



Summary

Information and communication in the cultural world in ACP countries: what tools for what objectives?

Moderator: **Ms. Josanne Leonard**, Chief Executive Officer of Miribai Communications, Trinidad and Tobago

- Centralisation and dissemination of cultural information: what are the challenges?
Mr. Lupwishi Mbuyamba, Executive Director of the Observatory of cultural policies in Africa (OCPA), Mozambique
- The role of local, national, and international media for the development of cultural industries
Mr. Jahman Anikulapo, Journalist, the Guardian, Nigeria and Chairman/President of the Committee for Relevant Art (CORA)
- The challenge of coherence of information: the example of Sudplanet
Mr. Olivier Barlet, Director of Africultures, France

Rapporteur: Ms. **Béatrice Lalinon Gbado**, Director of Ruisseaux d'Afrique - Former Chairwoman of Afrilivres network, Benin

The moderator, Ms. **Josanne Leonard**, reminded all participants that the aim of the panel was to exchange their views and experiences. She underlined the following:

- The role of information and communication;
- How we should use the tools of information and communication, to share information and build networks;
- The need to bear in mind that communication is also an industry: access to the communication industry, identifying the main players and making ACP countries more effective in the market place;
- Issues of access, of dissemination, and affordability; and,
- Issues of information and communication technologies.

1. Centralisation and dissemination of cultural information: what are the challenges?

M. **Lupwishi Mbuyamba**'s presentation highlighted the following:

- First important point: The need to set up cultural policies (UNESCO)

Regional interest: meeting and seminars organised in Dakar – importance of information.

- Second important point: Importance of the process e.g. SADEC (1992-1993)
 - E.g. Sisiba- creation of a data bank supported by the Paris National Library and reinforced by technologies. Establishment of a micro-station in Central Africa. Beginning of the propagation of cultural information.
 - Studies on agricultural cultural factors, health cultural factors etc. in order to ensure the implementation of coherent national cultural policies.
 - Importance of institutional networks, both in Africa and abroad.

Questions that were raised:

- Is there a risk of duplication caused by networks?
- Does the network take into account development cooperation?

Recommendations:

- Identification of existing structures
- Provision of services and infrastructures
- Facilitation of network usage
- Reinforcement of technical capacities
- Support for re-launching dormant structures
- Support for the creation of national structures – national observatories
- Creation/reactivation of regional centres

Discussions:

- Examples of good practices implemented by the Observatory?
- An information bulletin exists since 2002 (issue number 225 in 2009)
- Training programme for Portuguese-speaking countries, West Africa, East Africa. In June 2009 a training programme will be held in Maputo for Central Africa.
- Cultural Policy: last one in February in Nairobi – Assistance to governments regarding the conception and implementation of cultural policies.

Examples in other countries:

- DRC (Kinshasa): creation one year ago of a televised bulletin. In this programme people describe their experiences. It is necessary to foster radio shows and involve affluent society personalities (priests, farmers etc.) It is however necessary to take into account local culture, thus to base communication on local cultures.
- Strada Magazine: 7 private television channels in Togo. There is a true “movida” of information. We should focus on the information provided by citizens (Wikipedia type).
- Creation of a Pacific Art Alliance which resembles Facebook, but aimed at artists. It is a good way of sharing information, experiences etc. Internet allows for these efficient initiatives. The question is how far the ACP countries will support this idea.

- ATO Network:

- Need to create professionals in marketing: to bring talents to the audience.

- Need to create toolkits that can reach different kinds of audiences and markets.
- Zambia: EU is going to support local television and radios, so that artists can sell their goods.

2. The role of local, national, and international media for the development of cultural industries

M. Jahman Anikulapo underlined:

- The focus on the role of culture in development – women's empowerment, etc.;
- The non-existence of programmes to train people to write about art;
- The need to develop a media strategy which gives ownership to the creative communities;
- Encouragement of local media initiatives;
- The need for media surveys in Africa!;
- The Democratization of Media – who controls the media;
- The creation of partnerships between cultural groups and the media, and between local and national media.

Discussions:

- Reference to Media Plus – 2013 – Programme of incentives for EU producers: In Africa there is still state ownership. Private Media is not necessarily a solution. There is a need for a media policy in order to guarantee quality and effectiveness.
- Importance of the role that the media plays in shaping a country's external image, as well as in terms of preserving history and identity.
- Uganda: Private media – there is competition between the artists themselves. Therefore more cooperation is needed.
- The need to rethink the new strategies adopted by operators that organise cultural demonstrations. The communication here is focused on how international media will relay the information; peripheral/local media is thus often underestimated and under supported.
- Artists and operators should be encouraged to take responsibility on their communication as some of them do not necessarily take into account proposals that are made concerning available tool usage.
- Youth Planet: It is difficult to promote African artists in relation to artists from the western world (absence of accurate photos, lack of foreign support).
- Nigeria: There is a need for a new mindset.
- Gaps remain regarding the level of skills. There is a need to strengthen knowledge and command of communication tools.

- Impose cultural visibility through the media. There should be an endogenous development of culture instead of mimicry.

3. The challenge of coherence of information: the example of Sud Planet

M. Olivier Barlet talked about:

- SUD PLANET and how it benefits from international funding (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs),
- The importance of having a reference tool; a tool that is impossible to implement without the support of all cultural actors, artist and operators. WEB 2.0 allows for this as it is a reference tool. All operators working via databases should be reunited in order to achieve a database that is "for all and at the service of everyone".

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Building new and stronger networks;
- Promoting telecommunication – particularly for rural cultures and communities;
- Media Diversity – Survey on existing Media Platforms;
- Training of Journalists in Arts and Entertainment – also in terms of understanding the communication tools;
- Introducing Media Literacy in Schools;
- Recognising the role of communities and alternative media;
- Bringing together media owners and producers in meetings;
- Creating more databases – including statistical information; and,
- For the EU: Importance of recognising cultural actions in ACP countries.

Thank you to the note takers: Martin Chatel and Katrien Vervoort