Notably, there were multiple mentions of indicators as having contributed usefully to the field. For example, the IREX Sustainability Index was mentioned several times as being important, as were the World Bank Governance Indicators and the work done by Andrew Puddephatt on Media Development Indicators for UNESCO. This focus on indicators underlines the appetite for measuring progress and for comparative work which is thought to be a key requirement by funders in terms of understanding the impact of their investments over time.

*“IREX’s work on the Media Sustainability Index is really compelling and interesting and is some kind of hard data – it starts to give us an idea of what sorts of investments are working. We don’t know how they’re working, but ... it’s a great tool, it will leverage future research that will ask more difficult questions.”* Vanessa Mazal, Program Officer, Gates Foundation

- A number of other research reports mentioned as having shifted forward the debate were produced several years ago – the World Bank Development Report of 2002 and USAID’s policy paper on media of ten years ago were both cited, for example. Clearly these documents were key to catalysing increased attention given to media in the governance agenda. However, it could also suggest that there has been a lack of weighty or serious research – or research which has received high visibility – which has impacted the debate since that time.
- A wide range of other documents were mentioned as being significant, as well as the contributions made by organisations including the BBC World Service Trust, The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), the Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), the World Bank, Freedom House and Panos. Many of these organisations are praised individually but there are some reservations as well about the work which has been done. Vanessa Mazal from the Gates Foundation: “I think to date it’s all been very contextual and localised. So I don’t think that there have been a very substantial investment in really understanding the role that media plays in governance.”
- For some, it is the fora or conferences which have had most impact – most recently, the Media and Development Forum in Ouagadougou and the World Press Freedom Day established by UNESCO in 1993.

Overall, most of the responses gave the impression that there was a significant body of work which is currently impacting on the debate. Moreover, development academics – who might be assumed to be more up-to-date with at least the academic literature – claimed that they were not fully aware of what is out in the field. Given their prominence in the development field this was somewhat surprising. It could suggest a fairly narrow focus on what is directly relevant to governance or development, or simply be academic caution about straying into territory that is not familiar. In either case, it does underline a view that the research which has been carried out is too anecdotal in nature, not sufficiently weighty or that it may not have widely disseminated enough.

## What is holding back research on media and governance?

Perhaps more significantly, there is a perception that research on media and governance is constrained by a number of factors. Most commonly mentioned is the difficulty of undertaking media research – of framing the research in a useful and manageable way. In addition, there are a range of systemic barriers to research resulting from – amongst other issues – funding models and skills shortages. These issues are examined in more detail below:

*The nature of media – and the rapidly changing environment it operates in – makes research especially hard to undertake*

There is a widespread acknowledgement that media is particularly challenging for researchers. Research into other issues – for example, the effect of legislative developments on governance – is easier to frame and execute. Media's impact on an environment is more multilayered and complex than some other aspects of governance, moreover, and this is exacerbated in today's rapidly changing landscape, with its explosion of media including FM radio, digital media, mobile phones and blogs.

*"I would say it's easier to do institutional research because it's more tangible and people have a harder time trying to decide what good research would be, particularly because media has diffused because of the spread of alternative media ... it's quite hard to trace this stuff, it's quite complex."* Thomas Carothers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

*"One of the challenges in looking at the role of communication in development generally, not just the media element of it, is how to measure the impact of that aspect of the work, and I think that's part of the problem."* John Young, Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group, Overseas Development Institute

It is not just the framing but the analysis of media research which is challenging. Indicators which have been developed by organisations (For example IREX, Freedom House, The World Bank) are seen to be an important contribution to media and governance research, but while these can provide useful measures, they are often administered by social and political scientists with – according to William Orme – an insufficiently deep knowledge of media.

*"Take indices of perceived freedom – they'll take things like media penetration which is transposed with literacy and technology and plurality of voices – that's good and there are a lot of factors that can be measured. Analytically minded journalists will find that even in countries which have an apparently dense and rich media environment, it can seem timid and cautious. It's not challenging the established order. There's other countries where the press is more combative, though it may not have the same degree of professionalism – hard to quantify but you can certainly analyse and describe it!"* William Orme, Policy Advisor for Independent Media Development, UNDP

### *Difficulties of attracting funders and partners for research*

A number of policy makers and academics consider that research into media and governance simply has not attracted serious funding. This is not a universal view, however, and there are some indicators of change in this respect.

- John Gaventa from the Institute of Development Studies notes that “There has simply not been emphasis from DFID and other donors in the development field on the study of media in the democratisation process.” He points out, however, that ODI is now starting a programme funded by the Governance and Transparency Fund looking at interactions between civil societies and media and governments in a number of African countries, which suggests that things are moving.
- At DFID, Mark Robinson agrees that resources have possibly been lacking in this area. Apart from the Transparency and Governance Fund which his organisation is administering, he does point out that there are other opportunities: “For example, we have a responsive research window with the ESRC to which it’s perfectly possible for a media and governance group to link up with research organisations and submit a bid for funding...”
- From the Gates Foundation, Vanessa Mazal comments that it can be problematic finding partners for some research projects – “I think everybody says, ‘Oh, that’s a great idea’, but we have struggled to find some financial partners at this point”.
- With a different perspective, Mushtaq Khan at SOAS considers that funding may be hard to find when it questions the fundamental notions that “motherhood and apple pie must go together, development and governance must go together, a free media and open democracies and lots of competition must go together with market competition which must be good for the economy which must be good for development.”

#### *A lack of researchers in the field*

Another constraint on research is the perceived lack of specialist researchers in the field. This may be due to a lack of interest on behalf of researchers, a lack of focus on the area within graduate studies or simply because media development research is a relatively new area.

- John Gaventa from the Institute of Development Studies points out that out of one hundred researchers in his organisation, he is not aware of any who have come from a media studies background as a field of study – “they’re usually economists or sociologists or anthropologists who probably did a course of media.” A sign of change is that a researcher has just been appointed at IDS to work on media communication.
- Mark Robinson at DFID similarly comments that he is not aware of many prominent researchers working in this area – “Probably there’s a very deep knowledge gap and disciplinary gap here”, while Gordana Jankovic of OSI believes that there is a lack of focus on the subject in university curricula, although again noting that this may now be changing, albeit gradually.

A number of systemic constraints on research in this field have been identified. However, the key constraint is one pertaining to the field itself – the difficulty of developing methodologies which will deliver the necessary evidence required by policy makers. How these constraints are addressed is a key challenge, but not the end of the story.

#### **Research and policy**

While this consultation has revealed that there is some high-level policy recognition of the importance of media in the governance agenda, it has also found that there is a perceived gap

between policy and programmatic action. Moreover, there is also a strongly held view that research is not informing policy to the extent that it might. Two significant reasons emerge for this:

*A failure of researchers to engage with policy makers and other stakeholders*

A key problem with academic research, according to Paul Collier, is that it is increasingly geared towards peer group assessment and this means that academics are more focused on speaking to their peer group than to other audiences. Without the incentive to engage with policy makers, much research remains invisible outside the narrow confines of academic debate.

*“Researchers have no incentive to engage with policies – they just have an incentive to publish an article, so there’s a big disconnect between research and policy. That’s how money is allocated now, through peer group assessment, so basically everybody writes for their peer group and there’s no money in policy impact ... fifty years ago economics was basically written for the policy world. Now the current kudos is quite different.” Paul Collier, University of Oxford*

At the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), Marguerite H Sullivan agrees that researchers and academics do not always have the right language to engage policy makers, nor to make their work understandable or useful. She sees one of CIMA’s key tasks as overcoming this by commissioning and delivering reports which are appropriate for policy makers and not over-complicated by academic or research jargon.

There is growing recognition that those with expert knowledge in the area have an obligation to make the case more effectively. For Sina Odugbemi among others, this means getting researchers and academics to talk directly to policy makers, or those with decision-making power whether they be politicians or media owners for example.

*“It’s people like that who have the decision-making power who are the rainmakers...you have to get them in a room, sit them in a room with the people who have been thinking about this on a serious level – sit down with the leading policy makers and thinkers and governments, that’s what’s really going to do it...” Sina Odugbemi, Director, CommGAP*

However, Eric Chinje of the World Bank questions if there is yet sufficient recognition of the importance of speaking to media owners:

*“I just came out of one of the most significant events I think we’ve had in Africa, where we were partners in an effort to bring together owners of private media in Africa – to begin a conversation at that level with the folks. And when I came back, I was saying it cost us about \$50,000 to do this – they said, ‘Oh my God, so what do we get for our money?’ – people just don’t get it.”*

Beneficiary governments too need to be persuaded by research – and this is particularly important, given the dominance of the aid architecture model which distributes the majority of aid as budget support. This underlines the importance of having researchers from those countries involved in the research from the outset, a point which Amadou Mahtar Ba, Director of the African Media Initiative (AMI) and Gordana Jankovic make:

*“One thing which is often key ... African governments in general say ‘this research was done from London, Washington, Paris and New York. This is just the view from some people who*

*are sitting out there with their own agenda.’ This means it is important that researchers in Africa or Asia or Latin America, are involved in the preparation and in conducting the research. I think this would give it more street credibility, because it is needed.” Amadou Mahtar Ba, Director of AMI*

### *Institutional inflexibility*

A second reason for research failing to translate into policy is institutional inflexibility and slowness. Many multilaterals and bilaterals are big organisations which do not respond quickly or easily to new information or ideas.

For Eric Chinje at the World Bank this takes the form of an unwillingness to absorb information from external sources: “This institution and many others ... do not have within their DNA what it takes to absorb information coming from external sources. So the research will serve a purpose when the institution itself is ready to begin listening – when its own internal processes will bring forward the demand for more understanding of the sector.”

Mushtaq Khan from SOAS also believes that many ideas in the development world can only happen incrementally, and will therefore only take place over time. If research findings challenge the conventional orthodoxy, they are liable to take even longer to be accepted: “I think people work incrementally – people work on the basis of a body of knowledge that they’re taking for granted and if you challenge a lot of their fundamental assumptions of that body of knowledge then you’re going to be peripheral.”

When change does come in large organisations, it is likely to be reactive, rather than proactive. This means acknowledging that change is less likely to be based on research evidence alone, and more likely to be galvanised by circumstance;

*“It is reactive, but that is the way the world works – bureaucracies tend to labour forward on the basis of precedent - if they get into the habit of spending money on crisis x on the media, then it is more likely that they will continue to do that just out of inertia. It may move from the reactive if that action becomes normal. For example, spending money on ensuring that girls go to primary school in the same number as boys seems so obvious in development circles now, but it didn’t 20 years ago. There was no light bulb moment, but people on the ground figured out that not only was it the right thing to do, but it was a smart investment in terms of changing the way societies work.” William Orme, Policy Advisor for Independent Media Development, UNDP*

### **A focal point for media development issues**

A point made about media support in relation to governance is that there is a lack of strategic coherence in terms both of research and programme planning and delivery. But is there – and should there be – a clear focal point at international or regional level – either as a research hub or in terms of co-ordinating effort and support to the media? The consensus among this group was that there is no one single organisation which stands out in respect of either role. A number of different organisations are thought to be prominent in the field already:

- The BBC World Service Trust, perhaps unsurprisingly given their role as sponsor of this particular piece of work, is mentioned a number of times as seen as taking a leading role in

raising the profile of the debate.<sup>4</sup> Its research work and briefings are mentioned as important in the debate.

- The UK's Department for International Development is also mentioned as having driven forward the media agenda, particularly with its Governance and Transparency Fund. There is room to build on the work it has done. For example, its Development Research Centres (DRCs) and Research Programme Consortia (RPCs) have contributed to knowledge-building and lessons shared in relation to other areas such as conflict or citizenship and democracy, and it is thought that a similar set up could be usefully established for media-related issues.
- The Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) Director Sina Odugbemi says that their intention is to become such a hub or centre, at least in terms of leading research and debate about the issues surrounding media and communication; the World Bank is also mentioned separately as an authoritative institution.
- The African Media Initiative (AMI) is mentioned by one or two as an important point for regional co-ordination, and new Director Amadou Mahtar Ba hopes that it will become a focal point in this respect, although they do not have a specific budget for research. Surprisingly, perhaps, this initiative is not mentioned by the EU or AUC as significant, despite their having recently established a new initiative in relation to African media. There appears still to be some distance between the AUC-EU initiative on the one hand (perceived more as a politically inspired programme) and the African Media Initiative which is led and owned by African media practitioners.
- Other organisations mentioned in this regard as having potential as a focal point or at taking a leading role already, were UNESCO, OECD-DAC, Panos, The Communication Initiative, Brookings Institution, UNDP, The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the UN, Deutsche Welle Global Forum, the European Centre for Development Policy Management and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

#### *How important is it to have a focal point?*

While the creation or establishment of a single focal point (for research or co-ordination of media efforts) is not perceived as an over-riding need, there is a desire to improve mechanisms for sharing research, learning and analysis relating to media. "I get the sense that there is a vacuum to be filled," states Robert Chase of the World Bank, who continues that he would not even have been aware of the role played by the BBC World Service Trust in media development had he not recently attended a conference where he met Head of Policy at the BBC World Service Trust, James Deane. Whatever the institutional shape, the important aspect of such a mechanism is that it should fulfil some key functions:

- *Bridging the gap*: Thomas Carothers from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace emphasises the importance of an organisation which can bridge the gap between specialist media organisations such as the Knight Ridder Foundation or Internews and the mainstream development community: "there's room for an organisational model that you go to and think ha, here's where you go to think about media development."

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<sup>4</sup> James Deane is seen as playing a prominent role at the BBC World Service Trust: "He's always the one making this point and making it very effectively. He is often making it by himself, which is the interesting thing." (John Gaventa, Institute of Development Studies.)



- *Coordinating knowledge:* Marguerite H Sullivan from the Center for International Media Assistance emphasises the importance of having a central point for information about what is going on in the field: “at the moment, you have to make a lot of phone calls.”
- *Focus on media in development:* Paul Collier from the University of Oxford considers that the key gap is for a research organisation which focuses on media in development. “There might be the research centres on media and society, but whether they do anything on development is a different matter, and that might be a gap. A think tank focusing on media in development would be quite useful ... probably international.”

There is an appetite too from funders to see more co-ordination among media agencies – “It’s partly trying to work with a clearer representative group so that one has more of a shared perspective.” (Mark Robinson, DFID) while Marguerite H Sullivan (CIMA) points out that there is a need for a forum to bring together donors in media.

Some efforts at collaboration and rationalisation are already evident. For example, the EU is seeking to examine ways in which European Commission aid programs can – together with the programmes of the EU member states – become more effective, coordinated and coherent with other policies. The strategy involves establishing what is being done across member states, auditing programs which have been carried out by the EU over the last five years, establishing a freer flow of information between such organisations and facilitating networking.

In spite of such efforts there is a view that countries and country agencies are disinclined to collaborate to any significant degree in relation to media and governance agendas because they have specific agendas for media which they may not want to let go of. As Ruth Emmerlink from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs puts it, “different institutions all have different but relevant ways of working.” William Orme also believes that bilaterals “including DFID, USAID, the French and to a lesser extent the Germans and the Nordics, all see aid to media as part of their public diplomacy apparatus. They like to keep it as part of their bilateral providence if you will.”

Others argue that media by its nature is pluralistic – ‘messy’ even, and this should be reflected by the architecture of development institutions which aim to support it. A single institution could be too ‘value-laden’ to work:

*“The prolific nature of media means that you need to have a lot of variety in the system,”*  
John Githongo, Former Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance, Kenya

*“I don’t know what would have happened in the UK if you’d had a board 100 years ago which was going to coordinate, harmonise or whatever, investments/efforts to set up media industry institutions – would that have helped democracy in England? I don’t know...I would probably tend to say that this is the area where we need multiple focal points and we need to make sure not to kill diversity...”* Bjoern Foerde, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

*“I don’t think there’s a way to have it. Organisations are basically reflecting those who are running them or the societies in which they are based. It’s a must that you’re influenced by your environment, so because we are not based in one specific environment ... we try to benefit from it rather than establishing authorities in one specific environment over others.”*  
Gordana Jankovic, Media Director, Open Society Institute

## IV. ACTIVITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

This report was more focused on understanding perceptions than in producing an action plan or set of key recommendations. Interviewees were not asked what needed to be done to enclose the engagement gap, and the analysis has necessarily focused on identifying where there are confusions – implicit or explicit – in the current thinking about media in relation to governance and reporting on them. Despite this, a range of activities emerged which are seen to be important for progress to be made. These are not reproduced here as an action plan – most of them are already well recognised and are being addressed on a number of levels. However, they do represent some of the areas which key thinkers and policy makers in the area feel could make a difference in terms of the focus which media receives in the coming years. The activities range across three areas: Theory and Policy; Programmatic Support and Delivery, and Research and Shared Learnings:

### 1. THEORY AND POLICY

- There is a clear need to examine more fully **what is encompassed by media in relation to governance**. This debate needs to be ongoing and sustained. It needs to take into account the changing nature of the landscape and include views which challenge the accepted orthodoxy of media and governance in relation to development outcomes about what media in relation to governance means. This debate will influence the agenda from policy level downwards.
- Given the current predominant pattern of delivering aid via governments, there is also a need to examine more closely **the role of the non-state actor within the governance agenda**. In particular, there is a tension between embracing media as central to governance and the tendency to deliver aid to specialist organisations who on their own may be limited about how they can impact on the governance agenda.
- There is still a belief – in some quarters at least – that governance is not key for the Millennium Development Goals – and that media in relation to governance is not a key part of institutional mandates. **Top-down support** is thought to have the potential to galvanise change at an institutional level more effectively than any other initiative. Such support needs to come from the very highest levels both within organisations and in the public sphere.
- **Dialogue** is important. In particular, it is thought to be important for media practitioners to engage with policy makers more directly; media leaders in developing countries should increasingly be involved in debate with policy makers in order to influence the debate and shape the agenda. Policy makers need to bring media onto the agenda in their dialogues with governments.

### 2. PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT AND DELIVERY

- There is often a gap between policy statements and what actually happens within country programmes. The Communications for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) has identified that governance officers in the field may not have the knowledge and skills to understand media needs and is preparing a toolkit for use in the field which will distil knowledge from a range of practitioners in media support in a way which is usable by those in the field. This will be a key step towards closing the engagement gap.

- A bottom-up push needs to be applied to any programme of institutional media strengthening. This involves strengthening coalitions among media players in countries to ensure support for initiatives at the ground level. CommGAP is focused on strengthening such networks and coalitions.

### **3. RESEARCH & SHARED LEARNINGS**

- While the research base for media in governance is thought to have improved, progress is slow. Media's role in governance is not a key focus for academics, and those working in development are unaware of major studies in this area. Further efforts to review what has already been done – from impact evaluation work to academic studies – are considered key steps to further the knowledge base. Mapping of media-related initiatives should be a part of the broader audit. In this respect, the European Commission has already taken a useful first step with its plans to audit activities and programmes fielded by member states, although this is limited to European activities. Building on this to include US-fielded programmes would be useful. In the US, the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) is seen to be performing a useful role in bringing together different aspects of information about the sector.
- At university and graduate level interest in media development issues and their contribution to governance needs to be fostered by input from academics and specific funding made available for researchers who want to work in this area.
- There is a perceived need for research in a number of areas:
  - serious academic research or analysis which takes a broader or longitudinal view of media development across countries and its impact on development and governance outcomes
  - research which demonstrates the effectiveness of particular interventions, with a comparative element if possible in order to increase the learning application to other environments
  - research demonstrating the value of independent and community radio and TV
  - more content analysis
  - the extension of the IREX Sustainability Index would be valued
- More multi-donor funding of research projects, and the involvement of more researchers from developing countries.

## CONCLUSION

The intention of this consultation was to understand what current perceptions are about strategic engagement with media in relation to governance outcomes. Through speaking to a diverse range of those in the development community, the outcome is a snapshot of thinking about the issues under discussion:

In summary, this analysis has found that:

- Media as an aspect of governance is increasingly recognised as important by those in the development policy community. A small minority tend to question the emphasis on good governance itself in the development agenda.
- There are some indicators that progress has been made in regard to strategic engagement by development actors; in particular, media is starting to be recognised at policy level.
- Despite this, strategic engagement falls far short of what is considered appropriate considering media's importance to governance – representing a significant engagement gap.
- Research on media in relation to governance has increased, but there is room for more serious and strategic research both at the academic level and in terms of field studies, to underpin policy and to disseminate information about how interventions have worked.

A range of themes emerged to explain this engagement gap both at policy and programme level and in relation to research. At the heart of the matter lies the evident challenge of defining media, particularly in relation to governance – a conceptual difficulty. This affects not only how media is handled within development agencies – its place on the agenda and its institutional location – but impacts on how and whether institutions conceive that it is part of their mandate in the first place. Perhaps more challenging are issues of aid architecture; the problem of mainstreaming media within governance programmes is clearly a complex one when aid is channelled via governments. Specialist agencies or foundations may not have this problem but may run the risk of being sidelined.

Against this background, there is a demonstrable need to continue the debate about what media is in relation to governance, to continue to build on the policy statements which have begun to acknowledge the centrality of media's role. A number of the development actors spoken to are positive about the steps which have been taken, although there is a recognised need for this work to be underpinned by research and for that research to be thoroughly disseminated. Some of this work is being done, but more co-ordination would be useful. Informed debate too is hugely important – debate at all levels and between different sets of actors, policy makers and academics – not just “the usual suspects”. There is a desire that this debate should be not just located, but owned, by actors in those countries receiving development aid. The view going forward is positive, but much remains to be done to close the engagement gap.

## APPENDICES

### I. RESEARCH METHOD

The study consisted of 23 interviews across three groups: Donors (including those from bilateral, multilateral agencies, and foundations), development academics, and representatives from southern countries and organisations. The full list of interviews is below. The structure was weighted in favour of development agencies, with a total of 13 interviewees from this category. There were six interviewees from policy institutes, think tanks or universities, and three representing the southern perspective. The aim was to canvass a range of opinion and to seek alternative or differing perspectives. The aim was to undertake 20 interviews – in the end, 23 were completed. Two were from the EU and – on request – these were treated as a single interview for the purpose of analysis. As with all consultative work of this nature, the final list was influenced to a considerable extent by availability for interview within the time-frame of the research.

#### The interviewees

	Name	Job Title	Organisation	Type of organisation
1	Eric Chinje	Manager for External Affairs and Communications for Africa; Chair, African Media Initiative (AMI)	World Bank	Development agencies: Multilateral
2	William Orme	Policy Advisor for Independent Media Development	UNDP	Development agencies: Multilateral
3	Bjoern Foerde	Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre	UNDP	Development agencies: Multilateral
4	Robert Chase	Demand for Good Governance Focal Point, Social Development Department	World Bank	Development agencies: Multilateral
5	Sina Odugbemi	Head of Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP)	World Bank	Development agencies: Multilateral
6	Klaus Rudischhauser	Director DG for Development,	European Commission	Development agencies: Multilateral
7	Ian Barber		European Commission	Development agencies: Multilateral
8	Mogens Schmidt	Deputy Assistant Director General for Communication and Information; Director, Division of Freedom of Expression	UNESCO	Development agencies: Multilateral
9	Christina Dahlman	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	SIDA	Development agencies: bilaterals

10	Mark Robinson	Head of Profession Governance and Conflict, and Acting Head, Governance and Social Development, Policy Research Division	DFID	Development agencies: bilaterals
11	Ruth Emmerlink	Senior Policy Officer, Human Rights, Good Governance and Peace Building	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Development agencies: bilaterals
12	Mark Koenig	Senior Advisor for Independent Media Development	USAID/DCHA/DG: Office of Democracy and Governance	Development agencies: bilaterals
13	Vanessa Mazal	Program Officer, Public Affairs and Communications, Global Development Policy and Advocacy	Gates Foundation	Development agencies: Foundations
14	Gordana Jankovic	Media Director	Open Society Institute	Development agencies: Foundations
15	Thomas Carothers	Vice President for Studies	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Academics/ Think tanks/ Policy Institutes
16	John Gaventa	Director, Centre for Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, Institute of Development Studies	University of Sussex	Academics/ Think tanks/ Policy Institutes
17	John Young	Director of Programmes, Research and Policy Development Group	Overseas Development Institute	Academics/ Think tanks/ Policy Institutes
18	Mushtaq Khan	Professor of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	London University	Academics/ Think tanks/ Policy Institutes
19	Marguerite H Sullivan	Senior Director, Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA)	National Endowment for Democracy	Academics/ Think tanks/ Policy Institutes
20	Paul Collier	Director, Centre for the Study of African Economies	University of Oxford	Academics/ Think tanks/ Policy Institutes
21	John Githongo	Former Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance	Kenya	Southern: agencies/ independent
22	Habiba Mejiri-Cheikh	Spokesperson, Head of Communication and Information	African Union Commission	Southern: agencies/ independent
23	Amadou Mahtar Ba	Director	African Media Initiative	Southern: agencies/ independent

## II. KEY RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

**Are there any significant research papers/debates/fora relating to the contribution made by media to governance which have been particularly valuable or influential?**

The papers listed below do not represent a comprehensive list of the research in the field, but are the (largely) top-of-mind work which interviewees mentioned. In addition a number of pieces were referred to, and some authors were mentioned as having been important in the literature. These were:

- Report on the ways NGOs can use mobile phones and other digital media to hold governments to account (sponsored or produced by a mobile phone company)
- World Bank study on cell phones in the Philippines
- Work on radio stations in Russia and governance
- Work by Tim Besley and Robin Burgess, both at the LSE
- Work by Amartya Sen
- Work by David Stromberg
- Paul Collier's forthcoming book *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (published UK March 2009) is expected to be influential

### **Research publications/papers mentioned as significant/impactful:**

- "African Capacity Building: The Missing Link in Development", speech by EVK Jaycox, World Bank Vice-President for Africa, 1993
- African Media Development Initiative (AMDI) reports
- "At the Heart of Change: The Role of Communication in Sustainable Development", Panos, 2007
- BBC World Service Trust briefing on Kenya elections
- BBC World Service Trust media landscape studies
- CIMA report on US funding of media assistance, published by NED, 2008
- CIMA "Independent Media Report", published by NED
- Commission for Africa report 2005
- DFID report on media and governance
- Framework for Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis (SGACA), Sue Unsworth
- Governance Indicators, Daniel Kaufman
- "From Media Markets to Policy Making: Information and Public Choice", World Bank, 2008, Roumeem Islam
- Global Accountability Indicators (World Bank)
- Nigeria's experience publishing budget allocation; a practical tool to promote demand for better governance
- "Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development from the Global Forum for Media Development" Internews, 2007
- "Power to the People", evidence from a randomized experiment of a community-based mentoring project in Uganda, 2006, Bjorkman and Svensson
- "Promoting Independent Media: Strategies for Democracy Assistance", Krishna Kumar, 2006
- Reinikka & Svensson: evidence from a newspaper campaign to reduce capture of public funds (June 2004)
- Report on the situation of freedom of expression in Africa: AU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, presented Accra conference 2007
- Reporters Sans Frontières Annual Reports

- Review of performance indicators – a tool developed for Unesco by Andrew Puddephatt: ([http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/26032/12058560693media\\_indicators\\_framework\\_en.pdf/media\\_indicators?framework\\_en.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/26032/12058560693media_indicators_framework_en.pdf/media_indicators?framework_en.pdf))
- Strategies for Democracy Assistance 2006
- The IREX Sustainability Index
- “The Power of Information: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Farmers’ Welfare in the Philippines” by Julien Labonne and Robert S. Chase
- “Towards a New Model: Media and Communication in Post-Conflict and Fragile States” Kalathil et al. (2008)
- “The Role of Media in Democracy: A strategic approach”. Washington Centre for Democracy and Governance, USAID (1999)
- Various reports by the Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP)
- World Bank Development Report 2002 (Chapter 10 on media)

### III. RESEARCH PLANS

#### What plans do you have to institute/carry out research?

Some research in the area under discussion is planned by the organisations and individuals consulted.

- Multilaterals are most likely to be planning research work. The AUC (under the AUC-EU joint initiative) plans to initiate a study on the pan-African Observatory on Africa. At the time of speaking they were also in the final stages of a comprehensive study on the establishment of a pan-African radio and TV channel. The EU plans to undertake a study not just of what the Commission does in the realm of media support but of what member states do as a census or catalogue of what’s already out there as a useful data source. They have already carried out an audit of their own work in the area over the past five years. The UNDP is undertaking work in conjunction with UNESCO, to pilot the media indicators drawn up by Andrew Puddephatt.
- Of the bilaterals, DFID has already commissioned a number of programmes which are underway, while the two other bilaterals are still in the throes of reorganisation and therefore could not say what research they might be undertaking.
- The OSI is planning to undertake a set of studies looking at the transformation to digital media, aspects of which involve the role of media in governance and how digital communication is going to impact on this.
- Of the academics and think tanks, Paul Collier’s forthcoming book will touch on media, specifically in relation to elections. Mushtaq Khan (SOAS) stressed that media is heavily implicated in the work which he does, even though it is not a specific focus and John Young is about to commence a programme looking at interaction between civil societies and media and governance in a number of African countries.
- USAID is about to release with Internews a report on the capability of community media, and has issued a short report on cell phone technology – they conduct one or two pieces every year on an ongoing basis.
- The OSI is to undertake a study about the transformation of media from traditional to digital platforms and aspects involve the role of media in governance and how digital communication is going to carry this. A set of studies across multiple countries is planned.



A number of other projects were mentioned as in the pipeline, but not necessarily confirmed:

- Vanessa Mazal at the Gates Foundation is hoping to undertake some early stage research next year in better understanding the role that media plays in development
- UNDP would like to undertake research in collaboration with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). This presents a challenge in terms of agreeing the terms of reference in that BCPR has a short-term agenda and UNDP has a long-term agenda
- Eric Chinje at the World Bank hopes that some joint research will be carried out by the World Bank Institute and the Gates Foundation

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