



The MISA/UNDP Training on Investigating and Reporting Corruption for Journalists in Southern Africa

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Workshop Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) jointly organized a three-day training on “Investigating and Reporting Corruption” in Johannesburg, South Africa from 3-5 December, 2009. The main objective of the training was to build the capacity of media in southern Africa region by providing in-depth knowledge and skills on investigative journalism and facilitating knowledge exchange and discussions on the experiences of all participants. The training had a particular focus on how skills, tools and techniques could be utilized to investigate and report corruption within an environment of poor governance, widespread poverty and limited media freedom.

The training was more resourceful given the facilitators’ experience on the topics of corruption as well as investigative reporting techniques. The first part of the training covered the concepts such as definitions, causes, and consequences of corruption, international norms and standards, and corruption measurement and assessments. By exploiting the use of international instruments such as UNCAC, AU Convention and SADC protocols, the training expanded knowledge of participants on the understanding of international norms and standards. The second part of the training covered skills, tools and techniques required to conduct investigative journalism.

The training exploited more practical methodology to engage every participant’s participation through presentations, group works, experience sharing and question and answer formats. It also provided a base of knowledge and technical skills which investigative journalists could utilize in reporting corruption. Building up on the experiences from the Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), participants were introduced to systematic media approach to investigating corruption with substantial focus on planning process, documentation, interviewing techniques, data base development, analysis of data and information, and reporting stories. The training made a critical analysis of the corruption situation in Africa with comparison to corruption investigative case studies from South East Asia.

Nearly all participants rated the training as “excellent”. Most of the participants were very happy with the methodology used in the training, session course design, case studies used, presentations as well as the overall arrangement of the training. “The training empowered us with new techniques of doing investigation corruption stories”, wrote one participants in the evaluation form. Similarly, another participant said, “I was really informed and I am looking at corruption in a fresh new angle than I used to”.

As a follow up to this training, UNDP and MISA will develop a training manual on investigative journalism. Moreover, the training has indentified various areas of cooperation between UNDP and MISA including rolling out this training to the country level, a follow-up training for the trainers, establishing ‘UNDP-MISA Integrity Awards’ for the best stories on investigative journalism, and publishing a book by compiling the investigative stories on corruption collected by MISA.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
NIS	National Integrity System
PACDE	UNDP's Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community

1. BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) jointly organized a three-day training on “Investigating and Reporting Corruption” in Johannesburg, South Africa from 3-5 December, 2009. The main objective of the training was to build the capacity of media in southern Africa region by providing in-depth knowledge and skills on investigative journalism and facilitating knowledge exchange and discussions on the experiences of all participants. The training brought together participants from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Angola.

The training was attended by:

- A consultant from Southern African region Derek Luyt, Head - Media and Advocacy, Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) Centre for Social Accountability, Rhodes University
- Ms. Malou Mangahas, Executive Director of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (South-East Asia)
- 20 Senior Journalists from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- Representatives from MISA Regional Secretariat
- Representatives from UNDP



MISA took a lead in arranging all logistics including selecting participants, developing concept note, selecting venue, arranging the travel and accommodation of the participants, arranging all training workshop requirements including rapporteurs. UNDP took the responsibility to provide both technical and financial assistance to MISA to prepare for and conduct the training workshop. UNDP provide its

technical inputs to agenda and concept note and contributed its financial resources for the training. Moreover, UNDP brought an international expert from the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) to share skills, knowledge and experiences on investigating corruption cases and writing stories.

B. Context

Recognizing the importance of media in fighting corruption and sharing a common concern that for improving governance in Southern Africa, there is a need to strengthen media, MISA and UNDP's Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (PACDE) entered into an agreement to organize and carry out training on investigative reporting on corruption to journalists from the Southern African region. The agreement, which was signed by both parties on 24 October, 2009, echoed both organizations' commitment to equip media practitioners with skills and knowledge that will supplement their existing knowledge base in undertaking investigative reporting on corruption.

Both MISA and UNDP note that a free and independent media can expose corruption and mobilize the population in the fight against corruption. Media plays an important role if it is informed on the causes, effects, and magnitude of corruption as well as international anti-corruption norms and standards. However, both organizations also acknowledge that in many countries in Southern Africa, the media is not free and independent of political influence and the access to information is not guaranteed. Many journalists have to work in countries where media freedom and access to information are limited. With this background, both UNDP and MISA believed that training journalists in investigative journalism with a particular focus on social, political and economic circumstances, under which they work, would significantly contribute to mobilizing population in the fight against corruption. A well-developed and aware civil society ultimately has the capacity to monitor anti-corruption efforts, expose and deter corrupt practices andcredibly establishes that institutions are not corrupt" (UN Anti-Corruption Toolkit: 19).

C. Objectives of the Training Workshop

The primary objective of the training workshop was to stimulate journalists to develop their capacities and skills to investigate and report on corruption within an environment of poor governance, widespread poverty and limited media freedom. The programme assumed that these issues are systematically inter-related, and encourages participants to approach investigating and reporting corruption in a correspondingly systematic manner.

The second objective of the training workshop was to encourage participants to consider investigations and story angles which emphasize the multi-dimensional nature of corruption and anti-corruption efforts. In particular, participants were encouraged to investigate and report corruption in ways which engage directly with the experiences of their audiences and contribute to their empowerment in realizing their rights to good governance.

The third objective of the training was to emphasize the need for journalists to remain non-partisan. Media efforts to expose and combat corruption must rely on balance, impartiality and independence. In this regard, the training encouraged participants to pay particular attention to the basics of good investigative journalism: evaluating sources, checking accuracy of information, reporting contradictions

and discrepancies, being sensitive to the ethical dilemmas associated with investigating and reporting corruption, and distinguishing analysis from opinion.

2. TRAINING COMPONENTS

I. Opening Session

The meeting was opened by the remarks of Mr. Kaitira Kandjii, Regional Director of MISA and Mr. Siphosami Malunga, Democratic Governance Practice Leader, UNDP Sub-Regional office for Eastern and Southern Africa. Anga Timilsina, Coordinator of PACDE facilitated the session, whereas Derek Luyt, Lead Facilitator, introduced the agenda of the workshop and briefed on the objectives and expectations.

II. Session 1: Corruption: Concept and Definitions

Facilitator Derek Luyt led an exercise where participants wrote individual responses to various questions related to definitions, causes, and consequences and discussed in plenary various ways to analyze corruption situation on the African continent and the world at large. *Corruption was defined by the participants as the abuse/ misuse of entrusted power for private gain.*

Participants discussed and agreed that corruption exists in nearly every country in the world, but it differs in scale, extent, form, manifestation and consequences country by country. Countries such as Angola, Nigeria, and Somalia were singled out by participants themselves as been some of the worse cases, whereas participants also mentioned that many Southern African countries not getting any better in terms of corruption. The training noted that corruption has denied some citizens' better access to resources and development, particularly that of vulnerable groups such as women and children, and this has pushed the majority of society into abject poverty and hence there is the need to fight it and turn things around. Corruption exists across societies but highly exercised by people who have power and those who are greedy and longs for power and richness. Apart from power and greed, selfishness is also one of the major players contributing to corruption. More importantly, corruption becomes a culture itself when there is a higher degree of monopoly and wide authority, little accountability and perverse incentives to involve in corruption.

The training singled out institutional capacity, cultural susceptibility, moral decay, economic structures (poverty/inequality), political structures (one-party state and authoritarianism), historical causes (colonialism/Imperialism) and human nature as some of the major causes of corruption.

The training also went deeper in looking at the forms of corruption and the consequences of corruption to national development as well as to the lives of ordinary citizen. The absence of rules, regulations, policies and legislation as well as weak systems of enforcement, weak systems of oversight (i.e. absence of watchdog institutions), lack of accountability, lack of transparency, lack of check and balances in the system are major contributing factors to poor governance emanating to corruption in most countries, hence the need for the media to jet in with the ability to combat corruption.

The focus was also placed at the international norms and standards of corruption prevention measures and the critical role of media to educate the public and put pressure on the government by publishing the investigative stories. Anga Timilsina and Derek Lyut introduced to participants the fundamental anti-

corruption frameworks such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Related Offences, as well as the SADC Protocol against Corruption and briefed about the relevant articles related to the role of media from each of these instruments.

III. Session 2: National Integrity System (NIS)

Corruption prevention techniques were fully discussed with specific emphasis placed on reviewing and mapping each country's National Integrity System (NIS). Participants shared their experiences and were given time to outline the governing power structures which could be major loopholes of corruption in their own countries.

The NIS consists of the principle institutions and actors that contribute to integrity, transparency and accountability in a society. The following elements of the NIS were analyzed:

1. Legislature and Executive
2. Political Parties
3. Civil Service
4. Judicial System
5. Auditor-General/Audit Institutions
6. Anti-Corruption Agencies, Commissions and Plans
7. Ombudsman/Public Protector
8. Local Government
9. Media
10. Civil Society
11. Corporate/Private Sector
12. International Actors and Mechanisms

The training emphasized that a well-functioning NIS provides effective safeguards against corruption. However, when these institutions are characterized by a lack of appropriate regulations and by unaccountable behavior, corruption is likely to thrive. Strengthening the NIS promotes better governance across all aspects of society, and, ultimately, contributes to a more just society overall.

The NIS was used as a framework for Journalists to investigate corruption. Participants used this systematic approach to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the key actors and institutions and this exercise helped them to initiate proactive investigations, generate story ideas as well as identify gaps in knowledge (sources/contacts). Participants then made brief presentations on the situation of their country in terms of strengths and weaknesses of their NIS. A general discussion led by the facilitators pointed out the key factors that are linked to the vulnerability to corruption in each situation.

IV. Session 3: Corruption Prevention (Situational and Social Prevention)

The session looked at situational and social prevention as way to strengthen and build institutional capacity to prevent of corruption. Situational prevention strives to prevent corruption by regulating official discretion, reducing procedural complexity, increasing transparency in budgeting, employee

culture and motivation, and enforcing internal reporting procedures. It also proposes to eliminate conflicts of interest, and ensure disclosure of assets/liabilities/interests/gifts of political contributions.

Social Prevention on the other hand targets general social or economic factors to create conditions less likely to produce or support corrupt practices. It mostly deals with raising awareness of corruption, mobilizing citizens to refrain from corrupt practices themselves, citizen rights to integrity of service providers, particularly in the public sector. Rights to accountability and transparency through access to information held by the state (and/or others).

The main areas of social prevention involves public education, awareness and information, access to information, media training, joint government/civil society bodies, public complaints mechanisms as well as citizen's (consumer's) charters.

The training maintained that access to Information is vital to transparency and accountability and that it allows people to *ask* for information. It is thus vital for all laws in respective countries to incorporate access to Information rights with requirements to publish basic information, and ensure legally enforceable right to (documented) information with exclusions of cabinet discussions, internal working documents that require security clearance and documents related to privacy.

V. Session 4: Investigating and Reporting Corruption

Participants were also engaged in critiquing various real stories and their corruption investigation techniques. Corruption and investigative stories brought along with participants from different countries were critically analyzed, suggestions were made, and questions were asked and answered. More discussions on the general views of corruption and investigative reporting were also done.

The session went on to analyse types of investigative reporting such as 'Reactive and Proactive Investigations'. Reactive investigations are mostly reported cases from tip-offs and whistleblowers and involve:

1. Procurement fraud
2. Nepotistic appointments
3. Conflict of interest
4. Bribery: Receiving of gifts for performing official work and failing to declare them, or receiving of a gift from potential or a service provider and failure to declare it
5. Unauthorized private business: Officials running or participating in an unauthorized private business
6. Theft of government property: Officials stealing government property
7. Fraud: General fraud activities involving officials
8. Improper conduct that may lead to government losing money or resources
9. Irregular tender procedures

Proactive investigations involve:

1. Effectiveness of internal controls such as procurement control systems
2. Official motor vehicle control systems
3. Verification of qualifications
4. Investigation of payment of rentals of state houses by officials

5. Checking whether the quality of services or products provided by service providers is in line with the tender contract
6. Ensuring that leave forms and other relevant documents are submitted. Proactive Investigation also involves risk assessment to identified hot spot areas within departments.

It is important to note that journalists could find issues and prevent corruption by raising the flag on issues which would otherwise remain unnoticed or buried. However, it is imperative for journalists to wisely choose their sources with extra-consideration placed on primary sources, followed by the secondary and tertiary sources, respectively. Primary sources are original materials on which other research is based. Secondary sources are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources. Secondary sources are not evidence, but rather commentary on and discussion of evidence. Tertiary sources consist of information which is a distillation and collection of primary and secondary sources. Although human sources and electronic sources are of important to investigate corruption, document sources are believed to be rich of information for investigative reporters to rely on. Document sources involve public records such as:

- Government management documents
- Property registrations (Deeds office)
- Company registrations
- Hansard (a record of proceedings in parliament)
- Council meeting minutes
- Court records (e.g. charge sheet, judgments)
- Tender documents
- Birth, marriage and death records
- driver's licence records
- Vehicle registration records
- Research reports (e.g. census, demarcation board)

Non-public records are also important in providing information on corruption. These include police investigation files, bank records, income tax records, credit ratings, research reports (e.g. universities, NGOs) and diaries/notes.

At the end of this session, participants had a chance to get in depth exposure to the corruption measurement and assessment. The main issue discussed was whether corruption can be meaningfully measured and assessed. Participants were familiarized with various methodologies and existing tools with the strengths and weaknesses of each methodology. A time series data on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Indices from 2001 to 2009 were presented by Anga Timilsina and participants were asked several questions such as whether they agree or disagree with the improvement and deterioration implied by the indices. Participants then exposed to input, process, and output indices and were reminded that the objective of anti-corruption measurement should be clear in order to make measurement/assessment meaningful. For example, if the objective is to raise awareness, the perception-based indicators may be helpful. However, for reforming systems and institutions, one should look at the existence and efficiency of institutions as well as processes to indentify hot spots for corruption vulnerability.

VI. Session 5: Investigating and Reporting Corruption: Experience and Examples from the Philippines and South East Asia

The session uprooted various ethical dilemmas involved in investigation and reporting corruption and highlighted the scope and limitations of media investigation, methods and techniques for journalists, and challenges encountered in investigative reporting and to the ways to overcome them. Journalists were introduced to systematic media approach to investigating corruption with substantial focus on planning process, documentation, interviewing techniques, data base development, analysis of data and information and reporting stories.

Looking at the corruption investigative case studies in South East Asia, the training also made a critical analysis of the corruption situation in Africa with comparison to corruption investigative case studies in South East Asia. Malou took the participants into significant investigative reporting techniques, steps and shared experience on the case studies which were done by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism in the Philippine.



The case studies include investigation which the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism did to uncover the corruption practices involving the previous and current presidents of the Philippines. The experiences were inspiring and boosted the moral of participants to use similar techniques and engage in similar strategies on investigating corruption. It was noted that investigative reporting also requires time and commitment, and risk taking given the involvements of those in power.

This session was followed by the closing session where MISA Regional Director, Kaitira Kandji delivered the closing remarks and thanked all participants for attending the training. He expressed MISA/UNDP support to continue building capacity of the media in Southern Africa. He said that MISA would engage more to consult with partners including UNDP country offices and to ensure that the training is advanced to national level.

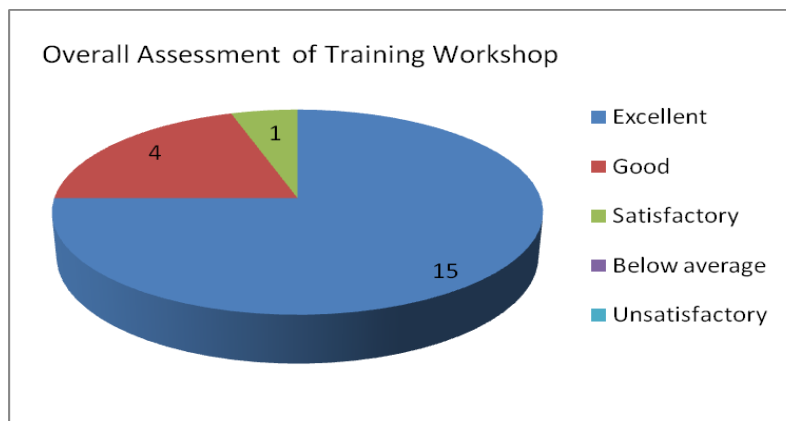
On behalf of UNDP, Anga Timilsina, Coordinator of PACDE thanked all participants for bringing their experiences and participating actively in discussions. He also thanked MISA and facilitators for the success of the training. The two facilitators, Derek and Malou also thanked participants and encouraged them to build a network to share stories on investigative journalism in the region. They also applauded the fact that the participants were well selected and that they expressed high level of experience in their field. Participants on their side thanked MISA and UNDP for organizing the training and requested that initiative should continue to empower them to do more investigative reports on corruption in their own countries.

3. PROGRESS AGAINST PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The training helped to build the capacity and skills required for journalists to investigate corruption cases and also motivated journalists that the media can contribute immensely to poverty alleviating and lifting the people’s lives by exposing and reporting the cases of corruption and monitoring the country’s progress in fighting corruption and improving governance.

More importantly, the training helped participants to interact with each other and share experiences from different countries and learn each country’s weaknesses and strengths to combat corruption. Participants were encouraged for realistic and accurate reporting and correct fact-checking to increase the quality of investigated cases. Participants also had a clear exposure to utilizing international instruments such as United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Related Offences, as well as the SADC Protocol Against Corruption with most of them admitting that their understanding of these instruments vis-à-vis the role of media was a unique part of this training. Participants also admitted to having learnt different approaches to reporting on corruption using different angles and approaches including using better techniques to formulate questions and document data and information sources.

Meanwhile according to the evaluation question form distributed for participants to fill in, out 20 participants, 15 participants rated the overall assessment of the training as excellent, where as 4 rated the training as good and 1 participants found the training to be satisfactory. Most of the participants were very happy with the methodology used in the training, session course design, case studies used, presentations as well as the overall arrangement of the training.



The training “empowered us with new techniques of doing investigation corruption stories. I honestly did not notice any weakness”, wrote one participants in the evaluation form. Similarly, another participant said, “I was really informed and I am looking at corruption in a fresh new angle than I used to”. Most of the participants emphasized the need for more workshop of the some nature in order to monitor their progress in regards to the skills learnt in respective countries. Some of them were happier to having learnt about corruption in more depth and feel the training has expanded their knowledge to help the do their job properly, but they would like to maintain their network as one participant said, “It was a great family of senior journalists in the SADC. Honestly, time flew fast. My prayer is that we should

keep in touch and maintain the network”. Similarly, another participant wrote, “I would like to thank for opportunity to empower and better ourselves. It was a truly fruitful and informative training. I have already put some of the practices in my daily routine and the results are amazing, you can imagine how happy I am. I will send some of the stories that I run as a result of the training”.

4. CHALLENGES

Although the training proved to be very useful to all participants, MISA and UNDP noted that participants needed much time to cover more issues in relations to the overall contents of the training. The challenge behind short length of time was due to resources and also due to the fact that most news rooms could not allow their journalists to be away from work given the work pressures in the newsroom.

The training also established that all country in the Southern African region apart from South Africa did not have any ‘Access to Information Laws’ to allow citizen including journalists to obtain information that could expose corruption. MISA and UNDP also noted that for corruption to be reduced if not eliminated, nations should enact access to information legislations and allow the media to operate freely. This will not only level the operations of journalists but will help to build good governance and enhance transparency and accountability in the distribution of resources.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

As part of MISA/UNDP agreement, MISA with the help of experts is currently engaged in developing a manual which will be used by both MISA and UNDP to conduct similar training in Southern Africa, South East Asia and Latin America. MISA is also planning to partner with UNDP country offices, and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism to roll out similar training to national level with the aim of building a network of investigative reporters across the Southern African Region and beyond.

Equally this will also help the majority of grass-root society to benefit and ensure that resources are fairly distributed without corruption practices. It is MISA and UNDP’s wishes to continue to equip the media with skills to make sure they strive to make the governments, institutions and those entrusted with public resources accountable.

More specifically, the followings are some of the actions items identified for follow up:

1. ‘UNDP Integrity Awards’ for five best investigative stories selected by a jury (could be an activity to commemorate the International Anti-Corruption Day)
2. Small fellowship grant for journalists to encourage publishing good stories
3. Network creation and collection of stories published by the participants (by MISA)
4. Publishing a book by compiling the stories collected by MISA
5. Facilitating the representation of journalists in major international fora (e.g., IACC)
6. Training of Trainers (TOT) on investigative journalism (a 10-day workshop covering all major topics on investigative journalism)
7. Representation of journalism in UNDP Anti-Corruption Community of Practice meeting for East and Southern Africa
8. Taking the training to country level (partnership between MISA and UNDP country offices)
9. Possible MISA partnership with UNDP Africa Governance Programme on various issues

ANNEXES

Annex I: Agenda

Opening session: Opening remarks and introduction of agenda

Session 1: Corruption: Concept and definitions

- Corruption Questions: To begin with, participants write individual responses to questions and discuss in plenary. (These questions lead into the following section of the programme) (facilitator: Derek)
- Definitions, causes and consequences (Facilitator: Derek)
- International norms and standards: prevention measures and the role of media
 - United Nations convention against corruption (UNCAC) (Facilitator: Anga)
 - AU convention and SADC protocol, and APRM process (Facilitator: Derek)
- Corruption measurement and assessment: various methodologies and challenges (Facilitator: Anga)
- Summary of key points: A journalist's guide to the central issues and debates (Facilitator: Derek)

Session 2: National Integrity System (NIS) (Facilitator: Derek)

- Introduction to the National Integrity System (NIS)
- Mapping the national NIS (participants will share their experiences)
- Plenary Discussion of NIS mapping.

Session 3: Corruption prevention (Facilitator: Derek)

- Anti-Corruption 1: Situational Prevention
- Anti-Corruption 2: Social Prevention

Session 4: Investigating and reporting corruption (Facilitator: Derek)

- Investigating Corruption 1: Scope and Limitations of Media Investigations
- Investigating Corruption 2: Methods and Techniques for Journalists
- Reporting Corruption: Some Challenges and How to Overcome Them.
- Putting it Together: Participants plan and critique corruption investigations

Session 5: Investigating and reporting corruption: Experiences and examples (Facilitation: Malou)

Session 6: Closing session

Annex II: List of Participants

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