READING 5.7 ■ INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA

WHY WORK WITH THE MEDIA?

The media play a key role in today’s society, and no advocacy or communications campaign can hope to succeed without media exposure. In any campaign, there are usually three possible objectives, and most campaigns pursue some combination of them:

- To inform and educate;
- To change attitudes and beliefs; and
- To change behavior.

These objectives are progressively more difficult to achieve. It is easier to inform and educate than to change attitudes and beliefs. It is extremely difficult to change behavior through the media, as has been demonstrated, for example, by campaigns to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

For an organization involved in budget advocacy work, this means that media campaigns will be good for creating awareness of budget-related issues and perspectives. However, to change behavior — for example, changing the decisions of policy makers or the votes of legislators — it is not enough to use the media alone. Media activities need to be part of a broader, integrated advocacy campaign.

THE CHANGING MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The media sector is becoming increasingly diverse and complex, and audiences are fragmenting. In most countries, the days are gone when you could get a story on national radio or TV or into a major newspaper and be assured that most people would see or hear it. At the same time, new technologies mean that it’s easier to produce media and to access a wide range of media. There’s digital TV with hundreds of channels, cell phones, new radio stations, and the Internet. We are also seeing a dramatic change in how news is made and disseminated: the model of the authoritative, trustworthy news institution is breaking down, as Internet and cell phone technologies make it possible for ordinary people to produce and share news. We have seen the rise of citizen journalism, blogs, and media-sharing portals, among others.

Another key trend is technological convergence. You can now watch TV and listen to the radio on your cell phone, read newspapers online, surf the Internet on your TV with the aid of a special set-top box,
make phone calls from your PC, record audio using your phone or MP3 player, and reach a wide audience by posting podcasts, photos, or videos on the Internet. These have dramatic implications for the ways in which the media can influence public discussion and policy makers. Likewise, in a number of countries, bloggers have come to exert a great deal of influence on the mainstream media and thus on political life. It is important to keep up-to-date with these developments and to constantly seek innovative and effective ways to respond to them.

**TYPES OF MEDIA**

Here is a (non-comprehensive) list of various types of media and various ways of classifying them. One could go further and break things down according to types of content and format. It is also important to consider the types of audiences reached by each type of media. All of these factors must be considered when planning a media campaign.

**Newspapers**
- national
- regional
- community/neighborhood
- daily vs. weekly
- “serious” vs. tabloid

**Magazines**
- from beauty to celebrity to sports to news and current affairs
- weekly, monthly, bimonthly, and quarterly
- local, regional, national, and international

**Radio**
- commercial vs. public service and community
- local, regional, national, and international
- various language services
- international broadcasters (BBC World Service, Radio France Internationale–RFI, Radio Netherlands, Voice of America, etc.)
Television
- free (broadcast) vs. subscription (cable/satellite)
- local/regional vs. national and international

Live Performance
- community-based educational drama
- industrial theatre

Internet and Social Media
- blogs
- e-mail newsletters
- citizen media and file-sharing portals (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest)
- online newspapers, magazines, and radio stations
- organizational websites
- social media sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)
- podcasts
  - mobile phones
    - text messaging (SMS)
    - mobile Internet
    - mobile phone applications (“apps”)
    - interactive services such as instant polling and SMS-searchable databases
    - downloadable content (e.g., ringtones, videos, etc.)
    - mobizines (mobile “magazines”)

Differentiating Audiences
It is important to identify your key audiences and then target them through the appropriate media.
Common sense goes a long way, but it is also worthwhile to do some research on the audiences of the various publications and broadcast outlets you are thinking of targeting. These days, almost all media
organizations have their own websites, and one can usually find useful facts and figures there, such as target audience, audience size, and so on.

Here are some examples of audiences and media that an organization involved in applied budget work might want to target:

- **Finance officials**: weekly financial magazines, business newspapers, business inserts in major newspapers, opinion pages of major newspapers, current affairs programs, and talk shows on national radio. The Internet is becoming an increasingly important medium for this group. Weekly financial magazines are beginning to place increasing emphasis on their online versions, and some influential business and financial media operate solely online (for example, the South African-based Moneyweb): “We have decided to invest more on the Internet because that is where the market is going,” according to Rikus Delport, editor, *Finweek*, quoted in *The Media* magazine, February 2007, South Africa. It would also be important to target influential bloggers or columnists for online publications.

- **Other NGOs/CSOs**: specialist development publications; development supplements in newspapers or magazines; key websites or portals (e.g., The Communication Initiative Network, Development Gateway, and SANGONeT in South Africa).

- **The general public**: mass circulation newspapers; radio stations, particularly community radio stations and public radio stations with substantial news and talk content; TV stations with news and public affairs programs.

**MATCHING MEDIUM TO CONTENT**

Each type of medium has its strengths and weaknesses, and you need to take these into consideration.

- **Print** (serious newspapers in particular) is good for very technical information, detailed arguments, and putting matters on record. People can keep print material for reference purposes and reread it if they need to check the details or if they didn’t understand all of the issues the first time through. If you have conducted a budget analysis and wish to communicate a lot of rather detailed information, you might consider paying for a special insert in a major newspaper.
• **Radio** is good for immediacy, for providing general information about an issue, and for interacting with the public (for example, through a live call-in show where you can take calls and respond to queries). It's not very good for presenting complex, detailed information such as long lists of budget figures. The downside of radio is that if listeners aren’t able to grasp something the first time they hear it, it’s too late. People usually listen to the radio while doing other things, so they are easily distracted and cannot concentrate on details.

• **Television** is good for visual and emotional impact. Television viewers tend to react more according to your appearance of competence and trustworthiness and less according to the content of what you say.

• **The Internet** and other technologies, such as e-mail and cell phones, are good for immediacy, interactivity, and advocacy. They can be used very effectively to coordinate like-minded groups, build international support, and mobilize activists.

**MATCHING CONTENT TO AUDIENCE**

It is also important to tailor your content to the audience you are trying to reach. If you wish to communicate with finance officials, for example, it is important to demonstrate an understanding of how things work, for example, procedures in the finance department, financial and other constraints faced by government, the way in which decisions are made, etc. Finance officials are regularly bombarded by wish lists presented by all sorts of individuals and groups, and they are used to filtering these out. They know there are many competing needs and claims; therefore, they are more likely to listen to people who show that they understand these constraints, and who offer solid, evidence-based arguments to back up their proposals.

It is also helpful to link values-based arguments to pre-existing requirements and legal frameworks — for example, “according to the Constitution the government is obliged to provide education for children,” rather than “it is morally wrong to deprive children of their education.”

If you wish to reach the broader public, in order to motivate people to join a campaign or to pressure decision makers, then simple, punchy messages are needed. Emotional messages are also an important way of reaching a general audience.
READING 5.8 ▪ GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH MEDIA

A. TECHNIQUES FOR GAINING MEDIA ATTENTION

Make Press Calls
It is important to maintain regular contact with key journalists. Telephone conversations can be very effective in promoting a story or responding to an event or previous news coverage. Be sure to find out what the various deadlines are and to call journalists when they are not under immediate deadline pressure (this varies greatly across medium and outlet). You can greatly increase the likelihood of getting exposure if you follow up an e-mail or fax with a telephone call to ensure the journalist or editor has received or taken note of your message.

It is useful to understand the key role players:

- **Editors** are the senior editorial decision makers, but they are often caught up in management and policy issues and may not be very involved in day-to-day story assignments.

- **Sub-editors** are essentially copy editors. They check facts, grammar, and spelling, and they help lay out pages. They are not involved in news gathering.

- **News editors** are responsible for day-to-day decisions on which stories will be covered and for assigning journalists to cover stories. These are key contact people for any organization seeking news coverage.

- **Journalists/reporters** go out and interview people and cover the news. It is important to identify these key journalists and build relationships with them.

- **Specialist reporters** focus on thematic areas such as economics, finance, health, etc. It is particularly important to build relationships with reporters who specialize in areas that are of particular concern to your organization.

- **Producers (radio and TV)** are responsible for decisions on program or bulletin content, setting up interviews, etc. There is generally a hierarchy of producers, and it is important to find out which producer is the right one to talk to.
It is also important to understand the news or content cycle of the media organizations that you interact with – for example, to know what their deadlines are – to ensure that you are able to get press releases to them in time and that you schedule your press conferences at times when most journalists are able to attend. When you want to talk to journalists, it is generally best to call in the mornings (for dailies) and early in the week (for weeklies). For current affairs programs on radio and television, be sure to call well ahead of the program’s broadcast time – unless you have dramatic, breaking news to share. Magazines are usually prepared well in advance of publication date (often months to weeks ahead), so it’s essential to contact them ahead of time.

**Distribute Press Releases**

There are no hard and fast rules about how often press releases should be issued, but it is important to issue a press release only when you have something new to say. They should not be sent out so often that journalists begin to see them as clutter. There is an art to writing press releases, and they should be written more or less as you would like to see the story reported. Bear in mind that newsrooms are usually under-resourced and that the media often use press releases “as is,” in unaltered form. You should include a good mix of facts and figures, as well as ready-made quotes that can be easily lifted out of the press release and repeated in the media.

**Hold Press Conferences When Called For**

According to *A Media Relations Handbook for Non-Governmental Organizations*¹, there are only two reasons to have a press conference: 1) when you are communicating information that is so complex that you need to interact with journalists in order to ensure clarity and 2) when you intentionally want to dramatize your announcement. When holding a press conference, timing and location are everything. A senior newspaper editor in Cape Town, South Africa once told a group of police service communications officers that he is far more likely to send a journalist to a press conference if it is within walking distance or just a short drive from the paper’s offices. Also, press conferences should be held at times when most journalists are not on or nearing deadline (unless it is very important breaking news that cannot wait).

**Stage Events**

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Journalists tend to report on events, not issues. For example, journalists in Southern Africa have often been criticized for their tendency to report on conferences. However, this can be used to advantage by an organization seeking to get an issue into the media: invite journalists to conferences on key issues and line up interesting people to be interviewed. Marches, protests, exhibitions, festivals, parades, competitions, and the like are all good ways to generate media attention. It is important that events provide plenty of visual interest.

**Participate in Talk Shows**

Talk shows on radio and increasingly on TV are an excellent way to generate and influence discussion of your issue. Talk show producers are constantly looking for new and interesting ideas, so it can be a good idea to contact them, suggest talk show topics, and also offer one or two people as studio guests. Alternatively, you can call in during existing live programs to get a point across.

**Write Letters to the Editor**

Letters to the editor can be a very effective way of getting a point across, particularly in response to articles or opinion pieces that have recently appeared in a particular publication. Some political parties make a regular practice of getting staff members to write letters to newspapers, under the pretext of being ordinary members of the public.

**Contribute Op-Ed Articles**

Many newspapers regularly publish opinion articles contributed by members of the public such as academics and NGO staff. It is important to understand the audience and style of each publication and to communicate with opinion page editors well before the desired date of publication, as most papers receive many more contributions than they could ever publish.

**Provide Background Information and Briefings**

It can be a good idea to hold informal media briefings, such as a breakfast or lunch, where a small group of journalists is invited to meet and talk with one or two experts on an issue. Such meetings have the two-fold benefit of helping journalists become more informed about an issue and building relationships between journalists and an organization.

A number of organizations also seek to promote improved coverage of specific issues by developing background material such as issue summaries, toolkits, and answers to frequently asked questions. For example, in South Africa the organization IDASA developed a website called “Word on the Street,”
which provided background material to journalists covering local government in South Africa. (The website is no longer active, here is an article about “Word on the Street”: http://www.ngopulse.org/article/idasa-web-resource-targets-community-media). The London-based organization Panos has a site called i-Witness (panos.blogs.com/iwitnesses), which contains toolkits to help journalists understand issues related to the Information Society.

**Be a Good Source**

- **Be available:** Establishing a relationship with journalists is a two-way street. If you expect them to pay attention to you and to cover your issue, you need to be available when they need you. If you are helpful and available when a journalist needs a quick quote just before deadline or some complex matter explained, they will be more likely to lend you a sympathetic ear when you need a favor.

- **Be credible:** Journalists need to be able to trust their sources. It is important to be sure that all information provided to the media is accurate. Often, it can be helpful to tell reporters where they can go to get the story substantiated. Do not speak on issues that you do not know enough about, even if pressured to do so.

- **Don’t become an annoyance:** Do not harass journalists or call them too often. They will start to find ways to avoid you. Be as persuasive as you can be, but if a journalist turns you down, learn to take no for an answer and don’t become rude or nasty. There are many stories competing for attention, and many reasons why a newspaper or radio station might not be able to carry your story on any particular day.

**Come Up With Interesting News Angles for Regular Events or Calendar Dates**

There are many calendar dates throughout the year that can potentially be used to publicize your issue – for example, national public holidays and internationally recognized days such as International Women’s Day, International AIDS Day, Human Rights Day, etc. Journalists are often looking for new angles for stories on or around such calendar dates. Bear in mind that coverage related to regular dates tends to be planned well in advance so communicate with potential media outlets far ahead of the desired publication or broadcast date.

**Be Aware of the News Cycle and the Budget Cycle**

It is important to think strategically and to time advocacy activities, including media exposure, so that they can have the most impact. If you want to influence the content of the national budget, it is
important to engage in media activities during the budget planning phase, which is well before the day of the budget speech in the legislature. By the time the budget has been announced, it is too late. Of course, at that time you may want to add your comments on the budget and evaluate it, but if you want to bring about changes in allocations, you will have to begin working towards the next budget. Once the budget vote has been passed in the legislature, it is a good time to highlight issues such as spending capacity and obstacles in service delivery. Around the auditing and reporting period, you would probably want to focus your messages on issues of financial management in government departments.

**How Does a Small Budget Advocacy Organization Get Into the National News?**

- It can be difficult for a small local-level organization to gain national media attention, but it is not impossible. First, appearance is everything. If you put out professional press releases, use e-mail and the Internet intelligently, and show that you know what you are talking about by providing solid analysis and credible information, no one need know that your organization is small in size or has its headquarters in a small town. Many a successful media campaign has been run by one dedicated person with a computer and a fax machine.

- Use the techniques for getting media attention that are outlined above. If you can get into the minds of journalists, think like they do, and then present stories and news angles that grab them, you will have a high degree of success.

- Focus your advocacy on actions and events and not processes and ideas. To most journalists, news is something that happens, that can be seen or heard, and that occurs at a specific time and place. Marches are news. Workshops are almost never news. A research survey is not news — but an event where a high-profile person announces dramatic research findings is news. A book is not news — but a book launch where a panel of prominent speakers are discussing issues raised by the book may be. The following is a good example of a newsworthy event: a South African business advocacy organization struggled to get media attention until it staged a huge event in which business leaders walked across South Africa in relays.

- Finally, be sure that your messages deal with issues of national concern. If you do highlight local issues and concerns, be sure to link these to and show how they have an impact on issues that are prominent on the national agenda.
B. Writing a Media (Press) Release

- Press releases should appear on your organization’s stationery, so that they appear professional and so that the organization’s name, logo, and contact information are clearly visible. Press releases should try to cover all of the classic questions that journalists are taught to ask in relation to an issue that they are covering: who, what, when, where, why, and how.

- Press releases should have a short, informative heading and should be written in a way that immediately grabs the reader’s attention. It can be very effective to compose press releases according to the so-called “inverted triangle” format: the most important information in the initial paragraph(s) with the least important information lower down (such as more in-depth details and the background of the organization).

- For example, below are two possible opening paragraphs to a press release outlining the results of a research survey. The second is likely to have more impact than the first:
  1) “The Budget Policy Group has published the results of an extensive survey on the impact of cash grants on vulnerable communities. The survey was carried out in six Southern African countries and involved interviews with over 2,000 respondents in each country. It reveals several problems with respect to the government grant system…”
  2) “New research by the Budget Policy Group shows that 2 million poor people in Southern Africa are not accessing government grants. The research reveals that, despite government efforts to register eligible grant recipients, most poor people find it difficult to fulfill all of the requirements…”

- The second example gets right into the key findings of the research and has a much greater chance of grabbing a journalist’s attention. In the first example, after the first paragraph you still don’t know what the research findings were.

- Provide brief and attention-grabbing quotes within the body of the press release and attribute them to organizational spokespersons. For example, “The BPG’s research director, Blessings April, explains, ‘We hope this report will lead governments to reconsider the administrative requirements that potential grant beneficiaries have to fulfill.’”

- Standard information about the organization should be included at the end of the press release, such as the organization’s mission and key background details.
Once a press release is distributed (by fax, e-mail, or other means), it is important to follow up with a phone call to key journalists and editors to make sure the release has been received and that it is noticed.

It is important to include a release date (and embargo details if applicable), along with the name of a contact person and associated telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to enable journalists to follow up if they want further information.

C. GUIDELINES FOR PRESS CONFERENCES

- Press conferences should be held only on rare occasions. Journalists are busy and will not attend a press conference unless the matter is especially important or dramatic. As a rule of thumb, only hold a press conference when the issues are so complex that you need to provide detailed explanations and interact with journalists directly in order to ensure that all questions are dealt with. A press conference can also be held when you want to intentionally dramatize an announcement.

- Press conferences should be held as close to most media organizations’ offices as possible and at times that take into account the deadlines of the key media in which you want your conference to appear.

- At the press conference, make a register of journalists who attend. This will help you to track which reporters and media outlets are actually interested in your issue, as well as provide you with useful contact names and numbers. The register can also be used to identify which media should be monitored afterwards in order to track coverage.

- Press kits should be prepared beforehand and handed out to reporters. These should contain hard copies of all statements or speeches to be made at the press conference as well as any useful background information. This material should come in the form of press-friendly briefing sheets rather than long academic papers. It can also be a good idea to provide a CD or DVD containing photographs, background material, and short audio and video clips. However, it is important to investigate beforehand what technology the invited media outlets have access to so as to ensure that you provide material in the most useful format.

- It is a good idea to have two or three speakers, so that journalists can gather a variety of quotes and perspectives. However, there should not be too many speakers so that journalists feel their time is
being wasted for the sake of letting organizational office holders feel important. Be sure to allow enough time for questions from the floor.

- It can be a good idea to provide opportunities for media to interview individuals who are affected in some way by your issue. For example, at a press conference to announce the results of research into the number of gun-related deaths in South Africa, the organization Gun Free South Africa arranged for some people who had lost family members to gun violence to be present to tell their stories. This provided powerful emotional content and gave a human face to the statistics presented in the research.

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS

- Ahead of any interview, it is critical to understand the purpose of the interview. If the interview was requested by a journalist, it is important to find out the purpose of the interview, when and where it will appear, the length (size of story, number of words, time in minutes), when and where the interview will take place, and the name of the interviewer.

- For television and radio, it is important to know whether the interview will appear live or be pre-recorded (and probably edited beforehand).

- It is advisable to settle on no more than three key points that you wish to get across during any specific interview and to stick to these. For television and radio news and current affairs programs, answers to questions should generally be short and to the point, around 20 to 40 seconds. Answers should never exceed a minute.

- It is very important to prepare key quotes or “sound bites” that are catchy and effective. The standard sound bite used during a radio news bulletin usually lasts about 12 seconds. During a current affairs report, perhaps 30 seconds to a minute. Television news sound bites are also short at 10 to 15 seconds. So prepare punchy, memorable quotes of various lengths — 10 to 12 seconds, 30 seconds, and 60 seconds — that encapsulate a key point that you want to make. A well-known example of a memorable sound bite is from the famous O.J. Simpson trial in the mid-1990s: “If the glove doesn’t fit, you must acquit!”

- Language should be kept clear and simple. Steer away from excessively complex arguments and too many facts and figures. Two or three well-chosen statistics can be used very effectively. It is
important to think about the simplest ways of getting figures across. For example, say “five out of every ten people” rather than “fifty percent of the population.” Similarly, it is a good idea to use descriptive language and images and metaphors that will resonate with the audience. For example, you might say “If we compared income to buildings, the income of the poorest Brazilians would be a doll’s house, 2 cm high, while the income of the richest would be a skyscraper reaching from the earth to the moon.” It is always a good idea to provide one or two concrete examples to illustrate each key point being made, particularly if the points are relatively abstract issues of process or policy.

- It is important never to become irritated or aggressive. When faced with a negative question, deal with it truthfully and then go on to emphasize a positive point. During live interviews it is generally possible to steer the focus back to one of your predetermined key points, even if the interviewer begins to focus on areas that you do not wish to discuss. For example, in response to a negative or critical question, you might say, “Well, our critics do say that, but that is not the real issue. The real issue is...”

- Practice and preparation are critical. It is a good idea to rehearse with a colleague beforehand and to anticipate possible negative questions and pitfalls. It is also a good idea to have someone record all interviews and listen to them afterwards in order to identify mistakes or areas for improvement.

E. GUIDELINES FOR MAKING PRESENTATIONS

- Presentations are crucial. Whether you are addressing journalists at a press conference or members of the parliamentary health committee, you need to be able to get your message across clearly and effectively. Remember also that the members of your audience hear many presentations – yours needs to stand out so that they remember it. Here are some tips:

  **PREPARATION**
  - Your presentation starts long before you stand in front of your audience. Preparation is crucially important.
  - Objectives: be clear about what you want to achieve, or what you want to convey to your audience.
  - What do you want them to remember? Think about ways to make your key message stick.
  - Engage your audience by building on what they already know – use familiar reference points.
- Make it important to your audience – put yourself in their shoes and think about why they should care about your issue.
- People remember firsts and lasts – pay attention to the end and the beginning.
- Give them reason to listen: break their pattern – present the unexpected.
- Have a strong, clear ending.

**Ensuring Impact**

- Plan your words, one idea per sentence.
- Use active verbs.
- Paint pictures: SHOW, don’t tell.
- Use the power of visual communication – use graphics, photographs, and maps to help your audience understand your research and what it means.
- Everyone has a preferred sense for learning -- make use of the five senses as much as possible.
  Use visuals and audio if you can.

**Delivery**

- Take control of the room. You must be in charge.
- Start with energy: show enthusiasm.
- Position yourself in the same area as your visual aids – don’t make your audience divide their attention between a screen and you.
- Keep looking forwards – always focus on your audience – don’t have your back to them while you stare at the screen.
- Signpost important points. You can literally say, “now this next point is very important!”
- Consider the wider environment – are there noises outside the room, are people too cold or too hot? Often, if you briefly acknowledge distracting factors, the audience will be able to put the distraction out of their minds and refocus on you.
- Pay attention to your voice: clarity, projection, pace, and pauses.
- Make eye contact with your audience.
- If possible, handle questions and answers before your ending – then wrap up with a strong take-home message – a definite, clear climax.

**Visual Aids**
- If you use PowerPoint, use it effectively (see below).
- Remember PowerPoint is just one possible tool among many. You don’t have to use it.
- Think about using other types of visual aids, such as Flipcharts, Whiteboards, and others. Be creative.
- Have handouts for your audience.

**USE POWERPOINT EFFECTIVELY**
- PowerPoint can be a powerful tool, but too often it is used badly, putting audiences to sleep.
- You don’t want your audience focused on the screen and not on you. Your slides should support you, not take over.
- *Don’t* write your presentation using PowerPoint. Prepare and structure your presentation and only then go to PowerPoint and think about how you can use slides to support your presentation.
- Keep slides simple. *Less is more!* Leave the detailed notes for the handouts. One idea per sentence. Short sentences. Maximum three sentences per slide. Some of the most effective slides can consist of just one word. Or an image.
- Be sure that any graphs and other illustrations with your budget information is clear: it can be understood and interpreted at first glance.
- Avoid busy backgrounds, fancy colors, and other visual gimmicks. Plain black on white is often the best. Every element should support your message, not detract from it.
- Don’t be a disembodied voice in a darkened room, with everyone just staring at your slides.
- Continually bring your audience’s focus back to you. You can use the “W” key to make the screen go white, or the “B” key to make it go black.
- Remember that the most memorable speeches in history were given without slides. Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela never used PowerPoint!
**READING 5.9 ■ NEW MEDIA**

We have mentioned the rising importance of new or digital media, but up to now, have focused mainly on traditional/mainstream or “old” media. But it is crucial to take into account the exciting possibilities presented by the Internet, social networking, and mobile phones in advocacy. The mainstream media will be with us for a long time yet, especially in developing countries, but the new digital media are rapidly changing the media scene. Even a small organization can use the Internet and mobile phone technology to have a huge impact.

- Sometimes people argue that the new media are not very relevant in developing countries, as most of the population does not have access to the Internet. But this argument does not take account of several factors:
  - It is important to differentiate audiences in advocacy. Emphasize that donors, international organizations, business people, policy makers, and journalists DO have access to and use new media more and more.
  - If you do *not* use the Internet and many of the social networking tools it offers, you will not be reaching these key audiences. New media can be very effectively used to reach journalists, who in turn will then give you exposure in the mainstream media.
  - The rise of mobile phones and mobile Internet access. While most ordinary people do not have computers, the use of mobile phones is widespread. Ordinary people in developing countries are increasingly using mobile phones to access the Internet and social networking applications such as Facebook. In addition, even when people don’t have sophisticated phones, basic technology such as SMS (text messages) can be used powerfully as a campaign or advocacy tool.

- So, what do the Internet and new media offer that mainstream media doesn’t?
  - The ability to tell your story and get your message across to your audience directly, without journalists as the “middle-men.”
  - The ability to cover the kinds of issues and tell the kinds of stories that mainstream journalists are often just not interested in covering.
  - The power of numbers. Social networking tools make use ordinary people’s networks of friends and acquaintances to spread messages rapidly, often to vast numbers of people.

Some examples of new media tools are:
Facebook (www.facebook.com): Unless you’ve been living on another planet for the past few years, chances are you know about Facebook already and have your own Facebook account. Facebook is a social networking site that allows people to link with their friends online. It can be accessed on the Internet via computers and Internet-capable mobile phones. Facebook offers powerful advocacy opportunities: you can create groups on Facebook, highlight Causes, and share news, views, photographs, and more. An example of the power of Facebook occurred in January 2010, when women all over the world suddenly started posting their bra color as their Facebook status, apparently as a way of raising awareness of breast cancer. It seems unclear where this started; it spread virally and rapidly, an excellent illustration of the huge power of Facebook’s social networks. For more information on this see here http://allfacebook.com/facebook-bra-color_b9596.

Subscribe to the IBP’s Facebook page at: http://www.facebook.com/InternationalBudgetPartnership

SMS: The plain old short message service or SMS on your mobile phone can be used very powerfully. It has been used to send out information rapidly to large numbers of people (either through bulk SMS services that allow you to send out a message to hundreds or even thousands of people at the same time, or through networking, where people just keep passing messages on to their friends, and their friends, and their friends...). It has also been used to gather important information from the field (such as having activists visit clinics and send SMS messages to a central point, indicating which clinics are out-of-stock of certain essential medicines).

There are a number of online tools that can assist you to use the power of SMS. One example is Frontline SMS, a large-scale texting tool for NGOs. See http://www.frontlinesms.com/.

Blogging: A blog is really an online journal or diary, or even a mini-website, which allows you to express opinions; cover news; share photos, videos, and even audio recordings; and also provide links to other websites that you think are relevant for your audience and message. The most popular blogging sites are WordPress (www.wordpress.com) and Blogger (www.blogger.com), which is a Google service. At either of these sites you can very quickly – and without having any technical knowledge – set up your own free blog or mini-website. If you know how to send an email, you can set up your own blog – it’s that easy! For an example of how WordPress can be used to set up a campaign website, have a look at: http://endforcedsterilisation.wordpress.com
Also check out the IBP’s Open Budgets Blog, which is a WordPress site: http://openbudgetsblog.org/

- **Citizen Journalism:** Citizen journalism refers to the fact that digital media now allows ordinary people to act as journalists. Using computers, mobile phones, digital cameras (including cameras on mobile phones), ordinary people around the world are able to produce and publish stories of importance to them. Citizen journalism can include blogs, but is not limited to blogging. Some citizen journalism sites combine citizen journalism with an editorial staff, in order to ensure stories comply with certain minimum standards. One example is Global Voices Online (http://globalvoicesonline.org).

- **Twitter** ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)): Twitter is almost like SMS, but it’s online. It is a service that allows you to send very short messages (maximum 140 characters) to people who are “following” you. You can also sign up to follow others and get their updates, known as “tweets.” A lot of what is on Twitter is really trivial (e.g., “I am having breakfast now.”), but many people use Twitter almost like newspaper headlines: to alert their followers to news or to an interesting website or blog. They do this by providing a brief alert, followed by a link to the site in question. Check out [http://twitter.com/OpenBudgets](http://twitter.com/OpenBudgets)

- **YouTube** ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)): YouTube allows you to create, share, and view videos online. It has a specific “channel” dedicated to non-profit groups. Many organizations have used this effectively to share advocacy messages. A good example is the Aids and Rights Alliance of Southern Africa (ARASA). Have a look at their video on health budgets here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkWoKgLhDVs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkWoKgLhDVs).
  Also check out the IBP video on social audits in Kenya, “It’s Our Money. Where’s It Gone?” [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2zKXqkrf2E&feature=player_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2zKXqkrf2E&feature=player_embedded#)

These are just a few of the sites and technologies available. There are many, many more, and new ones are springing up every day. It’s important to be alert and to try to keep up with new developments by reading blogs and participating in online social networks.
READING 5.10 • SAMPLE MEDIA

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

African CSOs Demand an End to Medicine Stock-Outs
February 2009

Stop the Stock-Outs! Access to essential medicines for all!

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Kenya and across east and southern Africa are coming together to launch a campaign demanding an end to stock-outs of essential medicines in public health facilities. The regional campaign is being spearheaded by Health Action International (HAI) Africa and Oxfam. National campaigns will also take place in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar.

The theme of the campaign is: Stop the Stock-Outs! Access to Essential Medicines for All!
The campaign is a call to action for African governments to meet their obligations to provide essential medicines to our people.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines essential medicines as “those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population...Essential medicines are intended to be available within the context of functioning health systems at all times, in adequate amounts, in the appropriate dosage forms, with assured quality, and at a price the individual and the community can afford.”

At the World Health Assembly in 1975, our governments made a commitment to ensure these essential medicines are available in public health facilities.

Yet today, over 30 years later, at any given moment, public health facilities in Africa have in stock only about half of a core set of essential medicines. These are medicines used to treat common diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, HIV, TB, diabetes, and hypertension – all of which are among the highest causes of death in Africa.

According to Patrick Mubangizi, director of HAI Africa, access to essential medicines is a human right and a cornerstone of an effective primary health care system. Says Mubangizi, “Access to free or cheap essential medicines determines whether people live or die, suffer pain and discomfort, or have their ailments cured, recover from illness or endure life-long disease.”
Stock-outs are worst in rural areas and poor people are the most affected. Stock-outs force people to buy medicines at much higher prices from the private sector. More often, though, patients simply go without the medicine that they so badly need.

The campaign is calling on governments and health departments to end stock-outs now by:

- Keeping accurate stock records and holding buffer supplies of medicines in storage.
- Creating efficient distribution systems at national and regional levels.
- Giving stakeholders (such as consumer organizations) a voice in forecasting and procurement planning.
- Ending corruption in the medicine supply chain to stop theft and diversion of essential medicines.
- Living up to commitments to spend 15% of national budgets on health care.

The failure to properly stock public health clinics and pharmacies with essential medicines stems in part from economic constraints and bureaucratic obstacles. “But above all, it is a failure of political will,” says Mubangizi. If governments commit to having medicines on pharmacy shelves, they can do it.”

Launch date:

Venue:

Speakers will include:

Media will also have an opportunity to interview patients who have personal experience of medicine stock-outs.

For more information contact:

Campaign partners:
SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE 1: DRAFT RELEASE

Speaking Up for Those in Pain

Hospices across the globe will be celebrating World Hospice and Palliative Care Day on 11 October 2008. In Bedlamistan we have a strong hospice presence with 74 member hospices dotted all over the country and 54 development sites.

Hospice is a philosophy, not a building, as many people think. The philosophy holds that a person with a life-limiting illness is on a special journey and has a unique set of rights. Palliative care is the active expression of this philosophy — a special brand of holistic care that provides quality of life, dignity in death, and support in bereavement.

Most hospices operate through home-based care by visiting clients and their families in their homes. Some hospices are fortunate enough to have inpatient units, where clients can be admitted for respite, pain control, or terminal care.

According to research, one of the main fears that a dying person has is dying in PAIN.

This year, the theme for World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is “Palliative Care: A Human Right.” The Hospice and Palliative Care Association of Bedlamistan wants to highlight the right of the terminally ill to access medication for pain control. Legislation currently prohibits trained palliative care nurses from prescribing controlled medications, and access to the correct medicines is difficult for many of our clients. We are actively advocating for this to be changed, so that our clients can have their pain addressed adequately and in a timely manner by trained, professional staff.

Hospices are nonprofit organizations that rely on fundraising activities. Their services are provided free of charge.

Please support the local hospice in your area by volunteering your time or expertise, donating goods to their charity shops, or making a financial contribution.

For more information, go to www.worldday.org or call the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of Bedlamistan at 012-345-6789
SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE 2: IMPROVED RELEASE

“Pain relief is a human right – let nurses prescribe,” says hospice association.

The Hospice and Palliative Care Association of Bedlamistan (HPCA) is calling for health care legislation to be changed to enable trained nurses to prescribe scheduled pain-control medication.

The call comes as HPCA and its 74 member hospices join hospices around the globe to mark World Hospice and Palliative Care Day on 11 October 2008. The theme this year is “Palliative Care: A Human Right.”

HPCA believes it is the right of people with life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses to be free of pain. However, many patients struggle to gain access to the correct pain-control medicines.

Giving trained palliative care nurses the right to prescribe scheduled medication would go a long way toward alleviating this problem. HPCA CEO Dr. Liz Gwyther says, “The lack of doctors in hard-to-reach rural areas of Bedlamistan means that prescriptions for pain-killing drugs are difficult to obtain, leaving patients in unnecessary pain. Enabling trained nurses to prescribe this very safe and routine medication would alleviate untold misery.”

According to research, one of the main fears a dying person has is dying in pain. But today it is possible to control pain effectively with drugs that are safe to use and that have few side effects.

Hospice is a philosophy and an approach to care — not a building, as many people think. The philosophy holds that the person with a life-limiting illness is on a special journey and has a unique set of rights. Palliative care is the active expression of this philosophy — a special brand of holistic care that provides quality of life, dignity in death, and support in bereavement.

Most hospices operate through home-based care by visiting clients and their families in their homes. Some hospices are fortunate enough to have inpatient units, where clients can be admitted for respite, pain control, or terminal care.

Hospices are nonprofit organizations that rely on fundraising activities. Their services are provided free of charge.

For more information please contact: name of contact person, telephone, and e-mail address
See also www.worldday.org.
Recently, Tanzanian Members of Parliament (MPs) visited Kenya to learn from their counterparts about the operations of their Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Since 2003, Kenya has been operating a CDF under which all MPs receive funds to initiate development projects in their constituencies.

There are concerns in Kenya about the CDF. In its current formulation, the CDF violates the constitutionally required division of powers among branches of government. Under the CDF, MPs (through their nominees, who are private employees) execute works within their constituencies, and report actual expenditures incurred on CDF programmes to designated district and national government offices.

As with all public expenditures, CDF accounts are subsequently verified by the legislature. This creates a situation in which the legislature is verifying CDF accounts managed by legislators – thereby violating the principle of checks and balances and separation of powers between the executive and the legislature.

Furthermore, the CDF risks diverting MP attention from core tasks. The MPs may be too busy managing CDF monies to exercise their role of scrutinising and holding the executive to account. MPs may also let government off the hook provided government does not question the MPs’ use of the CDF. Finally, the risk of creating parallel uncoordinated systems that causes duplication and wastage is real.

For these reasons, the CDF is a poor idea in principle. Instead of establishing a CDF in Tanzania, it would be better to strengthen local government systems. However, the Parliament is likely to go ahead and establish the CDF. In this case, it would help to take lessons from the Kenyan experience.

First, CDFs must be constructed in such a way that the rules pertaining to project eligibility are rigorous and enforceable. While each Kenyan MP is technically allowed to implement only 20 projects in a year, some MPs have been creative in their enumeration of projects. MPs have classified 10 or more classrooms construction projects in different schools as one project or similarly classified the construction of several health centers as one “health center” project for the purposes of the CDF.

Second, district officials should be provided with adequate resources to enable them to support the CDF projects executed utilising funding provided to the MPs. In Kenya, districts typically suffer from an acute shortage of technical personnel, particularly engineers, and are often unable to effectively monitor actual CDF expenditures.

Third, CDFs must be structured to require a thorough accounting of project funds. Due to poor record-keeping by CDF managers (who are nominated by MPs), reports developed under the Kenyan CDF often record amounts advanced for individual projects rather than the amounts that were actually expended.

However, if actual expenditures are not accounted for, it is impossible to hold either local officials or MPs responsible for any irregularities that may exist in CDF projects or for the results achieved by actual CDF expenditures.

Fourth, CDF funds should be expended each year. In Kenya, though most budget authorisations are valid for just one year, CDF monies do not lapse at the end of the year; unspent funds are available for expenditure in subsequent years. Thus, there is no incentive for an MP to spend CDF money in a timely fashion. An MP can even save CDF monies for later expenditure (as in an election year).

Fifth, CDF monies should be expended within an overall district planning process. In Kenya, apart from supporting bursaries, CDF monies can only be spent on infrastructure projects (such as construction of schools, health centers, etc.).

CDF funds cannot be spent on operational costs (such as salaries for teachers, procurement of medicines at health centers, etc.). Poor coordination between the district and national planning and budgeting processes (through which operational costs are budgeted) and the CDF planning process can lead to situations in which, for example, hospitals are constructed but not functional since staffing costs were not provided in the district budgets.

Finally, the CDF program should guarantee a citizen’s right to practical and meaningful information on the projects funded through the programme.

The Kenyan CDF law does not contain any provisions guaranteeing the public’s right to access information on the programme. Thus, constituents are denied a legal basis on which to demand project records (including accounting records) from the CDF managers, which further limits public accountability for CDF monies.

If implemented, Tanzanian MPs should structure the CDF law in Tanzania so that it does not suffer from the problems experienced in Kenya. Only then will we have a reasonable chance to ensure these funds truly meet the needs of wananchi.

Vivek Ramkumar is a Program Officer with the International Budget Project. Email: ramkumar@ibpp.org
SAMPLE OP-ED ARTICLE 2

A handout is a hand up

Needs of the poor should be seen as an economic asset, not a burden

Comment

Brett Davidson

It may be anathema to the donor community but cash really is king. Pledges like those of seed, food and fertiliser support make at the recent World Food Summit are like band-aid for the 300-million Africans living on less than a dollar a day.

In contrast to these emergency, band-aid measures, there is a growing body of evidence showing that social protection, in the form of regular, predictable cash transfers to the most vulnerable groups in society, are remarkably effective.

Some of this evidence comes from South Africa, where study after study show pensions and grants have a measurable impact on health and nutrition in recipient households. Other evidence comes from a plethora of pilot projects in neighbouring countries.

Aside from health benefits, cash transfers have enabled beneficiaries to acquire assets such as livestock and seed, freed children to attend school (rather than having to engage in trade or begging to assist their families to survive) and bolstered local economies and markets (also boosting food production by providing incentives to small-scale farmers).

But, even with all this solid evidence, policy-makers and donors remain sceptical.

In South Africa there is a resistance to expanding the grant system, while in neighbouring countries international donors procrastinate by continuing to demand more evidence and more pilots.

For their part, governments in Southern Africa refuse to consider "handouts" or continue to insist that social protection is unaffordable. Ultimately, however, the question is not one of affordability but of political will.

In 2004, for example, Lesotho's government instituted an old-age pension against the advice of international financial institutions. To make it more affordable, it made the grant amount fairly small and the age of eligibility fairly high at 70. Today, up to 77,000 pensioners and a quarter of all households benefit from the monthly grant of R200. The pension is so popular that to cancel it now would mean political suicide for the ruling party.

Lesotho shows that when there is political will, the money can be found. Surely, social protection needs to take priority over arms deals, new Parliament buildings, and any number of wasteful vanity projects.

The real question is not whether we can afford to implement or expand social protection, but whether we can afford not to. Unless we urgently implement policy options which address the needs of the poor in a manner that alleviates rather than aggravates the situation, and in a way that respects the poor as an economic asset rather a social burden, there could be catastrophic consequences.

There are consequences for social, economic and political stability, of which recent episodes of civil unrest experienced across the continent from Senegal to South Africa may be only a glimpse.

We may, as one leading politician put it, be on the verge of a "food revolution".

John Robert is programme manager for the regional hunger and vulnerability programme (RHVP). Brett Davidson is a media consultant for RHVP.

Poverty in Africa

Three-quarters of the world's ultra poor live in sub-Saharan Africa

$1

The number living on less than $1 a day rose by 20% to 238 million from 1990 to 2004. In the same period those living on less than $1 a day increased by a third to 121 million.

Africa's share of global poverty

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Contributors' guidelines: Each week the M&G receives at least 10 contributions to its opinion pages. Articles have the best chance of publication if they are between 750 and 850 words; anything longer must be considerably brilliant and written perfectly. Topical issues are likely to grab our attention, and we will not consider articles that require us to report in other newspapers. Provocative and persuasive argument wins over didactics every time, style and wit also triumph over pith. The opinion pages are planned and laid out on the Friday before publication, though exceptions can be made.
SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Education unit looks like a hit squad

Published Oct 05, 2008 in Times LIVE (www.timeslive.co.za)

Every thinking SA teacher should welcome the offer of additional educational support and training (“School inspectors return, but they’ll be nicer this time,” September 28).

Naledi Pandor’s proposed National Education, Evaluation and Development Unit is, however, to be treated with the greatest skepticism. The “development” part is fine, the “evaluation” part remains cause for alarm.

After 40 years’ service in education, I’ve been either subjected to or helped to devise every teacher evaluation system known to man and none of them has worked.

More than this, they have left the teachers who suffered them feeling cheated, confused and embittered.

The minister’s super-unit, apparently answerable to her alone, is to swoop down on schools, evaluate the personnel and present a report based on the evidence of the fleeting visitation. So what’s changed between this and the old-style “panels of inquisition”?

Pandor’s unit is, moreover, to be beefed up to the extent that it has the right, summarily, to fire useless principals and teachers.

The question is — by what means can a working teacher be reasonably and fairly evaluated?

Some teachers are brilliant in the classroom and nonentities in the extramural sphere.

Trust me, innumerable attempts to make sense of an unworkable system have failed. The answer is that to be of any value, evaluation has to be painstaking, discerning and co-operative.

With teachers’ jobs on the line, not to mention salary adjustments, the proposed unit’s function would boil down to that of an educational hit squad, eliminating the underperforming and attempting only the most superficial professional assessment of the rest. — Neil Veitch, Cape Town
SAMPLE CARTOON ABOUT THE PROVIDA CASE (MEXICO)

The caption reads:

PENS AND THONGS...

“By the way: I already need another ‘donation’ from a philanthropic organization...”
FACT SHEET

THE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES CRISIS IN KENYA

According to WHO essential medicines "satisfy the needs of the majority of the population and therefore should be available at all times, in adequate amounts in appropriate dosage forms and at a price the individual and community can afford."

Essential medicines are those needed to treat the most common diseases affecting the population, for example malaria, diabetes, HIV and pneumonia, among others. Essential medicines also include those used for important public health issues, such as reproductive health and vaccination campaigns. Countries define and maintain their own Essential Medicines List (EML) as a cornerstone of their national medicine policy and the entire health system.

Although most countries have an EML, the shameful reality remains: essential medicines are not available for everyone who needs them. The following facts detail how an ongoing crisis of essential medicines is a big killer in Kenya.

Killer Fact: There are not enough medicines in government hospitals

Essential medicines are available in only 50% of lower level health facilities (dispensaries and health centres) and in about 65% of hospitals in Kenya. It’s about to get worse, with the ongoing problems at KEMSA.

Killer Fact: Kenyans cannot afford medicines

Medicines are unaffordable to the majority of Kenyans. A typical wage-earning Kenyan who needs insulin for life would have to work between 3 and 11 days just to cover the cost for a month of insulin treatment, depending on the health facility from which he obtains it.

Killer Fact: The cost of medicines cripples household budgets

Medicines are often the largest health-related expense for poor families. This expense is made worse with medicines being out-of-stock in government hospitals, because families must turn to the private sector where prices are significantly higher. This burden becomes even more difficult to manage in times of increased prices for food and other commodities.

Killer Fact: The national Essential Medicines List is outdated

WHO recommends that countries update their national Essential Medicines List (EML) at least every five years to reflect changing public health patterns and to take into account new and improved treatments. Kenya last updated its EML in 2002. This means the list doesn’t incorporate, for example, the change in malaria treatment recommended in the 2007 national malaria policy.

Campaign partners

Kema: Consumer Health Information Network
VODA: Malawi Health Equity Network
MFA: Malawian Medical Association
SCLD: Social Justice Alliance
Uganda: Action Group for Health Care Rights and Advocacy
Zambia: Alliance of Zambia People Living with HIV/AIDS
Namibia: Health Action International Africa

Regional/International partners:
OSBAP: Open Society Institute

For more information contact:
Website: www.stopstockouts.org
**Killer Fact: Only 5.6% of the national budget goes to health**

Kenya has twice committed to meeting the Abuja targets, in 2001 and again in 2006. These were commitments, among others, to provide 15% of the national budget towards health and to increase access to medicines for the population.

**Killer Fact: Medicine procurement and supply is not efficient**

Problems within the Kenya Medical Supply Agency (KEMSA), as well as its tense relationship with the Ministry of Medical Services are hampering the procurement and supply of medicines. At least three independent assessments have outlined these problems and recommended concrete solutions. Yet the authorities have failed to implement these recommendations. As a result, KEMSA remains dysfunctional and there is a looming crisis in the supply of medicines to health facilities.

**Killer Fact: Millions are dying from lack of medicines**

By 2015, over 10 million deaths per year (globally) could be avoided by scaling up certain health interventions, the majority of which depend on essential medicines.

**Killer Fact: Kenyans use medicines dangerously**

Because government hospitals don’t have enough medicines in stock, Kenyans are misusing the medicines they get. More than half of all medicines are prescribed, dispensed or sold inappropriately, and half of all patients fail to take them correctly. This is a crucial public health hazard, and an enormous waste of scarce resources for health and medicines.

**Killer Fact: Big Pharma prioritizes profits over Kenyans’ lives**

The revenue of the top 10 global pharmaceutical companies is more than the gross national income of the 57 lowest-income countries. The pharmaceutical industry have used the power they wield in developing countries to influence policy and undermine access to more affordable generic medicines – all this to protect their commercial interest and enormous profits.

Yet greater access to more affordable generic medicines saves lives: because they cost up to 90% less than their brand-name equivalents, generic medicines can treat more people for the same amount of money spent.

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1. MOH / WHO / HAI Africa, Monitoring of Medicine Prices and Availability, Nairobi: MOH, October 2008
2. wage of the lowest-paid government worker (7466KSh per month)
3. MOH / WHO / HAI Africa, Monitoring of Medicine Prices and Availability, Nairobi: MOH, October 2008
4. www.who.int/medicines
**READING 5.11 ■ SOME KEY MEDIA TERMS**

**Blogs and bloggers:** The word “blog” is an abbreviation of “web log.” It is basically a journal or diary kept online so that it can be read by anyone using the Internet. Entries are usually presented in reverse chronological order, with the most recent entries on top. Blog entries often contain links to other blogs or websites. There are millions of blogs on the Internet, most of which are read by a small group of the blogger's friends and family members. However, certain bloggers have become very influential in their fields. In the United States, key bloggers are read as avidly as the major daily newspapers, and their views and opinions can have widespread political impact. In Egypt bloggers were jailed for expressing anti-government views. For a good introduction to blogging and numerous examples of blogs, see [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com).

**Citizen journalism:** Some good examples are All Voices ([www.allvoices.com](http://www.allvoices.com)) and OhmyNews International ([http://international.ohmynews.com/](http://international.ohmynews.com/)).

**Mobizines:** Mobizines are magazines that can be downloaded onto cell phones. They have gained popularity particular among younger people.

**Op-ed pages:** The opinion and editorial pages of a newspaper. These pages usually contain the newspaper’s own “leader” article expressing views on one or two of the major issues of the day, columns by regular columnists, and one or more opinion articles contributed by outside contributors (e.g., business people, politicians, academics, and NGO staff).

**Podcasts:** Podcasts are audio or audio-visual files that can be downloaded and then listened to or viewed on PCs; personal music players, such as the iPod and other MP3 players; and some cell phones. Some blogs take the form of podcasts, but podcasts can also be radio programs, documentaries, commentaries, and film trailers. An example of a newspaper’s podcasts can be found at [www.mg.co.za/multimedia/podcast](http://www.mg.co.za/multimedia/podcast).

**Press conference:** A conference to which members of the media are invited, called by an individual or organization for the purpose of making an important announcement.

**Press release:** A notice sent to members of the media announcing a specific item of news (an upcoming event, important new research findings, etc.) or expressing an opinion on a key issue of the day.

**Sound bite:** Sound bites are short audio clips that journalists use in television and radio news reports.