

Proceedings of Regional Training Workshop for Media Managers, Journalists, Communication and Culture Experts

**Organized By College Of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hawassa
University in Collaboration with NORHED LCB Project**

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INTRODUCTION TO PROCEEDING OF REGIONLA TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR MEDIA MANAGERS, JOURNALISTS, COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE EXPERTS

Opening Remarks and Welcoming Statements

The Regional Training Workshop began with a brief opening statement from the workshop organizer and the Dean of college of social sciences and Humanities, Dr. Nigussie Meshesha. Dr. Nigussie welcomed the participants of the workshop who came from government media organizations, public relation bureaus and cultural offices. He said the training was organized to give 6days training for media managers, journalists, and language, communication and culture experts with the financial support received from NORHED LCB project.

He added that the training is believed to help the trainees to get insights on theories and paradigms regarding issues pertaining to the role of the media in the society; the interface between language, communication and culture so that the participants of the training will be able to do their job within the perspectives of what the job they do demands of them. Dr.Nigussie explained that during the six days training, the participants would be trained on topics related to media practice, communication theories, media management, development journalism, language use, media, culture and society, linguistic pluralism and folklore.

Dr.Nigussie extended his heartfelt appreciation to NORHED for their financial support without which the training would have been impossible. Dr. Nigussie stated that Ethiopia is undertaking a number of development projects with the aim of transforming its economy in the coming decades and media and media practitioners play a very huge role in assisting the development programs. Media practitioners and public relation experts should have a good understanding on how to report communicate the development efforts of the country. They should also use language effectively in order to reach the message they intend to communicate to the public

clearly and effectively. In this respect, Dr.Nigussie added that the training will be useful to capacitate the media practitioners in their work.

Dr.Nigussie then introduced Ato Yohannes, the General Manager of South TV and Radio Organization to make a key note address. Ato Yohannes said that Ethiopia is now on development path to realize its growth and transformation plan. The country is the move in every aspect. In this process, media managers, journalists, language, communication experts make a lot contribution by informing the large Ethiopian public about the development activities undertaken in the country and urge them to be part of the development processes. He said such kind of training that aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of experts in media, culture and language is very vital as it enables them to serve the society objectively and responsibly.

Day One: Training on Media Practices-August1, 2014

The training on media practice was presented by Dr. Yohannes Shiferaw, assistant professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at Hawassa University. His presentation started in the morning and continued the whole afternoon. Most importantly, he focused on broadcast journalism as most of the training attendants are journalists from television and radio organizations. He talked about news and news values –criteria used to identify newsworthy events or situations. Accordingly, he explained the most commonly and universally used news values such as prominence, proximity, timeliness, oddity etc.

Moreover, Dr. Yohannes discussed the major features of broadcast journalism such as the organizational set up, the news gathering processes and the nature of audiences in radio and television. In connection with this, he particularly addressed the issues of news writing in broadcast whereby he clearly indicated the difference between news writing for broadcast and print. He pointed out that broadcast news must be written

for the ear. It is better to adopt a conversational, informal and relaxed style. In this regard broadcast news should be written in such a way that it is interesting and engaging to capture the attention of the audiences.

The other topic addressed by Dr.Yohannes is the radio and television programming. He said television and Radio programming are determined from the specific requirements of each in broadcast media. Programming demands high level of knowledge of the broadcast environment especially in competitive environments. What is more, Dr.Yohannes explained the concept of radio and television programming and techniques in programming. Here, he forwarded some specific questions on radio and television programming to the participants to give their reflections based on their experiences. The questions asked were:

- Do you think proper programming is widely practiced among Ethiopian TV and radio programmers?
- Is there any consideration of audience behavior in the process of programming in our stations?
- Are we getting the right audiences from the existing public?
- Do we classify our audiences and try to understand them demographically?
- What can we possibly do to get more audiences and increase our viewership?

The participants after they discussed the questions in group forwarded their views on the points raised.



The trainees attending lectures

Day Two: Training on Media Management by Dr.Nigussie Meshesha

August2, 2014

The second day of the training continued with lecture by Dr.Nigussie Mesesha on Media Management. Dr.Nigussie started his discussion by addressing the issue of media management in the Ethiopian Media practices. He pointed out that poor media management is one of the factors that affect the quality of news and information that media present to the public. Media will be able to deliver quality news and programs only when it has effective and efficient management. The organizational structure, the hierarchy, the chain of management of a media organization is expected to be in such

a way that it facilitates the effective delivery of news and information to the media audiences.

In his lecture, Dr.Nigussie talked about media management theories giving emphasis to Strategic Management Theory, Structural Theories, Transnational Media Management Theory, Organizational, Culture Theory and Leadership Theory. Dr. Nigussie pointed out that these theories are primarily used in the area of media management to effectively manage the media organizations so that they will be able to do their job they are set to do. All the theories are not equally effective and it will be important to identify and use the theory that best suits our media organizations. Moreover, these media management theories have got their own strengths and weaknesses.

As far as Ethiopian media management is concerned, Dr. Nigussie said that the poor quality of media products that we consume today is attributed to the poor media management practiced in the country. Usually people who are taking management position in our media organizations lack the experiences and skills needed to effectively manage the media institutions. Unless our media organizations develop effective management strategies, there cannot be a change in the news and views presented to the public. Good media practice is directly related to good media management and if this is not the case the media will not be productive and fails to meet its purposes. Dr.Nigussie told the participants of the trainings to work on their media management and bring a significant change in that respect to make their media organization stand out from the pack.

During his lecture, Dr.Nigussie asked some critical questions about media management whereby the trainees forwarded their reflections after they discussed in group on the issues raised.

Day Three: Theories of Mass Communication & Ethics by Dr.Yohannes Shiferaw –August3, 2014

In this session, Dr. Yohannes's lecture focused on theories of mass communication and ethics. He defined mass communication theory as a set of related statements about people's behavior that:

- Categorize phenomenon
- Predict the future
- Explain past events
- Give a sense of understanding of why a behavior occurs,
- Provide the potential for influencing future behavior.

Dr. Yohannes said that like research in other disciplines, most of the research which are done in the area of mass communication do have one or more of the following goals or objectives.

- Explaining the outcome (effect) of Mass Communication on audiences.
 - How do media directly or indirectly affect individuals or groups?
 - How do media affect individual knowledge of public issues and events?
- Explaining the effect of audience on Mass Communication.
 - What forces shape media content?
- Explaining how people learn from mass media.
 - How do people use media?
- Explaining the role of mass media in shaping people's values and views.

- How do political and economic structures use media to shape culture?

Moreover, Dr. Yohannes talked about major mass media effect theories developed by mass communication scholars at different times. The major media effects theories included the Magic Bullet Theory, the two-step flow, cultivation theory, agenda setting, uses and gratification and knowledge gap hypothesis. With these regard to these theories, Dr. Yohannes talked about their historical development and how they have been used in mass communication. He said that media professionals are expected to have sufficient knowledge about media effects theories as they are so important to understand about the nature our audiences, about the nature of the media system and about the overall processes of communication. In the middle of his presentation, Dr. Yohannes asked the trainees to discuss on some important questions regarding mass communication theories. The questions are:

- How do we evaluate the power of our media on society's thinking, attitude, perception about issues that matter to us?
- Do you think that media have the same power over our society now?
- Do you think this finding of two step flow and opinion leadership helpful? How and in what ways?
- Is it possible to use the concept in social issues related to health, agriculture, etc?
- What do you think is the implication of agenda setting in Ethiopian Media environment?
- Do audiences in Ethiopia consider media topics as important topics? Which group of people tends to believe media's projection of news?

- What relations do you see among media agenda, policy agenda and public agenda in our country?
- How serious do you think is the knowledge gap in our country?
- Do you think the knowledge gap has created influence on less educated and people of lower socio economic sectors?

The trainees discussed these questions in group first and they presented it in class. Based on the presentations by each group, questions were forwarded by the participants where by the presenters answered the questions. At the end, Dr. Yohannes briefly summarized his presentation and commented on some of the ideas given by the trainees on the questions asked.

Day 4: Development Journalism by Dr. Nigussie Meshesha

August 4, 2014

Dr. Nigussie began his lecture by asking what development journalism means. After he listened to some of the answers given by the trainees, he defined development journalism as a journalism practice that primarily focuses on reporting on development issues. He pointed out development journalism is a brand of journalism that emerged in late 1970's in south eastern Asia particularly in Philippines. He said unlike liberal journalism practiced in America and Europe that focuses on sensational and negative news stories such as crime, war, religious or racial conflict, development journalism focuses on positive news about development projects undertaken in a country, but in a critical manner to pin point the weaknesses of the developmental projects.

Dr. Nigussie more emphatically pointed out that development news should examine critically, evaluate and interpret the relevance of development plans, projects, policies, problems, and issues. It should indicate the disparities between plans and actual

accomplishments, and include comparisons with how development is progressing in other countries and regions. It also should provide contextual and background information about the development process, discuss the impact of plans, projects, policies, problems, and issues on people, and speculate about the future of development. And development news should refer to the needs of people, which may vary from country to country or from region to region, but generally include primary needs, such as food, housing, employment; secondary needs such as transportation, energy sources and electricity; and tertiary needs such as cultural diversity, recognition and dignity.”

Dr.Nigussie said that Ethiopia has now adopted development journalism in its policy as the country is working to lift up itself from poverty for which it has been known all over the world. Ethiopian journalists are expected to work in order to present development news and information to the public thereby mobilizing the public to get involved in the development projects the country is undertaking. It is better if Ethiopian journalists focus on positive news instead of the negative ones as they are not helpful for the country’s development. The media professionals should support the development activities that are taking place in the country.

The session was very interactive as the trainees also reflected their views about development journalism. The trainers raised a number of questions about development journalism and its practice in Ethiopia and Dr.Nigussie did his best to answer the questions.

Day Five: Language Use, media, culture and society by Dr. Binyam and Dr. Moges-August5, 2014

Both Dr.Binyam and Dr.Moges talked about language use in the media and how it affects the culture of a given society. They pointed out that the language that use in media should carefully constructed; its effect on the culture of the society in which

that media function. In this respect, the media practitioners or the journalists should effectively know the language of the society they are serving. A good use of language on the media helps us to reach out our messages to the intended audiences effectively and efficiently.



Dr.Moges lecturing trainees on Language use on the Media

Media practitioners or journalists, when they present news and views to the public they should adhere to the grammar of the language they are using; they should select the right words/expressions that best explain the situations they are talking about. Dr.Moges said that journalists' use of language highly decides whether the intended messages reach the audiences or not. When they recruit professionals, media organizations should consider their language ability –this is so because journalists should have a good command of the language used on the media.

Moreover, Dr. Binyam and Dr.Moges talked about dialects, language standardization and language harmonization explaining what they are all about and helping the trainees to have a better understanding about these aspects of language.

As it was with the previous training sessions, there was interactive discussion of both the trainees and the trainers about language use on the media. The trainees were made into groups and discussed on the questions given to them by the trainers. After half an hour discussion on the points raised in their groups, the trainees presented it to the class. The session ended with the summary of the presentation by the trainers.

Day Six: Linguistic Pluralism and Folklore in media by Dr. Fekede Menuta and Abraham Tadesse –August6, 2014

The last day of the training was devoted to the discussion on Linguistic Pluralism, and Folklore in Media. Dr.Fekede lectured on Linguistic Pluralism and Ato Tadesse lectured on Folklore in Media.

In his lecture on linguistic pluralism, Dr. Fekede said that Ethiopia is a country where more than 80 languages are spoken and it would be good to use these languages on the media to the extent possible. In connection with this, he presented the profile of languages spoken in Ethiopia. He pointed out that in Ethiopia more languages being

used as media language. For example, he said, about 47 languages are used by Southern Radio and Television Agency and this is a great achievement.



Dr.Fekede giving lecture on Linguistic Pluralism

Dr. Fekede added that in a multilingual environment should be able vigilant and work hard to have a better understanding about the environment in which are they working. Linguistic pluralism has a lot of advantages if we are ready to use them properly.

Ato Tadesse on his part talked about folklore in the media. He said that folklore is a societal traditional practices passed down in a community or a country. It encompasses stories or legends, proverbs, riddles music, traditional dances, traditional tools, traditional ornaments and so on.

In this regard, Ato Tadesse said that it would be more useful if journalists consider indigenous knowledge in their presentations. We don't have to always run after western thinking and philosophies as our society have got their own philosophies based on indigenous knowledge and we need to utilize it along with modern thinking and practices. If we fail to do that, then we cannot move forward as a nation. He added that media practitioners should give emphasis to local and indigenous knowledge in their presentations.

In this sessions too, there was discussion and debate on linguistic pluralism and folklore whereby the participants reflected their point of views.

Conclusion of the Training

On the last day of the training, there was a general discussion about the training and topics raised during the training sessions. In the general discussion, the trainees and all the trainers were present. The discussion was chaired by Dr.Nigussie, College of Social Sciences and Humanities College of Hawassa University.

The trainees appreciated the training and they said they were happy with the topics that raised in the training. They said that the training would help them in many respects and they are ready enough to use the knowledge they have gained in one week training. Such training they said, is so vital because some of the media practitioners don't have journalism back ground and in this training they have benefitted a lot. They also asked for more training such kind to take place in the future as there many more journalists who didn't get the chance to attend this training. The

participants of the training are all thankful to the University of Hawassa for making this training happen.

Dr. Nigussie said Hawassa University is working to provide community services and this training is part of the community service that the university delivers to the society. But such kind of training is the first of its kind because there was no time training was organized for media practitioners in Hawassa University. He was grateful for the financial support received from NORHED LCB project without which this training would have been impossible.

At the end, Dr. Nigussie handed out Certificate of Participation to the trainees and then he thanked all the participants and the trainers and officially closed the training.
