

Media literacy capacity building workshop for teachers and headmasters



Venue: Wise Awl Hotel Mutare

Date: 21 February 2020

Facilitator: Wellington Gadzikwa (PhD)

Contents

- Introduction 3
 - Expectations of the workshop 3
- Identification of community issues for reporting 3
 - Table 1: Critical issues within communities 3
 - Figure 1: Community issues within rights 4
- The Five W’s and H (structured forms of community story telling) 4
 - Figure 2: The Inverted pyramid..... 5
- Short story format of community reporting 5
- What makes an excellent writer? 6
- Opinion writing 7
- Monitoring and evaluation 8
- Way forward 9
- Participants list..... 11
- Photo Gallery 12

Introduction

Media Centre hosted a capacity building workshop for teachers and headmasters from Buhera South. This activity is part of the “Fostering Communicative Public Spheres and Community Based Partnerships that Promote Citizen Agency, Social Accountability & Responsiveness” project. The workshop sought to create a network and platform that ensure that key stories in Buhera south are captured in mainstream media. A total of five school’s headmasters and seven teachers attended this workshop. This also resonated with the project objective of ensuring that information and communication gap is narrowed in marginalized rural and urban communities; with youth’s and women’s voices amplified. The trained teachers and headmaster had the mandate to educate students in their schools on news gathering and reporting so that marginalized voices end up in mainstream media.

Expectations of the workshop

Participants expressed their expectations for the workshop as follows.

- To learn skills on fostering student participation in news gathering and dissemination
- To find mechanisms of receiving mainstream news in marginalized communities
- To check on socio-economic issues affecting communities e.g. early child marriages in Chipinge recently.
- To look at environmental issues affecting communities, climate change, food security etc. schools are strategic for news dissemination
- To ensure that social news in marginalized communities are brought to mainstream media
- To enhance interface between students, teachers, and policy makers through creation of various platforms. Inviting MPs to talk with communities.
- To enhance contribution of students in mainstream media, to ensure that children are able to write essays that can be published.
- To find ways of promotion of debates.
- To promote access to information for teachers and headmasters in marginalized communities.

Identification of community issues for reporting

The facilitator in his introduction noted that the participants were best placed to identify issues happening within their communities that they thought were news worth. The identified issues that participants thought should cascade into mainstream media includes

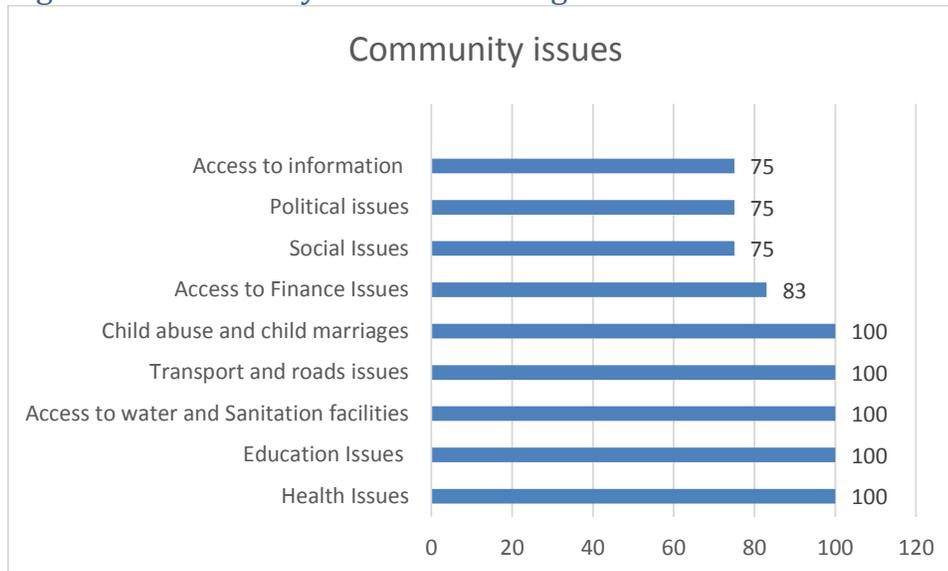
Table 1: Critical issues within communities

Early child marriages	Low pass rates	Orphans & vulnerable children	Empowerment projects
Child headed households	High teacher pupil ratio	Suicides	Infrastructure issues
Rape	School drop outs	Water and sanitation	Food security
Domestic violence	Donor dependence	climate change	culture
Child abuse and neglect	Drug abuse	Gender balance	Environment

In addition to these identified issues participants also reacted to some community issues that were identified before that training. About 25% of the participants thought issues of access to information, political issues and access to finance were not as important to them compared to other issues. All the

participants however were of the view that child abuse and child marriage issues were the most important followed by other issues as health, education access, water and sanitation issues

Figure 1: Community issues within rights



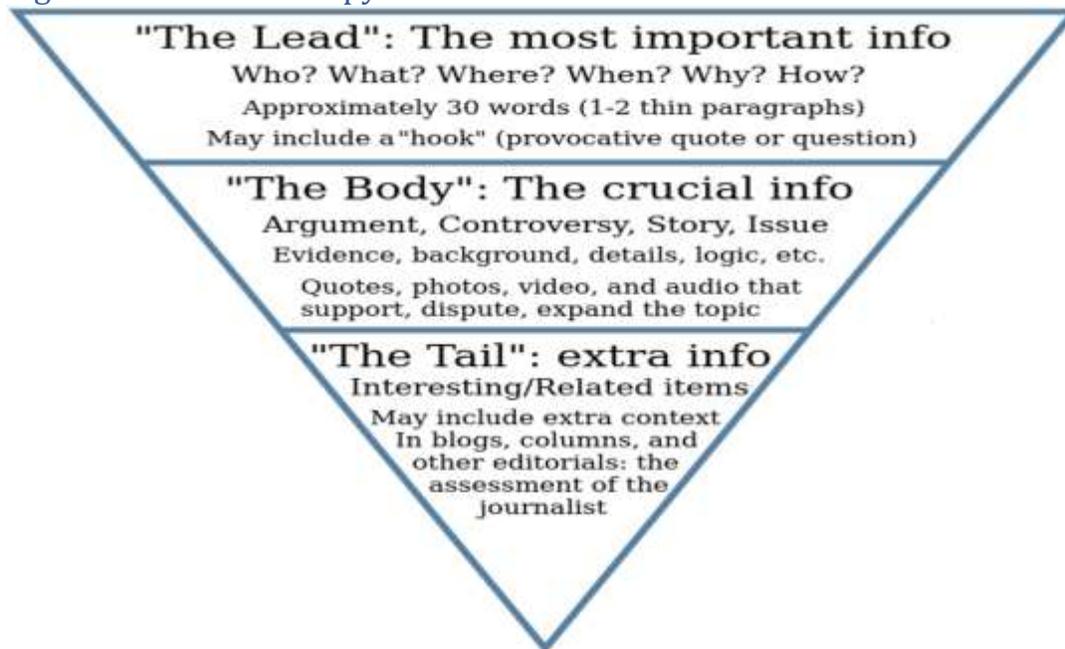
This session thereby set the pace for discussing news gathering and reporting which formed the basis of the training.

The Five W's and H (structured forms of community story telling)

Participants were introduced to the structured way of storytelling, that is the five W's and H of news reporting and the inverted pyramid.

- Who (is involved, person, entity, initiator of news)?
- What (what happened, what happened to who)?
- When (the time it happened, date)?
- Where (the place/setting where the story happened)?
- Why (explanation- why the issue or event being reported happened)?
- How (how an event happened including all the details)?

Figure 2: The Inverted pyramid



After the participants understood the concept of news gathering and reporting, the facilitator then engaged them to demonstrate their newly acquired information through exercises of identifying the 5 W's and H in the given short stories as follows:

A distraught Gokwe teacher from Nembudziya took his own life after allegedly catching his wife, a temporary teacher, red-handed in a compromising position at a local lodge last week.

*Source: **NewsDay June 09, 2012***

A 35-year-old Epworth man will rue the day he laid his hands on his 12-year-old daughter after he was slapped with 18 years in jail by a Harare magistrate yesterday.

*Source: **NewsDay June 16, 2012***

Short story format of community reporting (the feature/essay)

Participants were introduced to the feature article or essay. A feature is defined as a detailed presentation of facts in an interesting form adapted to rapid reading, for the purpose of entertaining or informing the average person. It usually deals with;

- Recent news that is of sufficient importance to warrant elaboration.
- Timely or seasonal topics not directly connected with news.
- Subjects of general interest that have no immediate connection with current events.

Most, if not all, hard news stories dwell on the well-known news values by focusing on issues that are relevant to people and giving information that makes life good and enjoyable. Features are written more like non-fiction short stories, with a beginning, middle and an end. They are written using a fictional approach although they are based on solid facts. The major focus of feature articles is on;

- Amusement.

- Entertainment.
- Inspiration.

Features are written using the fictional approach but should remain factual”

More than anything else, a feature resembles a short story. It exhibits the following arresting qualities,

- A beginning,
- A middle
- A conclusion
- A strong element of reader appeal
- Attention to detail

A feature is a hybrid of the writing world where all known writing techniques can be employed.

What makes an excellent writer?

What makes a writer excellent is the ability to show people in action, the ability to see the significance of people’s actions and make sure that the reader sees it too. This is based on the ability to select facts and interpret them well for the reader. A good feature article must also educate, inspire, motivate and uplift the reader.

Purpose of features/ short stories

Features are written to profile people or groups that make news such as athletes, performers, politicians, companies, community workers, choirs or political organizations. They also include;

- Explanation of events that shape news.
- Analysis of what is happening in the community or country.
- Teach an audience how to do something.
- Suggest better ways to live.
- Examine trends.
- Provide background to most news stories.
- Explore the news behind the news.
- Give advice and guidance.
- Describe hobbies and unusual occupations.
- Provide biographical and historical sketches.

Types of short stories/features

- Personality sketch
- How to do something
- Personal experience
- Confessional
- Interview
- Historical
- Seasonal
- Behind the scenes
- Participatory

Editorials usually try to achieve some of the following goals;

- Educating the public about issues of public concern.
- Try to persuade readers and listeners to adopt a particular position on any issue.
- Provide information.
- Providing a platform for constructive arguments.

By being informative, telling the public that there is a problem, an editorial may provide solutions or a way forward. An editorial can also try to explain the news, fill in background, forecast on the future and give moral judgement. In brief editorials;

- Explain.
- Persuade.
- Evaluate.
- Endorse a position.
- Criticize.

Opinion writing

- Opinion is free but facts are sacred. This does not mean that opinion should not be based on concrete facts. Many people take a great deal in reading and are influenced by what writers in their trusted newspapers present.
- Opinions are largely found in editorial pages where there is the editorial comment and letters to the editor with the page clearly marked opinion or editorial. If not on this page, it is usually on another page clearly marked Opinion or Analysis depending on the style of the publication
- Opinion is expressed from an informed point of view; it wields a lot of influence on the community or nation. This is so because opinion writers who contribute from outside the organisation (although they may not outrightly write at variance with the editorial policy) do not conform to the whims of the owners of the publication and thus can contribute in ways that may sound appealing to many readers.

Attributes of good opinion pieces

- **Timeliness:** The article should be based on recent, timely stories. Most readers will not be interested in stale news events. A writer should get an idea of what people are talking about, especially the hot topics. The article should answer the questions; So what? Why should readers care? How does the topic affect them?
- **Relevance:** It should have relevance, be of interest to the readers of the publication. It should start with a hard-hitting summary or final thought-provoking point. The lead should hook the reader by informing, educating, analysing, alerting, celebrating.
- **Clarity:** The article should be concise and clear. The writer should make use of argument in both the introduction and last paragraph. Avoid being mild-mannered, tactful or diplomatic as well as offering both sides – argument is better than discussion.
- **Specificity:** The article should be specific by focusing on a single issue at a time. The reader must understand why the argument should be of interest to them. What makes an opinion article is choosing a position on an issue by avoiding being wishy-washy. Use simple everyday language for easy understanding by the audience. Keep punctuation simple and avoid the use of

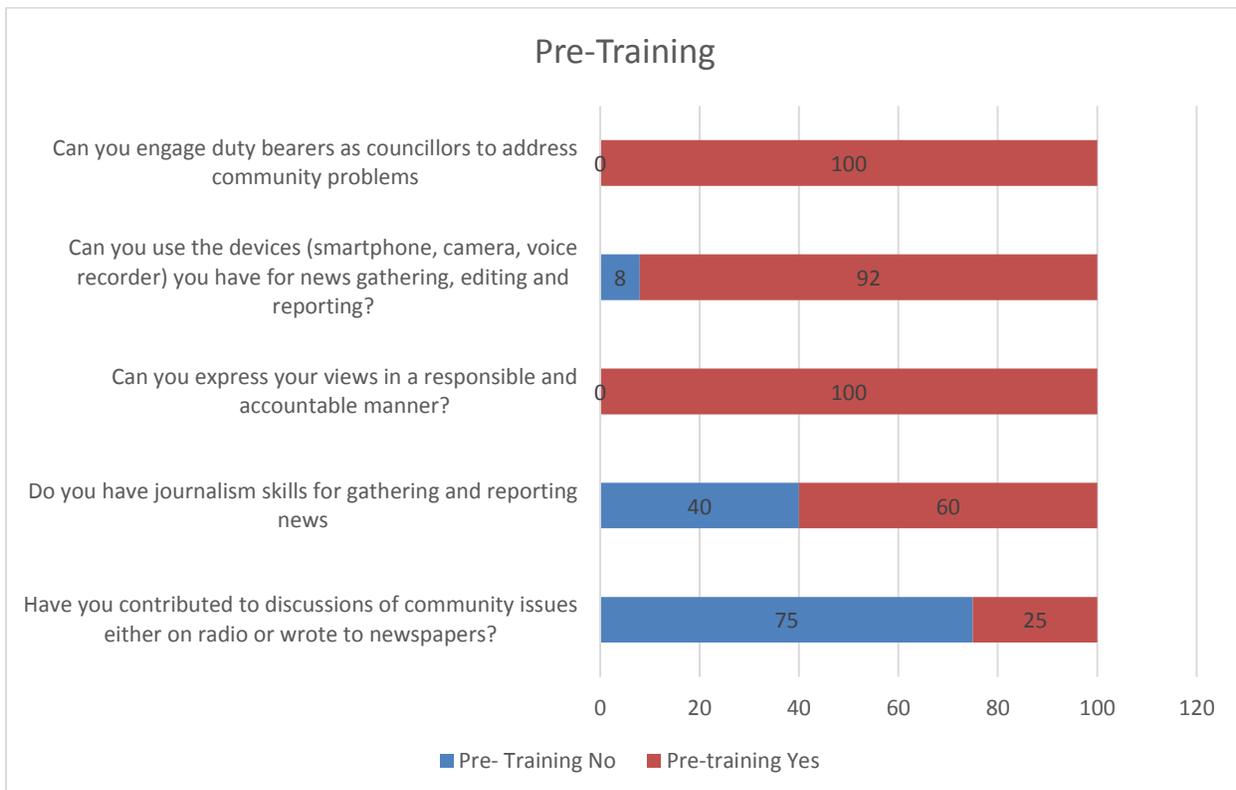
exclamation marks. Avoid formal language, righteous sentiments and bureaucratic or think-tank jargon.

- **Short and Sweet:** Always try to keep the article short 400 to 600 words in length. Mix long and short sentences to get the reader's attention. Use attention grabbing paragraphs. Do not write on what everybody knows. Rage, play devil's advocate, argue the rarer point or educate as only you uniquely can.
- **Provide solutions:** Give suggestions of possible solutions or recommendations to the situation. Express your opinion, argue your point, urge action and warn of danger.

Monitoring and evaluation

Before the workshop pre-training forms depicted that participants had a good understanding of the project expectations. All of the participants had prior knowledge of engaging duty bearers as councillors to address community problems. Being Headmasters and teachers in their communities this depicts that this group has good access to decision makers in their communities. Also, their skills set on the use of devices as smartphones and cameras were quite high as they had gathered information using their smartphone. Only one participant noted that he did not have a smartphone but had a cellphone to spread news with through the sms platform. All the participants noted that they can be accountable for the information they share in various platforms. 40% of the participants did not have journalism skills for gathering and reporting news while 60% had gathered news prior to the training. 75% of the participants had not contributed to discussions on community issues either on radio and on newspapers.

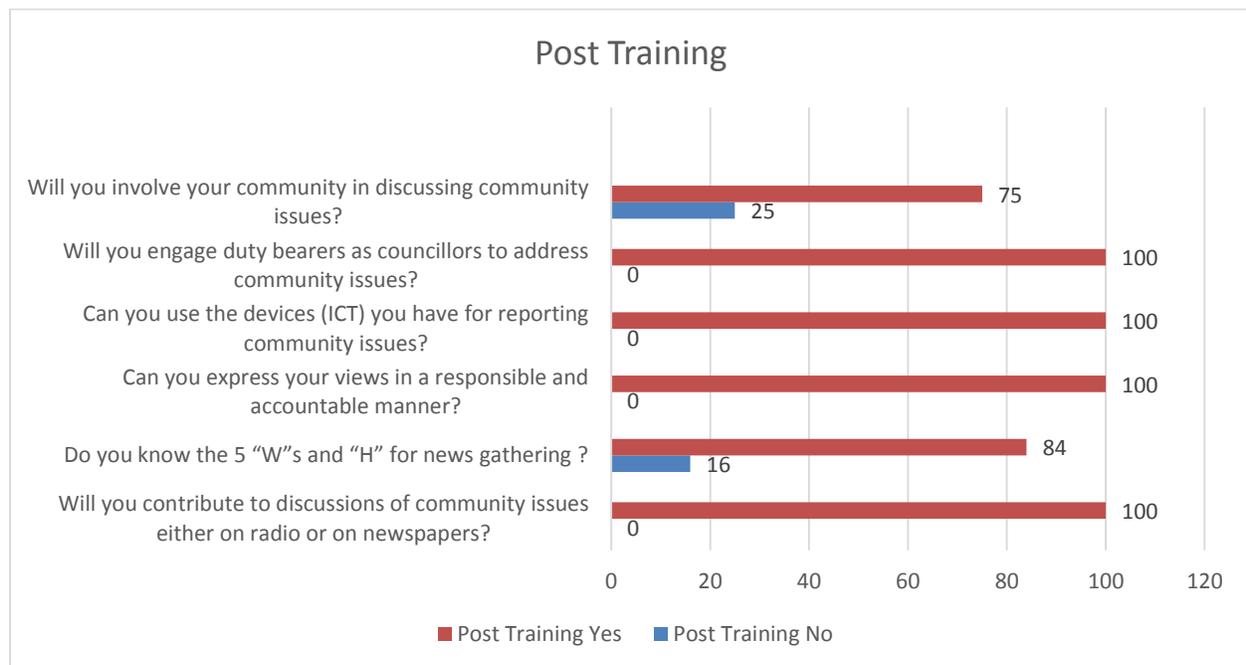
Figure3 Pre-training assessment



Post training Assessment

After the training a notable change was shown both in perception and in skills sets gained as a result of the training. As figure 4 depicts 75% of the participants noted that they would involve community in discussing community issues. All the participants demonstrated that they were more confident to engage duty bearers to address community problems. All the participants also echoed that they now know the importance of their smartphones and phones as devices for gathering and reporting news. Participants went on to form a WhatsApp group for continued engagement. After learning the importance of being credible sources of information participants noted that they could all express their views in a responsible and accountable manner, not spreading fake news or sugar coating the facts. 84% of the participant now had knowledge of the 5 “W” and “H” of news gathering and reporting. They noted that they will utilize the inverted pyramid in reporting of news. Two participants who arrived after the presentations on the 5 “W” and “H” noted that they would benefit from the created WhatsApp group where the presentation would be shared including information on citizen journalism.

Figure 4 Post training assessment



At the end of the training all the participants expressed enthusiasm to contribute community issues to newspapers and to radio. They noted that some issues of child marriages and child abuse required to be reported anonymously hence would benefit from freelance journalists putting out the issues on the open.

Way forward

Drought intervention strategies; The issue of drought and food insecurity was so prevalent in Buhera South leading a child abuse, child marriages, learners dropping out of school, hence needed urgent attention. An illustration was given of a girl who offered to get married just by seeing a tabloid presented by a young brother without even seeing the man to marry her. This was in the view to escape the scourge of poverty. As a solution it was noted that the group had to ensure that it formed linkages with likeminded

organizations who were better placed to deal with issues of child protection and engage humanitarian organizations to assist in the drought affected areas

Establishment of whistle blowing facilities; To address issues of early child marriage, the need to establish platforms of whistle blowing that link the community with police was raised. Some of the early marriages are not lasting long resulting in the girl child missing the opportunity to education. The issue of culture, religion, politics, corruption was also raised as it perpetrated a culture of child marriages. More discussions on operationalization of the whistle blowing facility would continue on WhatsApp.

Enhancing communication skills among the students; It was noted that most school libraries are empty and most learners are not exposed to any form of reading besides when they are in class. In response to this it was noted that newspapers would be distributed once every month to these schools. Also, it was noted that the teachers had a responsibility to showcase these libraries on WhatsApp platform so that the story would be taken up and shared to mainstream media. Also, teachers promised to start debate clubs and writing competitions to ensure that students develop better communication skills.

Utilizing child protection committees. These includes teachers, parents and social workers. It was noted that if these committees are strengthened, they would solve issues of child abuse.

Sensitization/ campaigns against child marriages; students need to be empowered that they have a right to education, that forced and child marriages are criminal. Sensitization can be through poems on child marriages, pluck cards speaking against child marriages etc.

Participants list.

NAMES	CONTACT DETAILS	POSITION
Mbofana Nyasha	0775877821	Headmaster
Mudidi Douglas	0775458267	Headmaster
Magoso Fungai	07740229514	Headmaster
Muchesa Annnia	0775388561	Teacher
Mliposhi Waston	0715151221	Teacher
Zenda Ityai	0777457588	Teacher
Chamuturika Rodgers	0773651843	Teacher
Chatikobo Trymore	0716578091	Headmaster
Mauya Manex	0772335007	Teacher
Madyanembwa Hambayi	0778347547	Headmaster
Nyangani Tracy	0774302863	Teacher
Kumbirayi Brenda	0779951847	Teacher

Photo Gallery





