



**MANICALAND**  
**CITIZEN JOURNALIST TRAINING BOOTCAMP**

**Theme : Telling our own stories for community development through citizen journalism**



Media Centre Executive Director Mr. Mudzengi (standing) giving opening remarks

**Venue** : Calvary Centre  
**Date** : 5 March 2020  
**Facilitator:** Alfandika Last (PhD, Wits)



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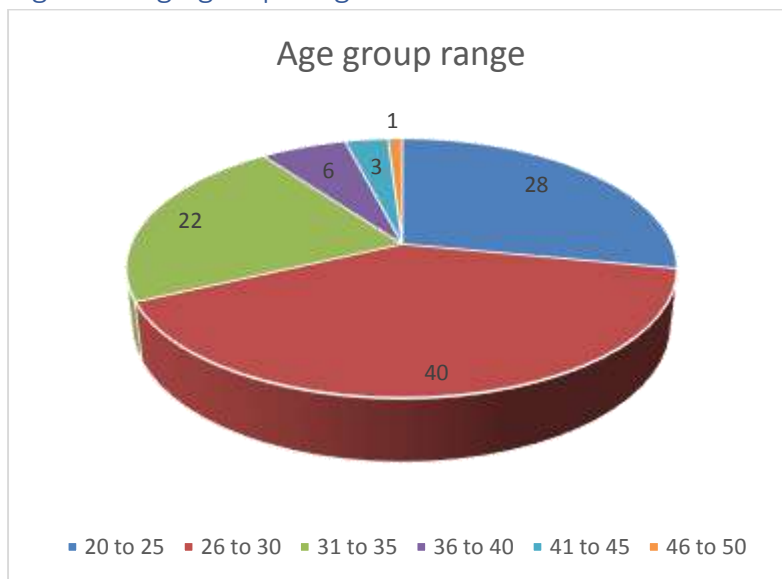


## Introduction

Media centre in collaboration with Tell Zimbabwe hosted the Manicaland Citizen journalism training bootcamp under the “Fostering Communicative Public Spheres and Community Based Partnerships that Promote Citizen Agency, Social Accountability & Responsiveness” project. The purpose of the bootcamp was to train citizen journalists in Mutare on what is citizen journalism, reporting news as citizen journalists, ethics, safety and security of citizen journalists, dealing with fake news in citizen journalism and photography, video and reporting using mobile phones. The bootcamp sought to further impart useful skills to citizen journalists on writing a news story using 5W and an H for diverse platforms.

The bootcamp was attended by Mutare citizens, media students, members of Patsime residence trust, community development practitioners, primary school teachers, news editors, journalists from Diamond FM, kumakomo FM, New Ziana, freelance journalists, CSOs representatives, entrepreneurs, correctional officers, Church pastors and social workers. Figure 1 below depicts the age groups of the participants.

Figure 1: Age group range

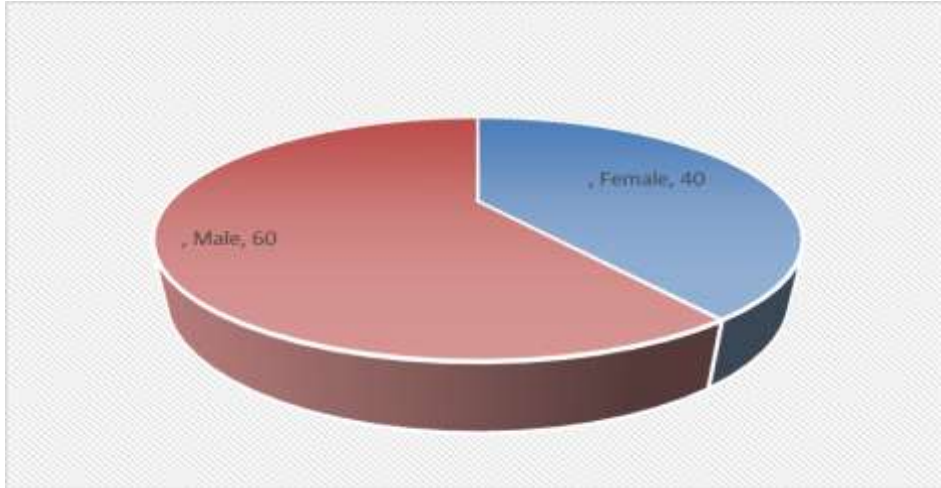


**Source:** Workshop register

Form the pie chat above 40% of the participants were in the age range between 26 to 30 years. Those in the 20 to 25 years constituted 28% while those in the 31 to 35 years category constituted 22%. Therefore 90% of the trained participants were youth. The remaining 10% of the participants populated the 36 to 40 years (6%), 41 to 45 years (3%) and 46 to 50 years category (1%) categories.



Figure 2: Gender Analysis



**Source:** Workshop register

Figure 2 aggregates the participants by gender. 60% of the participants were male while 40% of the participants were female. If all the invited participants attended, the workshop should have registered a 50-50% participation level among males and females

#### Pre-Assessment Analysis

Figure 2 below depicts the trends in understanding the facets of citizens journalists shown by participants before the training. The only variable that all the participants had knowledge of was the question that we asked that "Is it necessary to exercise responsibility and accountability in reporting?". In their response all participants showed that they understood the importance of gathering and sharing accurate news.



Figure 3. Pre-Training Analysis.



**Source:** Pre- Assessment forms

The pre-assessment forms also asked a number of questions. 40% of the participants had done some form of citizen journalism while 60% had not done any form of citizen journalism. This was interesting as majority of the participants had a media background. Also, with regards to the ability to protecting themselves as citizen journalists, 48% noted that they could protect themselves while 52% responded with a no. 95% of the participants also responded that they could use their devices as cell phones, camera and video camera's for news gathering, editing and reporting. 66% noted that they had journalism skills for gathering and reporting news. What distinguished the Mutare Bootcamp from other bootcamps held in Harare and Masvingo was that 91% of the participants had contributed to discussions on radio and wrote newspapers with only 5% having not done so. This is so because Mutare has community radio stations as Diamond FM and local newspapers as Manica post which are quite popular in the area. Also 75% of the participants had engaged duty bearers on issues of service delivery while 15% of the participants had not engaged duty bearers.

## The training

The welcome remarks where made by Media Centre and Tell Zimbabwe with the two organisations reiterating that the voices of everyday people were not cascading into mainstream media due to the fact that most media houses regarded it as not being news worthy. Participants especially journalists who graced the bootcamp where implored to report everyday news for everyday people as this was missing in mainstream media. After the introductory remarks the trainer then took centre stage to train the participants.



## Brief about Citizen journalism

Citizens in rural areas have adopted the internet to create alternative space for multiple viewpoints. In many occasions, rural development received limited coverage from the mainstream media. The issue limited access to mainstream media has force rural communities seek alternative platforms showcasing rural communities and development. The information and communication technology (ICT) and digitalization innovation is providing more platforms and empower people opportunity to voice out and engage actions to issues that they felt worth advocating for and long been neglected by the mainstream media by utilizing mew media platforms including among rural communities and their sustainability. Citizen journalism is making an attempt to address this problem by enabling rural communities to obtain and report news, and, to facilitate coverage of their concerns and interest, by connecting those communities and a virtual news outlets prospects to ensure their voice is also heard to initiate actions and mobilization towards a more sustainable rural community.

## The training covered the following topics

### 1. Conceptualising Citizen Journalism

- Here participants were assisted to define what citizen journalism is,
- The term 'citizen' was defined as different from the term 'subjects' and further defined in the context of Triangle Community
- Definition 1: The gathering and reporting of news by people who are not trained as professional journalists;
- Definition 2: The act in which a citizen, or group of citizens play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information with the intention of providing independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that is required for democracy and development.
- Definition 3; An alternative and activist form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a response to shortcomings in the professional journalistic field

### 2. Different types of Citizen Journalism

- Different types of journalism were discussed citing examples of Institutionalised; non-Institutionalised; Semi Independent Citizen Journalism; and Independent Citizen Journalism

### 3. Differences and similarities between Citizen Journalism and Professional Journalism

#### Similarities of citizen journalism and professional journalism

- Driving factors: truth telling and spread of accurate information
- Common values: use accepted good values such as objectivity, truthfulness and fairness
- Common mission: promote transparency and accountability by informing in a truthful manner.
- What is at stake: free flow of information, unhindered by laws, economic conditions or failing systems





#### 4. citizen journalism (CJ)

- CJ is participatory interactive and involving decentralised, bottom up structure and process. It uses different technologies news by the community from the community.
- Not profit driven. Its main purpose is to ensure that there is transparency and good governance
- Diversity of viewpoints (many voices and perspectives)
- Emphasis on publishing as opposed to gatekeeping (freedom from editorial control)
- Conversational (two-way communication between citizens and communities/professional journalists)
- Immediacy (quick news dissemination)
- Emphasis on details (provides all details without an articulated point of view and gives full/complete explanations)

#### 5. Practicing citizen journalism

- The facilitator lead a practical session on citizen journalism that:
- Participants were placed in 6 groups
- There were instructed to develop stories based on Who, What, where, when and how?

**Groups then presented the stories as follows.**

##### **Story 1:**

*“A Buhera Sangoma has been arrested for alleged culpable homicide after he injected his patient with an unknown lethal substance leading to sudden death of the patient on Monday morning March 5 2020”*

##### **Story 2:**

*Prominent businessman Essau Mupfumi recently availed 10 buses to service the Dangamvura town route to easy transport challenges in Mutare’s most populated suburb*

##### **Story 3:**

*Chikanga residents last week lodged a complaint at the Mutare city council for lack of road signage in their community because of high accidents that have been recorded.*

##### **Story 4:**

*The ministry of primary and secondary education has warned school headmasters that it is illegal to withhold examination results for students at whatever level on account of non-payment of school fees and warned the teachers to desist from providing extra lessons outside the provided schools times.*

##### **Story 5:**

*Sakubva residence are complaining about poor non attendance to sewer systems by the local authority. It has been 2 months with no response to broken down sewage main holes in Chinyausunzi despite efforts to get in touch with the Mutare City council.*



## 6. What you must do to perform your role

- Write about, photograph, record and videotape what you see happening, serving as eye witnesses that verify facts.
- Clarify, analyse and amplify events
- Authenticate statements, documents and details
- share expertise with other members of the community
- Seek answers to questions with boldness and respect
- Get interested in affairs that interest you most
- Cover events in your community. Do not wait for mainstream media
- Use appropriate technologies and platforms to get news to communities

## 7. Get practising now (Steps)

- Pick an area of speciality or beats (what you like most in your community)
- Know your rights (access, expression information, assembly, Constitutional)
- Be responsible
- Start writing
- Getting published
- Sticking to citizen journalism
- Getting social and expanding your contacts
- Being responsible. Like in any other journalism practice, citizen journalism is guided by four cardinal ethical principles: Seek truth and report it; Minimise harm; Act independently; Be accountable; report Objectivity; Accuracy ( check facts before publishing); Honesty and truthful (do not fabricate reports); Respect for privacy; Being sensitive “ comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable and give the voice to the voiceless, Avoid plagiarism and acknowledge sources and Separate facts from opinion

## 8. Ethics in citizen journalism

- A discussion on ethics of journalism was conducted with emphasis on the contextualised local culture, values and beliefs.

## 9. Safety and security for citizen journalist

- The safety and security of citizen journalist was discussed with emphasis that, ‘No story is worth dying for’ therefore safety precautions must always be observed in Citizen Journalism.





## 10. Platforms to publicize the information

- Writing letters to the editor
- Writing opinions in newspapers/magazines
- Participating in phone in programmes (radio and television stations)
- Commenting on websites of mainstream media
- using social media platforms (including those of media organisations and other organisations)

## Post Training Monitoring and evaluation

Figure 4: Post training evaluation



**Source: Post Evaluation Form**

As figure 4 depicts all the participants responded with a Yes on five out of seven questions that were asked. The only questions that did not score a 100% score were on the ability to protect yourself from harassment during news gathering and reporting. 22% of the participants expressed that risk of harassment will always present itself and it is almost impossible to be totally sure. However, 78% of the participants noted that they can plan in a way that protects themselves from harassment.

After consultation with a participant who had demonstrated ignorance of the 5 Ws and H of news reporting, we discovered that the participant arrived late for the training when that aspect was covered. However, 95% of the participants had gained that skill.

## 11. Concluding remarks

After the training participants promised to join interactive platforms as WhatsApp platforms.



## Annex 1: Participants list

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## Annex 2: Photo Gallery









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