

Calling all Journalists, Radio, TV, Print Producers, & progressive civil society:

**Unite to advance media freedom for all!**

**Media Transformation Summits**

Cape Town Sat 21 November      Durban Sat 28 November      Jo'burg Sat 5 December

Space is limited. To express interest in attending visit [www.r2k.org.za/media-summit](http://www.r2k.org.za/media-summit)

Hosted by the **RIGHT2KNOW**

# SUMMIT REPORT

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## Background

In 2015, the Right2Know Campaign (R2K) embarked on a series of media transformation and diversity summits with the following objectives:

- Inform civil society and community media of threats to media freedom and diversity
- Develop a consensus in response to threats to media freedom and diversity
- Strengthen collaboration between civil society and community media

A further purpose was that the inputs from these summits would feed into R2K's provincial summits and National Summit in February 2016 where resolutions would be taken around media transformation and diversity.

Three media transformation and diversity summits were held in November and December 2015:

- Cape Town: 21 November 2015, 37 participants
- Durban: 28 November, 20 participants
- Johannesburg: 5 December, 47 participants.

R2K was able to broaden the participation for the last summit due to unexpended monies in the Beyond Urban Nodes (BUN) budget. This was used to cover the cost of six participants from community media projects in other provinces to attend.

Each provincial summit was preceded by a 2-day capacity-building workshop for core R2K activists facilitated by the MDFD organiser, Micah Reddy and MFD member, Jayshree Pather.

This report provides a summary of the key issues that emerged in the discussions on the following topics:

- Diversity of voices and content
- Print
- Broadcasting
- Internet
- Media freedom
- Channel Free

The last section of the report contains some of the action ideas that emerged from the discussions.

## Diversity of voices and content

Media doesn't exist in a bubble, it reflects the patterns of access in society, information is limited as people only access local stories, want access to regional and national to understand politics locally, activists can make informed decisions.

Diversity of content and voice is highly political and contested, it is easy to get experts to set agenda of story, it is clear whose voices are marginalised – those of black working class women rural and urban, and media transformation needs to amplify these voices.

‘The mainstream media does not reflect the concerns of poor and working class people. Rather, they reflect the biases and interests of the middle and economically elite classes’.

Agenda setting determines the target audience, those who buy the newspaper for example, working class people do not have the contacts and access to bring news. Examples given of gatekeeping of editorial: shutting down of public comments on News24 online, and Facebook determining content on users' timelines, shaping and framing content.

There are two types of current and news affairs: agenda setting media for middle class English speakers like *Business Day* and *SAFM*, empowered productions versus big city tabloid superficial newspapers.

If the practice of democracy needs informed citizens - we have technocrats handling all information making decisions, and public accessing some information, can media in its current form deal with complexities needed by democracy?

Questioned role of cultural imperialism and consumerism: role of entertainment like film and advertising – what is the impact of consumption and the influence of those cultural values

How do we get indigenous culture and languages into media?

We have been trained as consumers of crisis / sensationalism, rather than the content of the story. Examples where content and voices were well framed:

- *Project Isizwe*: free Wi-Fi rollout in pilot phase in cities of Gauteng, Cape Town and Tshwane, includes training citizen journalists creating opportunities to produce local stories, upload and share without cost.
- Workers' World Media Productions project in pilot phase *Elitsha*: monthly English newspaper printed and distributed in Khayelitsha, Mdantsane, Zwide, East London, Orange Farm and Alexandra, where community journalists trained to produce local stories – biggest challenge is funding.
- Open Stellenbosch students produced a documentary *Luister (Listen)*, shown on YouTube it went viral, picked up by mainstream outlets and shown in Parliament.

Reported discussion on continuum: 1) politics and questioning role of the media, a polarisation into pro and anti government, 2) commercial versus social enterprise, what is the role of journalists, where on the continuum do you find yourself?

'How would future look in 10 years if we had diversity of voice and content?' Characterised by closer two-way relationship between community and media, more community focus stories produced by community or benign mainstream; a cultural shift re-valuing story telling culture and the ways information is handed over; training and access to information.

People access traditional and new media at the same time, so you can be on social media, write a letter to a newspaper or be on radio. Framing traditional media as the past, and social media as the future: notes a trend of multi-platforms and a convergence thereof, rather than a continuum

Media costs and despite increase in access to information, the digital divide still presents a real challenge.

- Example given of *Sunday Times* experiencing resource restraints where the easy (and lazy) norm is to call intelligent sounding male experts who are frequently lobbyists for the establishment, form the dominant voice. Trade union bureaucracy stalls input.
- WC community radio reports that the Democratic Alliance (DA) dominates as they are more organised versus the ANC. Relationships between mainstream media and communities need development to balance out with informed challenging voices.

Challenge to concept of bottom up approach to media: assumption of aspiration of growth from citizen media to mainstream, opinion is that consumption of local and community is more influential than mainstream. Media transformation should focus on grassroots becoming more dominant influencing opinion and policy, not being filtered as it rises to the top, and then taken seriously.

## Print

### Economic sustainability

Consensus that print media model is in trouble. Reality is print media seeing a drop in consumer figures, people are now accessing online, but there is still a role for print on the media landscape. AIP reports that locally, print is still strong.

Access - costs of print media limits access: example Mail & Guardian costs R35 which is not affordable.

Needs an emphasis on business savvy for smaller producers, creative and develop new models, challenging old models. Commented that there is opportunity for print to come back despite decline and digital migration.

Business model for print? Sacrifice. Publication must have purpose/strategy. Content is key.

Tension between government (money), donor (money) and purpose – especially provincial/local government funding of community media:

- this is a threat as important information and advertising is not reaching communities. Radio KC reported difficulties in accessing IDP information from its municipality – consequently not able to develop programming or inform communities.
- In the Western Cape, the provincial and local communications policy is highly centralised in the Democratic Alliance (DA) led government and Office of the Premier, who do not fund or advertise any form of community media. Recommended that this this status quo on the policy is challenged and ask for explanation for exclusion in

favour of mainstream outlets. Request for clarity and research on the policy, so we can advocate for broad-based inclusion of community media, as to not alienate mainstream and further divisiveness.

- A journalist from Inhloso Yesizwe, a small local newspaper in KZN, explained his experience: journalists for his paper were ordered to change the structure of the newspaper by the Emnambithi Municipality, and to write stories only about what it was doing (positive stories). The paper is funded by the municipality which gives them money only once a year. While he established his newspaper to help his community and reflect its stories, he is dependent on municipal funding and felt he had to comply with the in order to access funding.

Government says 30% of government ad spend for all community media – this does matter, makes a difference. But why no bulk-buying in community media – the way government has partnered with The New Age for example

Need to explore options like selling content, photos to bigger players / some other buyer?

Grow alternative media but huge concern of strings attached to public funding, tension of political nature versus independent voices.

## Monopolies

Problematic model: dominance of ownership by four media houses limiting independent voices, dominance of ownership impacts on diversity of voices as well as sustainability and funding models.

Printing and distribution is highly monopolised, lack of transformation in advertising practices in deciding what the value of your publication is.

For example, printing a newspaper like *Elitsha*: small printers and small distributors are too expensive, so only two choices: Paarl Print linked to Naspers and Caxton Press who own the distribution companies. Printing of the newspaper is very costly, so printing is decentralised to Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg – then distributed to areas.

Problematic relationship power of capital and mainstream media, stories reflect patterns of power in society. E.g. reporting on #FeesMustFall (#FMF) was highly critical of students but did not represent the full story, community media made efforts to focus on content of demands and interests in #FMF.

Lack of access to new media means diversity of small local ownerships will have value for long time yet. Important case in Free State found against big companies for unfair competition against small company.

R2K advocates for caps on ownership: example no more than one newspaper per city. Print and circulation monopoly – lost hope/trust – roll back monopolies!

## Community/independent print

Community newspapers: 219 around South Africa, 70% black, 87% local languages, 8 million copies, reaches 24 million South Africans; big growth since 2006, only 41 supported by the MDDA, they struggle financially and politically (government corruption and business corruption).

Reality of this alternative media is that it has its own issues, sometimes it produces in interest of commercial groups in their area therefore not independent, excluding groups and limiting representation, structural problems means they shape content according to who has power in that community.

Facing increasing threats – defamation charges (with no resources for legal costs) and take-overs. Need to be tracking what is happening at the Competition Commission in this regard.

Want to be a bigger player – ads, community, government, donor grants, shared printing and want to be local papers for local people.

Need to campaign for a Media Charter (ownership, demographics).

## Quality content

Content is shaped by commercial model - how content is framed considering what is left in or out, how is the frame shifted, what role politics and ideology plays in the story.

Opportunity for content sharing if mainstream and community media partner to amplify voices from ground. Growing alternative media means developing content and business skills to negotiate sharing and payment when sharing content for mainstream distribution. Local producers should see themselves as equal partners instead of pushing for space value in voices from the ground. AIP exists but unity is needed among independent producers to strengthen access to mainstream media sources.

Quality of journalism - alternative print media must produce quality media to gain public trust else they will not access that media.

Many print publications are going online which is cheaper and attracts advertising. To cut costs and boost their profits in this changing media environment, media bosses and owners of these publications employ fewer journalists who are given a greater workload usually at less pay. Quality journalism is compromised as journalists turn increasingly to "press releases" by government and corporate personnel, as well as syndicated news for news agencies, for content.

Quality of community newspapers – ‘Many focus on tenders and a few sport items. This is why people use them as toilet paper.

'In Umlazi we have the Umlazi Times. People do not read this newspaper because of the low levels of reporting. People say we do not want cheap quality stuff. The question is who reads this paper and who produces it?'

'Are free newspapers seen as bad just because they are free? Inkanyezi was a good paper for which one paid. Then Zweli Mkhize stepped in and changed it so that it reflected only ANC news. All its in-fighting. We ought to go the offices of such papers and demand that they serve our interests'.

'The problem with free newspapers is that only one pages carries a story. They are inferior. Their content do not reflect poor communities' concerns. In Eshowe for example, the community newspaper did not report on a spate of rapes but highlighted a story about homes for dogs. Some papers write more for the white community'.

SDCEA reported that in Wentworth township, there are 3 Caxton-owned newspapers which whom SDCEA has good relations. Their journalists come to the community for its stories and regularly feature these. People in Wentworth read a lot. Papers can be found on floors and on streets, but only after they have been read. People look at the classified sections for useful information (e.g. inexpensive building material, plumbers, etc.)

### Convergence/'new' media

Digital migration from print to online also limits access due to cost of Internet and data, may not provide alternative media, as searches direct you to mainstream sites. Opportunities for access – develop partnerships between those who have access (schools, libraries, NGOs)

### Language

Language is important. Local language newspapers have large circulations and are doing well.

### Broadcasting

#### Community broadcasting

Community media should be congratulated for the tenacity of its workers keeping it going, but let's go back to the original vision.

R2K has suggested that community radio stations get R3 million a year for 200 stations equals R600 million which is a small part of the fiscus but an investment in democracy. Stations could employ two full time professional journalists who could make a real living in their village, not become a migrant worker. These journalists could serve the real democratic information needs of the community improving local government function.

stations need full funding to be sustainable - huge challenge of funding means use of the volunteer model from developing countries where people have jobs is problematic – here most people are unemployed.

Infrastructure is another challenge – stations can wait years for a license from ICASA and funding from MDDA, and equipment from DOC - this delays service to the community.

Ownership and control on community media is problematic – looking at funding or political orientation. For example, those attending annual general meetings have to be a paying member of the station to vote for an elected board, rather than just community member. Discussed meaning of community which is often seen as homogenous without recognition of class and diversity.

Some community radios copy commercial stations to attract advertising there are not rooted in communities' content. Some struggle for municipal information access, and to service their community with educational and informative content.

Community TV: much more expensive than radio and radically underfunded, new DOC gives a little funding start but not that much, TV funding worse than radio due a policy gap. How do we facilitate greater collaboration between business and stations, how to facilitate constructive engagement? Government advertising comes with political strings; would you want your local tavern advertising on the station if alcoholism is a problem?

The broadcasting space is defined by the survival of the fittest: for example, Jozi FM in Soweto is rooted in the community of 3 million consumers, sounds like a commercial station, and generates lots of money but is not close to the community, one of their biggest shows is called 'Cheaters'.

Point made of taxing the rich classes to subsidise community media, another input critiqued our reliance on government or corporate funding and challenged the room to be self-reliant and create alternative revenue streams, stand together in unity. Question how much money is in the working class in trade union investment companies generate income off worker pension funds, not spent on labour media, so where is the money among ourselves?

This power is patent in the case of community media who rely on government funds to survive. (This dependency makes them reluctant to speak out - a case of not biting the hand that feeds one). The MDDA's failure to fund community media has made them vulnerable to the considerable power of the private sector and government. The big media houses have bought out small commercial and community media seen as competition. R2K says that community media need R3million a year to provide good quality and independent service.

Over the years laws have been passed, which demonstrate an urge by government, to control community media e.g. rules to the effect that municipal officials must sit on the boards of community radio stations. Such rules, which are symptoms of government insecurity and fear, should be scrapped.

The proposed Community Broadcasting Support Scheme is problematic as it gives the Department of Communications a role it shouldn't have - it will decide the content for community radio stations and which community radio stations it will work with. This takes



away the role of communities in determining the content, issues, etc. of their community radio stations and removes them from ownership of them.

Since community radio stations are largely dependent on municipal funds, they have become sites of corruption, nepotism, etc. - in short, cash cows. They are vulnerable to political control. Far from being money-making concerns for people, they should exist to inform people about government policies, and over and above this, communities should be able to voice their concerns through such media. Government wants "good stories" to be broadcast; it wants every municipality to have a community radio for this purpose. Peoples' lives however, reflect a much harsher reality.

'Seems that community media cannot exercise the right to communicate. What happens to people's stories? It appears that these are not happening because of the role of the ruling party. It uses community media for its own purposes. They become creatures of municipalities. In an ideal world municipalities should encourage community media to be platforms for people's stories and voices.

'We need community media that reflects our stories. The media do not cover our issues. E.g. in Eshowe they do mention rapes and pension deductions which are the problems here'.

'It is good that we have our people in community media. The voices of people, even in deep rural areas can be accessed and broadcast. Problems always arise when stories tarnish the reputations of officials. The question is how do we assist our comrades in community media to be free of pressure from municipal officials? Communities must be educated to know that they should own these and fight for them and their right to freedom of expression. Another problem is that community media journalists are often told they cannot publish on a matter as it is 'in court'.

Not all stations employ volunteers, some generate enough sustainable income to employ core staff. MDDA funding comes from the 0.2% that corporate media pays. The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) was established to ensure media diversity through helping set up and support community media. However, it appears unable to fulfil its mandate.

Community media are exploited as avenues for career advancement; nepotism and cronyism are rife in this sector as in those "higher up"; revenue through advertising is difficult to access.

We read and listen to community media but the owners are not aware of their readership. Most community radio see themselves as being there mainly for entertainment.

The more popular radio stations like Ukhozi FM and Igagasi radio invite only certain ministers as guests on their talk shows. Callers-in are given very limited time to make their points.

The burning of Karabo FM in Sasolburg was due to factional disputes over "ownership". Its fate did not make the national headlines as would have been the case had the target been a mainstream medium. It is thus up to us to make the public aware of community media and their roles, potential, etc.

Additionally, there was also the issue of spatial inequality between urban and rural-based community media. The former has more sources of money. In rural areas, there are fewer businesses and shop owners-possible local donors.

Raising issues related to political parties, one gets sabotaged. Where does one report such threats? As media people we are not safe from powerful politicians – especially people in community media. There is no place to get protection. Some are direct threats.

Financial constraints affect community radios.

Community radio stations encounter similar challenges.

Lack of legitimacy within community radios. NCRF can't meet some of the needs of community radio.

How do we share content and revenue, build synergies across platforms, leverage content, resources, and capacity?

## SABC

'SABC's screen is blank' – SABC board should be diverse, there is a constant crisis for management. Content on SABC is of poor quality, aspirant class content, including lots of soapies. Parliamentary channel only available on DSTV in English, so communities do not get educational and information from Parliament. People have lobbied to get 'Miners Shot Down' shown on SABC and etv with no success, political control showing self-censorship.

What must we do about the SABC? Government strategy is setting up own platforms, directly in competition to mainstream and community media, buying media space and having political control through money for advertising.

'The SABC is a depressing story. Once a state broadcaster, it is now a public broadcaster and in this capacity, is supposed to deliver hard-hitting and critical news, reflecting our voices. Regrettably, it too has failed to deliver on its mandate. Political interference is designed to turn it into a mouthpiece for Zuma and his government. Its COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, has regularly attacked journalists. His appointment was recently confirmed by the justice system as irregular. This is a thread that runs through all the structures of the SABC, including its Board, detracting from the possibility of its being a model broadcaster'.

## Digital migration

R2K says free top boxes for all, no-one should be left behind, significantly 7 million rely on free to air. Affordability was questioned quoting other issues in SA having more priority.

Clarity that one would get more channels from satellite than digital terrestrial, big debate on the role of SABC channels. Reality is that most South Africans know very little about digital migration, there has been very little consultation and input. People are not aware of the payment for set-top boxes at ±R800, migration is supposed to take place within 18 months with 5 million boxes distributed by South African Post Office which seems unlucky.

The question was raised whether DTT was environmentally friendly. It was pointed out that most technology, including the ubiquitous cellphone with its great potential for mobilising, had a "dark side" - research has disclosed that their use results in carbon emissions which cumulatively, add to the greenhouse effect! Something to reflect on!

is operating with policy uncertainty since 2011, as three broadcast policy reviews have been aborted, lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities between departments of communications, telecommunications and postal services; issues are dealt with in a piecemeal fashion, chaotic. We need to call for a broadcasting policy overview reclaim community television in digital landscape, government can't get away from this.

Point was raised again that working class people don't have proper access to media, need training on social media.

### Regulatory bodies/support institutions

Role of USAASA to disburse funds for broadcast and telecommunications around SA for the poor needs more urgent. Government has received reports that USASA has not been performing but has been caught up in factional battles, money is there, it is not being used, we must hold government accountable.

We must get DOC, ICASA, MDDA and USAASA working in the interests of the poor again.

Not only government that must be challenged, but also local companies. Community media are struggling to survive with few sources of income and will not want to rock the boat if this threatens their income flow.

#### Suggestions:

- Request for a workshop for organisations to tap into the media, and education around digital migration.
- African Media Leadership Forum completely apolitical only concerned with companies buying media – open markets. R2K should engage.
- R2K lobbies to build a community media alliance.
- Children and youth given the platform to talk about their issues. The role of media is pernicious on children's lives and how they are socialised, conscientised, indoctrinated. children youth have a right to be heard – most are illiterate, we can't leave it to school, suggest that R2K organise a media summit for children and youth. SABC is doing less programming for children in indigenous languages, media must enhance literacy.

### Internet Freedom and Access

Internet democratising phenomenon great for media diversity, participation not diverse because of digital divide, people have to make trade off on other necessities to afford data, example buying airtime vs food. We have very high costs similar to other countries with the same level of development – example Namibia's cost is cheaper despite their sparse population and spread out, we should research their reasons.

Regulators like ICASA had been influenced by the BEE share deals and revolving door culture.

Weak regulators unable to reign in telecommunications monopolies flout regulations, it's structural legal corruption.

Neoliberal market model's inability to deliver Internet to poor and working class communities, so where to from here.

There are threats and obstacles to media diversity and Internet rollout but very little action.

Opportunities for initiatives include popular education drive, Zenzeleni, Internet co-op in the Eastern Cape – small isolated project are happening, lack of dialogue between them, share usefulness like Zenzeleni's file-sharing.

Get activities funded by private donors on a project basis, be more imaginative when looking for funding, not just from government. Dilemma on public-private funding - what would that mean? Is it possible to co-opt private money without being co-opted ourselves?

#### Legal and regulatory threats:

- Film and Publications Board regulations trying to set up a censorship classification system, all distributors would have to classify material before your publish, costs to online distributors as bureaucracy would demand registration and classification.
- Cybercrimes Bill: R2K and allied organisations formulating response replicates RICA and worse aspects of Secrecy Bill. Major threat to whistleblowers and journalists, criminalize leaking classified data and possessing it with no public interest over ride.
- RICA, lack of regulation allows for invasive surveillance no checks and balances.

#### Concerns:

- real cyber security and online scams, communities do need cyber security legislation but could become be used to push through nefarious laws.
- FPB draft regulations unworkable and unconstitutional - worrying that it reflects a mindset among security bureaucrats similar to colleagues in China – common thread is authoritarian and ugly.
- Political mobilization
- Citizen journalism
- Informed public / informed decisions
- Free expression – right to communicate, receive and impart information, media diversity.

#### Obstacles

- Digital divide – access
- Lack of digital skills and resources
- People unaware of their rights online (lack of a stake in the Net) and lack of online literacy

- 'Dumbing down consumers' versus culture of libraries.
- Credibility, media ethics, regulation – need to be conscious consumers. Who decides what we see online? Algorithms, etc.
- Internet 'abused'- harmful content. Conservative views: new technology – 'media gevaar'.
- The market – monopolies, vested interests: beware of FB/Twitter
- Limited audience. Educate for net literacy – rollout in schools.

### Threats

- Vulnerability to cybercrime and harmful content: regulation or education?
- FBP, Cybercrimes Bill
- National security – net as security threat.
- Hyper-commercialisation: information concentrated in powerful, unaccountable entities; collaboration with spies.
- Surveillance: cooperation between states.
- Censorship: China style
- Abuse of power is the backdrop

## Media Freedom and Independence

Media freedom is freedom from government interference, capital in form of owners, bosses and advertisers doing agenda setting for media workers; freedom for media owners – whether community owned, or bought ownership - and journalists against government censorship, market pressures and owners, noting tension between journalists and owners.

There have been increasing calls from the ruling elite for transformation of the media. The COO of the SABC for example, has said we need "more sunshine journalism" as the media is "hostile." Blade Nzimande has called for "insult laws" like those of Zimbabwe where they have had dire consequences for journalists and the media. Essentially, these constant calls for media transformation by government, are cynical attempts to rein in the media and to stifle critical commentary on corruption; they are anti-the right to freedom of expression.

We agree about media transformation e.g. that the concentrated ownership of the media by 4 companies has to change. However, we want genuine media freedom and transformation. Without this kind of freedom we will have a restricted and self-censoring media.

Media freedom and diversity are 2 sides of the same coin. We have come a long way from the dark days of apartheid when newspapers and journalists - perceived as threats to the ruling Nationalist Party, were censored and/or banned. The ANC is not quite here as yet. It is limited by the protection afforded to all by the Constitution which guarantees the right to freedom of expression.

In short, today the media landscape is different...more diverse. We have critical (mainstream) media engaged in serious investigative journalism - doing what the media should be doing. We also have community media in the form of over 200 community radio stations and small

community newspapers which are intended to give voice to "voiceless" communities. However, the gains and freedoms attained are at risk.

Agreed that objectivity does not exist, maintain independence through subscription to ethics, this builds media with integrity, not propaganda. Noted threat of community groups – community must be in position criticize and expose own organisations.

Editorial and journalistic ethical codes are needed to bind the social contract, as all media is biased. Suggested a charter to define roles of owners, managers and journalists create a site of tension, so editorial appointments are critical for independence. Owners limit freedom through internal operations policies, production formatting and importantly resourcing constraining independence of journalists with too much work, little time and training.

Discussion about dignity: what this means to whom, in South African living conditions. Tension exists between right to freedom of media and expression, versus the right to dignity, noted that media should violate dignity in public interest. Self-censorship happens when dignity is used as conservative stick. Each media has own values and editorial based on facts, for example what is dignified would be different to *Amandla* versus *Muslim Views*.

Limits to freedom: Media Appeals Tribunal, security legislation like Secrecy and Cybercrimes and Bill.

Critical area regulatory space of public institutions: bodies like Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USASA) ICASA, SABC should enable free and independent media. Government can make appointments leading to revolving door culture, career path involving Department of Communications (DOC) if you stick to the status quo.

Community media gets money from government for advertising, no public oversight. MDDA relatively independent funding mechanism as grant maker. Threat is Community Media Support Skills Bill disbursing money through DOC tied to specific content production. Democracy shut down Minister of Information / Propaganda. Government Communication Information Services (GCIS) operated as separate wing from communication regulation. Independence of ICASA, MDDA and SABC created at that time being threatened by new Minister of Communication.

Need public education on media literacy: public needs to understand bias – analyse sources, voices in story etc., understand how censorship works.

Need to understand the role and mandate of regulatory bodies in communication space, the confluence of the roles linked to developmental diversity and financing, better understand challenge and what we need to achieve.

Question how media activism can come together across print, TV and radio; why are organisations not co-operating different media spaces? For example, share productions across community TV could be shared, as CTV not available nationally unless you have DSTV. How problematic is commercial media ownership?

Media objectivity and neutrality - media is tool is your air your voices, in SA capitalist ruling class and party is dominant, SABC used by ANC government – even civil society has class agendas. Suggests that capital must be redistributed to community owned grassroots media who will own editorial as media freedom can only be attained through working class freedom. As well as maintaining objectivity and accuracy, of equal importance is that journalists need comprehensive training, there is a lack of skills and training needed to make sense of the system which one can get lost in.

R2K challenged and says we want to transform and defend the media, media freedom as it exists today, fighting censorship and transformation of landscape for opportunities to produce and own media. We oppose censorship from everyone from government and market and bosses, to build alliance between citizens and media producers defending media as public service and interest in democracy.

Media Appeals Tribunal needs a big fight against government intervention, in that debate we raise the issues raise points to fix journalism: alternative democratic resourced and ownership models, autonomy and independence.

- need clarification on laws, as they have immediate impact for activists and journalists.
- we must be more proactive in taking precautions, even in very basic ways to protect ourselves.
- Suggestion of a cross media initiative for popular education on online safety, protection from surveillance.

Internet broadband rollout used by government agencies as carrot or stick especially in run-up to elections. We must look at what opportunity exists for social movement building through access, needs more discussion.

Appeal for R2K to do updated summaries of any Bills that are being researched and advocated so that all comrades can be on same page where possible.

However, threats to media freedom and diversity do not emanate from government only : powerful corporate interests also jeopardise MFD. Often government and corporate interests merge/intersect in a common drive to control and/or stifle MFD.

An example of a powerful commercial threat is NASPERS which has grown into media monster, and is guilty of monopolistic behaviour, with its tentacles spread widely in Africa. Multi choice is part of NASPERS with huge investments in China and elsewhere. NASPERS is able to railroad any competition into oblivion.

It seems that the media are dominated by politics. We have to free the media. The right way would be to stand for the truth and the community.

### Threats and challenges

- Government intervention – policies
- Political isolation – forced to express a certain view.

- Growing intolerance – on various matters. No internal criticism. Policies bolster intolerance to critical expression. If you become vocal you will be sidelined by those in government/power – then you won't get money.
- Knowledge platforms: whoever owns knowledge platforms, owns the manner of expression.
- People in power drive the way we express ourselves towards them. All we can do is protest, as a last resort.
- People are unaware of how the law/Constitution is used against them, instead of protecting their rights.
- Knowledge platforms are limited.
- Tools are not accessible and exposure is also lacking.
- State remains a large threat to FoE. It is not to the State's advantage for people to be educated and have FoE = exercise of power.
- We have a western way of communicating that has become normal – you are forced to express in a certain way. A more diverse media landscape, which is less Western-centric would make us more comfortable with ourselves.
- Access to information is linked to FoE. Can't have one without the other.
- State is biggest threat but the people don't use FoE enough to their advantage.
- An active citizenry – what does it mean to practice FoE to improve things – we all contribute to and perpetuate a corrupt system.
- Media diversity – we need more choices.
- FoE must do no harm. Responsibility does not lie only with the state – people must understand the responsibility that comes with FoE.
- Most community media practice self-censorship.
- For FoE you need a platform.
- You have to take sides with a political party (= self-censorship). Even when you are quiet, others will assume you are politically aligned.
- 'Patriotism': if you criticize, you are seen as unpatriotic.
- Legal barriers – can be abused to limit FoE.
- Are there other limits to FoE? No, only seeing it from government.
- FoE is an institutional challenge in all spheres – in all spheres of governance.
- Stereotypes and culture (for e.g. women face serious threats to FOE as opposed to me – patriarchy / misogyny).
- Political – intolerance for criticism.
- 'My party is behaving like a lion – he feeds himself before he feeds his family'.
- 'I think we are living in a feudal system. Government behaves like a feudal lord'.
- Are we able to freely express our criticism for government? No. You can express yourself, but you are not really going to be heard.
- We need education on what it means to be an active citizen.
- Intolerance and intimidation tactics against FoE, from those in power, is getting more acute and it is purposefully engineered.
- Results in the 'chilling effect': critics will hesitate before speaking out again. This is creeping into all spheres, not just media (e.g. communities, universities).
- Trying to reduce the debate, until it does not mean anything.
- Exclusion of certain views.



- So many institutions are losing their autonomy from the state – not just a media phenomenon.

### Channel Free

- Pilot phase of project with R2K and Save our SABC (SOS).
- With terrestrial TV the digital migration from analogue means the space for community TV is shrinking.
- In Multiplex 1 SABC has 85% (which it can't fill) and community 15%, allowing for two to three channels per province. Multiplex 2 allocated to M-Net and etv.
- Resources and funding, and commercialization of four of the five stations, are huge challenges for community TV, CTV is still independent but struggling to maintain mandate. Project envisions a national social justice channel, a platform for amplifying progressive civil society voices, not clear how channel will be formed on free to air TV, secured channel on OVHD for development phase to launch in 2016.
- Consulting a wide range of progressive voice currently for endorsement, becoming content partners.
- Complexity of media issues noted and difficulty due to dominance and control of government. TV ownership of national channel with collective ownership means getting 1) Channel Free endorsed and shaped by consultation by February 2016 on satellite, then 2) campaign to Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) for a license.
- Noted that channel would be on satellite but unencrypted to would be free to air for viewers with set top boxes.
- Question raised about involvement of MEC and City of Cape Town? Channel Free would be value-based putting community in community media, ideologically offering an alternative world view to a national community.
- Request noted for public education and engagement – explanation given that the people's demand for national license would be a campaign over two to three years, summit today is part of process, taking policy and making it a real demand in form of Channel Free. Notes that WC has CTV, an opportunity to work with and approach if your community is not represented.
- Concern noted the working class communities are used as members to set up media institutions, but still experience marginalisation for example election to boards, appeal that this does not happen in the process of

### Ideas on the way forward

Formation of the collective - Start working together around these issues and recognize our strengths.

Workshops, networking and co-operation with different people from other media institutions.

Do it for ourselves - recognise what we have and want together as positive alternatives. Collaborate, don't compete.

Sustainability - Be self-reliant and self-sustainable, Alternative revenue sources - Find ways of raising our own independent funding, Share resources

Diversity of content and voices - Diversity of content and voices and sustainability - Voices and content need to be debated more. Advocate for community issues to be broadcast on same level as commercial.

Continue to campaign against MAT – media freedom and independence is important.

Strengthening community radio

- Networking and co-operation
- Funding for community media - Campaign for better funding for alternative media, via institutions such as MDDA
- Ownership of community media - community media must be controlled by the communities - media to the people
- Community access to the media through space and airtime and funding
- Together we are the biggest media monopoly in SA
- Channel Free

Access to Internet

- Internet access and freedom
- Campaign for cheaper / free Internet
- Guaranteed minimum level of Internet access for every citizen
- Internet access for rural communities - Free wifi even in rural areas
- Educate people on how they can protect themselves on the Internet

Children's programming - Children as active participants in media both as informed consumers and producers.

Educate communities - need for popular education for activists and journalists, media literacy training and reading campaigns. R2K activists must hold workshops in their areas, to spread the contents of the Summit. After informing people about the media and the challenges they face, activists and communities should hold the media in their area accountable and take advocacy actions to highlight problems.

Campaign for free set top boxes for all – ‘no one must be left behind’.

Campaign for return to the constitution and independence of ICASA, SABC, USASA, NEMISA and MDDA.

RICA and its implications for activists and citizens.

Use online platforms/social media to inform people about issues: these are quicker means of communication and can easily reach many people at a time noting that there are limits to the use of social media: information relayed might not reach rural-based communities given poor infrastructure and the fact that data is expensive and probably unaffordable for many.

"Categorize" our use of strategy i.e. use social media to reach young persons. In the case of rural-based and older persons, use the media they're used to eg newspapers and community radio.

Try to break things down, taking into account community experiences and needs. Communities have different needs e.g. learning to read may be the priority in one, while access to clean water may be the foremost issue in another. Mobilise on the basis of these priority needs.

Activists should conduct an audit of all the media operating in their communities to establish local platforms in their communities, in order to advance MFD. Conduct qualitative studies in communities, using questionnaires, to ascertain what the MFD issues are in the area, and what people think about these.

Beyond education about MFD issues, we must also think about reaching people on other R2K work e.g. access to information, support for whistleblowers, etc.

Activists must update themselves constantly around critical media developments such as DTT. They must conscientise rural people about these matters. (It was pointed out that the lack of awareness on many significant issues, is also prevalent in urban areas).

The first step regarding community media, would be to introduce R2K and its work to communities - remembering the marginalised within them such as domestic and farmworkers, before embarking on a specific focus on MFD with them.

We should encourage people and ourselves, to write our stories and opinions for newspaper columns and submit these to the press, since many of them are not forthcoming in approaching communities. Important to understand newspaper cycles and their inner workings eg deadlines by which stories must be submitted, printing dates, etc in order to get our stories in. We have to build relationships with the media. We should be persistent - not give up if we do not reach our target initially.

There must be an MFD sub-committee in each province. Activists must read up on proposed laws and policies relating to MFD, follow and contribute to R2K's submissions and comments on these. Such activism can be written up, converted into short reports for communities. In KZN, keeping in mind language and reading issues, it would be important to also write these up in Zulu.

Local government elections will take place next year. R2K must emphasise corruption and urge people to be careful about whom they put in power. An activist said we should put ourselves in power. Activists called for a code of conduct for councillors, the need to be familiar with the political manifestos of political parties so that R2K could challenge their actions and policies on the bases of these. In particular, we must focus on what they say about the right to freedom of expression and MFD. We should encourage communities to know the political parties and to be critical about them, and to debate and engage with them. They are there to serve the people, not the other way round.

Explore arts and culture to spread the message – including working with musical artists who are popular with the youth and in communities and we must remember the power of documentaries in our work and keep in mind the Social Justice TV station that RZK is involved in setting up.