

Project Name:

Climate Change Journalism: The challenges and possibilities of teaching specialised journalistic literacies in African Journalism Schools [*An African Journalism Educators Panel at the World Journalism Education Congress, Mechelen, Belgium, 3-5 July 2013*]

Executive Summary

The Centre for Film and Media Studies (CFMS) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), in partnership with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), seeks US\$36 502 from the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) to host a panel for African journalism educators to discuss the challenges and opportunities of teaching specialised literacies, particularly climate change, in African journalism schools. The panel will convene during the 3rd World Council for Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) in Belgium on 3-5 July 2013 (<http://wjec.be/>). The rationale for the panel is to bring together African journalism educators from different parts of the continent to share experiences, research outputs and best practices on the key area of climate change journalism and how it can be mainstreamed in African media training curricula. This particular Congress is important in the sense that it will not only bring African together, but also with journalism educators from other parts of the world. The WJEC is made up of 32 different academic organisations involved fully or partly in the advancement of journalism education. The panel, as well as the entire congress, will therefore be a platform for cross-national, cross-regional and international exchange of experiences and best practices in teaching climate change in journalism schools.

Detailed Description of Project

Africa contributes just over 1 per cent of greenhouse emissions which cause global warming, but the continent is among the worst hit by the effects of climate change, mainly in the form of recurring droughts, floods and desertification. As in the case of other crises of our time—such as poverty, bad governance, corruption, disease, underdevelopment and so forth—journalism has the potential to provide critical entry points through which Africa can find ways and means of both adaptation and mitigation to the effects of climate change. Needless to mention, journalism education plays a key role in shaping the quality of journalism practice in any given context, including in Africa. As African societies change in the face of new threats and opportunities, journalism education, like journalism practice, also needs to creatively adapt to changing realities if it is to contribute meaningfully to society.

The 2013 WJEC is the 3rd Congress of the global organisation, with the first two having been hosted in Singapore (2007) and South Africa (2010), each attracting over 400 delegates from over 50 countries. This year's event is being hosted by the European Journalism Training Association and the Flemish/Dutch Network of Journalism Institutes, under the theme *Renewing Journalism Through Education*. The Unesco/CFMS panel at the Congress will

bring together African journalism educators as well as other interested academics and practitioners attending the congress to discuss ways in which climate change and other ‘specialised’ literacies such as science journalism can be mainstreamed in African journalism curricula. It is anticipated that the sharing of experiences between Africans and others from both the global South and North will provide useful frames of reference from which concrete action can be taken.

This comes against the background of the undeniable and increasingly severe effects of climate change across the continent and the world, and the need for heightened communication around both adaptation and mitigation. Journalism training institutions in Africa are creations of European colonial authorities and for the past five decades of independence have largely remained anchored in Western paradigms in terms of curricula. Even the language of mainstream journalism remains that of the former colonial metropolis, i.e., English, French and Portuguese, despite the fact that it is the second or even third language to more than 90 per cent of Africans.

Given that most of the journalism schools in Africa emerged either out of or with close links to humanities and social sciences disciplines (especially English literature and Sociology departments), the focus of most curriculums tends to be on either practical writing/reporting or media-society theory or both in some cases. In the majority of cases, specialised literacies such as business or financial reporting, science journalism, environmental journalism, health journalism among others, are not offered at most journalism schools for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of expertise to the belief that such skills can be learned ‘on the job’. And yet research shows that the quality of reporting on these ‘neglected’ but crucial literacies in Africa is generally poor, as demonstrated by a 2011 study commissioned by Unesco and undertaken by Uganda’s Makerere University to ascertain African media reporting of science and technology.

Against this background, the panel will seek to provide a platform for journalism educators from the continent and elsewhere to share experiences of both challenges and opportunities of mainstreaming these ‘neglected’ literacies in their training, in response to the realities of our time. We intend to host 12 educators (including 2 representatives from UCT and Unesco) drawn from UNESCO centres of excellence across the African continent. The participants will be required to present papers that focus on, but not necessarily limited to the following:

- The challenges of teaching climate change and other specialised literacies in African journalism schools
- Funding specialised training for African journalism schools
- African languages and the challenges of teaching specialised literacies
- The challenges and possibilities of teaching specialised literacies in the era of media cost-cutting
- The state of research into specialised literacies
- The role of the state in journalism training policy

- The possibilities of building partnership (cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, North-South or South-South linkages, for example) in enhancing specialised journalism training
- Should specialised literacies be learned on the job or in the lecture room? Revisiting the old age questions
- Adapting journalism training to the demands of contemporary Africa
- The role of the Internet and ICTs in teaching specialised journalism literacies

Problem Statement

Despite contributing only marginally to global warming, Africa bears the brunt of the effects of climate change, and these threaten the livelihoods of millions in a continent that already faces critical challenges such as poverty. To minimise these effects, Africa, like the rest of the world, needs to adopt a range of adaptation and mitigation strategies, from rethinking the sources of energy to practising sustainable agriculture, among others. The media provide very critical spaces where the fight against the effects of global warming can be articulated. And for the media to do so effectively, it is important that journalists and media workers themselves are competent on the subject in question. Current research shows that in the main, climate change receives scant attention in both journalism training institutions and in newsrooms. It is therefore important that African journalism training schools be capacitated in terms of the teaching of specialised literacies such as climate change.

Goals and Objectives

The main objective of the panel is to provide a platform for experience-sharing among journalism educators from Africa and abroad, with a view to ultimately improve the teaching of specialised literacies such as climate change in African journalism and media training institutions. To achieve this, the participants will be required to present papers that focus on, but not necessarily limited to the following:

- The challenges of teaching climate change and other specialised literacies in African journalism schools
- Funding specialised training for African journalism schools
- African languages and the challenges of teaching specialised literacies
- The challenges and possibilities of teaching specialised literacies in the era of media cost-cutting
- The state of research on the subject of specialised literacy teaching in African journalism schools
- The role of the state in journalism training policy
- The possibilities of building partnership (cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, North-South or South-South linkages, for example) in enhancing specialised journalism training
- Should specialised literacies be learned on the job or in the lecture room? Revisiting the old age questions

- Adapting journalism training to the demands of contemporary Africa
- The role of the Internet and ICTs in teaching specialised journalism literacies

Activities

This is a panel discussion on the challenges and possibilities of teaching specialised literacies, especially climate change, in African journalism schools.

Indicators of Success

The panel and the entire Congress is expected to provide a useful platform for sharing experiences, identifying obstacles to effective teaching specialised journalistic literacies, identifying opportunities and best practice, and establishing important partnerships among journalism scholars and teachers from Africa and globally. The following are indicators of success:

- Increased awareness by the educators of the challenges and opportunities of teaching specialised literacies such as climate change in journalism schools
- Well researched papers/presentations which will be published in both peer reviewed journals and popular outlets to encourage debate and discussion around the subject
- Creation of an African partnership of journalism educators to, among other things, coordinate research on the subject, meet regularly to follow up/update on issues raised in previous meetings, identify new opportunities and threats, etc.

Implementing Organisation

The Centre for Film and Media Studies is an institute within the Humanities faculty at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Founded in 2003, it offers undergraduate majors in Film Studies and Media and Writing, as well as a range of postgraduate courses in Media, Political Communication, Journalism, among others. Besides the academic focus, the Centre also hosts periodic training programmes for journalists and filmmakers from across the globe, and offers short training courses to underprivileged communities. In 2010, UCT adopted an 'Afropolitanism' policy which encourages greater integration between the university and the rest of Africa. The Centre, in response, is also seeking to establish better links with media workers and trainers across the continent. The Centre views this panel as an opportunity to establish linkages with fellow institutions in Africa, which links can be sustained through regular meetings/colloquia to address pedagogical and research issues of common interest, in this case the teaching of climate change and other specialised literacies in African journalism schools. CFMS will partner Unesco, whose work in culture and education is well known across the world.

The Participants (Incorporating Gender Analysis and Youth Participation)

Ten participants will be drawn primarily from Unesco centres of excellence across Africa. Representatives from centres in Cameroon, Kenya, Morocco, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Senegal, Nigeria, Mozambique and Namibia will be invited to participate. The participants will join Dr Wallace Chuma (UCT) and Professor Fackson Banda (Unesco) on the panel. (This brings to 12 the number of participants). The precondition for participation is to present a research paper on the current situation in one's institution (both challenges and opportunities). The papers will be subject to peer review and will be disseminated twofold: in a special issue of an academic journal and in popular outlets such as newspaper and magazine articles.

The selection of participants will be informed by the need for equal gender representation. At this stage (i.e., panel), there is no specific focus on the youth although young journalism teachers attached to Unesco centres of excellence will be considered for participation.

Sustainability

This is a panel discussion taking place as part of a global conference on journalism teaching. The expectation is that beyond this particular event, African journalism educators will form a solid network which will see future collaboration on researching and improving the teaching of climate change and other specialised literacies in our media and journalism schools. This is certainly sustainable.

Concerns and Conditions

There are no concerns and conditions that we can foresee at this stage.

Local and Other partners

We are partnering with Unesco for this particular but hope to increase our partnership base after the panel. For example, in follow up meetings, we are hoping to work closely with the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI), a UCT cross-university initiative which facilitates, co-ordinates and stimulates research and teaching on the linked issues of climate change and development from an African perspective.

Budget

Item	Unit Cost (US\$)	Total Cost (US\$)
Flights	1000x 12 participants	12000
Accommodation	135 (100 Euro) x 4 nights	6480
Subsistence (SARS Rates)	189 (140 Euro)x 3 conference days	6804
Conference registration	475 (350 Euro)	5700
Visa Applications	100x 12 participants	1200
Incidentals	1000	1000
University administration costs	10% of total costs	3318.40
Total		36502.40

Other Funding Partners Approached

No other funding partners have been approached for this project.

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