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MADAGASCAR

In December 2007, President Ravalomanana organized the “Presidential Dialogue,” a participatory event bringing policymakers and others together to discuss the lessons learned during the first year of implementation of the Madagascar Action Plan (a strategic and operational framework for the development of the country). Accordingly, in early 2008, the government set a goal of increasing the growth rate to 8 percent by enhancing rural development and making security and education a priority. Improving governance, particularly in the judicial sector, was also prioritized.

One event that fueled reporting in 2008 was the loss of control of the capital, Antananarivo, by the ruling party, *Tiako I Madagasikara* (I Love Madagascar); this benefited the young mayor, Andry Rajoelina, from the *Tanora Malagasy Vonona* (Determined Malagasy Youth) party. This development, viewed as a warning to the regime, gradually evolved into a challenge between the two sides, creating tension and power conflicts. Toward the end of 2008, Rajoelina was seen as the most popular opposition figure and became the natural leader of the opposition platform.

In mid-2008, reform of the education sector—the extension of primary education from five years to seven years and the use of Malagasy as the principal language of instruction in primary schools—also featured prominently in the Malagasy media. According to many professionals, the lack of communication and dialogue were the main causes of controversy and suspicion surrounding this initiative.

Other major stories included Madagascar’s organization of the African Union summit in 2009. To promote media coverage of such an important international event, and the upcoming International Organization of the Francophonie in 2010, a press center was built inside the Ivato International Conference Center.

The end of 2008 was marked by the reform of the law governing political parties, an outcome of the 2008 presidential dialogue. A broad consultation involving some political parties was conducted to debate, refine, and validate the new law. For the government, the implementation of this law was proof they promoted free speech and equal treatment of political parties. But the opposition political parties did not attend this meeting, arguing that this reform was tailored to defend the interests of the ruling party.

Finally, the most significant and most covered event at the end of 2008 was the closing by the government of private Viva TV, owned by Rajoelina. The government claimed an interview with former president Didier Ratsiraka raised public security concerns. The decision to shut down the station was widely considered an infringement of the opposition’s freedom of speech and the freedom of media outlets not aligned with the regime. This is one of the main causes of the unrest that led to the installation of Rajoelina as president in March 2009.

MADAGASCAR AT A GLANCE

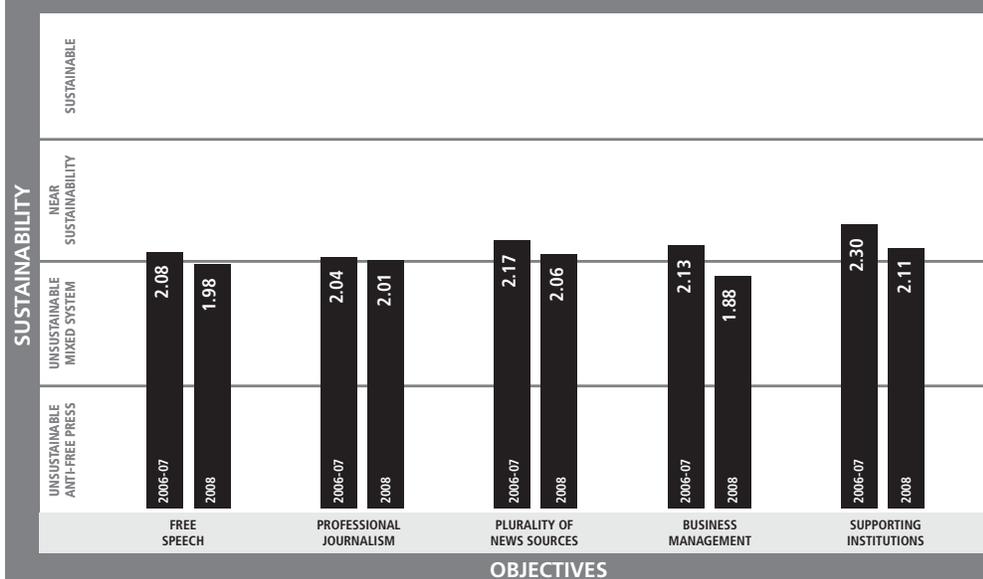
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 20,653,556 (July 2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Antananarivo
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Malayo-Indonesian, Cotiers, French, Indian, Creole, Comoran (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** indigenous beliefs 52%, Christian 41%, Muslim 7% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** English (official), French (official), Malagasy (official) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2007-Atlas):** \$6.361 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **GNI per capita (2007-PPP):** \$930 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **Literacy rate:** 68.9% (male 75.5%, female 62.5%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Andry Rajoelina (since 18 March 2009)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 254 radio stations, with 26 state stations (including the central and regional levels), 37 television channels, with 6 state channels (including the central and regional levels), 12 daily newspapers (with 5 partially in French and 1 entirely in French), 19 bi-weekly, 20 weekly, 12 bi-monthly, 21 monthly, 4 bimonthly and 14 quarterly. (http://www.ambafrance-mada.org/article.php3?id_article=269)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** top three by circulation: *Midi-Madagascar* (30,511), *Tribune Madagascar* (15,000), *Express de Madagascar* (15,000); about 200,000 daily copies total for entire country (sources: various local newspapers)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** highest-rated television outlets: Télévision Nationale Malagasy (state-owned), Radio Nationale Malagasy (state-owned), Madagascar Broadcasting System (private television and radio stations)
- > **News agencies:** ANTA (state), MADA (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 110,000 (2006, *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MADAGASCAR



Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.98

Panelists believed that legal and social standards promote freedom of speech but agreed that implementation was impeded in practice. The legal provisions in the 2007 constitution, especially Article 11 and Laws 90-031 and 92-032 on communication, are true guarantees of freedom of speech, according to Ruffin Rakotomaharo, chair of Madagascar Journalists Association (OJM) and journalist at Malagasy National Radio (RNM). However, implementation is inconsistent and limited.

The main reason for the problems of implementation is the lack of political commitment, whatever the government in place. Indirect pressures, including threat of administrative or penal actions, hang over journalists' heads. Rakotomaharo thinks the ban on radio talk shows like *Ny Marina* on Radio Antsiva and *Karajia* on Radio Don Bosco is unfortunate. There has been no improvement, and, according to James Ramarosaona, chief editor of *La Gazette de la Grande Ile*, reprimanding or admonishing Radio Don Bosco, rather than forcing the cancellation of the program, would have been sufficient.

Jean Eric Rakotoarisoa, a journalist at *Dan les Médias de Demain*, said that nationwide broadcasting for private radio stations is not permitted by law, but this is not equally enforced. Likewise, decriminalizing violations of the press laws and removal of prison sentences has never been implemented.

According to Jemima Rakotoasimbola, a reporter with M3TV in Mahajanga, journalists' inability to process information also affects freedom of speech. The resignation of a senior government official was, for instance, construed by journalists as desertion. This increases authorities' mistrust of journalists.

Rakotoarisoa said there is a difference facing regional journalists compared to those working in the capital. The authorities in the capital have a better understanding of the principles of freedom of speech, unlike those in the regions, who put a lot of pressure on the journalists.

Establishing a radio station is relatively free. A license is issued through open competitive bidding, and anyone can bid. This is reflected in the range of radio frequencies in Antananarivo, which is largely saturated. One has to comply only with the specifications available from the Office of Professional Regulation and Telecommunications (OMERT), and conditions for approval are open and clear, said Rakotomaharo.

However, panelists did not entirely rule out the possibility of political bias, as the OMERT and the Directorate for

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Information and Media are both under the Ministry of Communication and Telecommunications. The permitting commission will always do as the ministry likes. For example, as set forth in the order on free broadcast, the specifications should be discussed and finalized collaboratively by the commission and press organizations. In reality, the commission makes unilateral decisions.

The Florence Convention provides for customs exemptions for equipment and materials used by the media. Ramarosaona noted that according to the appropriation law, press organizations should benefit from tax incentives: the law states likewise that communication equipment should be, in principle, tax exempt. However, no implementing decree has been issued. This leads to corruption and/or nepotism, as only those who have acquaintances in the ministry can benefit from the tax break.

Rakotoarisoa offered a slightly different view. Generally, benefits are provided to the media but obstacles exist at the practical level. The law should state accurately what the tax relief is to avoid discrimination among the media.

According to James Ratsimandresy, consultant and former journalist at RNM, criminal actions against journalists are not frequent, but they do exist. Such actions have largely decreased in the past six years. The most dangerous situations arise during political disturbances. Rakotomaharo said that when a journalist receives a threat or is affected by physical violence or intimidation, he is hardly given any protection. The press organization does not take legal action when journalists are affected: even they shirk their responsibilities. The Journalists' Association merely raises objections or questions but remains passive due to lack of protection, according to Romule Raterazoelison, journalist at Radio Quartz.

Malagasy journalists are not covered by life insurance when performing their duties, except in very rare cases when they collaborate with international organizations. Only a few private journalists are insured, said Ratsimandresy.

A law that guarantees the media's independence exists, but is not fully respected. Further, there is supposed parity

In some regions, access to information at the level of regional public services is quite easy. There is a problem when the information involves the central level and requires the approval of a senior officer, said Romule.

regarding access to sources of information. However, there is a slight imbalance in the treatment of private journalists and state-media journalists. The latter are more often called on by government authorities to cover major events. The reasons are twofold: state media cover the whole country and reach a wider audience. According to Rakotomaharo, state-media journalists also have to abide by a clear-cut editorial line laid down by the government and, by extension, the ruling party.

In cases of libel, administrative or penal actions may be taken with possible prison sentences. In principle, an administrative action is taken prior to a penal action. Alleged victims can defend themselves in court. To date, no journalist has been given a prison sentence for libel against public officials or other actors.

From a legal viewpoint, access to any type of unclassified information is free and guaranteed by the constitution. Laudable efforts have been initiated, including the establishment of government portals accessible on the Internet and the holding of press conferences to speak about

LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > Legal and social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
- > Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- > Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- > Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- > State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence.
- > Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and offended parties must prove falsity and malice.
- > Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

important events. The problem lies with who holds the information, said Rakotomaharo. Some public officials are reluctant to provide information, and the figures provided by these authorities are often unreliable. The people's right to information is not always respected.

In some regions, access to information at the level of regional public services is quite easy. There is a problem when the information involves the central level and requires the approval of a senior officer, said Romule.

Sometimes, the approach to treatment and inclusion of the media is colored by past experience. There are times when a journalist distorted the statements made in an interview and is not given other interviews or information.

Access to international news sources is free in Madagascar. However, many journalists do not use them for want of means, particularly outside of Antananarivo, or out of laziness.

The government does not have a say on the hiring of journalists. The OJM issues membership cards through an independent commission whose members are elected or designated by each type of organization. In principle, one is given a card after at least three years of service. Actually, a card is issued in an almost fluid fashion, according to Ratsimandresy, and therefore joining the trade is free. One has only to meet the technical requirements for training and experience.

Most panelists agreed that there should be stricter criteria for practicing journalism. Many claim to be journalists but lack the needed skills. Press bosses are mainly concerned with earning profits, even if this means employing unqualified people. According to Nanou Fiankinana, UNDP Communication Coordinator, economic rationales prevail over qualifications. One becomes a journalist out of idleness, and the trade therefore loses its value. For example, at the regional level, a person was hired to broadcast songs, and afterward he became a de facto journalist.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Madagascar Objective Score: 2.01

Panelists said the environment in Madagascar is not yet conducive to the emergence of professional journalism. Conditions to foster good reporting do exist in the country; research can be done, and access to information is relatively easy to obtain. Journalists can get information and make in-depth assessments of any event or subject to improve the quality of their work. The problem lies at the level of the approach, means, and capacity to do it. Laziness and inadequate knowledge on the part of some journalists make the situation worse.

Generally, the perspective in reporting depends on the editorial line laid down by the press bosses at private media, and by the government for state media. Hardly any media process information impartially to produce quality reporting. Journalists often state facts as they are, without exploring the issue. For example, when opposition leader Henri Lecacheur received a three-month suspended sentence for holding an “unauthorized” rally in Antananarivo in August, state-run Television Malagasy (TVM) stated only plain facts, whereas TV Plus tried to investigate the actual reasons behind the case. In the situation surrounding the City of Antananarivo public washhouses (access to water by many in the capital is limited), Ravalomanana’s Malagasy Broadcasting System (MBS), both radio and television, only made general criticisms, while *le Quotidien*, also controlled by Ravalomanana, addressed the issue only from a perspective of promoting a clean Antananarivo.

Problems with means and infrastructure remain. Though journalists wish to double-check information and get all necessary advice, they lack the means to do so. For example, Raterazoelison said that during an accident that occurred in Ihosy, the media gave differing numbers of casualties. It is impossible to carry out investigations on the spot.

Sometimes, there is no way to have access to sufficient information. For example, when the former director of a ministry was arrested at Ivato International Airport, the media reported the facts differently. Some reported he was arrested with one gold bar in his possession, while others said three. According to Fabiola Raharijaona, journalist at *le Quotidien*, some information is not accessible at all to some journalists but is accessible to others. One may just as well wonder whether they have “bought” the information.

According to Ramarosaona, petty events are given to novice journalists to cover because of their lack of skills and experience. This leads to problems, however, as Rakotoarisoa noted that in covering crimes, suspects identified by the police are essentially reported to be guilty by these journalists before any court judgment has been handed down.

Ethical standards exist; conditions are conducive to their observance, but great efforts are required of the journalists to adhere to them. The Code of Ethics was issued and distributed to journalists, but most of them have not even read it. For example, when one speaks of a colleague, one has to quote his name or at least the organization he works for. But the phrase often used is “a local journalist,” said Rakotoarisoa. Violations of standards, even a deliberate violation out of an inclination toward sensationalism, occur almost every day. These include showing gruesome pictures for more than three seconds on television, raising issues that

Hardly any media process information impartially to produce quality reporting. Journalists often state facts as they are, without exploring the issue.

may jeopardize national solidarity, or not observing copyright on use of images.

Panelists felt that a quality journalist should comply with ethics codes and should never go beyond libelous limits. Unfortunately, some people without the appropriate training and capacity claim to be journalists and are unable to successfully perform their job. As a result, they subject the media world to brickbats, threats, and even violence. In some regions, anyone who works at a radio/television station claims to be a journalist.

Self-censorship means that the journalist analyzes all possible effects of disseminating the information. This should be done by all press organizations, according to Rakotoasimbola. It should also be well-suited to the context. For example, during the local religious rite of Fitampoha, reporting should respect tradition. It should be noted, however, that too much self-censorship may lead to withholding of information.

Self-censorship often depends on the news outlet’s editorial line. State media are often accused of distorting information, and yet they report facts devoid of comments or analyses, in conformity with the government’s editorial line, said Rakotomaharo. At TVM, any statement that goes against the government’s position might lead to a suspension of the journalist. However, when a piece of news has been made

JOURNALISM MEETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS:

- > Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
- > Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
- > Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
- > Journalists cover key events and issues.
- > Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
- > Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
- > Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
- > Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

According to Ramarosaona, petty events are given to novice journalists to cover because of their lack of skills and experience. This leads to problems, however, as Rakotoarisoa noted that in covering crimes, suspects identified by the police are essentially reported to be guilty by these journalists before any court judgment has been handed down.

public by other media or at press conferences, it can no longer be suppressed. In the Ambalamanasy Tamatave issue, for example, the government did not want a land issue to be reported upon, but TVM disregarded the instructions because the news had already been made public at a press conference.

Private press organizations also resort to self-censorship based on the owners' interests and political leanings. But self-censorship may also be due to external pressure. For instance, there are cases when one must carefully handle advertisers—particularly large telecommunication or mining companies (e.g., Sherritt or Rio Tinto's QIT Madagascar Minerals)—so that advertising revenues do not decrease, some panelists said.

Generally, journalists strive to cover key events and issues, but problems lie in making in-depth analyses of the news and establishing their importance compared with other issues. For example, to observe the government editorial line, state media just recount the facts without making comments or analyses even with respect to sensitive issues.

According to Fiankinana, some subjects do not even deserve reporting in the press. Rather, issues like the global financial crisis or tainted Chinese milk scandal (Chinese dairy products have been widely distributed in Africa) should be discussed and analyzed. For commercial reasons, these are hardly analyzed because top editors feel these stories do not interest readers and viewers. Sometimes, crucial information is not addressed at all.

Additionally, in the absence of any press agency in Madagascar, all the information in the print media focuses on Antananarivo and surrounding areas due to the high cost of transportation to provinces.

Journalists' salaries are inadequate. Many work out of simple dedication. To make up for low salaries journalists receive allowances from press event organizers during field trips. Therefore, journalists go hunting for stories that are likely to

pay such allowances, including per diem, cocktails, etc., said Raharijaona. Some journalists "have a good nose" and cover only these events or ask organizers what benefit they will get out of covering it before deciding to do so. According to Ramarosaona, journalists like to report on international organizations' activities just to get such benefits. Sometimes, these international organizations select them by name. Media outlet policies reinforce this behavior: for example, state-media journalists who go on field trips are not given any allowances by their employer, and reimbursement of expenses is a lengthy process.

Because journalists are badly paid—a state-station journalist's monthly salary is no more than €150—many accept bribes in cash or kind. This is more glaring for private-station journalists who are paid through advertisement revenues, according to Rakotomaharo. Such "kickbacks" from advertisers and politicians affect the good work of journalists. A report loses quality when, for example, only the picture, shot close-up, of an elected representative or other authority who wants praise for his or her achievement is broadcast. Some people pay journalists on a contract basis, and only their point of view will be conveyed.

In Madagascar, there is more entertainment than information in the media, as the perception of media managers is that people have lost interest in news and politics. A stations' primary goal is to secure the largest audience, said Fiankinana. Seventy percent of programs on the national RNM channel are entertainment programs.

Panelists felt that a standard should be set for the print media, i.e., the proportion of advertisements should not exceed the share of news. Rakotoarisoa said that the *Midi Madagasikara* newspaper format looks like that of a free sheet, as it contains too many advertisements.

For media at the national level, a real "technological revolution" has taken place and modern equipment is available and in use. At the regional level, quality varies. In Mahajanga, the M3TV channel's facilities and equipment are fairly good. In Moramanga, according to Romule, there is a lack of modern technological equipment. Further, some radio frequencies overlap due to the nonobservance of technical criteria, said Ratsimandresy.

Hardly any media outlets provide niche programs and reporting. A limiting factor is the inadequacy of means. Reporting is only possible when it is supported by a NGO or other private institution that directly derives the benefits of coverage. Many newspapers cannot afford to make in-depth analyses or pay for journalists qualified to be specialists in a particular field.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Madagascar Objective Score: 2.06

Information sources are many and relatively affordable. However, one should make a distinction between rural and urban populations. Urban dwellers benefit from the availability of several media (Internet, television, radio stations, newspapers). In the rural areas, access is rather limited, as only a few radio stations are available, and the high cost of living and absence of electricity make the situation worse. In the past, attempts have been made to improve radio coverage of rural areas.

The national Anosy station has been rehabilitated through bilateral cooperation. Rakotomaharo said that private stations have entered into contracts with international channels, including TV Plus, RFI/RFO, and Alliance FM. These collaborations are often aimed at building capacities in technical equipment, training, and program broadcasting. These still have somewhat limited coverage.

At the national level and in provincial capitals, access to world news is possible and free. Cybercafés are growing in number, and a lot of information is available through the Internet. Access to satellite-based information is also free but is limited due to subscription costs.

In a few regional towns, some information centers with high-speed Internet connections exist, such as in Ranomafana, Moramanga, and Fenerive Est. However, the efforts made to raise farmers' awareness of information and

Rakotomaharo said that RNM and TVM must comply with the government's editorial line and will never criticize government programs. The views of government dignitaries and ruling party leaders prevail; those of opposition parties are not covered.

communications technologies stumble because of relatively lower levels of education.

According to Rakotoasimbola, the establishment of a press center in Mahajanga is under consideration. To make it sustainable, however, organizational or financial problems must be overcome. The first press center, established in Diego, is virtually nonoperational due to such problems, said Rakotomaharo.

From 1998 until the present, the state media have not served the public interest, but have become a government media that primarily serves the interests of the ruling party. Rakotomaharo said that RNM and TVM must comply with the government's editorial line and will never criticize government programs. The views of government dignitaries and ruling party leaders prevail; those of opposition parties are not covered. However, keenly journalists and editors there want to work for the public interest, they cannot disregard the instructions; otherwise, actions would be taken against them. This is why chief editors at state media outlets change when there is a change in government.

State media are somewhat reluctant to address a few social issues, including the power outage problem, which is an easy subject to broach but difficult to discuss. "Censorship" exists but is not written in black and white, according to Rakotomaharo. One example is the issue of reforming national education. It is difficult to explain to the public that this effort is not "Malagasification," but rather the promotion of the mother tongue when debate shows cannot even be held in the state media. However, debates were held at private stations like TV Plus.

The absence of press agencies is a shameful aspect of the Madagascar media. The state-run *Agence Nationale d'information Taratra* (ANTA) is no longer operational. The main sources of information include AFP and BBC, especially for international news.

Independent broadcasters produce their own news programs. Information sources include the Internet or international channels like Euro News, TPS, and others. Independent

MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE AND OBJECTIVE NEWS.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- > A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
- > Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
- > State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- > Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
- > Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
- > Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- > A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

Overall, the slant on news depends on the group that owns the press organization. For private media, it is easy to make a distinction between the perspective of MBS or le Quotidien newspaper, which are owned by the Ravalomanana, and other press organizations including La Gazette de la Grande Ile and Viva TV, which represent the opposition.

stations located in Antananarivo regularly collect information based on national events. Radio stations in the regions use the newspapers as a source for national news.

Though it is difficult to identify the majority shareholders in press businesses, their political leanings and affinities are easily known. Overall, the slant on news depends on the group that owns the press organization. For private media, it is easy to make a distinction between the perspective of MBS or le Quotidien newspaper, which are owned by the Ravalomanana, and other press organizations including La Gazette de la Grande Ile and Viva TV, which represent the opposition. This gives the public the opportunity to analyze the provided information, said Rakotomaharo.

Minority languages are not an issue in Madagascar, as all citizens understand the official Malagasy language. Radio and television stations in the regions produce programs in local/ethnic languages to remain closer to their audience. Rakotoasimbola said that in Mahajanga, an intern translated the news to an Indian language, which the Indian community appreciated.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.88

Media outlets and supporting businesses at the national level are quite profitable, particularly commercial broadcasters, and fairly professionally managed, according to Ramaholimihaso. There are professional and modern media, such as Midi Madagasikara and RTA, but such profitability can be felt only in the fifth or sixth year of operation.

Distinctions should be made between the national and regional or local press. Radio stations in rural and isolated areas have severely limited revenues. Their owners, entrepreneurs or politicians, help to run them to convey their

views and defend their interests. Apart from these privately owned radio stations, there are also community-based state media, including Radio Antsiva Fianarantsoa, or associative radio stations like Radio Akonambanivolo in Beforona, whose goal is to control environmentally threatening slash-and-burn practices. These stations should be subsidized by the government, since the law prohibits selling advertising, but they are not. So, for want of means, their employees work only on a voluntary basis, and these media collect advertisement revenues nonetheless, said Rakotomaharo. Evangelical radio stations, which broadcast some news, likewise do not receive much revenue.

State media do not necessarily make funding decisions that are in line with public needs. However, most management personnel are professional. At the national broadcaster, for example, the financial chief is an expert in the field. On the other hand, the marketing person used to be a journalist. According to Rakotoasimbola, it is not necessary for journalism professionals to address these tasks. However, notions of journalism are needed.

Many revenue sources contribute to the operation of media. For the print press, there are a couple of major funding sources: subscription and sales per copy, and advertisements, said Ramaholimihaso; advertisements are the main revenue source for the print press. Rakotomaharo said that sometimes more advertisements are needed than news in order to provide sufficient funding. Most print-press organizations own their printing presses, which can be a source of additional revenue.

For radio and television stations, funding sources include commercials, awareness and communication campaigns, and special programs sponsored by NGOs and/or the government and aired for payment.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED BUSINESSES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

- > Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
- > Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- > Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- > Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
- > Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
- > Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

Advertisements come mainly from enterprises, international organizations, or national programs. They hire advertising agencies that contract with the media for the broadcasting; e.g., the broadcasting contract between M3TV and Tam Tam agency. According to Ratsimandresy, in some areas where enterprises are few (e.g., Upper Matsiatra), advertisements are mainly for upcoming concerts.

Estimates of the ratio of advertisement revenues to total revenues are sketchy. Although subscriptions and sales are important, today, advertisements account for about 60 percent of revenues. This is a source of problems, as advertisements have become a means of pressure for advertisers, said Rakotoarisoa. It is a real threat to the media's viability.

Generally, the government does subsidize independent media.

There are hardly any survey and research agencies that conduct polls, surveys, or solicit feedback on the media. ATW Consulting is one such company operating in Madagascar, however. Survey findings are accessible but are relatively expensive. Therefore, surveys are conducted only at the launch of a media outlet or occasionally specific market research is conducted to lay down strategic plans and customize content based on the public's needs and interests. Nonetheless, press organizations need to identify items of interest for the people.

No regular survey is conducted to determine program ratings, circulation, and Internet user statistics. Based on needs, communication agencies call on consulting firms to conduct analyses related to the media. These figures are not available to all, and when they are, their use is limited due to the doubtful reliability of data and findings. Radio games help the stations to assess their program ratings. For the print media, circulation statistics are published, but this is done mostly for the benefit of advertisers. A newspaper may provide erroneous figures to lure them.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Madagascar Objective Score: 2.11

Supporting institutions have started to invest in media capacity-building and provide training to journalists. However, criticisms are made about such support: some say that it is provided to the benefit certain sector-specific development programs and not to address the actual needs of media and/or journalists.

There are not many operational trade associations in Madagascar. The ones that do exist include the Association of

One pressing problem that stronger associations could tackle is in the area of legal reform. A draft code of communication has been under review since 2001, but problems remain that keep it in abeyance, including conditions for ensuring national coverage and actions to be taken in the event of press law violations.

News Editors of Madagascar (GEPIM) and Union of Authors, Publishers, and Booksellers, which defend the interests of their members.

The journalists' association OJM was established during the socialist government with a view to controlling journalism (at that time, nobody could do the job unless he or she was a member of the association). As such, a member was likely to be struck off the list at any time for critical reporting. Today, the association's grounds for existence are not clear. According to Ramaholimihaso, the association exists only to issue membership cards to journalists. The association should be able to protect journalists and defend their interests with third parties, said Ramarosaona.

Ratsimandresy said OJM has currently become more or less a government instrument. The association's executive committee has not been renewed since 2006, and the election was held with the authorization of the ministry. For Ramaholimihaso, the only entity that can provide protection to journalists would be a union, but this has yet to be established.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- > Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- > Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

Many other associations have also been put in place (private journalists, environmental journalists, women journalists, etc.) with foreign support. These were established to address the needs of thematic programs and donors. For example, an association of environmental journalists was established to champion a cause but not to protect its members, said Ramaholimihaso. Rakotoarisoa said that no protection is provided and no lobbying is done by these associations.

Journalists in some regions also attempt to set up associations. For instance, in Fianarantsoa, the Association of Journalists as Communicators has been established, said Ratsimandresy.

One pressing problem that stronger associations could tackle is in the area of legal reform. A draft code of communication has been under review since 2001, but problems remain that keep it in abeyance, including conditions for ensuring national coverage and actions to be taken in the event of press law violations. However, until now, the supporting institutions have been unable to resolve the situation, said Ramaholimihaso.

According to Ramarosaona, no NGO works for and specifically supports freedom of speech and independence of the media. International NGOs like the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung strengthen journalists' capacities in areas such as election monitoring. Others include the French Embassy, EU, USAID, UNDP, Pact, etc. The panelists believe, however, that they work only to achieve the objectives of their respective programs. They provide journalists with certain skills but do not support the wider use of these skills.

However, some entities have started to champion freedom of speech and independence of the media, including the local civil society organization Observatory of Public Life. After the establishment of the Human Rights Platform, some protection of the media's freedom of speech has been noted because all the cases were reported.

Fiankinana thinks that journalism training has proliferated. About 10 institutions claim to be "government approved," but the panelists said that of these only three are quality ones, including Saint Michel, ESVA, and the University. Others are very inadequate, and this shows itself in the quality of the students' dissertations. Students at these institutions will have problems finding jobs because press organizations will use the institution they attended as a yardstick. The Education Ministry should more strictly monitor these institutions and issue a list of non-approved institutions.

A reform of the University's journalism and communication department is ongoing. There will be a true journalism college that will be fully independent of the Communications

Department. The goal is to produce quality media through optimum education supported by practical exercises. It will provide multiple-level training, i.e., a common-core syllabus in journalism along with courses in different subjects, such as radio or television, explained Rakotoarisoa.

Foreign scholarships are also available for journalism training (recently in Egypt), but very few people benefit from them.

Short-term training is often held, although less so since OJM and other associations became less active. Most of it relates to basic journalism skills for a period of five days or so, with supporting documents, practical exercises, and evaluations. About one hundred journalists from the provinces have benefited from this free training conducted by international organizations, including UNICEF, said Rakotoasimbola. This training has been very useful, but unfortunately, not all journalists can participate.

GEPIM and "Ouest France" send trainers to press organizations. This is a positive practice for the media, as the trainers go to the training site and analyze the problems specific to each press organization. It should be noted, however, that many training sessions were not monitored and evaluated. Thus, their role in improving media's ability to provide quality information can not be measured.

Many newspapers have their own printing houses, such as the MBS Group with Blue Print. Others, including *La Vérité* and *Malaza*, do not have their own printing houses and use the services of private printing houses, which are profit driven and not influenced in choosing clients by political or commercial interests. The government no longer owns a printing house for the press and cannot place any restrictions on production at private printing houses.

Distribution is in private hands but not well organized. Independent workers at the printing companies in the capital city and major towns earn, in principle, 15 percent of the cover price of newspapers sold; there are also a few operational newspaper kiosks. According to Ramaholimihaso, no system is available to disseminate newspapers in small towns or villages. Newspapers reach the regions by taxi brousse (rural buses) on the same day or no later than the day after, based on distance and trip frequency. Air shipment via Air Madagascar is no longer affordable to print media.

Broadcast transmitters used by the private media are in private hands, as are Internet service providers. The companies that are responsible for these services are generally apolitical, but are sometimes vulnerable to the pressures of politics and the state.

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