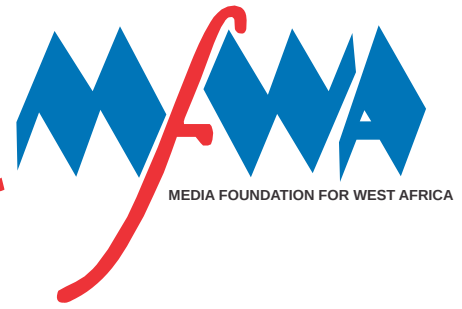




The Gong Gong



Issue 2, June, 2014.

Dear Stakeholder,

Thank you very much for your continued support for the work of Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and its partners in the various countries of the region. Your support has undoubtedly contributed to help sustain our efforts at promoting freedom of expression and democracy in West Africa. To continuously keep you updated, we bring to you our monthly e-newsletter, *The Gong Gong*, which highlights our ongoing works and those of our partners. In this edition of *The Gong Gong*, we feature our activities for the month of June.

During the month, we were engaged in

programme planning, free expression advocacy and staff capacity development. Our partner organisation for Liberia, The Center for Media Studies and Peace-building (CEMESP), and that for Nigeria, Media Rights Agenda (MRA) were also engaged in activities aimed at promoting and defending freedom of expression and democracy in the region. We share with you details of these and the profile of some of our staff in this edition of *The Gong Gong*.

Your feedback remains one of the most important resources to us and we hope to hear from you. Once again thank you for your support.

**We work with our
Partners to promote
Freedom of Expression
and Democracy in
West Africa**

STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

During the month, all staff of the organization participated in a three day staff capacity development training focused on enhancing the knowledge and skills of staff in programme development and free expression advocacy.

The three day training programme, carried out with funding support from IBIS- Ghana, forms part of the MFWA's institutional capacity development initiatives. At the end of the programme, some staff shared their thoughts:

"It was interesting, practical and educative. I had a good experience of working closely with some of my colleagues to achieve results. It was a very effective exercise" - *Fred Baimbill-Johnson Programme Assistant* -

"The practical training method was very effective. It built my capacity in conceptualizing project proposals" - *Dora Mawutor - Programme Officer - Communication and Research* -



• *Ms Marian Tadeffa-Kubabom, the trainer (standing), clarifying some issues for staff*



• *Rikke Hansen writes down discussions by her group for presentation*



• *Time for some reflection*



• *Time for inputs from the trainer*



• *Fred Johnson making a presentation of a group work*

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION RIGHTS MONITORING AND CAMPAIGNS

During the month, we continued to monitor the freedom of expression landscape within the region. Incidents of violations were recorded in Nigeria and Guinea. The month also witnessed the delivery of a seminal judgement by the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice on a case of free expression violation. There were three significant developments: Two incidents of violations in Nigeria and Guinea and an overwhelming victory for justice at the ECOWAS Community court of Justice

Attacks on the Press in

Nigeria: In the first week of June, there were different incidents of attacks on media freedom in Nigeria. The attacks came in the form of seizure of publications of *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership* and *Vanguard* newspapers. There were arrest of newspaper workers and detention of vehicles belonging to media organisations. Some newspapers also had their delivery vans searched while vendors in many parts of the country were also questioned.

Our partner organisation in Nigeria, the Media Rights Agenda (MRA) described the situation as harassment of the media. The MFWA issued a statement calling on the government of President Goodluck Jonathan to call the security forces to order and allow the media to carry out their duties in an atmosphere devoid of intimidation and harassment.

Security Forces Prevent

Opposition in Guinea: In the second week of June, security forces in Guinea prevented members of an opposition party, Union des Forces Republicaines (UFR) from holding a congress in the capital, Conakry. As a country that is recovering from nearly a decade of political crisis, such developments are worrying. The MFWA therefore called on the authorities of the country to respect the rights of individuals and groups to express themselves freely.

Victory for Justice: On 10th June, 2014, ECOWAS community court of justice delivered a seminal judgement in a case over the murder of celebrated Gambian journalist Deyda Hydara, 10 years ago. Hydara was one of Gambian's most distinguished journalist who was shot dead in his car in 2004 in Banjul, the Gambian capital. The Community Court ruled that The Gambia had failed to properly investigate



• Deyda Hydara

the murder of Hydara, and thus violated its treaty obligations to the ECOWAS. The court also averred that by its actions, The Gambia had promoted a climate of impunity that stifled freedom of expression. The Court's ruling marks another momentous milestone for the rule of law and free expression in The Gambia and the entire West African region.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST IMPUNITY

Government Impunity remains one of the biggest threats of freedom of expression in West Africa. One of such areas of impunity is the continuous disregard for judgments delivered by the ECOWAS community court of justice among offending member states of the ECOWAS. The Gambia in particular has continuously refused to comply with judgements of the court. The government of The Gambia has for the past four years refused to comply with judgements of the court in a case of torture of journalist Musa Saidykhan, and another judgement on the case of forced disappearance of journalist, Ebrima Manneh.

In the month of June therefore, the MFWA continued its campaign for compliance with judgements of the court.

The MFWA continues its campaign for the regional body, ECOWAS to invoke its sanctions against offending member states who flout the Court's judgements.

We believe that regional and International Courts are most useful and influential when they adjudicate cases and their decisions are respected and enforced by state parties.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

During the month the organization completed and launched a unique and highly praised guide for journalists on coverage of local governance. The production of the guide is in line with MFWA's Media and Governance programme that is aimed at promoting transparent, accountable and participatory governance through professional and independent media reporting.

The guide comes on the backdrop of a study conducted by the MFWA that revealed that coverage of local governance issues by radio stations was very low.

The guide was launched at a stakeholders forum by the president of the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) Mr. Affail Monney commended the MFWA for the document.

The Dean of Studies & Research at the Institute of Local Government Studies, Ghana Mr Eric Oduro Osae encouraged all media practitioners to acquaint themselves with the document for effective media reporting on local government and decentralization issues.



• Hon. Akwasi Oppong-Fosu
Minister of Local Government and Rural Development

“It is a perfect document that will empower media practitioners to ask the most relevant questions and demand appropriate answers on governance issues on the local level.

By developing this guide, the Media Foundation for West Africa(MFWA) has closed a big knowledge gap needed by media practitioners to perform their watchdog role”, Mr Osae said.

Copies of all our reports can be accessed free of charge on our website: www.mfwa.org

WORK BY OUR PARTNERS

Liberia: MFWA's partner in Liberia, The Center for Media Studies and Peace-building (CEMESP), has served five community radio stations in the country with specially designed election messages.

The messages were produced in partnership with the five community radio stations and recorded in local dialects, to reach a wider local

audience. The project is aimed at issue-based voting, women political empowerment and youth non-violence in election. It is also intended to promote a smooth constitutional review process. An audience survey will be conducted as part of the project to gauge the impact of the campaign on the local population.



• A journalist inside one of the beneficiary community radio stations

Nigeria: In the wake of attacks on the Press by security forces, Our partner in Nigeria, The Media Right Agenda (MRA) issued a statement condemning the attacks on some media houses by security forces in that country.

The MRA's Executive Director, Mr. Edetaen Ojo, said it was shocking that rather than address the real and pressing security challenges facing the country, which had resulted in most citizens living in perpetual fear, the Federal Government had chosen to chase shadows by unleashing its military and security agencies on the media.

The MRA continues to promote the implementation of Nigeria's Access to information law across the country. The organization has also embarked on a campaign to end impunity in Nigeria.



• Ms. Jennifer Onyejekwe
Deputy Executive Director
-Media Rights Agenda

Staff Profile



• *Mrs Margritta Amoaful-Owusu*

Mrs Margritta Amoaful-Owusu is the Accountant at Media Foundation for West Africa. She holds a Bachelor of Accounting (BA) from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and a Higher National Diploma (HND) Accounting option.

She previously worked with the Internal Revenue Service of Ghana, First Ghana Building Society and Hotel Catering and Tourism Training Institute, Ghana. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Accountants.



• *Richard Koduah*

Richard Koduah is the Administrative assistant at MFWA.

He joined the organization in 1999. He has a Diploma in Business studies (DBS) from the Institute of Professional studies.

He also has a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Accountancy from the Accra Polytechnic.

CONTACT US
30 Duade Street, Kokomlemle.
P.O.BOX LG 730, legon.
Accra - Ghana

Tel: 233-302-242470
Fax: 233-302-221084
Website: www.mfwa.org
Email: info@mfwa.org

Facebook: Media Foundation for West Africa
Twitter: @TheMFWA
Youtube: The MFWA
G+ : Media Foundation for West Africa