Proposition d'un projet pilote
Pour promouvoir la paix et la stabilité dans la Province du Sud Kivu (R.D. du Congo)

Observatoire social Sud Kivu

Exploration participative de la réalité sociale et de son évolution par la valorisation du travail des journalistes locaux

Hansueli Homberger, CH-8620 Wetzikon
+41 (0)79 635 99 71, info@h-connect.ch

Juin 2016

Photo: C. Nalwango

Table de matières

PROPOSITION DE PROJET

Observatoire social Sud Kivu

Exploration participative de la réalité sociale et de son évolution par la valorisation du travail des journalistes locaux

Résumé

Dans des zones de conflit, l'accès public à des informations sociales est souvent difficile. Ou précaire[1]. Cette problématique constitue le point focal du présent document : Comment retourner à la normale après une guerre sans savoir répondre à des questions fondamentales ? Des questions comme : De combien d'enseignants aura-t-on besoin dans tel district, telle commune ? Comment évoluent les prix sur des marchés différents ? De tels vides handicapent les administrations locales, la société civile et les intervenants externes.

Ces exemples illustrent comment l'absence de données sociales peut être problématique en situation de conflits violents. De telles informations sont normalement mises à disposition par des services statistiques. Leur absence risque de prolonger ou d'aggraver des crises et d'entraîner des inefficacités dans la stabilisation post-conflit.

Pour réduire des tels effects négatifs, l'auteur propose la **création d'une source publique d'informations utiles et fiables sur le contexte social du Sud Kivu.** Ceci en publiant des *données validées de manière journalistique (voir A2.1)*.

Cette proposition s'adresse à des organisations et des particuliers engagés dans le développement et la promotion de la paix en Afrique centrale. Elle repose sur un travail de master de l'auteur[2] dont l'annexe 1 résume l'essentiel. Le travail est basé entre autres sur une enquête menée à Bukavu / Sud Kivu, traitant de la *perception* des médias et des *attentes* de leurs utilisateurs. Pourtant, le focus géographique de cette proposition est en premier lieu dû à la situation toujours volatile au Sud Kivu, malgré la fin officielle de la guerre depuis des années. L'auteur est familier avec la région depuis plus de vingt ans.

L'implication de journalistes locaux et l'approche participative sont les clés de cette proposition. Pour la compréhension holistique de la réalité sociale en zone de conflit, les journalistes locaux sont une excellente source d'information, souvent sous-valorisée. Un rôle clé leur est donc attribué dans ce projet. En

---

[1]   Cette observation vaut pour des zones de conflits en général et particulièrement aussi pour la Province du Sud Kivu qui vient de traverser des années excessivement violentes. Le terme « information sociale » n'a pas de définition exacte à ce point mais sera exemplifié dans le texte.

[2]   2015 ; Université Bâle / Swisspeace ; Études post-grades en transformation de conflits ; Le travail est accessible via www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Projets médias en zone de conflit. Pour une vue d'ensemble de la documentation voir A2.3

parallèle, il est prévu d'impliquer l'administration congolaise, des universités et des spécialistes. L'approche se veut interdisciplinaire, impliquant la recherche sociale appliquée et la promotion des médias locaux (détails : annexe 1).

L'hypothèse du projet est que *l'accès public à des données sociales conduit à un paysage médiatique axé sur les faits réels. Cela permettra la prise de décisions collectives dans un climat de dialogue, de confiance et d'inclusion. En plus, l'accès public à de telles informations est susceptible de briser l'isolation du Sud Kivu : L'intérêt sur le plan régional et international (médias, recherche, secteur culturel, business, sport, etc.) devrait contribuer à la stabilisation durable après un long conflit meurtrier. L'accès public à des données sociales est aussi susceptible d'améliorer en continu les démarches de l'aide internationale.*

Les perspectives globales de cette proposition sont : 1.) Une contribution à la stabilisation de la région des Grands Lacs africaines et 2.) Un gain en savoir-faire pour l'amélioration des projets médias en zone de conflit. L'évaluation de ces deux perspectives s'avérant à la fois complexes et d'utilité collective, il convient de diviser le budget : un volet pour l'exécution du projet en soi, et un budget séparé pour un **suivi scientifique** (environ 16% du montant recherché).

À la longue, l'initiative devrait conduire à l'établissement de structures locales capables de s'autofinancer et s'autogerer. Pour générer des revenus, la mise à disposition de produits et services est prévue (newsletters, site Internet, club d'amis du projet etc.). Signalons toutefois que la gratuité de l'accès aux données est l'un des piliers fondamentaux de l'idée[3].

Concrètement, l'auteur estime qu'il serait possible d'atteindre les objectifs précités **sur une durée de dix ans avec 1,4 million de dollars US** (voir plan d'action / budget ; Annexe 3). La durée inhabituellement longue du projet relativise le volume du budget. La nécessité de protéger le staff local est l'une des raisons de s'engager à long terme. Pour en savoir plus, veuillez consulter l'annexe 1 et les documents suplémentaires (vue d'ensemble : A2.3).

Cette proposition ne dépasse volontairement pas le cadre des travaux préliminaires. Certains détails restent à négocier avec des partenaires locaux. Ces thèmes à approfondir (selon l'avis de l'auteur) sont présentés dans l'annexe 2.

---

[3]   Les droits d'accès et de traitement de donnés pourraient p. ex. être réglés selon la philosophie « Creative Commons ». http://creativecommons.org/, 10.10.2015

Observatoire social Sud Kivu

Exploration participative de la réalité sociale et de son évolution par la valorisation du travail des journalistes locaux

ANNEXE 1 : Concept Note *(Note conceptuelle)*

A1.1   Orientation

This concept note is a summary of different studies on media initiatives in conflict zones, carried out in the period from 2009 to 2015. An overview on the entire documentation is given in A2.3, including indications for access on www.h-connect.ch.

The main issues addressed in this research project are *quality categories, evaluation* and *continual improvement*. The different papers were submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Advanced Study Degree in Peace and Conflict Transformation, held by Swisspeace and accredited by the Advanced Studies Centre at the University of Basel / Switzerland.

The use of this documentation is subject to limitations according to standards defined by Creative Commons. The material can be used for non-commercial purposes by quoting original sources and sharing future developments alike (CC-NC-SA; www.creativecommons.org).

For further information please use the following contact details:

Hansueli Homberger
Zürcherstrasse 40
CH-8620 Wetzikon / Switzerland
+41 (0)79 635 99 71
info@h-connect.ch
www.h-connect.ch

A1.2   Abstract

The topic of this paper - quality of media initiatives in conflict zones[4] - implies two core questions: What is good and what is poor quality (regarding the topic) and what distinguishes the *inside* of conflict zones from the *outside*. Communication channels between *inside* and *outside* are often scarce or shut down. For example when states with a high Human Development Index (HDI)[5] ask their citizens to refrain from travelling when violent clashes occur in Low-HDI-Areas. This is just one example of segregation between these two spheres of observation.

I contend that media initiatives in conflict zones must clearly extend beyond the remit of common media organisations, towards de-escalation, conflict regulation, and development etc. As these are not standard functions for media, the quality debate turns in circles. Two things, at least, are clear: Applying standard media quality criteria is not enough. And media in conflict zones are particularly well positioned to understand and explain their environment – society, social change, power balance etc. – in a holistic way. This second point is highly important for collective decision-making and administrative tasks inside conflict zones and also for objective quality assessments of outsider's aid activities[6].

In order to empower conflict-affected societies and to improve the efficacy of aid in general, I propose an additional function to media initiatives in conflict zones: *To constitute publicly accessible databases with rudimentary, journalistically validated[7] information on social change* (for details see A1.7). As media organisations constantly produce data on social change, the costs for these additional tasks appear to be reasonable when compared to the potential benefits.

The aim of this work is to be useful for practitioners and experts inside and outside conflict zones and particularly to contribute to better mutual understanding between different academic fields involved in media initiatives in conflict zones.

---

[4]   The definitions are to be found in A1.10

[5]   The Human Development Index (HDI) has been developed by the United Nations as an alternative to the Gross National Income (GNI), in order to be specific on human development.
(http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD; http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi (29.7.2014, for both sources)

[6]   The terms "aid" and "aid activities" are used in this text to describe different forms of external support to conflict zones like for example humanitarian- and development aid, activities to enforce, maintain or build peace, to deal with the past etc.

[7]   Feedback loops in media systems can validate data on social change, but this must involve also non-media actors, particularly public structures formally in charge for monitoring and documentation (statistical services etc.). Inclusiveness is of general importance in outsider interventions in violent environments. Context and stakeholders must be carefully and continually analysed in order to avoid doing harm by marginalising or privileging specific groups in conflict. See Anderson M (1999) regarding the *Do No Harm Principles.*

A1.3 About usefulness and quality

Talking about quality is en vogue, but is also vague: Different sectors such as, for example, industry, education, health, aid activities, finance etc. have different understandings of quality. Simultaneously, new visions of quality emerge[8].

Therefore, the quality-question must be discussed here together with the question of usefulness: Useful for whom and for what? In accordance with my personal understanding of quality, I want this paper to be useful for improving living conditions in conflict zones. In order go beyond simply debating media quality, the theoretical considerations in this paper were complemented with field research[9].

Another challenge is that quality assessments regarding aid often lead to debates: First because it is a political issue in the so called "donor countries", second because the correlation between *impact* (social change in conflict zones) and *input* (aid activities) can rarely be attributed with certainty. This is particularly the case in peace building, under which media initiatives in conflict zones are to be subsumed[10].

In a first phase, this work was oriented by the question: *How to evaluate quality of media initiatives in conflict zones?* First conclusions were formulated in 2009[11]. Subsequently, I included the question: How to *add value* to such initiatives? This with a focus not only on externally supported media initiatives but also on other media organisations in conflict zones, the international media system, interactions between different systems and possible synergies. I am sceptical about the idea of media concepts developed in "rich" countries[12] having the potential to de-escalate violent conflicts in "poorer" societies, without a specific peace-building element being added.

---

[8]   Some examples: The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, https://www.globalreporting.org/Pages/default.aspx; 15.10.14), Transparency International http://www.transparency.org/ (19.2.2014) or the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI; https://eiti.org/; 15.10.14).

[9]   Field research was undertaken in Bukavu (DRC; Capital City of the South Kivu Province) because of personal relations that I have in this region since a first visit in 1984. For details please refer to the full documentation (Go to: http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Media projects in conflict zones; a detailed list of documents can be found in A2.3). I am referring to this sample of fieldwork throughout this paper for illustrative purposes, referencing to it as *"my fieldwork".*

[10] The term Peace Building sums up a variety of activities reaching from diplomacy to mediation or negotiation, institution building, dealing with the past etc. Some selected definitions for peace building can be found on http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/2013/08/selected-definitions-of-peacebuilding/ (20.8.2014). The difficulties in establishing correlations between input and impact when evaluating peace building activities are further elaborated in the full documentation (Go to: http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Media projects in conflict zones).

[11] Homberger (2009); See A2.3, additional documents of the author.

[12] In this paper, the term "rich countries" is used to describe the group of states with high rankings in terms of Gross National Income per capita and/or Human Development Index, which are also referred as "industrialized" or "developed" countries in literature.

A1.4 Approaching reality in conflict zones

Based on what I experienced in roughly two years spent in the Central African Great Lakes Region between 1984 and 2014, as well as on what I learned from international experts and students about other conflict zones, I assume that isolation is a major problem for people affected by violent conflicts[13]. I still remember how puzzled I was in 1993, when asking Mrs. Shangazo, a respected lady in Shabunda (DRC), what outsiders could do to benefit her district, which was already physically isolated then, three years before war affected it. Her somehow disturbing answer was *"Il faut seulement chaque fois venir nous voir"* - "You need only to come and see us every time".

Poverty and violent conflicts segregate "insiders" like Mrs. Shangazo from the "outsider" community, which is in fact a very heterogeneous entity involving aid, military, business, academia and many other sectors. Physical or armed protection effectively binds together most of this outsider community, with the effect that a specific communication system for outsiders emerges. In this communication system, security issues are often the core topic, together with specific project related issues and observations on social realities and social change.

For the majority of those most affected by violent conflicts, such information platforms are not accessible, with the effect that different communication systems, even different "truths" exist in parallel. Without relations of trust and objective, publicly accessible information on social realities and social change, factual errors and destructive propaganda can circulate unrecognized in these segregated communication systems[14].

The fact that the survival of those most affected by violent conflicts often depends on outsider's emergency responses might provoke additional frustrations: Representatives of aid initiatives are perceived as powerful persons and the "beneficiaries" can expect that this power is used to correct unjust power balances in their environment.

Besides the scarcity of trustable relations and communication channels, traumas are a second element of segregation between *inside* and *outside*: In conflict zones, violence does not surprise but most of the time still happens unexpectedly. This traumatises victims, relatives, friends and bystanders. Outsiders most often do not share this type of experience, which implies a risk of

---

[13] Another argument to support the assumption that scarce insider-outsider communication might be problematic is the fact that "conflict countries" covered intensively by international media over the last years appear as having low or very low internet connection rates (percentage of individuals using Internet). Some examples: Eritrea 0,9% (last on the list), Somalia 1.5%, DR Congo 1.9%, Afghanistan 5.9%, Iraq 9.2%, Libya 16.5%, Syria 26.2%, compared to industrialized countries, reaching up to 95% and more (Norway for example has 95.05% of all individuals using Internet). All data are according to the International Telecommunication Union ITU; http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx, 28.7.2014 (Downloadable Excel-Sheet in the rubric *"Core indicators on access to and use of ICT by households and individuals"*, comparing 228 countries and specific geographical areas).

[14] In a recent article in Foreign Policy (6.10.2015), Séverine Autesserre analyses the problem of segregated communication systems under the rather provocative title "Trouble in Peaceland". She reports *„resentment over this behaviours grows among local partners and eventually causes international initiatives to fail"*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/10/06/trouble-in-peaceland-united-nations-congo-development/ (28.10.15)

re-traumatising victims by ignoring or recalling dramas behind smiling faces.

Aid to conflict zones contributes substantially to local or regional economies and subsequently influences power constellations. In such circumstances, illegal or immoral business practices (corruption etc.) are a third constitutive element for possibly diverging perceptions of reality among different communities: Individuals and groups involved in immoral activities have interests in dissimulating their practice, which is likely to hinder a realistic understanding of context, stakeholders and interests in a conflict.

To understand reality in conflict zones it is necessary to go beyond all those segregation lines. This is time consuming and demands relations of trust as well as access to objective information on social realities and social change. Understanding interests and needs behind power constellations can orient towards communalities, common interests and cooperation. Lack of care in this regard carries the risk of outsiders disconnecting themselves from reality inside conflict zones – and contributing to the deterioration of situations, sometimes even despite the best intentions[15].

In all this, I see *strong arguments* for outsiders to work collectively with insiders on monitoring social change in conflict zones and on constituting *reliable, publicly accessible databases with essential information on social change in different geographical areas.* Media initiatives appear as potential catalysts to bridge insider-outsider gaps, to initiate meaningful insider-outsider cooperation, and to function as feedback channels for validating data according to journalistic standards – feedback processes that are also crucial for collective decision-making and state building in conflict zones.

---

[15] Foreign Policy (2015.02.02) – as an example – reports on a well intentioned initiative – the so called „section 1502" in the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform, passed by the US Congress in 2010 – aimed at stopping commercialisation of conflict minerals, which turned out to have *„propelled millions of miners and their families deeper into poverty"* (quotation attributed to the Washington Post of November 30, 2014). http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/02/how-dodd-frank-is-failing-congo-mining-conflict-minerals/; 14.2.2015

A1.5 Why transparency on social change is important in conflict zones

Nobody doubts that objective data on social realities and social change is important for planning public services and infrastructure, for other administrative tasks and generally for collective decision making. Most states maintain statistical services for this purpose. But obtaining reliable data in this regard is complex and costly[16]. Warfare and poverty affect the capacity of such services and also public accessibility to objective data on social change.

Further, objective data on social change is a prerequisite to assess the quality and performance of aid activities[17]. It appears that *insider needs and outsider needs meet in transparency on social change*: Insiders need it to shape their future; Outsiders need it to evaluate the impact of their aid activities. These fundamentally different perspectives imply the risk of insiders and outsiders monitoring social change separately, which would be first of all an economic nonsense and secondly could disconnect outsiders from realities inside the conflict zone[18].

Therefore, the **key recommendation of this paper** is to consider the monitoring of social change as *a specific function in society* to which stakeholders should contribute *collectively*. In consequence, evaluations of aid should be referenced to such public monitoring of social change. Ad hoc data collected throughout evaluation processes can improve the aid system when made public and when it contributes to constant questioning, validating and completing of public databases[19].

---

[16] For Switzerland, with roughly 8 million inhabitants, the budget for statistical services is approximately CHF 170 million.
http://www.efv.admin.ch/d/downloads/finanzberichterstattung/budget/2014/VA14_Band_2A_d.pdf (20.8.2014)

[17] The OECD (1991, 9; Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance) claim, *"An evaluation must [...] contain such information as background [...]"*.

[18] In this regard, the nexus between journalists covering conflict zones from the outside and specialists for conflict analysis is of particular relevance for this paper: Without sufficient connections to reality in the conflict zones, the understanding of the conflict risks being actualized only by external experts, what can become an entry point for propaganda and (tactical) disinformation into international media and communication systems. A journalist interviewed early 2012 in Bukavu / DRC by the author says: *"[Understanding] starts with living together with the population. I think that this is the first thing"* (my translation).

[19] Which resonates with the above mentioned OECD Principles, stating: *"What is often needed is evaluation on a more comprehensive scale and an aggregation of evaluation results"* (OCDE, 1991; 8)

A1.6 Media's Role in Monitoring Social Change

Literally, media means in the middle. But pragmatists argue that independence in media is not possible as long as news must sell. Market failure and market concentration in the media sector is often described as threatening democracy, whilst media and the entertainment industry tend to converge[20]. However, the role of media in social change is similar to the cultural sector: Both observe and reflect, which are vital functions in society.

A1.6.1 *A few words on trust*

Trust is a keyword linking media sciences to conflict studies: In media, trust is an essential factor of economic success, as it binds recipients to "their" media. In conflict studies trust is often the key to conflict regulation[21]. When it comes to trust, everybody is an expert as trust is based on personal or collective experience and learning. As pointed out by Luhmann (1968, 53), trusting is *deliberately* taking the risk of being exploited or dominated. Taking risks and getting rewarded – a trial and error mechanism – allows trust to build up. He describes trust as a mechanism to reduce the complexity of social systems and points out that the pressure on individuals to trust in systems rather than other individuals is increasing: Public health and education systems, public transport systems, banking systems – and media – are just a few examples of trust-dependent systems.

When assessing the quality of media initiatives in conflict zones, one main challenge is to understand the "mechanisms'" of trust in the context being observed. This challenge is manifold and implies a number of sub-questions: What levels, forms or expressions of trust exist in the conflict zone and how do they change or interact? Is a specific media seen as trustworthy? By whom? Can outsiders realistically evaluate trust related aspects in conflict zones?

Surveys and interviews are current methods to approach such questions but have substantial uncertainties: Do or can resource-persons tell the truth? Do they recognize behavioural change as such? Are evaluation procedures and quality criteria comprehensible to people living in

---

[20] Puppis (2007, 78, 65ff) demonstrates how market fails in the media sector: *"Because of the limited willingness of recipients to pay for media use, refinancing media organisation on the public market (alone) is not possible. Media need to orient themselves to alternative financing sources. If media are active in advertising market, the advertising industry obtains a possibility to influence content"*. Further (pp. 65 et seq.), he looks at media regulations and sees state subsides as one regulatory instrument, among others. He distinguishes three arguments to justify media regulations: Technical reasons (e.g. limited availability of frequencies etc.), commercial reasons (market failure in public goods like information; danger of market concentration etc.) and socio-political reasons (vital importance of objective media for democracies; cultural value of media etc.). (My translations). Peace Nobel Shirin Ebadi (in Solbach et al., 2008, 15) is explicit: *"…the principal [five] owners of American media control and manage assets that amount to five thousand billion dollars. This concentration and accumulation of capital becomes so powerful that it eclipses the role of the individual in society".* In her opinion, freedom of expression must be biased in favour to none-elites in order to serve democracies. In her words: *"And, of course, that means freedom for the opponents of the government […]. It is the opponents who should be free to disseminate their views in any way they wish"*.

[21] Field research in the DRC revealed that trust is also crucial to get information about remote, rural areas with difficult access when fighting occurs. Local media say that they work with „rural correspondents" who serve as information sources but also as channels to receive feedback from recipients.

conflict zones? Such studies demand extensive time frames and considerable financial means. If these resources are scarce, approximations based on existing statistical data appear feasible but must be at least rudimentarily validated. Feedback loops in media systems appears to be an interesting option in this regard[22]. As pointed out in A1.5, surveys should certainly contribute to transparency with regard to social change and power constellations.

A1.6.2 Can propaganda be constructive?

Manipulation is in fact not always as bad as the term suggests: Chiropractors manipulate their patients, technicians manipulate engines - to name just two examples of manipulation generally considered as *constructive*. Media initiatives and other peace building activities in conflict zones are designed to manipulate society. Promoters of such activities who are not transparent about their intentions might face difficulties when trying to convince stakeholders about the usefulness, legitimacy and constructiveness of their propaganda[23].

The objective of propaganda[24] is to change the behaviour of recipients, most often by promising future advantages or by scaremongering. But before behaviour changes, trust needs to be established, at least to a minimal degree. Otherwise, promises or scare tactics would not convince. Thus, to be constructive, campaigns promising future advantages must be first of all transparent about their authors, networks and interests.

But who has the legitimacy to define, what is constructive and what not? How to reconcile eventually diverging visions of sponsors, implementers and beneficiaries? One aim of this paper is to draw attention away from the destructive-constructive dilemma and focus on *mechanisms of propaganda* instead. These are similar for constructive and for destructive media outlets, as usually no separate media systems are installed. I am convinced that understanding how and why propaganda works is useful for people living in conflict zones. Insiders and outsiders certainly have different approaches to reality in conflict zones, which can be an obstacle to peace and stabilisation. Using propaganda techniques transparently to overcome such obstacles appears to be an interesting perspective to improve cooperation.[25].

---

[22] Study designs with statistical control groups are ambivalent in conflict zones: It can be seen as immoral to cut specific groups from specific services in order to figure out changes in other groups having these services delivered.

[23] In fact, promoters of media initiatives in conflict zones chose diverging slogans like for example *"Media for peace and human dignity"* (Fondation Hirondelle, http://www.hirondelle.org/); *"[Empowering] groups and individuals who are the target of hate speech and ensuing acts"* (Radio La Benevolencija Humanitarian Tools Foundation; http://www.labenevolencija.org/la-benevolencija/mission-and-vision/); *„End violent conflict"*, Search for Common Ground, https://www.sfcg.org/; All examples viewed on 28.7.2014.

[24] According to Jowett, G., & O'Donnel, V. (1986, 2) *"Propaganda, in its most neutral sense, means to disseminate or promote particular ideas"*.

[25] My field research provides some support for this assumption, but as it is also my personal opinion and the field study is based on a small sample, this cannot be considered as evidence. Explaining how manipulation and propaganda works is distinct from explaining that information, opinion and advertising must be separated – a golden rule in journalism, transferred to national laws in many countries.

A1.6.3 Is the mediating function of media a potential or a duty?

Impartiality links the roles of mediators and of media[26]: Both impact violently escalated conflicts, but only mediators have a clear duty: De-escalation and conflict regulation. Media reporting certainly has an impact on how actors and their (conflicting) interests are perceived, but this impact is not determined in advance as long as freedom of the press counts as the highest imperative in media. Howard (2002, 9) firmly questions, whether this is morally correct by stating: *"[I]t is increasingly obvious that the professional norms of journalism do not trump fundamental moral obligations"*. This dilemma inspired Johan Galtung et al to develop the concept of peace journalism[27] some fifty years ago. But not many of the elements of this are implemented in today's leading media[28].

Whether, and which, media are able and willing to control the impact of their reporting on escalated conflicts is an interesting question but must be left open here in order not to overstretch the paper. Of relevance are the media's *potential to impact*[29] and the ways to *value this potential*. Again, the question of destructive or constructive could be asked, but it is more important to distinguish media initiatives in conflict zones from media in general: The first have a clear task with regard to the conflict, similar to the task of a mediator: De-escalation, in the first place, but it can go beyond this, towards development, economic growth, reducing social inequalities etc. Other media, inside and outside conflict zones have the same potential, theoretically, but most often adopt a neutral position in this regard. In addition to this, media professionals covering conflicts from outside the conflict zone often lack the necessary know-how to achieve de-escalation inside the respective conflict zone. Therefore, media initiatives in conflict zones must provide adequate support in terms of peace building and/or conflict analysis to regional and international media so these can value their potential to stabilize conflict zones.

---

[26] As media and mediators consider viewpoints of different (ideally all) parties, a rigid argumentation would rather claim *all-partiality* instead of impartiality, at least from mediators.

[27] Galtung J (2008b) recommends journalists *"go for the less newsworthy to get a balanced picture"* and *"be conscious of the tendency to cast non-elite in a negative light, to disregard the structural, and to go for the negative, like the violence, rather than the positive, like the solutions"*.

[28] This implementation problem of peace journalism inspired me to propose *Connective Journalism* as an alternative, more neutral concept (Homberger, 2014; see A2.3, additional documents). Howard (2001, 12) proposes *"to view the media as several stages in a continuum of intervention"*. His model moves from stage 1 (*"conventional journalism"*) to stage 5 which is *"directly interventionist media programming, which includes and extends beyond conventional techniques to use soap operas, street theatre videos and comic books [...] with an intended outcome in mind to foster society 'as we'd like it'"*. Howard himself uses quotation marks for «as we'd like it» and leaves out whether he asked the beneficiaries if they "like it". From the sources I interviewed in my field research, some were sceptical about entertaining media content, giving the credits rather to media offering space for dialogue. To all this, McGoldrick & Lynch (2001) contribute with a list of Do's and Don'ts for peace journalism, enriching the original concept of Galtung.

[29] The potential of media to impact conflicts must not be questioned as such: The destructive role of media in the world wars and more recently in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda are two examples that are publicly not contested. In addition to which, none of the interviewed persons in my fieldwork questions the potential of media to end violence and some even go as far as seeing the end of violence as the ultimate goal of media.

A1.7   How to move from reporting social change to monitoring it

Having discussed why it makes sense to involve media in systematic and public monitoring of social change for peace building purposes, the question is now: How to do this? Regardless of their environment, media have the knowledge and the networks to cover social change. It is just that, after reporting, outlets usually end up in archives or, in conflict zones, sometimes in waste bins. The idea here is to create synergies between journalistic work and the constitution of publicly accessible databases on social change.

The following is just a very brief process description.

Step 1: **Identification of actors, relevant indicators and geographical limitations** – leads directly to the most difficult conceptual questions. How to decide which indicators reliably represent social change? Who to involve in this decision making process? How to manage the task under budget pressure?

The fact that the satisfaction of *basic needs* is determinative for individuals' and groups' social reality is an argument to link the choice of indicators to it[30]. Further, journalists' accessibility to data needs to have priority. Having highlighted scarce Insider-Outsider contacts as one characteristic of conflict zones, the physical presence of foreigners could be another possible indicator. But as all this is closely linked to quality definitions, the recommendation must be to involve the concerned beneficiaries in the detailed decision-making regarding this question[31].

On the other hand, indicators, data collection methods and geographical aspects must be determined at an early stage of the project because later changes might impede the creation of consistent databases suitable for comparative purposes. Therefore, a basic set of indicators needs to be defined from start; additional criteria or other geographical areas can be added later.

Step 2: **Investigation and focussed media coverage at fixed intervals** – is aimed at obtaining a baseline and subsequent datasets on the fixed indicators, and at crosschecking data through feedback loops in media systems. Covering topics related to basic needs and social change is likely to be of relevance for recipients in conflict zones and arouse their interest.

Step 3: **Documentation and presenting trends** – focusses on inspiring (political) dialogue and on minimizing disinformation, speculation, destructive propaganda and tensions related to this. The Internet appears to be the tool of choice for data storage and presenting overviews and trends. Additionally, the findings need to be presented and discussed in local media in order to assure they are constantly discussed and validated, and to include those communities that do

---

[30]   A classical source of inspiration about basic needs is Maslow A.H. (1943). The framework of the Human Development Index (HDI) is another recommendable source of inspiration in the quest of indicators for the monitoring of social change, even if covering all 54 indicators included in the HDI is far from realistic for the purpose discussed here. The website http://hdr.undp.org/en/data is transparent on methodological details about how to monitor social realities and social change.

[31]   Further elaborated in chapter B.2 of the full documentation (Go to: http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Media projects in conflict zones; a detailed list of documents can be found in A2.3).

not have access to the Internet. Moreover, an effort should be made to arouse the interest of outsider communities in order to bridge the insider-outsider gaps described.

Linking the monitoring and documenting of social change to journalistic activities helps minimize efforts. Steps two and three offer the chance for multiple synergies whilst step one is oriented at project design and mobilizing resources.

A1.8 Expected outcomes of the proposal (Hypotheses / Theory of Change)

These reflections, together with earlier studies and field research allowed the following three hypotheses to be developed, which all have the same starting point:

> *(1) Public access to journalistically validated data on social change in conflict zones facilitates the constitution and maintenance of fact-oriented media landscapes, which in turn is constitutive for dialogue, trust building and inclusiveness in collective decision making.*

> *(2) Further, publicly accessible, journalistically validated data on social change in a particular conflict zone can potentially raise interest from the "outside-world" (media, research, cultural sector, business, sports etc.), counter isolation and (re)integrate conflict zones in regional and international communities and networks.*

> *(3) In regard to aid activities, publicly accessible, journalistically validated data on social change has the potential to avoid multiple parallel monitoring processes, which reduces spending and increases the efficiency of aid.*

Overall, the **Theory of Change**[32] has *publicly accessible, journalistically validated data on social change* as its input variable. This is expected to effect changes in the following six output variables: *Fact-orientation* in the media landscape (increase), *Trust* (increase), *Inclusiveness* in decision making (increase), *Interest* of outsider communities (increase), *(Re)-integration* into regional / international communities (increase) and *Efficiency* of aid activities (increase).

The expected causal links from the availability of objective (journalistically validated) information to the output variables are not automatisms but require deliberate promotion. Further, the cause effect chain, from input to output, is not restricted to media: Availability of objective information can potentially have the expected impacts also via other channels like for example public administrations, civil society organisations, diaspora, cooperation in terms of culture, education etc.

---

[32] Church & Rogers (2006, 10 et seq.) dedicate a whole chapter to understanding change in conflictive situations and strongly recommend making theories of change explicit. In their words: "the changes sought [in peace building programs] should be [made] evident in a well designed programme".

A1.9 Challenges

The following list of risks and challenges might look discouraging. Nevertheless, it would look quite similar without adding the monitoring of social change to media initiatives in conflict zones.

The most critical element in the concept presented here is its dependency on the readiness of different actors inside a conflict zone to cooperate[33]. Cooperation is important to avoid market distortion: Charging one organisation with the whole task would allocate disproportionate funding to it and leave other local media organisations discriminated against and the initiative dependent on external funding. Further, cooperation between media organisations is required to assure data validation through different feedback channels.

The proposal to create public databases on social change in fact encourages media to go beyond their classical role "in the middle" and complement other (public) functions, most likely statistical services. This can create more problems than it solves when representatives formally in charge of this function interpret complementation as disrespectful or even threatening. Conversely, convincing specialists for statistics, social sciences etc. to become involved in the initiative might substantially increase its overall performance. The end-goal must be efficient collective decision-making and financially independent structures that fulfil their role in society (media, statistical and other public services, civil society etc.). Combining initiatives in institution building, political dialogue, and in the media sector appears to be a highly synergetic option.

On a more general level, the acceptance of the idea by powerful individuals and ruling groups is not pregiven but must be acquired by making potential advantages comprehensible. The choice of indicators is essential in this regard: Many statistical figures such as, for example, the total population or ethnical attributions can be politicized or even abused for segregation and worse. Innocent indicators do not exist, but focussing on basic needs like health, education etc. and on trends instead of rankings (which potentially stigmatize the most vulnerable) are less sensitive or polarizing.

Motivating different stakeholders - some occasionally in competition with each other - to cooperate implies a danger of paralysis when having too many stakeholders on board. The issue can be managed by limiting the number of representatives per *type* of contributor in the system (which potentially opens the system for contributors from outside the media sector).

Another risk lies in the limitations that arise when monitoring of social change is realized as a "by-product" of media organisations: Small budgets allow only a few indicators to be monitored and only a small number of actualisations per time period. This need not be an obstacle (or can even be a plus) if information is systematized into accurate and relevant essentials. Considering

---

[33] My fieldwork indicates a certain degree of mistrust in the media ecosystem of Bukavu/South Kivu, contrasted by the viewpoint of several journalists interviewed, who have experienced cooperation among different media as positive. Such exercises in media cooperation have apparently been organized by external donors in the African Great Lakes Region to cover important events, i.e. elections etc.

the usual geographical fragmentation of conflict zones, priority should be given to monitoring different geographical areas, with few indicators.

Technological challenges are data storage, data safety and visualisation, and are linked to the choice of criteria and geographical areas to be monitored. The risk of creating "data cemeteries", which nobody uses, and which even discriminate against people without Internet connection, is not negligible. Involving different stakeholders raises the chances that they exploit the "Wiki's", to which they contribute. In the case of media, an incentive could be that meaningful and accurate content can be produced with less effort.

The legal context and its practical implementation in conflict zones are particularly challenging issues, as media in conflict zones are often subject to oppression. Including the legal situation in the monitoring of social change increases the degree of complexity and carries a certain risk of conflict with stakeholders who have something to hide. However, not addressing this challenge carries a risk of being incomplete and having poor impact.

Overall, long-term engagement appears as a must in the matter discussed here, not only because short-term orientation would potentially put the life and wellbeing of project staff at risk.

A1.10 Definitions

The research question implies the terms "Conflict Zone" and "Media Initiatives", which are specifically defined hereafter for this paper:

Conflict Zone: A geographic area with *violence problems* and/or lack of *justice* where external actors or sponsors intervene in the local *media sector*, or consider doing so, in order to influence society to be less violent and/or more just[34].

Media Initiative: Non-local actors providing assistance (financial, technical, intellectual or similar) to the local media sector in a conflict zone according to the definition above.

The combination of these two definitions limits applicability to specific activities in specific contexts. In return, a wide spectrum of possible interpretations of specific terms is intentionally left open in order to avoid imposing value systems from outside conflict zones.

Violence is not limited to direct violence but also includes other, more subtle or hidden forms of violence and human rights abuses, subsumed for example by Johan Galtung (2008a, 106) in the categories of direct, structural and cultural violence.

Justice is not limited to its purely legal aspects but can also include, for example, elements like felt injustice, due to impunity.

Media Sector is not limited to "classical" media channels like press, radio and TV but can also include the internet and social networks as well as channels generally attributed to the cultural sector like Books, Films, Music, Events and the like. This logic also applies for the term **Media Landscape** used in the hypothesis. It should not be limited strictly to the channels mentioned above but also includes more personal communication patterns like, for example, the direct communication people use to verify information.

Social change – a key term of this paper – is referred to as *"[…] alteration of mechanisms within the social structure […]"* by Encyclopaedia Britannica[35]. As in practice the separation of mechanisms and structures might be challenging, I would tend to also accept *alterations in social structures* as a form of social change.

---

[34] This definition is not in contradiction to other definitions for areas with violence problems and/or lack of justice but aims at *focussing on media initiatives* in such zones. In international relations, different frameworks are used to describe situations of violent conflict like, for example, the term "complex emergency", defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as *"Situations of disrupted livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people, in which any emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security environment"* (http://www.who.int/environmental_health_emergencies/complex_emergencies/en/ , 14.7.2014).
This definition is much larger than for example the definition of war used by the German based "Working Group for Research on the Causes of War" (AKUF, "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung"), which defines a war as a *"violent mass conflict [involving at least one] regular force [and] a minimum of centrally controlled organisation [and armed operations taking place] with a certain frequency".* Violent clashes that do not fulfil the above criteria are considered as "armed conflicts". http://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/en/fachbereiche/sozialwissenschaften/forschung/akuf/akuf/kriegsdefinition-und-kriegstypologie/#c84532 , viewed 28.1.2015

[35] http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/550924/social-change (30.7.2014)

A1.11 Bibliography (Excerpt)

Note: An exhaustive bibliography can be found in the complete research documentation, available on *www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Media projects in conflict zones.*

Anderson, M. (1999). How Aid Can Support Peace – or War. Boulder, CO: Lynne

Church, C., & Rogers, M.M. (2006). Designing for Results. Washington, Search for Common Ground. http://www.sfcg.org/Documents/manualpart1.pdf (15.2.2015)

Galtung, J. (2008b). 50 Years - 100 Peace & Conflict Perspectives. Kolfon Press, www.kolfon.com

Howard, R. (2001). Media and Peacebuilding: Mapping the Possibilities. Vancouver B.C., Activate, Quarterly journal of IMPACS, Institute of Media, Policy, and Civil Society

Jowett, G., & O'Donnel, V. (1986), Propaganda and Persuasion, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications

Luhmann, N. (1984).Soziale Systeme - Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie. Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp

McGoldrick, A., & Lynch, J. (2001). What is Peace Journalism? Vancouver B.C., Activate, Quarterly journal of IMPACS, Institute of Media, Policy, and Civil Society

Maslow, A.H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. Psychological Review, 50, 370-396. http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm (15.10.2014)

OECD (1991). DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance. Paris, Development Assistance Committee. http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2755284.pdf (26.2.2015)

Puppis, M. (2007). Einführung in die Medienpolitik. Konstanz, UTB / UVK Verlagsgesellschaft

Solbach, W., Schmidt, C., & Boemcken, M. (2008). Media in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention. Conference-Documentation Global Media Forum in Bonn (2. - 4.6.2008). Bonn, Deutsche Welle.

Observatoire social Sud Kivu

Exploration participative de la réalité sociale et de son évolution par la valorisation du travail des journalistes locaux

ANNEXE 2 : Considérations spécifiques

Un certain nombre de paramètres liés à ce projet reste à négocier avec des partenaires locaux. Les travaux préliminaires indiquent quelques champs thématiques à discuter dans ce cadre. Ils sont résumés ci-après à titre d'aide-mémoire. Le plan d'action intégré dans l'annexe 3 repose sur ces prémisses.

A2.1 Notes sur le déroulement du projet

Dans l'idée de l'auteur, le projet pilote est conçu pour **une durée de dix ans**[36]. Les 24 premiers mois avant le « Going Public » sont destinés à constituer un réseau de collaboratrices et collaborateurs locaux. Leur tâche sera de couvrir leur district (Territoire) par des **recherches périodiques sur des sujets spécifiques selon des méthodologies standardisées** (p. ex. santé, éducation, économie, etc.). L'intervalle proposé pour ces recherches est de six mois. Dans leur ensemble, ces recherches donneront une image cohérente et géographiquement différenciée de la situation du moment au Sud Kivu, ce qui permet à la longue d'identifier les tendances de l'évolution sociale. D'autres tâches durant la phase initiale du projet porteront sur le règlement des modalités de collaboration, la recherche de données de base (Baseline Studies) et la conception d'un logiciel simple pour centraliser, publier et visualiser les données recherchées.

Les indicateurs pour l'orientation desdites recherches est un autre champ thématique à clarifier avec les partenaires locaux. Ce choix inclura probablement des éléments de l'index du développement humain des Nation Unies (IDH)[37] ou d'autres instruments similaires[38], notamment pour pouvoir recourir à des méthodologies standardisées. En somme, le monitoring sera a limiter à un petit nombre d'indicateurs (5 à 10). Comme il a été dit, une collaboration étroite avec les autorités compétentes de la RDC (services statistiques, etc.) ainsi que des universités et des spécialistes devra être envisagée du début.

---

[36] L'exécution du projet sur une durée inférieure à dix ans serait éventuellement une option si la sécurité du staff local n'est pas compromise. Toutefois, le budget ne se réduira pas proportionnellement (environ -9% pour une durée de sept au lieu de dix ans). Une durée de moins de sept ans apparaît comme non recommandable sur base des travaux préliminaires.

[37] http://hdr.undp.org/fr/data; 23.9.2015

[38] P. ex. Global Reporting Initiative, etc. https://www.globalreporting.org/Pages/default.aspx, 28.4.2016

Le staff local du projet (« Observateurs sociaux ») devrait être composé dans la majorité (environ 75%) de journalistes locaux employés à temps partiel (entre 10% et 25% environ). Les observateurs sociaux devront rester majoritairement dans leurs professions originales, à savoir les médias ou d'autres domaines pertinents pour le projet (p. ex. statistique, sociologie, informatique, etc.). Quant au recrutement, il conviendra de respecter une représentation équilibrée entre les genres et les différents espaces géographiques.

La validation par des moyens journalistiques est un terme clé de ce projet : des informations sociales recherchées par des journalistes locaux seront validées sur base de la déontologie journalistique. Relativement bon marché, ce concept est toutefois limité. Premièrement parce que le monitoring ne peut se faire que sur un nombre limité d'indicateurs, et deuxièmement parce que des recensements en bonne et due forme ne seront pas possibles avec ces moyens. Pourtant, certaines de ces lacunes se laissent combler *en initiant, en animant et en soutenant – à travers les médias – un dialogue entre les observateurs sociaux, la population et des spécialistes (« Feedback-Loops »).* Cette approche permet de valider même des sondages rudimentaires, jusqu'à un certain degré. Fournir un appui ciblé à ce dialogue entre observateurs sociaux, population et spécialistes peut être vu comme l'élément le plus innovateur de cette proposition – qui a le potentiel d'ouvrir d'autres niveaux de compréhension au-delà des objectifs du projet. Et ceci est plus qu'un effet secondaire positif : comme on le sait, la compréhension est cruciale pour régler des conflits.

Géographiquement, le focus sur le Sud Kivu est volontairement étroit. Une extension en cas de résultats satisfaisants est une option. Le cas échéant, il ressort des études préalables que la représentation de l'espace rural est un facteur sensible : il s'agit d'éviter que des contrées éloignées soient discriminées par rapport à des régions plus facilement accessibles pour l'aide internationale[39]. Sous cet angle, il apparaît recommandable d'inclure une option permettant l'utilisation de p. ex. 15% du budget pour des activités dans l'espace rurale des provinces avoisinantes le long des frontières avec le Sud-Kivu, si des nécessités et des potentialités s'esquissent.

---

[39] C'est l'auteur en personne qui conclut qu'une discrimination de l'espace rural pourrait être ou devenir problématique au Sud Kivu, sur base de ses propres activités de recherche et consultation dans la région (vue d'ensemble des publications voir A2.3). Il s'agit d'une opinion personnelle et non d'un résultat de recherche. La question n'a pas été soumise à une étude scientifique par l'auteur.

A2.2 Notes sur l'évaluation du projet

Le critère-clé pour l'évaluation du projet proposé est la demande pour des services et produits mis à disposition. Ainsi, la satisfaction des groupes suivants devrait servir d'orientation aux évaluations :

- Le réseau même qui recherche et publie (staff local du projet)
- Les services concernés de l'administration congolaise, la société civile et des acteurs (externes) de la coopération internationale
- Médias : ceux du contexte local, mais aussi ceux avec orientation régionale et internationale

Suivant les perspectives globales de cette proposition, il est indispensable d'évaluer aussi l'impact du projet sur la stabilisation de la région des Grands Lacs africains et de considérer les leçons apprises quant à l'amélioration des projets médias en zone de conflit. La complexité de telles recherches impose l'établissement d'un budget à part pour un suivi scientifique (environ 16% du montant recherché ; voir annexe 3). Sans cette séparation, les couts d'évaluation apparaîtraient disproportionnés par rapport au coût total. Bien évidemment, un suivi scientifique adéquat du projet sera d'intérêt collectif et augmentera donc potentiellement l'utilité de la demarche.

A2.3 Note sur l'auteur et ses relations avec le Sud Kivu

Entre 1994 et 2008, Hansueli Homberger a dirigé l'association Suisse *Solidarité Shabunda* qui s'engageait en faveur du Territoire de Shabunda dans la Province du Sud Kivu (bénévolat). Depuis 2008, il conduit des recherches sur la qualité et l'amélioration des projets médias en zone de conflit dans le cadre d'études postgrades accréditées par l'Université de Bâle (Master of Advanced Studies in Peace and Conflict Transformation, en coopération avec Swisspeace). Parmi les travaux effectués dans ce cadre, l'enquête susmentionnée sur la perception des médias à Bukavu et les attentes de leurs utilisateurs revêt une pertinence particulière pour la présente proposition.

Hansueli Homberger est consultant indépendant, évaluateur, formateur d'adultes et technicien. Il dirige la société *h-connect Sarl* et vit à CH-8620 Wetzikon.

Pour en savoir plus : *www.h-connect.ch.*

Contact : +41 (0)79 635 99 71 ; info@h-connect.ch

A2.3.1 Autres publications de l'auteur

Improving Media Initiatives in Conflict Zones – Reconsidering Quality Categories. 2015. Documentation complète. Master-Thesis en anglais. Y compris l'enquête à Bukavu (voir en bas).

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Projets média en zones de conflit

Médias en zone de conflit : perceptions et attentes. 2015. Enquête à Bukavu / Sud Kivu. En Français ; abstract et analyse de contenu en anglais. Compris dans la documentation complète susmentionnée.

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Projets média en zones de conflit

Analyse de contexte, Kivu-Maniema rural. 2014. En français. Établi pour l'évaluation d'une ONG locale, opérationnelle au Kivu-Maniema rural. L'analyse fut validé rudimentairement par une réflexion publique à Shabunda en décembre 2013

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Congo / Grands Lacs → Shabunda 2014

Connective Journalism – How to overcome the implementation problems of peace journalism. 2012. Anglais.

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Culture → Essais

Bukavu … via Bujumbura – Portraits, et quelques questions ouvertes. 2012. Français ou allemand.

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Culture → Essais

Research Proposal. 2012. Anglais.

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Projets média en zones de conflit

Evaluating the Quality and Impact of Media Initiatives in Conflict Zones - Interim Study report. 2010. Anglais.

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Projets média en zones de conflit

Medienprojekte und Medienwirkungen in Konfliktzonen – Grundlagen zur Herleitung von Qualitätskriterien. 2009. Allemand.

> http://www.h-connect.ch → Organisation → Projets média en zones de conflit