U.S. Universities and Media Development

A Report to the Center for International Media Assistance

By Anne Nelson

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CIMA Center for International Media Assistance

NED National Endowment for Democracy
Supporting freedom around the world

The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), a project of the National Endowment for Democracy, aims to strengthen the support, raise the visibility, and improve the effectiveness of media assistance programs by providing information, building networks, conducting research, and highlighting the indispensable role independent media play in the creation and development of sustainable democracies around the world. An important aspect of CIMA's work is to research ways to attract additional U.S. private sector interest in and support for international media development.

CIMA convenes working groups, discussions, and panels on a variety of topics in the field of media development and assistance. The center also issues reports and recommendations based on working group discussions and other investigations. These reports aim to provide policymakers, as well as donors and practitioners, with ideas for bolstering the effectiveness of media assistance.

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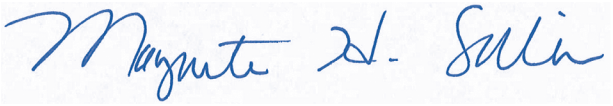
Preface

The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) at the National Endowment for Democracy commissioned this study of U.S. universities' work in international media development.

CIMA is grateful to Anne Nelson, a veteran journalist and journalism educator, for her research and insights on this topic.

We hope that this report will become an important reference for international media assistance efforts.



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Executive Summary

Over the past decade, the field of communications has exploded onto unimagined new platforms and applications. U.S. universities have long been partners in international media development, but now those who wish to remain active in the field must adapt to a challenging new environment.

In the past, universities tended to work within narrowly defined categories of media assistance, largely centered on journalism training. But sweeping technological and social changes have disrupted the profession, and many journalism programs have retrenched, cutting back on international activities to concentrate on their domestic programs. Others have taken the opposite approach, seeking new international partnerships to increase revenue through grants and tuition. Much of the most dynamic activity is taking place in university departments that are new to the field of media development.

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It has never been easy to define the term "media development"—and it may well get harder. But here are some initial parameters for the purpose of this report:

- Media development entails a coordinated effort to advance the common good through the free flow of information, especially in societies that have lived under severe political or economic constraints.
- The "common good" presumes that projects go beyond the provision of technology to include some engagement with content or function in partnership with serious content providers.
- Media development contributes some "leave-behind" value, through structural benefits that remain after the implementation is complete.
- The "university-based projects that are the subject of this report are predominantly carried out by and funded through a college or university (as opposed to side activities carried out independently by faculty).

Clearly, many worthwhile activities fall outside this range of definitions. Almost every U.S. journalism program receives international visitors, educates international students and professionals, conducts international research, and consults with international media development implementers. This report takes a narrower view, attempting to identify trends and innovative institutions. It also seeks to identify some important new players. The exponential growth in crowd-sourcing and mobile platforms is attracting new academic implementers from disciplines ranging from public health to transitional justice. These programs are picking up

new media tools and using them to new, often unexpected ends.

The new media ecosystem demands unprecedented agility from the American university system. Institutions must grapple with the fact that developments on the ground are evolving far faster than university departments or syllabuses. Some of the most notable projects are "bottom-up" developments that don't conform to academic structures. One example is Ushahidi, the open-source mapping platform that is revolutionizing crisis management–born off-campus, but nurtured by its relations with many different academic institutions. While Ushahidi has not always fit neatly under the category of "journalism," it was a winner in the 2009 Knight News Challenge.[1] The Knight Foundation is casting a wide net in search of fresh ideas to benefit the culture of journalism, open to projects from any discipline. "It's not a question of journalism schools versus non-journalism schools," notes Eric Newton, Knight's vice president for journalism program. "It's innovators versus non-innovators."

Yet while much of the current innovation involves new platforms, that doesn't mean that traditional concerns have gone away. Donors, academics, and practitioners all reinforce the need for independent, quality content that adheres to ethical standards. As innovative platforms assume more of the traditional functions of news organizations, their implementers often find themselves returning to the basic principles that journalism schools have been teaching for decades.

A Fragmented Landscape

The new world of U.S. university-based media development is scattered around scores of institutions and departments around the country, with new projects and partnerships springing up all the time. It is noteworthy that none of the dozens of U.S. universities surveyed appears to have a formal program in international media development.[2] Academics have little notion of what is being done in the field at other institutions, and it is rare to see much coordination between departments within the same university.

"You know what they say," noted Bruce Etling, director of the Berkman Center's Internet and Democracy project. "There is no Harvard University–it's all the schools living in their own microcosm."

This fragmentation makes it unfeasible to comprehensively catalogue all of the existing programs among the nearly 7,000 accredited U.S. colleges and universities, but it is possible to chart some trends in the field and describe notable projects in each category.

Current U.S. university involvement in media development falls into four principal categories:

1. Training in skills and content production for journalism students and working journalists.

2. Faculty and curriculum development for journalism education.

3. The promotion of new media platforms for advocacy, research, and information campaigns, especially related to public health and human rights.

4. Research that leverages other modes of media development.

Journalism training and content production for journalism students and working journalists

For decades, journalism training has been the classic form of media assistance, a natural outgrowth to the admission of international students at U.S. journalism schools. The University of Missouri and Columbia, the oldest journalism programs in the United States, both had international students from the beginning.

One watershed program in media development was conducted by Columbia University in post-Communist Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia, like other countries in the former Soviet bloc, featured a highly literate population with decent access to newspapers and broadcasters, but a dearth of journalistic skills and critical thinking. The New York Times Foundation set out to address these problems in partnership with the International Media Fund. (The New York Times Foundation closed its doors in 2008, a victim of the economic crisis.[3] The International Media Fund was launched with U.S. government support in 1990 to foster independent media in the former Soviet bloc. It was terminated in 1996.) The two donors approached Columbia as a partner in Prague in an attempt to jumpstart journalism education in the region. In 1991, Columbia launched the "Columbia-Charles University Journalism Project."

In the early 1990s, teams of Columbia journalism professors rotated through the

lofty halls of Charles University, teaching variants of journalism school courses in English to Czechoslovakian students. There were many bumps along the way. The first class started off with 43 students, but fell to 10 by the end of the semester. Czech students weren't used to required written assignments, and those who completed the course found that few of its teachings could be applied in Czech newsrooms at the time. After two years, the program's architects commissioned a report to reflect on core values and lessons learned.

"How does one build a free press where none exists? There are many avenues of thought," the author mused:

> One simply is to provide the equipment–the presses, the computers, the cameras, the transmitters–and let these new pioneers explore the territory in the same way the Zengers and the Hearsts and the McCormicks did in this country. This idea fails to take advantage, however, of the experiences of the Zengers and the Hearsts and the McCormicks. It fails to assume that we have learned valuable lessons that can be passed on, to allow others to create a better product in a faster period of time. [4]

The Columbia School of Journalism has worked under several administrations since that report was written. It still maintains an international presence, offering joint degrees with Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg and the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris, and maintaining partnerships with universities in Germany, Argentina, India, and Spain.[5] According to journalism school Dean Nick Lemann, Columbia President Lee Bollinger has publicly suggested that the university may open a future Global Center dedicated to press issues. The Columbia Journalism Review recently published a pilot issue of a new Chinese edition in partnership with a Taiwan-based enterprise, and there are hopes it will move forward.[6]

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But Lemann does not regard international media development as central to his school's program. Regarding the Charles University project, he asked, "You mean the old imperialist model?"

What is the Journalism School currently doing in field of media development? "The answer is, not much, except in an anecdotal way," he said in an interview. "We're a school, so our job is education. My preferred answer is like the James Carville slogan: 'It's a school, stupid.'" The School of Journalism has increased its percentage of international students over his tenure, he said, but "the biggest number are from the UK and Canada"–countries that fall outside the realm of media assistance. (International students now account for almost a third of Columbia's 300 students, up from almost 15 percent a decade ago.)

Lemann noted, "My background before I came here was mostly domestic, so that's

where my focus has been. I don't think international media development would be a good use of my time." He has altered the school's former approach to international journalism education. "We've gotten out of what they used to call 'train the trainers'—I don't think of it that way. It just seems presumptuous to tell people abroad that this is how to teach." Lemann added that the school has little connection to the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) or the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), two training institutions that used to deploy some Columbia faculty. However, a few current faculty members teach overseas on their own time in various summer programs.

Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism has moved emphatically in the opposite direction. In 2008, it opened a degree program in journalism and communication in Education City, on the outskirts of Doha, the capital of Qatar.[7] The Qatar program is directed by Medill professor Richard Roth. He laid out its principles in an e-mail interview:

> The incentive here was a risk-free opportunity to walk the talk of globalizing our undergraduate program. This is our first overseas degree program. There had been many overtures from other countries and foreign universities in the past, but they all seemed too much like franchising–lending or selling our brand without Northwestern keeping control of the quality or the curriculum.
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> [The] Qatar [program] isn't that: it is the Northwestern curriculum, with Northwestern faculty and Northwestern standards. No risk because the Qatar Foundation is footing the bill, for all necessary expenses. Additionally, the Qatar Foundation funded at Northwestern University three faculty chairs for the Evanston campus–each named for the Emir and one each in journalism, communication and the college of arts and sciences.

The Qatar Foundation first approached the president of Northwestern in April 2006, and the program came together quickly. "It is the same curriculum we have in Evanston, only repackaged," Roth noted. "We have, as you might imagine, added some things not offered in Evanston to account for where we are, such as a course called 'Newswriting in Arabic' and a course on Arabic television." About a third of the students are Qatari nationals, and a number of others have grown up in Qatar in the expatriate community. The first year of the program enrolled 38 students with 16 nationalities, who paid the same tuition in Qatar as they would in Evanston. Roth intends to maintain the same number of students and increase the number of applications. For the time being, all of the additional funding comes from the Qatar Foundation, but Roth is seeking supplementary donations for scholarships.

The Qatar program has been multi-media from the outset. "All our students learn to do journalism on all platforms," Roth stated. "They are taught beginning in the first year to do multimedia journalism. All of them have blogs, all learn Flash, all shoot and edit video, etc. Our student 'newspaper' is online only."

Qatar falls into its own intriguing category in terms of media development–the oil-rich

Persian Gulf state is hardly "economically underdeveloped," with a per capita income of more than $120,000, which places it second in the world.[8] Yet its journalism culture is young, untempered, and vibrant. Doha is the home of satellite broadcaster al-Jazeera, which has transformed the Arab media environment (and provides guest speakers for the Qatar journalism classes). The chairman of al-Jazeera's board is a member of the al-Thani clan, as is Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, founder of the Qatar Foundation. [9] Although critics have pointed out al-Jazeera's editorial reluctance to criticize Qatar policies, the channel has stimulated new debate in a region where expression was long stifled.

There are few well-established centers to train the burgeoning Arab media, and the architects of the Qatar partnership want to position their program as a natural magnet for neighboring countries. "There are no universities in the region that Medill would consider competition for journalism instruction," Roth noted. Northwestern is not the only university experimenting with overseas joint ventures. Many of these schools are responding to increasing economic pressure. While a few programs are seeing an increase in applications, their candidates include students who are seeking a haven from a grim journalism job market, which has hemorrhaged more than 30,000 jobs since 2008.[10] Some administrators have noted that the quality of their U.S. applicant pool is declining, and have responded with new international recruiting efforts. They seek wealthy international students and foreign campuses to diversify revenue streams, building on a U.S. educational system with a far longer and more robust history of teaching journalism than universities in any other country.

But these ventures are not without risk. One cautionary tale has been shared by David Dynak, dean of the College of Arts and Media at the University of Colorado in Denver. Dynak, whose academic background is in theater studies, has been worried by the double jeopardy of the dismal job market and the harsh state funding environment. "Colorado is a pretty difficult state for education–it might be 50th in funding," he said in an interview. (Recent studies show Colorado hovering between 49th and 50th in the country in key indicators of educational spending.[11]) He added that state university journalism programs have been hit especially hard.

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>
> *—Nick Lemann, Dean, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University*

Several years ago, Dynak and other University of Colorado representatives were approached about a potential partnership in Islamabad, Pakistan.[12] "We were negotiating with a private individual, Farook Khan, who was representing the Pakistani government," Dynak recalled. "He had been based in Denver–that's how the connection came

about. They'd looked at several journalism schools, but it didn't go anywhere. But Denver was interested." According to Dynak:

> The idea was to create the Islamabad Media University as a joint program with CU Boulder, which has a school of journalism and mass communications, and UC Denver–we're digital design, film and animation. There was a state-funded ambassador who came here, and a dean and myself went to Islamabad looking at their media. It was really sad, and I grew in admiration for [then-president Pervez] Musharraf. We got to meet with his prime minister, [Shaukat] Aziz. When Musharraf took over he nationalized media, but gradually he liberalized.
>
> When we were there, there were about 120 private media outlets, and they've grown since then. Aziz told us, "We've nationalized the media and that's supposed to make us despotic. But what's worse–a nationalized media or an incompetent free media?"

As the Colorado team was pondering this question, other problems arose. Dynak explained:

> The Denver faculty were enthusiastic, but the Boulder faculty were less so. They were bringing up things like human rights violations. While we were there the Red Mosque exploded [in a terrorist incident]. At that point [the project] slowed down, and that's where it stayed.

"We were going to send faculty and share tuition revenue, based on the Colorado in-state model," Dynak said. "We were going to build in study abroad components in both directions–that's where it began to get dicey." Security and insurance issues became concerns, and then outright obstacles. A memorandum of understanding was signed, but the program stalled.

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The University of Colorado experience highlights some of the risks common to international partnerships: unstable and authoritarian regimes; burgeoning media sectors with little experience in formal training; the threats of corruption and political violence. Musharraf is no longer running the country, but no one pretends that the problems have been solved. Dynak hopes that the program can advance nonetheless. His incentive? "You only get a few chances to save the world," he said.

Dynak is hoping for another international opportunity through a recent proposal to the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which has contributed over $530 million to more than 600 projects in 17 countries since its founding in 2002.[13] Most journalism programs fall under the category called "Giving People

a Voice in their Future," but media-related projects have also found a home in the other categories concerning education, economic development, women, and youth. His school's proposal for Iraq stresses technical training for Iraqi women. Dynak explained:

> Everyone would get a Mac laptop, pretty tricked out with software for editing graphic novels. There would also be $5000 digital cameras–10 cameras and 10 film packages ... We would assign [the women] mentors for their applications and select a cohort of 30, with 10 back-up candidates. There would be distance learning in March, April and May. In June they'd come to Denver for eight weeks intensive training. Denver has pretty good IT infrastructure.
>
> In the grant we're going way beyond our faculty – to 30 media professionals to mentor them. We won't teach content. We're going to let all the content come from the Iraqi government, the US government, NGOs working in Iraq, PRTs [Provincial Reconstruction Teams], and Iraqi universities and media outlets emphasizing human rights, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty [International].

The Denver proposal has passed the first hurdle, and Dynak is awaiting results from the second round. He says that next steps have been laid out: "We'd send Denver faculty to Iraq to hire a field-based director, and identify six universities in Iraq. We did a scan and didn't find any that teach film production." Dynak reported that it took a little over a week to write the Iraq proposal; he is intent on moving it ahead, whether or not it succeeds in the MEPI process: "If it doesn't hit ... then we'll go to private foundations."

Private foundation funding stimulated one of the newest initiatives in journalism training: the Africa Agricultural Reporting Program at the University of California at Berkeley, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.[14] According to journalism Dean Neil Henry, the program was born of a chance meeting. At the Davos World Economic Forum of 2008, Michael Pollan, a member of Berkeley's faculty, spoke with Rajiv Shah, then the head of agricultural development for the Global Development Program at the Gates Foundation and now administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). "We've been looking for ways to diversify our funding," Henry said. "He was interested in building on our scholars program, and we were looking for vehicles for content. So we did a proposal aimed at addressing the food crisis in Africa."

According to Henry, "It's the first time Gates has ever partnered with any journalism school in the country."

The project is unusual in its scope. The two-year grant, funded at $767,800 per year, will bring four African students to Berkeley to participate in a specially-designed curriculum, developed in concert with Berkeley's agricultural economists and Martha Saavedra, associate director of the African Studies Center. The program seeks to improve coverage of African agriculture, women, and food and extends its reach to benefit Berkeley students and international fellows, igniting their interest in the issues. The African fellows' stipends were generous enough to allow them to purchase computer equipment to take back to Africa. There were

more than 400 African applicants for the two slots in each round. "The 400 applicants have become kind of a database for students going to their countries," Henry said.

The first year of the program has already yielded extensive coverage in a range of African, U.S., and European outlets (showcased on the program's website, http://africareportingproject.org/). "We're hoping we can renew the grant and build on it," Henry said. He sees partnerships with Africa institutions as an important component of his vision. "The problem of first-world-centric programs arose in our conversations with Gates. We'd like to do more on the continent. Martha [Saavedra] is now in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa, looking at schools of journalism for new partnerships. I would love to send people to African journalism schools to teach. We haven't done onsite media organization training yet, but there are things that are brewing, to give digital training in African journalism schools. Uganda is going to build on the ties of one of our scholars to Macerere University. We're also exploring a relationship with the University of Ghana in Legon. I don't know of any school that's trying to do what we're doing."

Henry, who covered Africa as a former *Washington Post* correspondent, is sensitive to the issue of advocacy journalism and appreciates the Gates Foundation's openness to dialogue on the question of professional standards. "We had an extended long discussion about the difference between journalism and advocacy. To their credit, they understood what journalism is."

Henry hopes that the Agricultural Reporting Program can open the doors to other forms of media support. "The Gates Foundation people know what's happening in media development, and they also know what's happening to the media in this country, with the pressures on the industry. They're edging towards supporting us here, because they understand that a strong news media is needed for democracy." Unlike some of his counterparts, Henry has no plans to apply for government grants. "It's not in our culture to look for government funding. I wouldn't entirely rule it out–I can see us discussing it, in a heated faculty discussion. USAID money is like taking money from the State Department–it's the issue of church and state."

Knight's Eric Newton (who is neutral on the question of government funding) sees the Berkeley-Gates partnership as positive for all concerned. "Berkeley's experience as a community content provider in the United States gives them the moral authority to do outreach outside the country," he says. "Gates has moved steadily forward in its media work. I think it's appropriate that Microsoft, which has built its business with media-related products, should contribute in this philanthropic area in the same way that newspaper foundations did in the past."

Faculty and curriculum development for journalism programs in developing countries

Another constant in the conversation about media assistance is the question of curriculum development. Every dean of a major journalism program receives a stream of international colleagues seeking advice about what and how to teach. This is particularly true over the past two decades, when skills-based journalism education has moved from its status as a virtual U.S. monopoly to an international phenomenon.

A few years ago, the University of Oklahoma undertook a World Journalism Education Census, with the support of the Knight Foundation. As of August 13, 2010, it identified 2,363 different programs (almost 30 percent of which were based in North America).[15] A huge percentage of these programs are new; a previous (although less comprehensive) survey by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in 1995 recorded a mere 221 programs outside the United States.

It is commonplace for U.S. journalism professors to participate in international lectures, workshops and short courses. But for the vast majority of new degree programs outside the United States, the idea of importing U.S. journalism professors to lead their faculty simply doesn't arise, for reasons of both cost and culture. At the same time, many of their administrators are eager to draw on the strengths of the U.S. method. The Indian Institute of Journalism and New Media in Bangalore, for example, developed its curriculum in association with the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism when it was founded in 2001.[16] This was also the case with earlier partner programs in Barcelona and Buenos Aires.

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Many new programs feature a form of "soft development" that would not show up on any budget, but has an impact nonetheless. These are courses that are led by non-U.S. graduates or former faculty members from U.S. journalism programs. The transplants remain in touch with their U.S. schools, replicating aspects of their curricula. One example is Ying Chan, who has revolutionized Chinese journalism education from her base at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong and through media partnerships across China. Ying Chan was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, taught at Columbia, and is a board member of the Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University–all of which informs her schools' curricula.

In some areas of curriculum development, the focus is driven by foreign policy concerns. In the aftermath of the Cold War and the onset of the post 9/11 conflicts, attention turned from the former Soviet Bloc to Arab and Muslim countries. One effort is the Promoting Transparency Through Journalism Education, program spearheaded by IREX and funded by the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the State Department.[17] Its U.S. university partners include journalism programs at Emory University in Atlanta, Kent State in Ohio, and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.[18]

USAID has funded several related projects. Its Higher Education in Development partnership awarded the University of Kentucky at Bowling Green a $200,000

two-year grant in 2004 to create "a sustainable core curriculum in journalism focusing on international and democratic media" in Tunisia.[19] USAID also supports an IREX project called the Jordan Media Strengthening Program, which includes curriculum development in partnership with the University of Tennessee and the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. [20]

Not every curriculum project designed to benefit the cause of journalism engages professors of journalism. The director of Annenberg's Center for Global Communications Studies, Monroe Price, has worked closely with Jordanian law faculties to develop curricula on freedom of expression, based on the belief that journalism training cannot fully succeed without a suitable enabling environment. "In media law, a long strategy involves improving legal education and producing greater critical understanding of the issues," he stated. Price's program has worked with several classes of Jordanian journalism and law students over the past few years. "More could be done with faculties of law and journalism," he said. "But in all cases, that requires sustained collaborations."

There are some signs that direct U.S. university influence on international journalism curricula may be waning. In the recent past, the U.S. skills-based model has often been embraced by foreign institutions seeking an alternative to old models of mass communications theory. But there is a growing sense that some aspects of U.S. journalism education make presumptions that are not universally applicable. U.S. investigative reporting techniques, applied in repressive countries, can risk sending their practitioners to jail. Students who utilize advanced technology in the classroom may find that it's unavailable in the workplace.

In the recent past, the U.S. skills-based model has often been embraced by foreign institutions seeking an alternative to old models of mass communications theory. But there is a growing sense that some aspects of U.S. journalism education make presumptions that are not universally applicable.

These and related issues were explored in a 2007 CIMA report by Ellen Hume, *University Journalism Education: A Global Challenge*. [21] Hume found that some foreign universities were more interested in teaching public relations than instilling the ethics of independent journalism. "The receptiveness of any particular university for enhanced journalism training is contingent on local conditions that vary widely from region to region," she reported.[22] Her findings reinforce the importance of collaborating with regional studies experts and working in partnership with local universities.

Hume's report coincided with the first World Journalism Education Congress, held in Singapore in June 2007, which mapped out a landscape for the future of journalism education. UNESCO published a related report called *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*.[23] It

was significant and perhaps inevitable that its panel of experts was overwhelmingly non-American–significant because it was a departure from the past, and perhaps inevitable because other regions of the world have begun to assert independent values.[24] To the extent that the U.S. maintains an active role in curriculum development, the function may be shifting from universities to NGOs. ICFJ, Internews, and IREX have been working successfully in the area of media curriculum development, sometimes in consultation with U.S. universities. These organizations often can respond more nimbly and with greater local knowledge than their university counterparts. Their internal policies present far fewer obstacles to accepting U.S. government funding, and they benefit from the presence of trained, dedicated staff to carry out the often taxing requirements of proposal-writing and reporting.

Promotion of new media platforms for the purpose of advocacy, research, and information campaigns, especially public health and human rights

If U.S. universities' influence in journalism education is wavering, their roles are growing more robust in the realm of media for development. This field–still poorly defined but rapidly growing–takes advantage of new media technologies and applications to promote a broad and expanding array of social goals: public health, education, election monitoring, and government transparency. These initiatives are rarely based in journalism programs.

Projects are often spurred by the interests of major funders, including USAID, the State Department, the Open Society Institute, the Gates Foundation, and the Omidyar Foundation. Their funding is sometimes supplemented by grants from a host of United Nations and European government aid agencies. One such program is Communication for Change, or C-Change, funded by USAID and implemented by the non-profit development organization AED. C-Change aspires to "improve the effectiveness and sustainability of social and behavior change communication applied to programs, activities, and tools."[25] It works extensively on major public health issues, such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and malaria, but "the program is also providing communication support to other sectors, including democracy and governance, civil society, and environment."[26]

C-Change's two U.S. university partners are Ohio University and the University of Washington. According to its website, "Ohio University coordinates the overall implementation of capacity building and strengthening activities," and has worked on the design and implementation of a training package of online training courses.[27] Ohio University has also worked with the University of Witwatersrand to create a "center of excellence" to serve Southern Africa. The University of Washington's International Training and Education for Health has also been working with C-Change to develop a training curriculum for health workers.

One prominent figure in the media for development sector is the director of information and communications technology (ICT) for Columbia's Millennium Villages project, Matt Berg–who was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world for 2010.[28] His project is based at Columbia's Earth Institute, headed by

economist Jeffrey Sachs. The project sends teams of faculty, experts, and students to work with clusters of villages (most of them in sub-Saharan Africa) to promote Millennium Development Goals in a real-world setting.[29] In 2006, the project received a $50 million donation from George Soros.[30]

Berg, who arrived at Columbia three years ago, was born in a village in Cameroon, grew up in Senegal, was educated in the United States, and returned to Africa to serve with the Geekcorps in Mali. (The Geekcorps is a non-profit volunteer organization founded in 1999 by Berkman fellow Ethan Zuckerman to promote ICT in developing countries.) Berg has extensive experience in community radio. One of his major projects is ChildCount+, launched with $10,000 of discretionary funding from the Earth Institute, which uses mobile phones to monitor maternal and child health indicators in African villages.

"I got a little money from Sachs for using mobile phones for data delivery, nutrition screening, and malaria," Berg said in an interview. "In three months we registered 9,500 kids under the age of five. Every health care worker gets a printout on every kid, and a MUAC test done in the home. [The Mid-Upper Arm Circumference is a basic indicator for nutrition levels.] If it shows malnutrition, they give them Plumpy Nut [a fortified peanut butter]. We could do the same with a measles campaign."

The program is expanding rapidly. "We're adding pregnant mothers and household visits," Berg notes. "Our goal is to reach 100,000 kids by the end of fall [2010]."The project is now working with the Ugandan ministry of health to update its reporting to include malaria.

Until now, relatively little of Berg's work has fallen under the definition of "media development," but that may be changing. Berg's experience with community radio in Mali has led him to see the medium as an important element in the Millennium Villages' ICT package.[31] "We need a full-time person to work in the community radio system," he said.

Nonetheless, Berg intersects more often with Columbia's public health and international development programs than with the journalism community. "We'll be teaching a class on mobile health at SIPA (Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs) in the spring," he notes.

SIPA offers another example of media development coming in through an unfamiliar door–in this case, through the Workshop in Applied Development Practice. Director Eugenia McGill, who formerly worked for the Asian Development Bank, also collaborates with the UNICEF innovation team. She oversees fieldwork that has ranged from an experiment to use the Ushahidi platform to map political violence in Iraq, to a Gates-funded pilot project to use cellphones to track female genital mutilation. Her workshop sends graduate students out as teams of pro bono consultants to assist in the planning, implementation, and assessment of new projects. Some of SIPA's fieldwork is carried out in conjunction with the school's International Media, Advocacy and Communications specialization, which offers related coursework.

Although "media" doesn't appear in McGill's job title, it's becoming a growing part of her practical portfolio. "I'd say I work in the field of international development, and media has always been an important part of

it," McGill reflected. "But it's become more important once landlines and electrification became optional over the last decade."

McGill believes that the field of media development is evolving faster than universities' planning processes. "You've got these little innovators and incubators all over, and university administrators don't even know they're happening."

Another center for media innovation is the Berkeley Human Rights Center. In May 2009 it held a conference called Soul of the New Machine, to look at ways new media could serve the cause of human rights around the world.[32] The conference stepped farther into the implementation arena with a contest to promote new mobile platforms for human rights applications. The winning projects received a total of $30,000 in prize money.[33]

Henry, Berkeley's journalism school dean, is on the board of the Human Rights Center, but the two programs do not have extensive contact. "We invited the journalism school to the conference, but they didn't come," noted Camille Crittenden, the center's director. "It was more about citizen journalists and less about traditional journalism. The intent of the conference was to bring together human rights practitioners and people working on the technical side. We were looking at mobile applications for human rights documentation."

Funding for the conference also bridged traditional and new sources. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation was a major funder, while participant travel was covered by Humanity United, the foundation created by Pam Omidyar (wife of eBay founder Pierre Omidyar). "The conference was webcast and blogged live with nodes in London, Lebanon, Colombia, Thailand and New York," Crittenden said. (Some of the bloggers were recruited by David Sasaki and Global Voices, the global blogging platform launched by Harvard's Berkman Center; see below.)

"I'd say I work in the field of international development, and media has always been an important part of it. But it's become more important once landlines and electrification became optional over the last decade."

— Eugenia McGill, Director, Workshop in Applied Development, Columbia University

Eric Stover, a Berkeley law professor and faculty director of the Human Rights Center, has been trying to build bridges between the center's work and international journalism education, in partnership with the University of Maryland. "Eric Stover was just in Kampala and Nairobi, working on international justice modules for journalism schools," Crittenden said. "He's trying to foster a better understanding of international justice mechanisms such as tribunals and truth commissions."

The center's leadership is acting on the belief that new media technology will have a massive impact on the field of human rights. "We still haven't seen the promise of new media tapped for raising awareness of international justice issues," she said. "It could grow through cross-posting blogs,

Facebook, and other forms of social media. Mobile applications will move more quickly into the developing world, especially Africa—mobile is the computer most people have."

Crittenden sees open source software as an essential part of the equation. "Researchers have seen the pace of software development advancing. It's mostly open source applications, so various developers can add bits of code. Datadyne and Frontline SMS were at the conference."

Ushahidi developer Eric Hersman also participated in the 2009 conference, and the center may partner with Ushahidi for a "bar camp" (an informal conference and training session, usually open and collaborative in nature). "Ushahidi has a new center, the I-Hub, that's the fastest connection in Nairobi," Crittenden said. "We might do a bar camp there next year." The center's interests illustrate the blurred lines between development goals. Although its media starting point consisted of narrower human rights concerns, now "we're looking at short educational videos that can be played on cellphones about tuberculosis, maternal health, and other global health issues," Crittenden commented. Even though it emphasizes raising awareness and promoting activism, the Berkeley Center's work still draws on some core principles of journalism, including ethics, verification, and editorial standards. Without editorial safeguards, online information can be easily manipulated by interest groups.

"The problems of documentation were discussed at the conference," Crittenden noted. "One example was the Guantanamo project in Second Life. It didn't have a strong connection to the facts. It's not enough to raise awareness – you have to have a grasp of the facts." Second Life is a popular "virtual world," in which several million registered users guide avatars through various environments. An online simulation of the detention center at Guantanamo drew criticism for purporting to promote human rights education while lacking in reportorial accuracy.[34]

Freestanding centers often benefit from fewer bureaucratic constraints and more flexibility in funding than traditional schools and departments. They are often interdisciplinary by definition, which is a major advantage in addressing the freewheeling field of new media.

Berkeley's Human Rights Center illustrates one of the most striking characteristics of the new university model for media and development, which is how often it blossoms "off the grid." Freestanding centers often benefit from fewer bureaucratic constraints and more flexibility in funding than traditional schools and departments. They are often interdisciplinary by definition, which is a major advantage in addressing the freewheeling field of new media. The best example of these benefits is Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, which was founded at Harvard Law School in 1996 but quickly became an intersection for a broader community. These days, much of the innovation is

generated by graduate students themselves. This generation often arrives on campus with professional experience in the tech sector and may also bring field experience in developing countries. They supplement their formal coursework with informal initiatives that quickly disseminate ideas across campuses and continents, often through bar camps. The boundaries between universities blur, as do the distinctions between students and non-students, and development workers and clientele. The hallmark is collaboration, the creative core of the new behaviors charted by theorists such as Yochai Benkler and Clay Shirky.

The dissemination of the crisis-mapping platform Ushahidi is a good illustration. It was created in the aftermath of the 2007-8 election crisis in Kenya by a group of software developers with Kenyan roots, as a means to track political violence. Following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Patrick Meier, a Ph.D candidate at Tufts University, launched an implementation of Ushahidi for Haitian disaster relief, enlisting teams of Tufts volunteers. On February 27, another earthquake rocked Chile–coinciding with a student-organized conference at Columbia's SIPA, called Policy Making in the Digital Age. As it happened, Meier was scheduled to speak at the conference about Ushahidi. By the time he left New York, Meier had stirred the Columbia students to take up the challenge of organizing an Ushahidi effort on behalf of the earthquake victims in Chile.[35]

By mid-2010, Ushahidi could count on three core situation rooms, in New York, London and Geneva, with rapidly evolving clusters of volunteers on several continents–many of them students. This is a case of a media development project going viral around campuses with little sign of administrative involvement.

A parallel effort arose from a classroom project at MIT, where students were encouraged to develop online tools to help with Haiti's reconstruction. They came up with the concept of Konbit, a hybrid platform that promotes the local labor market and the flow of information, resources, and translation services between Haiti and partners within the diaspora and international NGOs.[36]

While Konbit may not look like traditional journalism, it serves vital information needs of a disadvantaged population—and may serve as a humanitarian version of online want ads.

Another major player in the media for development field is John Hopkins University. Although the school is not traditionally associated with journalism, its Center for Communications Programs is crafting a broad range of innovative media approaches to public health and related issues.

Research to leverage other modes of media development

Contemporary media and development pose a conundrum for academia. Traditional academic research depends on phenomena that hold still long enough to measure them, and with new media that is not the case. Both academics and donors recognize that they are working within a research vacuum, but it's not clear how to advance.[37]

University-based research projects provide valuable signposts to the development community, charting where innovation

is thriving and where vacuums remain. One significant project is the University of Oklahoma's World Journalism Education Census, which, with the support of the Knight Foundation, is undertaking to document every journalism school and program across the globe.

Another notable effort is the "Deepening Our Understanding of the Effects of US Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building Final Report," a 2009 statistical analysis of correlations between development efforts, including media development, and the advancement of civil society. The study, funded by USAID, was conducted by the University of Pittsburg, the Hertie School of Governance, and Vanderbilt University.[38]

But the research powerhouse in the field is undeniably the Berkman Center at Harvard, which boasts a full-time staff of about 30, an interdisciplinary culture, a handsome endowment, and a rotating roster of research fellows. Ethan Zuckerman, a longtime senior fellow, described the community in a 2007 report:

> Many are geeks who are fascinated by law, or lawyers who dream of being geeks. Some are internationally famous, like Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales. Others are simply respected by everyone who's ever worked with them, like professor and activist Wendy Seltzer. Some fellows use their time at Berkman to generate original scholarship…others use the Berkman Center as an incubator for new projects...In a digital age full of virtual connections, the fellows program is a reminder that sharing ideas face to face is indispensable.[39]

Berkman's generous budget supports faculty, conferences, projects, one-year fellowships, short-term internships, and ongoing social networking. This flexibility allows it to harvest the talents of scholars from other institutions and create a hub for Boston's vibrant community of new media innovators.

The director of Berkman's Internet and Democracy Project is Bruce Etling, who previously worked on the ProMedia I program at IREX. The project has its roots in research, but these have led to more concrete activities in media development. "The Internet and Democracy Project started with an international focus, looking at bloggers and online activists," Etling said. "We did a series of case studies on how the Internet has had an impact on the political process, looking at South Korea's *OhMy News*, the Iranian blogosphere, and six or seven other countries. It's been anecdotal so far, but faculty wanted it for teaching, and it's up on the Web." Etling said that the Iranian blogosphere accounted for much of the quantitative work so far. "We're now doing a project on the Russian blogosphere, building tools to collect the data that's already out there."

Berkman has received State Department funding, but at this point, government funding is not a major source of support. "We've applied for a couple of other grants, but it takes so much time and effort, and we're batting about one for four with the government," Etling commented. "It's easier to go to the foundations."

The Berkman Center's involvement in media development marries its theoretical interests with a strong curiosity regarding practical applications. "We're coming at

it from the new media angle," Etling said. "What we've done is in the field of citizen journalism and global blogging."

Berkman's most prominent product in the field to date is Global Voices, a prominent international blogging platform. Berkman fellows Zuckerman and Rebecca MacKinnon organized the project at a Berkman conference in 2004 and it has now evolved into a largely independent entity. It includes a project called Rising Voices, which trains bloggers around the world and links them to the Global Voices community. "Global Voices started with a little seed funding from Berkman. It's learning by doing–it's organic," Etling explained. "It's a question of getting the right people in a room and identifying the problems–not going in with a huge framework and a $2 million budget."

Berkman's fieldwork often emerges from individual interests, such as Zuckerman's experience with the Geekcorps in Africa. "Ethan Zuckerman and Colin MaClay got a MacArthur grant for a year to pursue a technology and civic engagement project in Nigeria," Etling said. "It's more 'activisty' than most Berkman projects, a series of events partnering with NDI [the National Democratic Institute] and NGOs who are doing good work, but are not into the technology sector. They're saying 'Here's what's available' and giving training for election monitoring."

Etling argues that Berkman's broad and secure funding base gives it a great advantage in setting its own agenda. "It's unique to the new media space–by the time you get a grant in six months to a year, there's a whole new technology that's come out. It's moved from blogs to Twitter." Etling says that Berkman is working in "a new type of field that doesn't fit into any other departments. We try to be a clearinghouse for people from other universities who don't have anyone else doing similar work at their institutions. When fellows leave, we try to keep them tied to the community. We have one staff person who is a community developer—we have a Twitter group, a friend network—we do it through social media, because that's who we are, right?"

"It's a question of getting the right people in a room and identifying the problems—not going in with a huge framework and a $2 million budget."

— Bruce Etling , Director, Internet and Democracy Project, Berkman Center for Internet and Society

Although the Berkman Center holds many advantages in terms of size and budget, innovation can also arise from an outstanding individual or program. Rosental Alves, chair of the communications department at the University of Texas, has put his institution on the map through his tireless efforts in Latin America. He has played an important role in bringing Latin American journalism online, promoting journalists associations in the region, and supporting freedom of expression. Susan Moeller, director of International Center for Media and the Public Agenda at the University of Maryland, has made a notable contribution in the field of international media literacy, spearheading important research, training, and curriculum development.

Northwestern's Media Management Center offers a targeted three-week training session

for media business managers from the Middle East in partnership with IREX, supported by the State Department's MEPI program. Tufts University has an imaginative interdisciplinary program in media studies and citizenship, and its graduate program has produced outstanding innovators in the field.

But the burgeoning innovation doesn't mean that the old models have disappeared. The Charles University partnership of the 1990s was prompted by the U.S. government's desire to jumpstart Western-style journalism in the former Communist bloc. In the summer of 2010, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul requested proposals from U.S. universities for a million-dollar grant to create a partnership with the journalism program at Herat University in Afghanistan. Many of the goals were familiar: curriculum development, faculty exchanges, and support for adopting new technologies. But the challenges are greater than ever: The university that wins the contract will be responsible for installing internet service, overseeing extensive security, and creating distance learning programs for students with limited English. The request for applications seeks universities with experience in Afghanistan, a strong journalism program, and advanced technological capabilities—a rare combination on any continent.[40]

Conclusion

In July 2010, World Journalism Education Council gathered more than 400 journalism educators from about 50 countries for the second World Journalism Education Congress in South Africa. There was broad recognition that social media has become a major force in the field that cannot be marginalized and that Africa has become a world-class incubator for media innovation. [41]

At the August meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Eric Newton carried these ideas a step farther, laying out the "four transformations" for U.S. journalism programs.[42] Journalism schools are:

1. Becoming better connected to other university disciplines and departments, expanding the definition of what it means to be a journalist.

2. Playing an increasing role as content and technology innovators.

3. Emerging as promoters of collaborative, open approaches and models.

4. Becoming news providers that understand the ecosystem of their communities. In the digital age, journalism schools are trying to engage more deeply with the people we used to call the audience.

These transformations are even more urgently required in the field of media development. In the future, media development projects will originate in an ever-widening pool of university departments. These will include law, public health, library science, computer science, international relations, visual design, and even architecture and urban planning, where striking advances in mapping applications are taking place.

Nonetheless, programs that specialize in data will also require skills from the traditional journalism toolkit: verification, story-telling ability, and contextualization. Academia could be an ideal setting for this exchange of ideas, a meeting place between core values and technological innovation.

Universities could also provide a space for frank discussion about the limitations of technology and the means to discern when new technologies offer concrete benefits to the user and when they constitute a distraction.[43] These questions are even more critical in resource-poor societies in the developing world.

To achieve these ends, more coordination is needed, both within and among universities, to serve as a critical bridge– between North and South, between technologists and humanists, between social media and traditional journalism.

American universities that would like to participate in this new world will need to replicate some of the spirit of the new culture. New centers for media research and development should be interdisciplinary from the start, not trapped within the walls of former departments. They should be open, not just to new knowledge, but to new collaborative forms of knowledge creation, in order to become full and valued partners in this age of media transformation.

Appendix: Interviews

The author would like to acknowledge the help and insights of the following people:

Rosental Alves
Professor and Knight Chair in Journalism
College of Communication
University of Texas at Austin

Matt Berg
ICT Director
Millennium Villages Project
Earth Institute
Columbia University of Columbia

Christopher Bishop
Senior Communications Specialist
IBM Corporate Headquarters

Camille Crittenden
Executive Director
Human Rights Center
University of California at Berkeley

David Dynak
Dean
College of Arts & Media
University of Colorado Denver

Bruce Etling
Director
Internet and Democracy Project
Berkman Center for Internet and Society
Harvard University

Neil Henry
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Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism
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Eric Newton
Vice President for Journalism Program
Knight Foundation

Monroe Price
Director
Center for Global Communication Studies
Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania

Richard Roth
Senior Associate Dean for Journalism
Northwestern University in Qatar

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