



ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Central African Republic: Supporting the media and humanitarian information and communication in a complex emergency

5-6 February 2014, Yaoundé, Cameroon



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Acronyms

AFPC	Association des Femmes Professionnelles de la Communication
ARC	Association des Radios Communautaires
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
CAR	Central African Republic
CDAC	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
CNT	Conseil Nationale de la Transition
CSJ	Conflict-sensitive journalism
FH	Fondation Hirondelle
FPU	Free Press Unlimited
GEPPIC	Groupement des Editeurs de la Presse Privé Indépendante
HCC	Haut Conseil de la Communication (High Council for Communication)
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPE	Institut Panos Europe
IVR	Interactive voice response
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MPJ	Maison de la Presse et des journalistes
OMCA	L'Observatoire des Médias Centrafricains
REMASTP	Réseau des Médias africains contre le sida, la tuberculose et le paludisme
RFI	Radio France International
RJDH	Association of Journalists for Human Rights
RNL	Radio Ndeke Luka
RSF	Reporters without Borders
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
UJCA	L'Union des Journalistes Centrafricains
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VOA	Voice of America

1. Background

Central African journalists have been risking their lives as they try to inform their compatriots in what are arguably some of the worst security and technical conditions. Even prior to the current conflict, CAR media faced challenging circumstances. IREX reported in its Media Sustainability Index that: "Media professionals in the Central African Republic continue to subsist despite deteriorating working conditions, meager operating budgets, dilapidated facilities, and technical barriers to disseminating their reporting. They face government tactics of harassment, suspensions, and other deterrents, particularly in relation to the country's persisting problems of corruption and banditry in the southeast. All of these factors complicate the media scene and create a largely unsustainable environment for the press."¹

The current situation changes from hour to hour and given that there are almost one million displaced persons, the humanitarian situation is critical and the media play an important role in getting information to the population. As one roundtable participant said: *"l'information en temps de crise doit être considérée au même titre que l'eau et la nourriture"*.

Due to the challenges in getting accurate information of the sector's needs and the importance of bringing together key stakeholders, IMS and Institute Panos Europe (IPE) organized a two-day roundtable in Yaoundé, Cameroon address the needs of the media and humanitarian information and communication sectors in CAR.

2. Roundtable objectives

IMS and IPE partnered to organize the regional meeting with CAR media stakeholders and international media support and humanitarian organizations. This two-day roundtable brought together representatives from key media organizations and institutions in CAR as well as representatives from international organizations currently operating in CAR to support the media. The aim was to address the needs for media support and humanitarian information and communication and to ensure international coordination.

Specific objectives included:

- » To gather local and international partners to identify and prioritize the needs of the local media community in CAR
- » To gather local and international partners to identify and prioritize the needs to ensure appropriate humanitarian information and communication reaches those who are most in need
- » To coordinate media development and humanitarian information and communication efforts in CAR
- » To identify the regional implications of the current situation in CAR
- » To provide a show of support to the media community of CAR

Due to ongoing insecurity in Bangui, the meeting took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon (upon recommendation from local experts) with representatives from Central African media traveling to

¹ IREX, "Central African Republic Media Sustainability Index", 2012. <http://www.irex.org/resource/central-african-republic-media-sustainability-index-msj>, p. 57.

Yaoundé. In order to facilitate coordination in Cameroon, IMS and Panos Europe partnered with the Cameroonian organization, *Journalistes d'Action, Femmes de cœur*, an association of women media professionals.

Invitations to the roundtable were sent to key media associations and stakeholders in CAR, as well as to international media support organizations operating in the country. Likewise, humanitarian organizations, including members of the network *Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities* (CDAC) were invited. A select number of Cameroon media associations also took part in the meeting.²

The round table was divided into five parts:³

- » Overview of the crisis and the situation for media and humanitarian information and communication
- » The regional impact of the crisis – from the perspective of the media
- » Key challenges for the media sector
- » Key challenges for humanitarian information and communication
- » Initiatives in CAR carried out by the international media support organizations

3. Overview of the crisis and the situation for media and humanitarian information and communication

In the words of one participant, the situation in CAR today is “catastrophic” and “une crise totale”. Indeed, it was clear that the current conflict is horrific with the media sector no less affected than the rest of the country.

Although the current crisis officially began in December 2012, its origins are older and more complex going back to times of colonization. Yet there has been a change in how the current crisis in CAR is both perceived and covered particularly regionally and internationally where it has increasingly been *depicted along religious lines* – Muslims versus Christians. The local media have not been immune to this and have increasingly been put at risk under this divide, including faith-based radio stations.

Even though there are huge challenges for making the media operational after the recent worsening of the crisis, it is important to take a historical perspective on the media development in CAR. There are *structural problems with the media* which have been there for many years and while some of these challenges (poor professional standards and ethics) are not directly related to the current crisis others have clearly been exacerbated by the crisis.

The current crisis has resulted in both *self-censorship* and *politicization of information*; Bangui is commonly referred to as “the city of rumors”. Clearly there is a need for journalists to manage information carefully but there is also need for regulatory structures and media content monitoring; while such structures exist, the reality is that they are having a difficult time practicing.

² See participants list in Annex IV.

³ See agenda in Annex III.

One example of this was discussion of the use of the word “genocide”. Central Africans were quick to note that the use of the term has the potential to inflame and could result in deadly consequences in CAR and could reinforce the risk of an actual genocide.

Meanwhile, the Seleka see the media as a threat with local *radio stations often the first target* with many cases of looting and some completely destroyed.

In addition, there has been a complete *breakdown of state institutions* with Central Africans having no trust in the justice or security institutions, for example. This has in some cases put extra pressure on the radio stations which have been expected to fill out the vacuum of the deficient state. Bangui-based Radio Ndeke Luka, for example, has served as an entry point for people with trauma that have approached the station to get help; the station referred them to institutions that could provide trauma counselling. “Authorities”, says one journalist, “have simply disappeared.”

Lack of security compounds the already difficult job of gathering information from the field with dangers facing women journalists compounded. Safety issues have, in part, led to a lack of access to information in real time despite an overwhelming need to give people the possibility to report on their living situation and their needs. It is very difficult for journalists to access areas outside Bangui which has severe consequences on the reporting. However, whether *access to information* is the actual problem or whether it has been a case of simply not knowing where to go to get certain information is debatable. It is likely that both challenges are at play.

There is some concern that the *international media support organizations* are primarily working with radio and almost all through the same local partner, Association des Radios Communautaires (ARC). It was suggested that the internationals get together and coordinate their efforts to avoid duplication and ensure that local partners are not over-burdened.

It can be expected that the *humanitarian crisis will get worse*, with spread of diseases (HIV/AIDS was mentioned, but others as well), which will need attention, and where media can play an important role in prevention efforts. It is also important to have more information of what humanitarian organizations are doing and how they can work with journalists, both inside Bangui and in the field, to gather news and information.

In planning *future media support and humanitarian information and communication activities* it will be important to take into account the 18-month transition phase and the planned elections in February 2015. The elections will demand quality coverage from the media and encourage citizens to participate. However, it is clear that many of the problems facing the Central African media sector are not new. As such, in addition to addressing immediate needs it is crucial that there be support that looks also to the long-term. “We tend to think of the emergency response, but we should also focus on the long term sustainability”, said one participant.

4. The regional impact of the crisis – from the perspective of the media

There are, however, additional areas in the greater context that must be considered when discussing challenges in CAR as relating to the media and humanitarian information and communication. One of these is the regional and geo-political dimension of the crisis and the implications of the regional media in the coverage of the crisis.

Over the years, CAR has received refugees from countries such as Chad, Uganda and South Sudan while the more recent crisis has seen Central African refugees fleeing to Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville and the DRC. In addition, historically many of the Seleka originated from Chad. Other rebel groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have crossed into CAR border regions. As such, it is difficult to separate the current crisis in CAR from its neighboring countries and how these issues are covered nationally and regionally.

It is important to *ensure a sub-regional perspective on news coverage* of the conflict as most countries in the sub-region are not simply bystanders but are affected on a daily basis by what is going on in their neighbor. This was evident in the Yaoundé meeting as it presented an important opportunity for Cameroonian and Central African colleagues to meet and exchange ideas.

However, it is very difficult for media in Cameroon (and elsewhere in the sub-region) to cover the crisis in CAR – there are issues of security and mobility and they seldom receive information from their Central African colleagues and do not have direct access to media in CAR.

There have been some recent examples of *cross-border journalistic work* such as that carried out by Panos Europe in the Great Lakes region. Cross-border media synergies, joint information production and the availability of the news on an internet platform can actually contribute to the easing of tensions.

One suggestion was made to use this as an example and, at least in the short-term, to organize journalists to meet across borders to discuss the crisis and how to cover it. A longer-term option could be to *establish sub-regional networks*.

5. Key challenges for the media sector

It was clear that the media sector has suffered enormously during the past 15 months, since December 2012. Media outlets across the country have been looted and in some cases completely destroyed. Journalists are threatened, mobility has been greatly hampered and safety is a constant concern – this coupled with a media sector that was in dire straits prior to the current conflict.

As in many countries, the best journalists tend to leave the profession for better paying and more stable jobs. As a result, there is ongoing demand for training as well as job security, better pay and management training. The related issues of sustainability and management were common themes as well.

Below is a summary of the challenges the round table identified in relation to the media sector in CAR.

5.1 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

Legislation dealing with the media in CAR currently exists and there were no specific challenges brought up with regards to this. On the other hand, it was evident that there are significant regulatory gaps. In particular, the Haut Conseil de la Communication (HCC) is not functioning effectively. It was emphasized that in crisis periods such regulatory bodies are crucial particularly when it comes to monitoring media content. It is clear that there needs to be some reflection on *reorganizing and reconstituting the HCC*. In the past, decisions taken by the HCC were not accepted by the media community and as such there is the issue of legitimacy which must also be addressed which suggests the importance of including the media when reconstituting the HCC. There is a need to make the HCC more functional and to ensure synergy with OMCA, UJCA and GEPPIC in that they all need to work together. It is also necessary to involve the media in the reconstitution of

the HCC and to ensure that the organization's work is neutral, professional and accepted by organizations representing the media.

It is also important that there be some sort of media monitoring or self-regulation. This should fall under the purview of the *Observatoire des Medias Centrafricains* (OMCA), however, the structure could improve its operations to be more effective. OMCA could then serve as monitoring body and could then report back to media on instances when hate speech, for example, was used.

Among the suggestions to meet these challenges was to rehabilitate and reinforce the HCC and OMCA as well as the importance of reinstating press cards.

5.2 Safety

Another ongoing challenge for media operators in CAR is that of *safety and security*. Since December 2012, most journalists have received threats which became even more serious after Seleka seized power in March 2013. There have been assassination attempts, torture and at least one journalist has been killed. Mobility and the ability to travel to cover both the crisis and much-needed humanitarian information are severely hampered by the ongoing insecurity. At least one journalist was tortured at the beginning of the crisis in December 2012 and to this day suffers from trauma. Other journalists have had to flee the country due to threats from both Seleka and anti-balaka. Journalists who do manage to get to the field do so without protective gear and have received no hostile environment-type training and as such are seriously at risk.

It was suggested that the individual media outlets should have protective gear on hand for their journalists as well as build capacity among journalists on how to cover the conflict and the dissemination of manuals on this matter.

5.3 Radio

Many radio stations across the country were looted or completely destroyed during the course of the violence in the past year. Out of twenty some radio stations registered, currently only a handful (7-10) can be brought back to broadcast leaving some remote areas of the country without any source of information whatsoever. Radio Ndeke Luka, RFI and VOA are currently the most reliable stations for information.

Almost all of the radio stations in CAR face issues of *financial sustainability*. This is in part due to the fact that they were created by outside donors rather than by the communities themselves who could (and should) ensure their development, future sustainability and a sense of ownership within the community. In this sense, there is the need to ensure increased *engagement with the communities* in which they operate. In addition, it is important to note the difficulty many of these stations face in retaining their human resources who have been trained. This is coupled with the *instability of the "comités de gestion"* who are simply not adequately involved in the stations' operations and management.

The *influx of international organizations* is also putting substantial pressure on the radio stations (and the associations) when they have limited capacity to begin with. The challenge of coordinating and working with several international partners, some of whom have arrived on the scene at the same time, concerns local actors who feel that the work that is carried out simply won't be beneficial to the radio stations in the long-term.

There are a number of *faith-based radio stations*; however, they too have little or no experience in running a radio station. Some argue that since the current crisis has religious dimensions to it this could make it problematic to work with faith-based stations; however, it is crucial that some

attention be paid to such stations and the role they might play in either bringing people closer together and further apart.

A *series of suggestions* to meet these challenges was put forward. There is clearly a need to re-equip those stations that were destroyed or damaged and set up new stations in areas without coverage. There is also a need for capacity building in numerous areas including management and sustainability, conflict coverage, program and program schedule development. Increased involvement of local communities was also called for as was coordination among international implementers and to develop a fund to support radios.

5.4 TV

In Bangui, 8 of 10 people have access to a television set with most watching satellite TV⁴; of course, this is dependent on electricity. There is currently *only one television station* (state-run) operating though it was looted and only had two cameras to begin with and no vehicles. It is unclear what the current state of equipment is. State media was also mentioned as problematic in that it only dealt with the government's point of view, and due to this is likely less trusted by the audience.

There also seems to be some television equipment currently housed at a radio station supported by the Italians though none of the station's personnel have the technical know-how to operate this equipment.

Based on these challenges it was recommended that the television sector should be enlarged to include other outlets in addition to state-run TV. However, considering the potential for reaching out to important parts of the population it should also be considered to re-equip the state TV, in order for the broadcaster to re-start operations.

5.5 Print media

On paper some 60 newspapers exist of which about 20 appear semi-regularly with 7 dailies and only one kiosk in Bangui selling newspapers. *The print-run is very low* for the newspapers and is usually not more than 200 copies. However, the creation of these newspapers has been done in a haphazard manner with *little regulation* and according to one participant "even without a university degree you can start a paper" which is then evident in both content and management.

Today, the written press is in effect gone – all computers and equipment have been looted. Even prior to the current crisis, the print sector was suffering and receives no subsidies from the government though the law does provide for this.

However, it is important to note that newspaper focus on politics and are read (and shared) in Bangui mostly by older, educated readers and expats. The *relevance of print as a media for debate* and exchange of opinions is important as newspapers are quoted on the radio during the "revues de presse" and as such can drive the discussion. It should also be noted that opinion-makers in Bangui rely heavily on the print media.

It must be noted, however, that there are challenges with the written press – *low professional standards and ethics* have led to cases of defamation, for example, which then leads to a lack of credibility and in worst cases to a lack of trust.

Several suggestions were made to address some of these challenges including the need to encourage international implementers (and donors) to support the written press and to provide local organizations such as GEPPIC with an office. The sector could also be supported through

⁴ IMMAR audience research.

distribution of papers in the interior of the country, to secure exemptions of taxes and to ensure there is access to efficient hardware to print. Finally, the suggestion was made to encourage publishers to merge their publications and to cooperate so that there are fewer competing newspapers which would also address sustainability issues.

5.6 Online media

Lack of internet access, low web literacy and lack of infrastructure mean there is *little web presence* in the media sector in CAR. Some journalists maintain social media accounts and some media outlets do maintain websites yet to date there has been very little development of this sector.

It was felt that there should be some training program available that addresses online journalism. In addition, it was suggested that there needs to be adequate and fair regulation regarding online information found on websites and blogs.

5.7 Journalism Education

The opening five years ago of the department of journalism at the University of Bangui was hailed as a positive step forward. However, the department continues to face *challenges of both human resources and equipment*. In addition, there is currently no structure where journalists can receive continuing education something that could go far in addressing ethical standards and professional practices.

In this regard, it will be important to set up a training center for journalists, possibly with the university, for long-term training. Likewise, it is important to find ways to strengthen the university department through equipment and human resources.

5.8 Media associations

There are a number of media associations in CAR, some set up organically and others set up by international implementers. Many of these organizations *face issues of sustainability* and capacity and are reliant on donor funding. There are also leadership conflicts and tensions amongst some of the association leaders. Some face additional challenges in that they are the *local partner for numerous implementers at the same time* which brings added pressure on the organization and also causes some tension between organizations.

However, it is clear that most, if not all, of these organizations are important. For example, UJCA is positioned to take on the important issue of low salaries and is charged with lobbying on this issue.

The Maison de la Presse et des Journalistes (MPJ) should serve as an umbrella organization to reinforce professional solidarity; however currently some of its *facilities are currently not usable* due to the presence of soldiers who have taken over their space.

Another issue that was raised was the need for a clear picture of the situation of journalists and who and how many are working as journalists. Such a picture would allow a better assessment of individual needs and resources needed.

Another suggestion was to pursue activities that reinforce institutional capacity of the various organizations. For example, one mechanism could be through a sort of basket fund that organizations could access.

6. Key challenges for humanitarian information and communication

An important part of the round table was the discussion of humanitarian information and communication in CAR and challenges in that regard. Humanitarian information and communication seeks to enable communities affected by a disaster or complex emergency to have access to life-saving information and provided with a means of communication to inform others of their needs and requests.

For many, the term “humanitarian information and communication” seemed to be new while others saw this as simply a type of news and did not see the need to distinguish it as a separate category. In this regard, there is a need for capacity building in humanitarian information, assuming the level of crisis in CAR will need attention for the foreseeable future.

There also seems to be *a lack of relay of information to the local media* in the sense that humanitarian organizations are too busy working to pay attention to information and communication needs which is then perceived by some as a “closed door” policy. This results in a delay of accessing useful information for news reporting. There needs to be more openness and transparency when dealing with the media; however, this is not possible for some organizations, such as ICRC, due to their mandate and their modes of operation in which confidentiality guarantees their neutrality. In the case of the ICRC in CAR, the organization strives to provide as much information to the population directly and in the past has worked directly with journalists to provide training.

The information is too little and too late. This means in that some information is outdated and often rendered useless; in the worst-case it can be counterproductive. In order to prevent this in the current situation and also in the long-term perspective, the international and local organizations need to have a higher intensity in giving out information.

The humanitarian situation is severely hampered by the many rumors floating around which can incite even more violence. One international participant at the Yaoundé meeting said that many of those displaced are displaced due to rumors and not because of the current situation. This further underlines the importance of transparency, access to trust-worthy and real-time information on the crisis and the humanitarian situation as well as mechanisms that quickly can respond to rumors.

As with all other information, humanitarian information and communication faces the *challenge of infrastructure (or lack thereof)*. With only a handful of potentially working radios, the information is concentrated in Bangui leaving vast areas of the country in the dark and leaving those who most need information without. One INGO partner who has lived in CAR for several years, notably outside of Bangui, described how the “desperate isolation could be more acute than lacking in food or water”.⁵ It would be useful to do a *mapping of the whole country in regards to sources of*

⁵ OCHA, “Communications with Affected Communities in CAR: Evaluation Report”, February 2014, p.5.

information. This would constitute a foundation for future donors in establishing 3G or other lines of communication, broadcast facilities, as well as the need (or not) to support distribution of print media.

It was suggested that systems and/or mechanisms are established to *encourage exchange and mutual understanding between the humanitarian and media sectors*. This could also go a long way to building trust between the two sectors and to addressing what journalists feel is a lack of reliability when it comes to humanitarian information.

7. Current and planned initiatives in CAR

Currently there are a number of international operators working with the media sector in CAR including Radio France International (RFI), Fondation Hironnelle, Institut Panos Europe (IPE), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and Invisible Children. Most of these organizations (e.g. FH, RFI, SFCG) tend to work with radio due to the medium's reach and not with print or TV.

In addition, they also have a tendency to partner with the same local organizations which tends to put undue stress on what is already limited capacity of these organizations. Some pointed to the need for increased cooperation and coordination between international operators citing the current state of "polygamy" in which several international operators partner with the same local organization. This "polygamy" results in increased pressure and demands on what are often organizations with limited capacity to begin with. It was also suggested that this could lead to division within the local media community.

Lack of support to the print sector has essentially resulted in an information vacuum for political elites who get their news and information through the print media despite the low standards.

Some organizations, notably IPE, target media associations, regulatory bodies and the journalism department in addition to working with journalists. There are also some organizations which are just starting to work in-country such as Free Press Unlimited (FPU) and Internews which is in process of returning.

In general, the participants from CAR criticized the internationals for almost exclusively focusing on the emergency and not on the long-term needs that have been present for so long. Most projects and donors are seen as not having any sort of long-term perspective.

Some donors, such as the EU and the UN, have begun to respond to the humanitarian crisis in CAR. The European Foreign Ministers and OCHA representatives met 20 January 2014 to discuss how to coordinate their efforts.

Donors are already earmarking funds for CAR with the EU, for example, holding a meeting in January. It is not clear, however, what mechanisms will be put in place. At a meeting at the French Embassy in Bangui on 14 February 2014 a basket fund was mentioned as an option for media support. At this point it seems clear, that the influx of funding will primarily be addressing the immediate needs stemming from the crisis; whether some of this funding can be transitioned or bridged to more long-term initiatives is unclear.

8. Preliminary recommendations – media support

Focus area	Challenges	Suggestions/recommendations
Legislative and Regulatory Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Haut Conseil de la Communication (HCC) is currently not functioning and lacks legitimacy » OMCA not operational and no media content monitoring functioning right now 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reorganize and reconstitute the HCC » Ensure operationalization of OMCA <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ensure synergy and cooperation between OMCA, UJCA and GEPPIC » Reinstate press cards
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increased threat including assassination attempts » Mobility and the ability to travel to cover both the crisis and humanitarian information severely hampered » Journalists without protective gear and have received no hostile environment-type training 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Individual media outlets need protective gear on hand for their journalists » Build capacity on how to cover the conflict » Dissemination of manuals on conflict coverage and CSJ <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Set-up comprehensive safety systems, including integration of safety schemes at the media outlets
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Radio stations looted or destroyed » Sustainability issues » Lack of engagement with communities » Instability of comités de gestion » Influx of international organizations » Faith-based radio stations have little experience but role currently is crucial 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Re-equip/rebuild radio stations » Build conflict coverage capacity » Ensure coordination among international operators <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Re-equip/rebuild radio stations » Engage comités de gestion and the communities and create sense of ownership » Build management capacity » Set up radio-support fund
TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Only one TV station (state-run) which was looted 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Re-equip state TV <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enlarge television sector
Print media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Little regulation » Low professional standards and ethics 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reconstitute HCC and OMCA » Ensure local organizations have offices in which to work <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Encourage internationals to work with

		<p>the print sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Work to set up efficient hardware for printing » Secure exemptions from taxes » Encourage publishers to pool resources, cooperate and merge publications
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Little web presence 	<p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Set up training program for online journalism » Ensure adequate regulation for online media
Journalism education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lack of human resources » Lack of equipment » No structure for continuing education for journalists 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enhance the Dept. of Journalism <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Set up training center for journalists » Build capacity at university, possibly through exchanges » Equip university with relevant equipment
Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Sustainability issues » Lack of capacity » Local organizations partnering with several internationals at once 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ensure internationals coordinate <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Build institutional capacity » Revitalize Maison de la Presse et Journalistes » Need collective effort to come up with rate cards
Regional Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lack of substantial and accurate coverage within the sub-region » Lack of cross-border journalistic work 	<p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cross-border journalistic work » Establish sub-regional networks
Media - general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Incomplete picture of media sector post-crisis » Need to better understand the role of media during and after crisis » Crisis of confidence between the media and authorities 	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Complete mapping of the post-crisis media sector and each outlet's capacities » Build capacity of media regarding coverage and treatment of conflict and reconciliation » Bring together members of the media and authorities for dialogue

Some additional suggestions that were not specifically addressed at the Yaoundé meeting include the need for elections coverage capacity building, particularly given the current crisis and sensibilities; it could also be useful to set up a media network to assist in covering the elections. In addition, hostile environment training, adapted to the specific context and needs in CAR, would likely be helpful.

It is important to note that these recommendations are all essentially desired outcomes; however, what was not addressed nor discussed during the roundtable were the processes by which these might be achieved. These processes are important to consider particularly in the current

environment which is fluid, violent and puts implementers, local partners and journalists at substantial risk. As such, there must also be elements of risk assessment attached to these processes when implementation is considered. This, in and of itself, requires flexibility, creativity and the ability to maneuver, act and react during implementation. And it is important for both implementers and donors to take this into consideration as it will most certainly necessitate changes in processes in order to achieve the intended outcomes.

9. Preliminary recommendations – humanitarian information and communication

Focus area	Challenges	Suggestions/recommendations
Access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access to information is difficult and often unreliable » Information is too little and/or too late » Humanitarian situation is severely hampered by the many rumors » Distinction between information and humanitarian communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need more openness and transparency when dealing with the media » Need access to real-time information from humanitarian organizations » Need for capacity building in humanitarian information
Relations with humanitarian organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Insufficient integration of the media by humanitarian organizations » Lack of confidence between media and humanitarian actors » Unclear what policies are of humanitarian actors regarding media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need mechanisms in place to enhance communication between media and humanitarian organizations
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lack of nation-wide coverage » Radios have been ransacked or destroyed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need a mapping of the entire country regarding sources of information

Annexes

Annex I – Bangui Recommendations

As an initial follow up to the Yaoundé roundtable, representatives of IPE, ARC, Radio Ndeke Luka, OMCA, MPJ, RJDH, UJCA, REMASTP, AFPC, SFCG, Radio Centrafrique and Tele-Centrafrique met on 17 February 2014 in Bangui. They came up with specific actions that could be implemented to address the recommendations that came out of the Yaoundé roundtable.

Recommendations for media support:

Focus Area	Challenges	Possible Activities	Beneficiaries	Responsible for pursuing
Legislative and Regulatory	1. Reinforcement of regulatory body (Haut Conseil de la Communication)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobby the Conseil Nationale de Transition (CNT) and the transitional authorities to finalize the text on the implementation - Put in place a commission and a schedule to put in place the new HCC team - Train the new team on regulatory practices - Rehabilitate infrastructure and equipment of the new HCC 	Central African media Idem HCC members and personnel HCC members and personnel + media	UJC UJC HCC
	2. Continue to pursue process of granting national press cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Resume Steering Committee activities to put press card in place - Lobby new Minister of Communication to accelerate the process 	Journalists and the public	Min. Communication + OMCA
	3. Inadequate public aid to press sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobby to ensure the commission in charge of grants is operational 	Media	MPJ, GEPPIC, ARC, delegate of state media

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign for the application of the Florence Accord - Ensure the laws governing the commission addresses the MPJ central purchasing center - Awareness campaign on the existence of the central purchasing center as a support mechanism for the media 		
	4. Anarchy of the written press landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put central purchasing center into operation - Set regulations and preferential rates at the purchasing center - Review and monitoring of the criteria re : authorization to practice journalism - Put in place a mechanism that allows for co-regulation between OMCA, HCC and commissions for allocation of public aid 	Media	MPJ, GEPPIC, OMCA
Media Landscape	5. Reinforce professional media organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training in how to run/build associations - Training in programming, M&E - Reinvigorate media organizations - Training re: communication and negotiation - Follow up on the outcomes of IPE's Institutional Diagnoses of July 2013 	All media organizations	
	6. Need a clear picture of the Central African media sector since the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circulate IPE's State of Media study and update 	Media organizations and media outlets	IPE

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	crisis			
	7. Need for coordination of international operators to ensure local media organizations are not overwhelmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly coordination meetings between ARC and international partners - Coordination meeting with international operators - Examine the state of the public media - Hold strategic planning sessions 	<p>ARC and partners</p> <p>Operators and media</p> <p>State media, Min. Comm., NGOs...</p> <p>Each entity – organizations and media outlets</p>	<p>ARC</p> <p>Operators</p> <p>Min. Comm</p> <p>Each structure that is affected</p>
	8. Sustainability of media (finances, HR) beyond the crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build management capacity - Ensure there is financial support during and after the crisis - Create an advertising agency - Create support funds 	<p>Each entity that is affected</p> <p>Idem</p> <p>Print, radio, TV outlets</p> <p>All entities</p>	<p>MPJ/UJCA/ARC</p> <p>UJCA/ARC/MINICOM</p>
	9. Lack of confidence between media and authorities which puts undue pressure on the media sector	(see above re : HCC, press card, Purchasing center, sustainability)		
	10. Lack of respect towards journalism profession	Idem		
	11. Poor working conditions of journalists (salaries, lack of	- Campaign to create a special status for state journalists and a collective agreement for private media	Journalists (both public and private)	UJCA

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	transport, equipment...) have negative effect on the quality of information and the stability of the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build managerial capacity - Review the training program at the Dept. Of Journalism (Integrate media management course) - Create a training center for working journalists 	<p>Editors and publishers</p> <p>Journalism students</p> <p>Journalists</p>	<p>ARC/MPJ</p> <p>Dept. of Info and Comm at Uni. of Bangui (DSIC)</p>
	12. Enhance the role of the community in community radio stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support creation and build capacity of listening clubs - Audience research (Focus groups, etc.) - Put in place feedback mechanisms (Include listeners in the defining and evaluation of program schedules) 	<p>Radio stations</p> <p>Radio and print media</p> <p>Media outlets and their audiences</p>	<p>ARC</p> <p>RJDH</p> <p>Media outlets</p>
	13. Role of media in conflict prevention and their behavior and role during and post-conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict sensitive journalism training - Campaign to popularize the code of ethics - Train editors in chief on the code of ethics 	<p>Media outlets and their journalists</p>	<p>ARC, UJCA, HCC, OMCA, ...</p>
	14. Revitalize umbrella organizations (e.g. MPJ) to build confidence and professional solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (See: Purchasing center, press card above) - Organize weekly meetings and coffees at MPJ - Put ARC offices at MPJ so that maintenance center, studio and training center are in one central location 		<p>MPJ /MINICOM/</p> <p>OMCA /GEPPIC</p> <p>MPJ</p> <p>ARC/MPJ</p>
<i>Media businesses, treatment of information and professional training</i>	15. Security of journalists (access to flak jackets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure each newsroom has protective gear - Put in place an alert mechanism - Training on ethics 	<p>Newsrooms</p>	<p>UJCA /MPJ /OMCA</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen existing telephone capacity of ARC and include all journalists - Strengthen relations between Central African media and RSF, JED, FIDH, IFJ - Ensure all have access to and are familiar with safety manuals and how to cover conflicts safely 		
	16. Lack of access to information in real time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training in investigative journalism - Establish synergies with international and regional media - Create a center where information can be shared - Campaign and sensitization against « Gombo » journalism 	Newsrooms	MPJ/UJCA/ARC/OMCA/ GEPPIC
	17. Difficulty of getting around and to cover outside Bangui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create information sharing center - Provide equipment (transmitters, internet, telephones, motos, etc.) - Train technicians 	Newsrooms	MPJ /ARC/UJCA et chaque média
	18. Lack of experience covering conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above re : conflict sensitive journalism training 		
	19. Lack of capacity in Dept. of Journalism (lack of professors, equipment, and funds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support DSIC - Lobby Minister of Education and UNESCO - Synergy between DSIC and press organizations 	Journalism students	DSIC/MPJ /GEPPIC

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	20. Build capacity of journalists, technicians and management and ensure continuing education	- See above re : management and technical training		
	21. Support for information production during times of crisis	- Lobby for funds to support production - Set up media synergy/network for peace (Radio and print ...) - Negotiate funding	Media and the public	ARC/UJCA/RJDH/AFPC...
	22. Lack of coordination to define advertising rates/rate card	- Set up an advertising agency - Create a mechanism to regulate advertising	Media	MPJ/GEPPIC/ARC
	23. Lack of strategy for managing publireportage	- See above re : management training and advertising agency		
	24. Economic weakness of the media	- Strategic session at each media house + Advertising agency		
	25. Rehabilitate those media houses that were looted or destroyed	-Create support fund to support rehab of media houses		
	26. Printing of various newspapers	See above : Purchasing center and set up of printing press	Print media	MPJ/GEPPIC

	27. Importance of regional media in coverage of the crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Synergy with regional media - Joint reporting sessions - Set up a mechanism that will allow for sharing of information with media in the provinces and in neighboring countries - Support news agency (ACAP) /Training of agency journalists 	UJCA/ARC/MPJ/media houses	IPE ??
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Recommendations for Humanitarian Information and Communication

<i>Access to Information and Coordination</i>	1. Difficulties accessing and reliability of information, information management and rumor management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above : conflict sensitive journalism - Investigative journalism 	Newsrooms	RJDH/MPJ/ media houses
	2. Understanding what is humanitarian information and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training re : HIC - Informal meetings between media and humanitarians 	Newsrooms	RJDH/MPJ/ media houses
	3. Insufficient integration of media needs by humanitarian sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define the mechanisms of collaboration between media and humanitarian organizations 	Newsrooms	RJDH/MPJ/ media houses
	4. Reliability of humanitarian information	Idem		
	5. Lack of trust between media and humanitarian organizations	Idem		

<i>Information and News Coverage</i>	6. Lack of national media coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of print media - Organize joint reporting in the provinces supported by NGOs and the government 		
	7. Access to information in real time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training re : concept of "humanitarian information and communication" - Put together a guide re: treatment of humanitarian information - Training of spokespeople at government ministries and public institutions 		
	8. Policies re : coverage of humanitarian actions			

Annex II – International Organizations working with media sector in CAR

Organization	Focus areas	Long-term projects/Main activities	Crisis response?	Local Partner/s
<p>Internews</p> <p>Contact: Jacobó Quintanillo</p> <p>jquintanilla@internews.org</p>	Mostly radio and humanitarian information and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinforce community radio correspondents (18) - Develop citizen journalism - Build and re-build community radios - Distribute 1000 radios - Purchase mobile radio unit to provide coverage areas not currently covered - Reinforce RJDH - Develop a crisis map - Set up studio for humanitarian productions - Set up information link between media and humanitarian agencies 	Yes. Humanitarian information focus. Project starts February 2014	RJDH
<p>Fondation Hirondelle (FH)</p> <p>Contact: Dario Baroni</p> <p>dbaroni@hirondelle.org</p>	Radio Ndeke Luka	<p>At the end of 2013, FH received funds from the EU for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up studio for ARC at MPJ - Train journalists - Provide a roving technician - Make available a 40-minute block/day of national news and information for partner radios. They will be paid for broadcasting. 	Conducted preliminary assessment December 2013	ARC MPJ

<p>Radio France International</p> <p>Contact: Bernard Chenaud bcd@cfi.fr</p>	<p>Local/community Radio</p>	<p>Have been working in CAR since 2006. Current 4-year program began January 2011. « Radio proximité », Project was suspended due to the crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up 3 community radios in Bayanga (not completed), Alindao et Bangassou (completed) - Training radio producers for social mobilization; management training and a system for technical maintenance - Capacity building of ARC - Set up learning studio at ARC - Support creation of support funds for community radios through ARC 	<p>Not planned but will likely be some elements built into current project that address crisis.</p>	<p>ARC ; WWF Allemagne et ONG Echelle; Associé : Electriciens sans Frontière</p>
<p>Institut Panos Europe (IPE)</p> <p>Contact: Pierre Martinot pierre.martinot@panoseurope.org</p> <p>Pascal Chirha pascal.chirha@panoseurope.org</p>	<p>Media organizations, regulatory and self-regulatory bodies</p>	<p>Since 2008, with EU, Cordaid and French Embassy funds, IPE has implemented several projects as part of Projet d'Appui aux Médias Centrafricains (PAMCA). It addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislation and regulation (support HCC) - Support for professional organizations including MPJ, OMCA, AFPC, REMASTP - Support Dept. of Journalism with production of student newspaper "Kongo Ti Doli"; production of "Journal des Elections" - Reinforcement of media businesses 	<p>No</p>	<p>ARC RJDH MPJ UJCA HCC OMCA</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionalization of journalists - Bringing together media, civil society and authorities for dialogue 		
<p>Free Press Unlimited (FPU)</p> <p>Contact: Leon Van Den Boogerd vandenboogerd@freepressunlimited.org</p>	Radio	<p>3-year project to support media in prevention of conflicts. Begins March 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide equipment - Journalism training - Marketing and management training - Reinforce ARC 	Not planned however they will look in to assisting some radios that were looted or destroyed during the crisis.	Association des Radios Communautaires (ARC)
<p>Search for Common Ground</p> <p>Contact: Thomas Paul Banze tpaulbanze@sfcg.org</p>	Radio	Support radio stations in Rafai, Zemio and Obo and those set up by Invisible Children.	Seeking funding to support crisis response to radio stations in Bangui, Bossangoa and elsewhere. Some funds already committed.	Invisible Children
<p>Invisible Children Contact: Guillaume Cailleaux gcailleaux@invisiblechildren.com</p>	Radio	Focuses on working to end the conflict involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). As part of those efforts they support a radio in Zorobo in the country's southeast.	Unknown	SFCG
<p>Voice of America/BBG</p> <p>Contact: Kathryn Neeper kneeper@bbg.gov</p>	Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VOA is increasing number of news bulletins with hourly updates - Added humanitarian and peacebuilding promos and PSAs to Bangui FM stream - Will be producing additional content in Sango 	Yes	n/a

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		- Enhancing text messaging and IVR services to the region. Developed Symbian-based mobile app featuring multimedia news, photo, text and video		
Reporters sans Frontières Contact: Clea Kahn-Sriber afrique@rsf.org	Advocate for right to information.	RSF lobbies for press freedom internationally.	Not specifically. Will continue to monitor as always.	n/a

Annex III – Agenda



Table ronde

« La crise en Centrafrique : les médias face à leurs responsabilités »

Prestige Hôtel, Yaoundé du 05 au 06 février 2014

Mercredi 05 février 2014

09h⁰⁰ - 10h⁰⁰ : Introduction : Modérateur : Carole Yamelong (JAFEC)

Cérémonie d'ouverture Officielle

- » Mot d'ouverture de la présidente de JAFEC
- » Présentation du contexte (enjeux de la crise et responsabilités des médias de la sous-région de l'Afrique Centrale) et des objectifs de la session par les Représentants d'International Media Support (IMS) et d'Institut Panos Europe (IPE)
- » Cocktail et retrait des officiels

Présentation des participants + Méthodologie : Pascal Chirha (IPE) et Michelle Betz (IMS)

10h00 - 12h 00 : Atelier 1 : La situation actuelle des médias centrafricains

- » Présentation de la situation et cartographie des médias : ARC (Jean – Ignace Manengou) et UJCA (Maka Gbossokoto) et AFPC (Chantal Pani)
- » Etat des lieux de l'information humanitaire : Radio Ndeke Luka (Ali Syllas) et ARC (Jean – Ignace Manengou)

12h00 – 13h00 : Atelier 2 : Situation humanitaire en RCA: besoin du public en information et communication : forces et faiblesses des médias.

Modérateur : Pascal Chirha (IPE)

Intervenants : Thierry Khondé (Réseau des journalistes des Droits de l'homme / RJDH), Cameroon Tribune (média public d'information Cameroon), Sarah Zagoury (CICR)

- » Discussions et enrichissements

13h00 – 14h00 : Pause – Repas

14h00 – 15h00 : Atelier 3 : Impact de la crise dans la sous-région : point de vue du secteur médiatique

Modérateur : Cléa Kahn-Sriber (RSF)

Intervenants : Press Eco/Cameroun, REMASTP/RCA (Momet Mathurin), BINUCA, RSF (Cléa Khan-Sreber), RFI (Bernard Chenuaud), CICR (Sarah Zagoury)

- » Discussion et enrichissement

15h00 – 16h30 : Atelier 4 : Initiatives internationales d'appui aux médias de RCA

Modérateur : Michelle Betz

Intervenants : FPU, FH, RFI, IPE, SFGC, Internews

16h30 – 16h45 : Synthèse de la journée (Michelle Betz)

Jeudi 06 février 2013

9h00 – 9h30 : Rappel Synthèse de la première journée (Pierre Martinot)

9h30 – 11h00 : Atelier 5 : Perspectives pour le développement et le renforcement des capacités des médias en RCA et dans la sous-région : enjeux, actions prioritaires et solutions

Modérateur : Pierre Martinot (IPE)

Intervenants : ARC, Réseau des Médias pour le Développement (RMD Cameroun), GEPPIC, UJCA

11h00 – 11h15 : Pause-Café

11h15 – 12h30 : Suite atelier 5 : Modérateur : Pierre Martinot (IPE)

» Discussion et Enrichissement

12h30 – 13h30 : Repas

13h30 – 14h30 Atelier 6 : Perspectives sur l'information et communication sur la situation humanitaire : enjeux, actions prioritaires et solutions

Modérateur : Suzanne Moll

Intervenants : UFP (Cameroun), FH (Dario Baroni), RJDH (Thierry Khonde), OCHA, CICR

14h30 – 15h30 : Discussion et Enrichissement

15h30 – 16h30 : Formulation des priorités, des recommandations et perspectives de coordination

Modérateur : Pascal Chirha

16h30 – 17h00 : Clôture des travaux : JAFEC

Annex IV - List of attendees

Organization	Surname	Name	Position	Email
Haut Conseil de la Communication (HCC)	SAKANOT	Fernande	Vice - Président	sakanot@yahoo.fr
Association des radios communautaires (ARC)	MANENGOU	Jean-Ignace	Président	jeanignacemanengou@yahoo.fr
Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l'homme (RJDH)	KHONDE	Thierry	Coordonnateur Principal	T.Khonde@rjdh-rca.net
Radio Ndeke Luka (RNL)	SYLLAS	Ali	Rédacteur en Chef	sylpanik@yahoo.fr
Observatoire des Médias Centrafricains (OMCA)	DEBATO II	Pierre	Président	pierredebato@yahoo.fr
Maison de la Presse et des Journalistes (MPJ)	GAMOU	Célestin David	Administrateur	gamoucelestin@yahoo.fr,
Union des journalistes centrafricains (UJCA)	GBOSSOKOTTO	Maka	Président	tdlc@yahoo.fr
Association des femmes professionnelles de la communication (AFPC)	PANI	Chantal	Présidente	panichantal@yahoo.fr
Groupement des éditeurs de presse indépendants/privés	MOKWAPI	Marcel	Président	mokwapi@yahoo.fr
Réseau des médias africains pour la lutte contre le sida, la tuberculose et le paludisme (REMASTP)	MOMET	Mathurin	Président	mometmathurin@yahoo.fr
Institut Panos Europe	MAINA	Farissa	Responsable Administrative et Financière	farissa.maina@panoseurope.org
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Free Press Unlimited	LEON VAN DEN BOOGERD	Léon	Chef de Projet	vandenboogerd@freepressunlimited.org
Reporters without Borders (RSF)	KAHN-SRIBER	Cléa	Responsable Afrique	afrique@rsf.org
International Media Support (IMS)	BETZ	Michelle	Advisor	mb@i-m-s.dk
International Media Support (IMS)	RASMUSSEN	Finn	Responsable	fr@i-m-s.dk

International Media Support (IMS)	MOLL	Suzanne	Media Advisor	smo@i-m-s.dk
Journalistes d'Action, Femmes de Cœur (JAFEC)	FANKAM	Jeanine	Présidente	nkamguika@yahoo.fr
Réseau des Médias pour le Développement (RMD)	NWANOCHI	Charles	Secrétaire Général	
Press Eco	BAMBOU	François	Président	
Union de la presse Francophone (UPF)	BIHINA	Aimé Robert	Président	
Union des Journalistes du Cameroun	NTA'A BITANG		Vice - Président	ntaabitang@yahoo.fr
Cameroon Tribune	EBOA	Paul		
RFI/CFI	CHENUAUD	Bernard	Directeur Adjoint Programme Afrique CFI	bcd@cfi.fr
BINUCA	IKAVI	Uwolowulakana	Chef de section Communication	ikavi@un.org
JAFEC	YEMELONG	Carole		Carole.yemelong@yahoo.fr
ICRC	ZAGOURY	Sarah	Comm Delegate (regional)	szagoury@icrc.org



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Cover photo: An internally displaced man walks through the grounds of Ecole L'iberte, an IDP camp in the town of Bossangoa December 17, 2013. Photo: UNCHR / S. Phelps