Twenty Years of Peacebuilding Media in Conflict Strategic Framework

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Media in Conflict

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Introduction

In less than 100 days, 800,000 people were killed in the Rwandan genocide. During this conflict, a private radio station RTLM (Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines) broadcasted messages inciting the local Hutus to commit atrocities against the Tutsi community. The International Criminal Tribunal, set up by the United Nations after the conflict, found the two radio founders guilty of contributing to the genocide by inciting ethnic hatred. But after the war, a few people decided to use the radio differently. In 1995, they established Studio Ijambo (Wise Words), a radio station in neighboring Burundi calling on the local population to begin with conflict reconciliation. Under the slogan “Dialogue is the Future,” the studio produced social affairs and news programs, dramas, documentaries and children’s programs – a whole variety of media that focused on peace development.

A few years later, on the Good Friday of 1998, one of the longest conflicts in modern history came to an end when the political parties of Northern Ireland negotiated a political settlement known as “the Good Friday Agreement.” Northern Ireland’s three decades of conflict ended in a settlement between the Catholic and Protestant representatives. The final step towards the acceptance of the agreement was a referendum. There was significant animosity toward the agreement on both sides, and for some time it seemed as if the agreement would not gain enough support from the voters. The British government decided to ask for help from an unlikely source – McCann Erickson – one of the world’s leading public relations agencies. McCann Erickson developed a media campaign including posters, billboards, direct mail brochures and public service announcements all emphasizing the benefits of the agreement. A month later, the agreement received the support of 71 percent of the people from both sides of the community. It is impossible to gauge the campaign’s direct influence on the people’s decision to support the agreement, but evidence shows that the advertising campaign played a role in the acceptance of the political agreement, leading to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

At about the same time, the conflict in the Middle East between the Israelis and Palestinians was escalating. One piece of good news was the research stating that certain improvements were observed in the attitudes of future generations, especially in children, who reported watching the Israeli-Palestinian version of “Sesame Street” called “Rechov SumSum/Shara’a SimSim”. The program was a project of Sesame Workshop, the creators of “Sesame Street,” which has provided many hours of educational programming to children across the world. This time Sesame Workshop was producing a program for a society where violent conflict was deeply ingrained. They developed a show with the goal of improving tolerance between the two communities. The results were very encouraging; children generally reported improved levels of tolerance and acceptance of the other group in conflict.

The need for a conceptual framework

These three stories are milestone projects that are frequently used to illustrate the media impact on peacebuilding. They were executed professionally by experienced practitioners and their impact on peacebuilding processes in the three countries has been demonstrated. Such projects helped publicize the efforts of positive engagement of mass media in peace processes. Even
though the practice never established the common terminology (most often referred as peacebuilding media) it is generally defined as the use of media technology and content in promotion of the peacebuilding processes.

However, these three stories illustrate the central problem in writing about the field. To this day, these stories remain isolated anecdotes, used primarily by the project organizers in funding applications. The stories remain disconnected from each other and they are rarely talked about under a common umbrella of a larger field of similar work. The common, cohesive rationale and analysis that captures a bird’s-eye view is missing.

Even though a number the isolated media projects have played a role in peacebuilding over the last 20 years in most world conflict zones, this rich experience is yet to be integrated into a cohesive collection that documents the long history of media in conflict zones. A missing component is a comprehensive study of all the projects that would approach the general idea rather than an individual regional application. Gravely needed at this time is a synthesis of the stories from the last twenty years of media projects beginning with the practice from the Great African Lakes region, the Balkans, Iraq, up to the latest development of peacebuilding media in Afghanistan.

The rest of the literature in the field has usually been centered around case studies of individual media projects in individual conflicts. In that vein, the milestone media projects have all been identified and described. The next step is consolidation of projects not just by telling their history, but also by synthesizing the thinking that informed them.

Such a synthesis requires not just a narrative account of media uses in conflict but must provide a consolidating way of thinking about the practice. This is why this publication presents such a way of thinking by examining the tested-and-tried approaches and experiences of the last two decades and organizes them in the form of a framework. This framework searches for patterns of media utilization in the field, and provides an organizing principle for thinking about media role in peacebuilding.

It is done with a hope that the identification of the major conceptual plan of media utilization will provide a coherent organizing principle for media interventions in conflict countries. Conceptual integration of the practical knowledge represents an essential starting point for comparing interventions of different kinds and distilling best practices. It allows us to compare different media interventions and identify best individual practices that can serve as a baseline for future interventions. It is also a prerequisite to the question of optimal use of media in conflict zones.

**Towards a Conceptual Framework: A Short History**

Media has been in wars effectively throughout the history of warfare but media has only become a systematic tool for peacebuilding in the last 20 years, beginning with inter-ethnic conflicts of the early 1990s. This is partly due to the end of the Cold War era and a shift from inter-state to intra-state conflict which saw emergence of numerous conflict actors using innovative tools both
in combat and in post-conflict stage. But more importantly, two other congruent developments of the previous decade (1980s) made the practice possible: a) media technologies and equipment coming of age and b) peacebuilders becoming better organized as NGOs.

Throughout the 1980s, media technologies developed by becoming much smaller in size, considerably easier to use and significantly less expensive. For example, smaller video cameras for personal use became commercially available and easy to operate. Copy machines allowed for easier distribution of printed material. A number of new media channels allowed for the non-professional media content to be distributed. The change in media industry was significant – production of media content was no longer exclusive to corporations and state governments. Regular citizens and organized groups became competent in making their own media.

About the same time, a number of peacebuilding activists organized more formally and formed independently funded, non-governmental organizations. A few of these organizations (Foundation Hirondelle, Search for Common Ground and Internews) specialized in media production as well as peacebuilding. They believed that the media sphere is a perfect space where beliefs and attitudes can begin to be reformed and began experimenting with the use of media for peacebuilding. For them, peacebuilding was not just about the elimination of violence but also about building positive relationships, knowledge and attitudes among the former enemies.

Most of the early uses of media in peacebuilding relied on simple logic – if wars and conflicts start when communication attempts are exhausted then building peace must encourage communication among those in conflict. Therefore, simply reinvigorating exchange of information and focusing on positive relationships should contribute to peace.

This is the rationale that influenced the launch of a number of new radio station in conflict zones with the intent to encourage positive social change: Radio Agatashya in the Great lakes region of Africa, FERN in Bosnia, Star Radio in Liberia, Radio UNTAC in Cambodia were the first well organized attempts to use radio as a tool of peacebuilding in the early 1990s. Because the negative impact of radio played a significant role in exacerbating conflict in Rwanda and Bosnia, it was thought that peace oriented broadcasting should have a similar impact on peace. Especially when a few radio soap operas like “Our Neighbors, Ourselves” in Burundi and “New Home New Life” in Afghanistan became extremely popular in conflict regions, many started talking about the intrinsic ability of media to promote peace. Soon after, similar television programs followed in the mid-1990s; from newscast produced by multi-ethnic production (e.g. OBN in Bosnia and Studio Ijambo in Burundi) to dramas and programs for children emphasizing cooperation and coexistence (e.g. Nase Malo in Macedonia). Even advertising campaigns techniques utilizing the best practices of product and brand promotion were exploited in promotion of peace agreements in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Macedonia.

The discourse around these media projects generated discussions about the potential of media to do good around the world. Coinciding with a prevailing belief that information technologies and free flow of information helped in bringing down the Iron Curtain, there was a lot of excitement about the media’s role in peacebuilding. The funding from governments and big international organizations supported the most ambitious projects of the most prominent peacebuilding non-
governmental organizations. Millions of dollars were spent on media infrastructure, technology, equipment, radio and television stations, etc.

This upsurge of practical media projects spurred the interest of researchers and academia. Initially, studies were postulated on an assumption that if media can move people to conflict, it must contain the ability to work in the opposite direction, thus promoting peacebuilding. Eventually, researchers began to argue that even if media have the ability to escalate a conflict to its violent stage, the opposite direction — de-escalation — cannot be taken for granted. Some academic studies began to argue that attitudinal or behavioural change toward tolerance and cooperation is at least not as straightforward as a hate message instigation of violence can be. Wolfsfeld puts it succinctly in a vivid metaphor:

Simply put, it is a hell of a lot easier to promote conflict through the media than peace. I think that a case for media leading to peace is a much more difficult hypothesis to prove than the one that media can lead to war. In other words, the idea of lowering the level of hate is clearly in any case a much more difficult challenge than raising the level of hate. Like anything else, it is easier to start the fire and burn the building than to build one.

The practitioners responded with their findings from the field. They carried out summative research of their own projects which undoubtedly showed significant impact of their projects on the audience. This research showed impressive change in cognitive, attitudinal and even behavioural change among the people who tuned in. Despite the fact that the research stopped short of proving the media’s dramatic and direct influence on violence cessation, there were hardly any doubt about the importance of media in peacebuilding.

Media became doubly important to peacebuilders because it was seen as capable of instantiating violence but also of powerfully transforming people and societies. Media experts, donors, and peacebuilding practitioners agreed that media must be a part of peacebuilding strategy. The question was no longer if media should be used, but rather how it should be utilized in peacebuilding. This is how the question about the optimal media strategy became central to the practice and the primary focus of this particular study. Therefore, we no longer focus on the question Does media impact peacebuilding? Instead, we are asking: What were the persistent themes, strategies and approaches of the 20-year peacebuilding media practice and do they provide coherent organizing principles for the future?

**Conceptual Framework: Three main pillars of the practice**

The last 20 years of the practical media employment in peacebuilding offers a range of rich experiences from a variety of conflict zones. Significant lessons have been learned about the practice. Most importantly, media has shown a capacity to help in peacebuilding recovery. Furthermore, while it is hard to congregate the geographical diversity of experiences and various media disciplines under one roof, an analysis with a bird's-eye view perspective shows a number of similarities, persistent strategies of use across the projects and conflicts. In the process of implementation, most projects share a number of important elements. This offers important insights into the practice and allows us to advance a framework of operation. Each new peace process involves more and more media initiatives but three
specific media practices have distinguished themselves as the main pillars in media assistance and development as the dominant practices in most of the peacebuilding processes:

a) Journalism or the news-media that gathers, investigates and disseminate traditional news
b) Other, non-journalistic media forms; marketing, entertainment and the new media
c) Regulation of media environment and standards of operation

**Journalism.** Journalism is often criticized for its ability to incite conflict and praised for the opposite role in reconciliation. In conflict zones, journalism development and reform are now a common sense solution to violence prevention. Reforms have different foci and target emphasis but the most frequent methods are development of new media outlets or pluralization, support of new or already existent independent media and training of journalists.

The development of new and support of existing independent news media in conflict zones over the last two decades has been based in the belief that creating free and professional journalism is the foundation of a peaceful, democratic system. The prevailing belief behind the assistance to media in conflict was that free and independent journalism is a natural ally of peacebuilding and an antidote to violent conflict. Engrained in principles of accuracy, balance and political independence, journalism is considered a necessary element of both peacebuilding process and a democratic system.

Training of journalists seems to be one of the priorities and receives a significant proportion of the funding allocated to the media assistance programs. The dominant paradigm in journalism training contends that the main problems facing journalists in conflict is lack of technological skills, information-gathering methods, and understanding of ethical principles. The antidote to the problem and the main premise of the training is the basic professional journalism training courses emphasizing accurate, balanced, and independent information. In other words, this teaching embodies the current ideals of the Western, professionalized, objectivity-oriented journalists. While this represents a truly necessary foundation of journalism training, conflict environments – unlike liberal democracies – may necessitate a complimentary set of skills.

The violence or war weakens the ability of professional journalists to remain balanced and accurate, and strengthens their tendency towards sensationalism and simplification. An additional layer of principles and skills are often needed, not as a replacement, but rather as an improvement to the traditional journalistic principles. Known under various names and somewhat varying approaches to training, additional principles are integrated in the new training, best known under the term conflict-sensitive journalism. This training expands on the teaching of professional skills (accuracy, impartiality, balance, and independence) with another tier of skills.
Media other than journalism: marketing, entertainment and new media. Other media formats have been used successfully in most peacebuilding processes over the last two decades. Entertainment programming can be perceived to be trivial and void of a socio-political agenda. Similarly, marketing and advertising are supposed to promote consumption of commercial products and economic growth. But both kinds of media practices have been utilized in peaceful reconciliation of conflicts by promoting the change of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of conflict populations.

Both marketing and entertainment embody some of the same journalistic principles, yet in a distinctive way they use the media as a tool in pursuit of an intended goal or an objective. While journalists aim to inform, marketers hope to persuade. Similarly, entertainment can compel and grab the attention of a massive audience. These media forms have long been employed by governments in propaganda and cultural diplomacy efforts, and they have found significant success in advancing social development in the areas of health, agriculture, family planning etc. Building on those experiences, peacebuilding actors embraced the process wholeheartedly and implemented it successfully in Afghanistan, Rwanda/Burundi, Northern Ireland and elsewhere. Different type of organizations executed diverse yet highly effective programs resulting in transformation of beliefs, attitudes and knowledge that helped diffuse social tension in quite a few fragile societies.

At present, new types of online media are changing all the established patterns of media consumption. They combine old and new media, journalism and non-journalism into a new way of expression characteristic of the new generations. They are changing the convention media rules and evolve so rapidly making the patterns of change impossible to capture. Nevertheless, these new media are making an enormous impact in the new conflict regions: “Twitter revolutions” in Iran or Moldova, Facebook protests in Egypt and Tunisia, cell-phone organizing in Gaza, Kenya and Ukraine, the YouTube activism for genocide prevention in Darfur and the individual citizen journalism from Mumbai to Baghdad are changing everything we thought we knew about the media. Yet, there is no easy way of describing the brief and changing history of the new media’s involvement in both conflict and peace. A cohesive and possibly separate account of these media adventures is gravely needed to capture the short but fascinating experience and the new developments of the social media world.

Regulation. The focus of most media assistance projects over the last two decades has been on the propping up of new media projects that reinforce peace agreements (i.e. journalism training and social marketing campaigns). In contrast, hate speech, biased media institutions and attacks on journalists allow conflicts to linger in its non-violent form long after peace-signing ceremonies. Over the past two decades, the international community and local actors engaged in a series of media reforms in order to develop a healthy media environment, also known as “enabling environment” or the process of building media laws and institution that support free and independent media. This is why a comprehensive media strategy cannot be complete without a twofold approach: positive, peace-oriented media and regulation of negative media practices that enable violence.
In a post-conflict environment, media regulatory reform is necessary to remove these biases and enable the media sector to provide the reliable, unbiased information necessary for peace. A regulatory framework outlines rules under which media should operate. A regulatory framework serves a number of purposes: it allocates frequencies for broadcasting, outlines guidelines and codes of practices and regulates incendiary and hateful speech in the media, etc. When media outlets disobey the codes of practices or engages in incitement, regulatory agencies can withdraw broadcast frequency, fine and even shut down the violators. The ability of the regulatory body to impose sanctions on the incendiary media further encourages fair and independent journalism. Especially when the regulatory sanctions are coupled with the withdrawal of financial support, regulation can be used as a tool with which to manage conflict and foster sustained peacebuilding.

Looking at the problem of regulation, it is important to recognize that unlike journalism, marketing, or entertainment, regulation is a systemic issue. Consequently, whereas journalism and marketing initiatives are adopted by organizations, transformation in the media regulatory system can only occur with buy-in at the national level. Generally, in the past 65 years, the motivation for such transformation has either been occupation by a victorious power (Germany, Japan, Iraq) or by a peacekeeping force (Bosnia, Kosovo). In either case, the occupation has taken for itself the task of nation building, generally with the goal of creating a democratic society. Reform of the media sector and its regulation is crucial to this task.

Over the past 20 years, international development donor agencies and peacebuilding practitioners have engaged in a series of nation building projects from Bosnia through Afghanistan in which reform of the media sector has been a vital element. The regulation part of the framework describes what has been discovered to work in regulating media sectors that advance rather than undermine peace. Briefly, it shows that for media regulation to enhance the peace, the media regime must address three basic issues. First, and most fundamentally, the government must develop independent and legitimate agency in charge of regulatory system. Second, this agency must develop and enforce laws and guidelines that regulate media content and prohibit hate speech and incitement. Finally, it must provide an environment that protects journalists in their work. While these policies are by no means the only effective measures of regulation, their prevalence in practice speaks highly of their usefulness. These three practices remain a small subset of a much larger regulatory policy, however a crucial one in the recovery from violent conflict.

**What have we learned after 20 years of peacebuilding media in practice?**

Consequently, not only are the three pillars well established practices of most media intervention over the last twenty years, their sub-practices have become recognizable (see Table 1). They occur repeatedly over the last 20 years as well as remain prevalent across various geographic regions. The following analysis outlines the conceptual and historical development of each media practice as well as the persistent approaches and strategies of implementation.
### Table 1: The Conceptual Framework

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<th>Journalism</th>
<th>Other Media</th>
<th>Regulation</th>
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<td>Pluralization of the news media outlets</td>
<td>Social Marketing</td>
<td>Development of independent and legitimate agency in charge of regulatory system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support of free and independent news media</td>
<td>Entertainment- Education</td>
<td>Development and enforcement of laws and guidelines that regulate media content and prohibit incitement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training of journalists</td>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>Development of the environment that protects journalists in their work</td>
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20 Years of Peacebuilding Media in Practice: Three Main Approaches to Journalism Development

The development of news media in the post-Cold War conflict environments had to consider multiple socio-political contexts. Formulaic templates of development just did not exist. At the time of the first post-Cold War conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia, there was no tested model for quick media independence in conflict societies. Some models of the media development were being formulated at the time based on the experience from press development in countries in democratic transition (e.g. former Soviet bloc, Latin America and parts of Asia).9

Therefore, the initial media efforts in conflict zones have largely been experimental attempts to incorporate the practices of media assistance from transitioning post-communist societies to the one in post-conflict zones. As a result, the news media development in conflict zones saw three similar areas of activity to those adopted in societies in transition. These initiatives can be understood as phases of development even though there is no clear sequence in their implementation as they frequently occurred simultaneously. Most of the assistance to conflict media can be summed up as:

a) pluralization of the news media outlets  
b) support of free and independent news media and  
c) training of journalists

**Pluralization of the news media outlets.** A major similarity between the transitioning societies and societies in violent conflict at the time of the first interventions was in the state’s monopolistic control of the media system. At the end of the Cold War, media in both environments was scarce but most importantly it was tightly controlled by the government or the majority governing party. Most of the conflicts in the early 1990s (Rwanda, Bosnia, Sierra Leone) were enabled by dictatorial monopoly over scarce news media. In Rwanda, the state radio was controlled by the government and the private radio RTLM was in the hands of people close to the government. So when the Hutu government launched the attacks on Tutsi, radio was another tool at the disposal of the genocidal government. Similarly, throughout the 1990s Afghanistan had only one radio station completely controlled by Taliban. Iraqi television and newspapers were both dominated by Saddam Husain’s regime.
Because a monopolized media system in the hands of authoritarian regimes has proven to be a potent weapon in wars, most media assistance projects begin with pluralization – the creation of multiple new media sources that weakens the state’s monopoly over a media system. The initial response of international media agencies in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq have been the same - pluralize the media to provide an abundance of viewpoints. Pluralistic media systems were seen as stakeholders of diverse sets of viewpoints. Perhaps more importantly, they were difficult to control by a single political entity.

Creating plurality and diversity of voices has often been seen as the best available shortcut to a media system capable of supporting a functioning democratic society. A healthy mix of actors organized quickly to finance, manage and produce small media projects all across the conflict zones. Government development agencies and the private sector engaged in pluralization by providing unprecedented funding for new media development (e.g. USAID, CIDA, DIFID, EU etc.). In Burundi, the European Union funded the popular Radio Bonesha, the Ford Foundation funded the alternative news station RPA and Search for Common Ground founded Radio Isanganiro. Others, especially the NGO sector, pursued the changes of the regulatory guidelines and technical issues that would allow an infusion of multiple new media into environment (e.g. IWPR, Internews, Article 19).

If the success of pluralization was to be measured purely in numbers of new media outlets, then the accomplishment of media pluralization has been unmistakable. Afghanistan went from one radio station to 220 stations in just nine years, Iraq went from a state controlled monolith to 200 Iraqi owned publication almost overnight. Sierra Leone went from fewer than 10 regular newspapers and one government operated radio in 1990 to over 60 newspapers and about 12 radio stations in 2002. Six years after the war in Bosnia, the number of radio and TV stations per capita was twice that in the United States.

The impressive numbers of the new news media outlets can be viewed as the most illustrious accomplishments of media assistance even before the critical assessment of their content. This is because the creation of news media outlets is extremely complex to accomplish as well as the most expensive part of media assistance. Print and broadcasting outlets are complex systems that require expensive hardware operated by highly skilled personnel. The building of new media outlets entails the physical construction of media houses as well as costly technological equipment including printing presses, broadcast transmitters, recording equipment, etc.

The Bosnian news network OBN, started from scratch in 1996 as an alternative to sectarian propaganda cost $10.5 million to set up and another $7.5 million to run over the first three years of broadcast (1996-1999). Even in the relatively inexpensive Afghanistan environment, transmitters, infrastructure and the initial operating cost for TV Tolo was $6 million (two and a half million coming from USAID and the rest from the owner’s mortgage of their homes and property sold in Australia). In Iraq, the new public broadcaster was set by the coalition provisional authorities (CPA) and its cost in the first three years was estimated at $200 million. The total cost of the U.S. attempt to establish a new public broadcaster in the end was estimated at $500 million, “the largest attempt ever by the United States, or any country, to help create independent media in another nation.”
Support of free and independent journalism. Pluralization has definitely been one of the more successful practices over the last two decades of media development. However, even a highly pluralized media environment does not automatically become a free, fair and independent system conducive to democratization or peacebuilding. Afghanistan and Iraq are both examples of highly pluralized media environments. But the MSI index considers the Iraq media system to be unsustainable, meeting minimal objectives for a free media system.\textsuperscript{19} Similarly, a Freedom House survey describes the state of Afghan media as “not free”.\textsuperscript{20} Pluralization removes the problem of authoritarian control over media. On the other hand, it allows breathing room for all kinds of media content. In the conflict environment, this often means the return to journalistic practices saturated with political bias, partiality and often blatant propaganda. Plurality does not distinguish between the independent journalism and the journalism of questionable quality, inaccurate information and favoritism. Journalism that blatantly serves conflict agendas of political parties undermines the peacebuilding transformation from violence to cooperation.

Bosnian post conflict media development is an illustration of this problem. After the peace agreement in 1995, Bosnia’s media sector underwent a typical pluralization method of media development. An influx of financial assistance made it easy to set up independently-owned radio and television stations. 210 radio and 71 television stations were registered in a country of 4 million people soon after.\textsuperscript{21} But even in this hyper-pluralized environment, the old ethnic broadcasters remained the most popular television stations by far. During the war, these ethnic stations were instrumental in spreading messages of hate that incited and fueled the conflict just a few years earlier. After the peace agreement ethnic media continued to advocate their own patriotic causes and demonize their opponents.\textsuperscript{22} Despite the influx of new, independent media, biased coverage by ethnic media made the entire media system, though pluralistic, a contributing factor toward further fragmentation of Bosnian society.\textsuperscript{23}

Consequently, a pluralized media system is a necessary but not sufficient element for a functioning society. It represents the initial step which then demands additional refinements in support of free, independent media. This next step requires more delicate media assistance which differentiates between journalism conducive to democratization and one that has corrosive impact on it. The former receives incentives and support while the latter remains unassisted.

Incentives for independent media come in variety of ways but the most common form of assistance is financial support. Media operations are primarily commercial businesses and their survival depends on their ability to finances their operation. In general, media make the majority of their money from advertising sales to other commercial business. However, most environments coming out of violent conflict are economically deprived which makes the funding of media houses extremely difficult. In such a case, advertisement sales rarely cover the costs of operation and therefore most conflict media depend on supplemental funding from elsewhere. This funding comes from big governmental and private agencies in forms of grants and donations. By awarding such funding, the international donations and grants can keep the independent media in business while withdrawing the assistance may mean the end of the road for others.
The biggest providers of grants and donation to post-conflict media are the state governments (e.g. British, Canadian, Danish, Swiss, and the US) and other intergovernmental organizations (UN, EU, OSCE). It is unthinkable to conceive of media development in a conflict zones without the huge amounts of funding made available through those grants. For example, Afghan media received huge amounts of financial support and remains dependant on continued influx of donations. By 2005, the USAID funded 132 media projects for $14.6 million. The British government agency DFID provided 1 million pounds to the Afghan language BBC, the World Bank funded the Afghan regulatory agency ATRA with $1 million and the European Commission gave $1 million to Killid media group. Without such assistance most of these projects would likely disappear.

Another form of incentive for the independent media is journalism training. Professional journalists often have little if any training on their roles, their legal rights, investigative practices or what to do in the midst of a violent conflict. Sierra Leone did not provide a single training program for journalist until 1993 and Rwandan journalists had little practical training until 2000.

Training of Professional Journalists. Training of journalists has been the underlying priority of media assistance programs. Pluralization of media infrastructure is a precondition to creating vibrant news media, but the ultimate success in creating free and independent journalism depends on training in professional practice. At the most basic level, good journalism rests on a foundation of accuracy, balance, and impartiality. In other words, this teaching embodies the current ideals of the Western, professionalized, traditional journalists.

For example, the Institute for War and Peace reporting conducted extensive training of Iraqi journalists since 2003. Over this period IWRP received a total of $28.2 million primarily from the U.S. State Department. The initial trainings in 2005 were compacted into two-to-three week long workshops focusing on hands-on approaches to reporting. Training in basic reporting skills of balance, fairness and neutrality was meant to improve on the biased journalism practiced during the former regime. The underlying assumption behind the training was “that short-term training programs could be effective in post-authoritarian or post-conflict societies to quickly develop a cadre of journalists able to inform the public with accurate, balanced news during a time of transition.” The initial lessons showed that short workshops did not manage to instil a more professional set of skills in such a short period of time under on-going violent conflict.

It is important to understand why basic professional skills such as accuracy, balance and impartiality are hard to attain during conflict. This is because the complexity of conflict environment constrains journalism and prevents it from its normal operation. Violence is a destructive force that immobilizes society and severely obstructs daily journalistic operations. Threats and physical violence makes the manipulation of information sources possible, limits the movement of journalists and puts them under physical and psychological pressure. Additionally, parties in conflict (governments, political parties, ethnic groups) often monopolize and control the media which makes balance and impartiality impossible by default. In short, conflict violence prevents journalists from performing their jobs and severely limits their ability to remain balanced, accurate and impartial.
Additional principles to professional journalism. Additional principles have become widespread in the training programs of journalists in conflict zones. There is no unifying approach or an agreement on the set of additional principles but a recognition of the emphasis on the extreme character of the conflict environment in which traditional values are necessary but not sufficient to ensure good journalism. The traditional norms of journalism are indispensable but a complimentary set of skills appears necessary when training journalists in conflict environments.

Known under various names and somewhat varying approaches to training, additional principles have been integrated in some journalism trainings. Probably the best known training approach is “conflict sensitive” journalism. Conflict sensitive journalism builds on but does not betray the professional journalism principles detailed above. In short term, conflict sensitive journalists are trained to report on diverse parties and points of view, rely on reliable sources, and report on harm to the people on all sides. In the longer term, journalists should be capable to engage in conflict analysis. Some journalists see the additional principles as a departure from the dominant objectivity paradigm, while others welcome the opportunity to engage in conflict more directly.28

The Open Broadcast Network (OBN) in Bosnia will likely be remembered as one of the most ambitious media responses to propaganda and violent conflict. To this day, it remains the only television network established in response to a peace agreement, when the Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks came under pressure to end their three-year-long violent conflict by instituting a provisional, internationally-run governing body (the Office of the High Representative, OHR) in charge of peace implementation. One of OHR’s initial assessments of the Bosnian conflict was that propaganda through the ethnic television stations was instrumental in spreading messages of hate that incited and fuelled the conflict.

Throughout the war, all three ethnic groups utilized radio and television broadcasting to further their strategies and demonize their opponents.29 In response, the OHR (supported by UN, EU and US administrators) developed and promoted “unbiased media” to combat persisting propaganda. An international community expert group, headed by the Open Society Institute of New York, developed a concept for a completely new television network. As a result, the new national television network (Open Broadcast Network, OBN) was launched in 1996 just a few months after the idea was introduced. The mission statement of the network was “to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with a locally run but national and cross-entity TV network … and [to provide] the viewers with programming they can trust, whether locally produced or acquired from other sources” (OHR, 1999). In the beginning there was no shortage of funds, training and support. During the first year of operation, the station was given $10.2 million in funds and equipment (Poucher, 2001).

While the idea of conflict sensitive journalism had not been clearly formulated at the time of OBN’s inception, it is clear that this project embodied similar principles. Developing far from academia and the expert discussions of optimal journalistic principles, OBN’s original mission dealt with similar propositions: Jadranko Katana, the OBN news director of information programming admitted that he often preferred to broadcast stories that emphasized a peace-
oriented narrative at the same time he had a clear idea about what journalism should stand for, regardless of conflict or peace:

Our job is to convey the information whether you like it or not. And that’s it. The only way to somehow approach reconciliation was to present a neutral piece of information in the sea of propaganda messages, information free of a particular point of view other than journalistic standards.

But the OBN’s mission was far too ambitious for a single project. It was positioned as an exemplary media institution that could bring an end to the old propaganda of conflict times. OBN was entrusted to reform existing media by example. The belief rested on an assumption that propaganda cannot survive in the environment of fair, open and balanced journalism. OBN was not only supposed to help the audience see what fair reporting ought to look like. It was to challenge and undermine the biased war media machinery by example and this never happened. In 2003, the station changed ownership, its infrastructure became privatized, and it transformed into a commercial television project with moderate success.

20 Years of Other Media in Peacebuilding: Marketing, Entertainment and the New Media

While the journalists’ involvement with peacebuilding practice may interfere with the strict interpretation of objectivity standards, other media formats can play a more direct role in peacebuilding without similar constraints. Entertainment and marketing (lately, the new media) are used intentionally in support of the peacebuilding process and they have become known for their exceptional utilization in the field of international development, which is an approach that uses media to promote positive social change in underdeveloped world. Defined as a “planned use of strategies and processes of communication aimed at achieving development,” this field is a result of pragmatic interdisciplinary integration – communication research and development studies.

In the past, practitioners usually directed their efforts at the specific issues that constrain societal advancement. Most often, the causes of underdevelopment (poverty, health development and disease prevention, family planning) are closely related to the problems that lead to violent conflicts. For example, numerous communication campaigns launched across Africa and Asia have raised awareness about AIDS prevention, improvements in farming techniques, and the use of contraceptives for family planning. Even though it is hard to imagine a more destructive impediment to development than violent conflict, development agencies did not focus their communication efforts on peacebuilding. It was rather the non-governmental and intergovernmental peacebuilding agencies (e.g. Search for Common Ground, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping operations) that took the lead in the deployment of mass communication for the transformation of violent conflicts.

An entertainment format was used to promote social development by placing educational messages into popular entertainment shows. This is why the practice became known as Entertainment education or Edutainment. Along the same lines, when commercial marketing techniques are used to promote social change, the practice is known as social marketing. The two
practices have mostly been used in promotion of international development, pursing social change in areas such as health development, educational advancement, environmental change and lately peacebuilding. In the last few years, there has been a number of example where the new online media, especially the social media, were used strategically in pursuit of social and political change. While not much time has passed to clearly evaluate contribution of new media to peacebuilding, it is clear that the following three practices have clearly established themselves as the persistent non-journalism approaches to peacebuilding:

   a) Entertainment-education  
   b) Social Marketing  
   c) New Media

Entertainment-Education in Peacebuilding

After the edutainment shows inspired socially responsible decisions in international development, peace-oriented themes were soon imbedded in a variety of entertainment programs. Reconciliation, tolerance and cooperation became some of the peace-oriented messages blended into entertainment shows. Many entertainment projects were launched following the brutal conflicts of the 1990s in Rwanda/Burundi, Israel and Macedonia. Peace-oriented content aiming to reconcile these ethnic groups were carefully implanted in soap operas, dramas, music shows and children’s programs. The immediate goal of peacebuilding edutainment was a positive social change at the individual (community) level but also a change on a larger institutional and socio-political context.

The use of the edutainment in conflict regions came from a realization that entertainment format had certain advantages in comparison to other mass communication content in the media:

- **Entertainment (unlike journalism) doesn’t require objectivity and can openly support peaceful outcomes.** This genre of programming does not require balance and neutrality. Quite contrary, entertainment is appealing because it is suggestive; it portrays diametrical characters and nudges the audience to side with the protagonist. Entertainment is not bound by objectivity, its fictional character allows for the creation of fantastic scenarios not bounded by reality. In such scenarios, bias toward peace is not only acceptable but also desirable. Also known as intended outcome programming, edutainment can openly promote peaceful outcomes, and unlike journalism, maintain its credibility.

- **Entertainment has a broader reach and appeals to different demographic groups (women, children, etc.)** Entertainment is equally popular among all demographic groups. It has the potential to deliver a message to a variety of audiences in a way that news programs cannot. News programs and journalism are traditionally favored by an older, male audience, however, children are rarely interested in the content of news shows and some of the most popular entertainment formats (e.g. soaps and dramas) primarily attract female audiences. Because the children will inevitably become the future stakeholders of peacebuilding in each society, building a positive relationship among them can be an invaluable investment for the future of peace. Embedding the peace oriented themes in
entertainment dramas and series can encourage women to develop a more active role in peacebuilding. Involving women and children in peacebuilding can often mean the difference between sustainable peace and protracted conflict.

- **Entertainment works well on attitudes.** The obvious strength of journalism is its ability to effectively gather and deliver information and opinion. Entertainment shows are effective mostly because they are well-told stories that entice the audience emotionally. Such stories can be oversimplified in terms of character and content but they are effective because their dramatic content plays on the audience’s feelings. For this reason, the format of mass appeal (i.e. drama, music) makes the pro-social change not only familiar but also well liked. In addition to drama and music, formats such as reality television, theater and infotainment were found to be successful because they evoke emotional reactions in addition to providing rich content. Such was the case with the popular music used in Angola and Macedonia, street theater in Bosnia, Liberia and Macedonia and peace-oriented reality television in the Middle East. The following section describes some of the lessons learned from these implementations of edutainment in peacebuilding.

- **Entertainment is prevalent in quantity; news programs are a small fraction of the 24-hour media cycle.** Entertainment education recognizes the sheer availability and the appeal of entertainment in modern society, which is why peacebuilding agencies begin to attach reconciliatory messages in popular shows. Entertainment programs currently dominate contemporary electronic media. In comparison, news programs and journalism are a small fraction of the 24-hour media cycle even in an information overloaded western world. Average news program from cable news channels in the U.S. attracts less than half a million viewers while prime time (i.e. entertainment programs) network audience is measured in millions. Expending communication efforts beyond the news media greatly enhances the media’s ability to impact the social environment.

Thus far, soap-opera remains the most popular entertainment format featuring peace messages. Soap operas and radio dramas have successfully featured cleverly embedded peace-oriented themes in entertaining plots. Soap operas have been created for multiple conflict settings and the popularity of the format is a global phenomenon.

**Case Study of Edutainment for Peace in Afghanistan: New Home, New Life.** One of the classic examples of edutainment in support of peace in Afghanistan is BBC’s *New Home, New Life* radio soap-opera. One of the longest running and most popular shows in Afghanistan, New Home, New Life tells a story of everyday lives in the three fictional but typical Afghan villages. One storyline follows a romantic tail of the heroine Gulalai, another is the entertaining adventure of the village chief Jabbar Khan. But no story was as dramatic as the story of Khair Mohammed. Khair was well respected elder in one of the villages. In a dramatic twist involving a quarrel among two communities, violence broke out and shots were fired. Khair was killed in cross fire and radio listeners were in disbelief over his death. The radio station received numerous letters and phone calls of people saddened by his death, and a small town held a
memorial service in the local mosque in his honor. Most importantly, in the upcoming months during the local jirgahs (meeting of elders) the story of this fictional character was used as a warning of what can happen when disputes are not handled peacefully.35

Stories like this are the reason why Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the UN, congratulated the show on its 10th anniversary in April of 2004: "It is a perfect illustration of how the media can use drama and entertainment to advance the cause of peace and development."36

Sixteen years after the show premiered, New Home, New Life is still an exemplary model of blending the pro-social and educational content into a dramatic format.

Developed by the BBC World Service Trust in 1994 during the Taliban regime, the show was intended as an educational program aimed at bringing social change in Afghanistan. Building on the popularity of entertainment format, the soap opera genre dramatizes the lives of common people. Despite its fictitious characters, the plots remain realistic and involve dramatic resolution of real problems facing local people. It allows a seamless integration of educational messages into dramatic action and it has been successfully used in health development promotion in Latin America, Asia and Africa.37

New Home, New Life has been one of the most popular non-news shows in Afghanistan38 in the last 16 years. 48 percent of the population listens to the show on a weekly basis.39 The show is popular with women and men as well as entire families who frequently listen to the show together. During the Taliban regime, the show was popular even among the insurgents due to its entertaining content.40

Not only can listeners identify the show and its themes, the research shows that they positively identify with the characters, learn about problem solving from them and seek to learn from the program’s content. For instance, the UN survey in 1997 found out that the listeners of the program were only half as likely to be involved in a mine incident as non-listeners, suggesting that significant learning has occurred as a result of long-term listening.41 After being on the air for 16 years, the program has become a resource of information and it successfully models resolution of conflict problems.

Social Marketing in Peacebuilding

An influential paper in 1952 hypothesized that if we could sell brotherhood like we sell soap, peace would prevail globally in a short period of time.42 This problem reflects the essential objective of social marketing: how to make socially responsible behaviour a desirable commodity. Social marketing practice emerged from its much better recognized relative – commercial advertising and marketing. In business, the entrepreneur aims to provide a product to satisfy the needs of its customers, in social development social marketing addresses socio-economic needs and uses communication channels to outline a solution to the social problem. Social marketing has been defined as “the design, implementation, and control of programs seeking to increase the acceptability of social idea or practice in a target group,” but practically it is a technique that utilizes communication to promote cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral change.43
The impact of commercial marketing can hardly be disputed in contemporary society. Even though its impact may not be direct and easily perceptible, the annual expenditures on advertising (e.g. in 1998, Coca Cola’s $1.6 billion, in 2008, McDonald’s $1.201 billion) are the best evidence of its believed influence. Besides, the idea of using advertising for the promotion of health development has brought significant results in cases of the maternal and child health and nutrition in the third world, family planning in developing countries, the antismoking campaign in the United States, cardiovascular disease risk reduction, and substance abuse prevention among adolescents.

But the promotion of peace appears to be a slightly more complicated task. Pro-peace marketing is not as easy practice as promotion of tangible products. The promotional strategies of consumer products are working not only because the products are needed and wanted but also because the commercial industry understands the theory and practice of the effective product promotion. Therefore, social marketing also helped change the way we think of the audience of media projects. People were formerly thought to be passive receivers of messages but increasingly they are seen as a constituency capable of helping in peacebuilding. Social marketing brought about this transformation that assumes the involvement of the beneficiaries of change in every stage of development intervention. It places an emphasis on understanding and involving the audience in the following phases: analyzing the problem, designing the response, implementing and evaluating.

Case Study of Social Marketing in Peacebuilding: Refugee Repatriation Campaign. When the election of 1996 brought no significant change in the Bosnian government, leaving the war actors in power, more non-journalistic projects were employed in order to reduce political tensions. One project was a collaboration between the OHR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that resulted in an extensive social marketing campaign involving multiple media formats and channels.

At the time, the issues of refugee repatriation and property return were considered to be the major obstacle to peace because the forced movement of the population resulted in a high number of internally displaced people. The peaceful transformation could not have been achieved without the proper and complete return of the population to their homes and properties. This is why the comprehensive media campaign initially targeted refugees who needed to understand that a safe return to their home was possible. Additionally, the greater public needed to be reminded about the legal entitlement of the refugees’ personal property, despite the long period of unlawful mass expulsions.

Therefore, the three-part campaign (‘Dosta je’ (It’s enough) ‘Postovanje’ (Respect), and ‘Koliko jos?’ (How long)) was launched consisting of three phases promoting the return of the refugees and repossession of their homes and properties. The first phase called for an end to the lawlessness (Dosta je), while the second phase asked that the right of repatriation be respected (Postovanje). The two campaigns were followed by a third stage – TV series ‘Koliko jos’ (How Long), which was broadcast on public television channels. Run as documentary series, ‘Koliko jos’ aired nationally in prime time for several months.
The choice and the positioning of the messages in the media channels will be remembered for its emphasis on the unique channel of communication, clever targeting of its audience and its ability to affect the cultural context. In order to ensure successful penetration of its message, the Office of High Representative had passed a broadcasting regulation that all television and radio stations were obliged to give a certain amount of time to the media campaign. Building on such favorable conditions, short public service announcements (PSA) on radio and TV were launched in 1999. Soon after, large billboards, posters, print ads, leaflets and also some non-traditional communication strategies (specially designed folders, matches and diskette holders) were distributed across Bosnia.

Most original were the sugar packets served in the coffee shops imprinted with the logo of the ‘Postovanje/Respect’ campaign. Considering the cultural significance of coffee shops and its importance in the public life of the Bosnian society such promotion has been a very effective way of reaching the audience and inserting the message into the social context. In addition, the messages were reinforced during national prime-time television slot. The third part of the campaign, thirty five minute-long stories about people affected by the displacement, ran for three months (March-May 2001) to conclude the campaign.

Mareco Index, a commercial public opinion research agency, conducted the evaluation research of the campaign. The first phase of the campaign ‘Postovanje’ was seen or heard by 72 percent of people while 54 percent saw or heard its follow-up ‘Dosta je.’ It is also noticeable that the third phase, the TV series was watched by 37 percent of Bosnians.\textsuperscript{48} The results also confirmed significant recognition for the main messages and outstanding public awareness in regards to the campaign.

New Media

Television might be the medium of greatest impact but it is expensive to operate and produce. Newspapers are significantly cheaper to produce but costly to the audience and inaccessible to the illiterate. Radio can overcome the problems that other media may have: low rates of literacy, lack of electrical or broadcast grid and high cost. The Internet combines all the benefits and obstacles of the old media and then adds a few constrains of its own: even the most primitive online connection requires complex set of hardware and software not widely available in the conflict regions. This is the primary reason why the Internet is the least frequently used media practice.

When talking about the new media in peacebuilding, most of the practical application comes from the last decade starting with peaceful revolutions of the new millennium; the Bull-dozer Revolution in Serbia (2000), Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003), Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004) etc. At the time when these revolutions were developing, so was the Internet. While still only at its rudimentary level, websites, email and mobile phones helped organize mass protest, coordinate actions, spread the information in those revolutions. Nevertheless, the Internet was praised for its impact and ability to promote social change.
The Internet developed further in the next 5 years as the digital technology advanced beyond passive viewing of web pages. The new version of the Internet known as Web 2.0 allowed for the collaboration of people, sharing of resources and formation of digital communities beyond geographical boundaries, around common interest. The most significant outcome of Web 2.0 was the emergence of social media that turned the table on how people interact with the media: people no longer only receive the message but produce and share their own media due to integration of the web and mobile technology into a social interaction. Social media increased the power of formerly underrepresented constituency and could easily organize against the traditionally dominant government.

Hence, it was only a matter of time before the Web 2.0 found its application in the areas of violent conflicts. The protest against the oppressive governments in Moldova and Iran in 2009 became known as the Twitter revolutions. Instead of organizing via telephones and emails, protesters utilized the social media platform Twitter to communicate and inform the world about their plight. Once the protest were on their way in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen and Syria, the information about them was spread through Youtube, Skype, Twitter and Facebook. Not only were the media platforms different, but sources of information were no longer exclusively professional media conglomerates. Instead, regular citizens used the new media technology to take part in building their own new futures.

The most prominent is the example from the Egyptian revolution. In 2010, when an Egyptian Khaled Said was beaten to death by the police, the Facebook page “We are all Khaled Said” became a place for protesters to organize against the Mubarak regime. A young activist Wael Ghonim used his Facebook account to sign up more than 100,000 people for January 25 demonstration against the president Mubarak. The protesters planed their revolt on Facebook and executed it in the street by disposing of the oppressive government, if only to see the rise of the military one. If the earlier protest in Iran were characterized as Twitter Revolution, the Egyptian demonstration was then dubbed the Facebook revolution. This is a powerful anecdote that describes the potency of the new media tools that work much differently than the old media. This example illustrates something new and different – the unprecedented reality of political organizing galvanized by a new communication tool in a network of people connected by the new technology.

Regardless of how powerful the impact of the example from Egypt may seem, we must resist the temptation to generalize based on the power of the anecdote. We are only at the beginning of development of new media practice and its involvement in peacebuilding. So far, the practice shows an indication of something compelling which now must be understood in the proper context, historical perspective, relation to the old media etc. There is no doubt that the Internet makes collective action possible. Howard explains it plainly: “Clearly the Internet and cell phones have not on their own caused a single democratic transition, but it is safe to conclude that today, no democratic transition is possible without information technologies.” This is good for the environments where collective action is the antidote to the problem – oppressive regimes. But collective action may not be the magic solution in peacebuilding as much as in regime change scenarios. Collective action might be the best approach to toppling oppressive, authoritarian regimes. Peacebuilding requires additional kinds of action, usually longer term
processes, institution-building, attitudinal and behavioral change and for assessment of those impacts more time is needed.

20 years of regulation practice in peacebuilding: three basic steps towards regulating the conflict media

Most of the projects described previously (journalism, social marketing entertainment and new media) deal with the orchestration of positive media practices in support of the on-going peacebuilding process. Yet, the residual violence-inciting propaganda represents major obstacle to a lasting peace. A critical component of peacebuilding media strategy that has been widely underreported and underutilized concerns the regulation of this volatile media environment. While the intervention with peace-oriented information in conflict is necessary, intervention against certain kinds of media should be considered at the same time. This is why a comprehensive media strategy in peacebuilding should be conceived as a twofold intervention: encouragement of the practices in support of peacebuilding and elimination of the media practices that enable continuation of conflict and irregularities in media.

Even though the cessation of direct violence marks a decisive step in transforming conflict, other forms of violence (i.e. cultural and structural) can be destructive to peace development. The majority of conflicts in the last fifteen years have been reinforced through carefully orchestrated media machines. Even after political agreements bring an end to physical violence, hate messages, biased and unprofessional media institutions and threats against journalists tend to prolong the culture of violence.

The preceding history of media regulation over the past 20 years suggests some basic rules for developing a healthy media environment. Broadly speaking, if implemented successfully, the following suggestions provide a media environment that ensures the production of unbiased and reliable information. The basic structure for regulation is three-fold:

a) Development of independent and legitimate agency in charge of regulatory system.

b) Development and enforcement of laws and guidelines that regulate media content and prohibit incitement and hate speech.

c) Development of the environment that protects journalists in their work.

Development of independent and legitimate agency in charge of regulatory system

Well organized regulatory infrastructure is the foundation of any regulatory process. The very basic requirement of such infrastructure is the creation of an agency in charge of regulation. Consequently, the agency develops regulative policies, sanctioning system, monitoring mechanism, etc. Just as the formation of the FCC and the OFCOM helped established functioning media systems in the U.S. and the U.K., the creation of a regulatory agency in a conflict zone is a first step in orchestrating media and society in general.

The most important feature of an effective regulatory body is its ability to remain independent and resist political pressures from the government and other power structures. Daily operations of a regulatory agency in most societies are coordinated through the governmental agencies (e.g.
culture ministry, government appointed executive board, etc.). However, the degree of government interference in the agency’s business differentiates between successful and corrupt regulators. Most governments try to exert pressure in order to ensure preferable treatment of the broadcast media. In authoritarian societies, government’s interference is blatant, but even modern democracies have been known to meddle with regulatory policies and procedures (e.g. Czech Republic, Turkey). Fortunately, a number of countries in post war recovery have set up independent and transparent institutions, including media regulators.

The Bosnian regulator, the Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) serves as the model example of a well-established and independent regulator in a conflict society. Its first version (the Media Election Commission) was created in 1997 and was succeeded by the Independent Media Commission (IMC) in June 1998. After a successful tenure it changed its name again in 2000 and it became the Communication Regulatory Agency. Although the CRA’s development might be best described as trial and error, the accomplishments of its regulation are significant especially when the number of stations broadcasting in Bosnia is taken into account. At one point in 2001, Bosnia had reached the world’s highest number of broadcasters per capita; 210 radio and 71 television stations were registered in a country of 4 million people.53

It is astounding that such a prolific and often incendiary media environment was put under control in a relatively short period of time. The most important event that contributed to the containment of hate speech was the execution of regulatory practice. Among the agency’s biggest accomplishments was the introduction of broadcast licenses, which required all of the existing broadcasters to register with the agency. Furthermore, the IMC implemented the Broadcasting Code of Practice, legally binding for all the broadcasters and “considered morally binding on reporters, editors and the owners and publishers of newspapers and periodicals.”54 Finally, most prominent were the number of sanctioning and executive orders that prevented incendiary speech from a number of media outlets in Bosnia.

Considering the success of the Bosnian regulator, international mediators decided to replicate the Communication Regulatory Agency in the next door crises in Kosovo. The United Nations administrators established the Temporary Media Commission (TMC) in 2000 and gave it extraordinary rights. Not only was the TMC in charge of broadcasting media but it also had the unprecedented authority over six Kosovo newspapers. Five years later, TMC was transformed from a temporary institution to a permanent Independent Media Commission for Kosovo. At that moment, the newspapers got their own regulator—the Press Council. The council was set up as a voluntary organization owned by the media outlets. At the same time it was invested with strong regulatory rights to issue fines and force newspaper to issue correction and a right to reply.

Later on, the U.S. controlled Coalition Provisional Authority followed the same model of regulation in setting up their own regulatory agency. They established the Iraqi National Communications and Media Commission (NCMC). The power structure within Commission was divided between a Chief Executive Officer and nine commissioners, and the three-member Appeals Board was introduced to hear complaints. Similarly to Bosnia and Kosovo, the regulator distinguished between self-regulatory print and state run broadcasting regulation. The commission faced multiple challenges, the most significant being continuous violence which prevented most social institutions from functioning. Furthermore, it faced the problem of staffing
the regulatory body, lack of support from barely existent civil society, and the problem of regulatory legitimacy considering the occupying force in charge of policy.

The work on an independent regulatory body in Afghanistan and its guidelines began slowly and late at the end of 2005. The Media law that passed that year stipulated five independent media commissions, each dealing with different aspect of regulation. High Media Council and the Media Affairs Commission were supposed to be in charge of long-term media policy and regulation. Three additional commissions were meant to be regulating private media, public media and violations and complaints. However, in practice these commissions were never set up as the Ministry of Information and Culture frequently bypassed the process by assuming regulatory functions themselves. 55

While it may seem to be a straightforward process, establishing independently functioning regulatory agency has not been easy task. Even the relatively successful stories of the Bosnian and Iraqi regulators recently hit an identical bump in the road. Both agencies became de facto paralyzed when the government failed to appoint replacements to the co-executive councils. In the meantime, both governments are using this situation to strip the agency of their power. Therefore, it is not surprising that in most societies in conflict, government ministries and agencies continue to have a grip over media regulations. Israel’s media are not even regulated by an independent regulator. Instead, the government’s Ministry of Information directly supervises them. Pakistan’s Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) is an extension of the authoritarian government that does not hesitate to intimidate journalists. 56 Not much is different in most other authoritarian states.

There are other reasons for failure to establish independently run agencies, overpowering authoritarian government is just one of them. Lack of resources, time and unwillingness of independent actors are additional reasons. For example, despite the recognized need for such agency in Cambodia, the UN administrators never had the resources (financial nor man-power) to organize a formal regulatory agency. Instead, a small number of officials played the regulatory role themselves without the mandate, mutual agreement or ability to enforce the rules. In other places, despite best intentions regulatory agencies cannot fully perform their responsibilities (regulatory offices in Kinshasa, DR Congo were pillaged and set on fire in 2006). 57

Develop and enforce laws and guidelines that regulate media content and prohibit incitement and hate speech

The next step in the regulation of conflict media is the development of media laws and guidelines. This is a complex legal and regulatory framework consistent with the Western democratic standards of regulation that include laws like defamation law, copyright law, public broadcasting law, and the law on access to official documents. Such guidelines are the basis for an environment that enables media and journalists to be fair and independent. In conflict environments, the most important part of the legal framework is a code of conduct outlining rules that pertain to daily media operation, but especially the guidelines that prevent conflict incitement.

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It is not uncommon for conflict governments to impose strong and obtuse guidelines and codes of conduct, especially during the period of imminent violence. Usually a result of a kneejerk response to the conflict propaganda, government can react harshly, thinking that such policies are in the best interest of the people. Instead of dealing with the development of subtle regulatory guidelines directed at incendiary speech, governments may impose sweeping measures that give media regulation a negative reputation.

Such was the case of post-genocide Rwanda, where government set harsh regulatory pressures on media because of the inciting impact of the hate-radio Radio Télévision Libre de Mille Collines (RTLM). For several years following the genocide, the government imposed a ruthless ban on all forms of radio broadcasting only allowing the broadcast of the government controlled radio. Even respectable international media (BBC and VOA) were being accused of promoting genocidal ideology.\textsuperscript{58}

Similarly, Kenyan regulators reacted harshly in response to the imminent conflict. At the time when 2009 post-election violence in Kenya was beginning to take lives, a call-in show on a vernacular radio station featured very strong language, bordering on hate speech. Local radio stations were ill-equipped and unprepared to delay incendiary language in live broadcast. Kenyan government responded by banning all live broadcasts on the radio. This was a rather clumsy, ad hoc response to the incendiary speech which existed primarily on the vernacular radio.\textsuperscript{59}

The two previous examples show why media regulation resembles a walk on a tight rope. Even though the regulation may legitimately prevent very dangerous incitement to violence, the process of regulation is dangerously close to suppression of freedom of expression. This is why the existence of clearly publicized guidelines, codes of conduct or standards of practice are imperative.

Bosnia is an example of cautiously and professionally executed regulatory framework which is now used as model for other conflict societies. As soon as the ceasefire agreement was established, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) received a mandate to help ensure freedom of expression and introduce some regulatory guidelines. In response they introduced the new media conduct code known as Standards for Professional Conduct for the Media and Journalism. Under this mandate, the standards put an emphasis on fair, accurate and balanced reporting. Broadcasters were required to abide by the Broadcasting Code of Practice. Legally binding for all the broadcasters, the Code was considered “morally binding on reporters, editors and the owners and publishers of newspapers and periodicals.”\textsuperscript{60}

The broadcasting Code of Practice introduced standard, western guidelines and media practices. It set out the rules for broadcasters particularly focusing on incitement, standards of decency, non-discrimination, fairness and accuracy.\textsuperscript{61} The IMC issued numerous executive orders to Bosnia broadcasters and publishers to block incendiary speech.\textsuperscript{62}

**Incitement regulation.** Of specific concern to peacebuilders are the laws and guidelines that define the incendiary speech. The issue of incitement is generally defined as the responsibility to avoid inflammatory language and language “which encourages discrimination, prejudice, or hatred, or which encourages violence, or contributes to the creation of a climate in violence can occur.”\textsuperscript{63} Rwandan regulator used even more sweeping terms as “the use of any speech, written...
statement, or action that divides people, that is likely to spark conflicts among people, or that causes an uprising which might degenerate into strife among people based on discrimination.”

The Iraqi regulator National Communications and Media Commission (NCMC), prohibited incitement in very general term but issued detailed list of topics it did not want to see advocated in the media.

The need for incitement regulation was clearly demonstrated in an example from May 2000 when a minor Kosovo newspaper called *Dita* accused a Serb employed by UNMIK (The United Nations Mission in Kosovo), Petar Topoljski, of being a war criminal and of complicity in crimes against Albanian Kosovars. Giving the details of his home and work address, the article provided the place and motive for someone to commit a crime. Within three weeks, Topoljski was found in his apartment stabbed and strangled to death. Shortly after the discovery of Topoljski’s body, the editor of *Dita*, affirmed his intention to continue publishing the names and details of Serbs who had been “involved against Albanians.” The head of the UNMIK mission, Bernard Koucher, recognized the act as a case of incitement and suspended publication of the paper for eight days.

Rather than accept this regulation and sanctions, the newspaper community as a whole rose up and sided with *Dita*. Despite having authority, without due process and a court hearing, Kouchner had overstepped his bounds, setting what could be a dangerous precedent of limiting the freedom of expression for local media. As the incident had the potential to spin out of control, UNMIK established the Temporary Media Commission (TMC) to manage media regulation in Kosovo. Believing that the core of this dispute was the lack of regulations on hate speech and incitement, the TMC saw the *Dita* case as an opportunity to create legitimacy not only around regulation of incendiary speech but also for the entire program of media reform that UNMIK had planned. As was the case in Bosnia, regulations and codes of conduct developed in partnership were applied by the TMC and adjudicated by a separate hearings board called the Media Appeals Board (MAB).

These multiples examples from different conflict sites show why it is very hard to determine the exact language, process or the tone of regulation that should be universally applied in all cases of conflict. Perhaps, the best approach to the problem is not a universal but a national, case-by case code that addresses the problem with national sensitivity. The problem of defining and accepting the regulation of hate and incendiary speech is unlikely to be resolved universally. Coming up with a universal language at once and without specific context is extremely complicated. Different societies and different legal systems have different interpretation of incitements and hate. But most societies agree that media content can create fear and provide a foundation for violent action. However, waiting for imminent violence to craft a specific law may be dangerous.

**Enforcement of laws.** When violations of the media code have been detected, a regulatory agency must intervene and force remediation. This is why a system of sanctions is common to all the systems of regulation in the world. If enforcement is not timely and effective, regulation is not effective and in the case of the regulatory areas described above will not result in more peaceable society. Over time, regulators have cultivated multiple strategies to address such violations. Based on the violations’ severity and frequency of occurrence, sanctions can include
1) corrections of coverage, apologies, and rights reply, 2) fines, and 3) suspension or closure of operations.

The closure of Al Hawza newspaper in Iraq is an example of a failure of regulative practice which was not firmly grounded in appropriate procedure. In March of 2004, the U.S. established Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) accused the weekly Al-Hawza newspaper of spreading false claims and inflammatory language. Controlled by Muqtada Al-Sadr, the paper published one article which had accused the CPA of deliberately starving the Iraqi people; another blamed American soldiers with purposefully firing rockets at a mosque. Lacking an independent regulatory agency and laws and guidelines, CPA hid behind a poorly formulated definition of incitement and skipped due process to arrive rather hastily at enforcement. It instructed to the troops to close down the newspaper. As such, its decisions were viewed as political and illegitimate. As a matter of fact, it is hard to distinguish such practices from censorship.

Legitimacy of regulation comes from the openness and transparency in the regulation process. While tyrannical societies use regulation to restrict all dissenting opinions, free societies use the same regulation to protect free speech and diversity of opinion. Legitimate regulation must clearly publicize guidelines, codes of conduct or standards of practice because the process of regulation can come dangerously close to suppression of freedom of expression.

*Develop the environment that protects journalists in their work*

The essential components of all journalistic systems are the individual journalists who supply us with the stories and report on the world beyond our immediate environment. In order to ensure that they can carry out this important function, journalist must be protected in their professional activity. Justification for such protection comes from the provisions that protect freedom of speech. While the legal provisions for protection of speech are indispensable, protection of journalists must be seen as more comprehensive.

It entails at least two components. One component concerns the matter of internal press freedom as it relates to journalists’ job security and the relationship with the owner and the editor. The other is physical security. Journalists are often targets of physical violence, intimidation and other threats. The legal system usually goes beyond the constitutional protection of free speech to ensure that journalists are protected by an enabling legal environment. Such an environment ensures that “those who seek to act violently against news media representatives will not be able to do so with impunity.” Journalists cannot perform their jobs professionally if the authorities do not use all of their power to prosecute those who intimidate journalists.

Physical security is the most critical issue in an environment of violent conflict. Even after ceasefire, when journalists are no longer killed in war, their safety is threatened by new nuisances – harassment, intimidation, and physical attacks. In addition to beatings, threatening encounters and harassing phone calls, subtle pressure on journalists through the harassing libel suits in biased courts are standard practice.

Over the last 20 years, the international practitioners have realized that the protection of journalists is an indispensable issue to the freedom of media. In Bosnia, the international NGOs,
The Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters San Frontieres and the International Federation of Journalists worked along the OHR and the OCSE in a strategic plan to protect journalists. The Helsinki Committee and the OSCE established a "hotline" to identify incidents of harassment of journalists. The OCSE launched a mass media campaign publicizing the attacks on journalists. It also encouraged the journalist to report the incidents of intimidation themselves. The OHR often penalized perpetrators directly; in 2000, the OHR removed two public officials in response to their implicit support of the attacks on Radio N. On-going judicial reform focused on training for judges and prosecutors in media law. The journalist greatly benefited from the decriminalization of the libel law which protected them from politicized law suits. 69

But the pressure on journalists continued; the most egregious were the murders of two Kosovo journalists, Bekim Kastrati in 2001 and Shefki Popova in 2000 and a car-bomb assassination attempt in 1999 on of the editor-in-chief of Nezavisne Novine (The Independent) in Bosnia. 70 In Kosovo in 2000, almost 40 percent of journalists said that they had been threatened while performing their jobs. 71 Authorities, both government and other political party members, exerted pressure on the editors, journalists and even owners to cease with critical reports and investigative journalism that threatened the status quo. The main tool of intimidation became financial pressure. Because the government was the biggest employer and contractor, the media critical of the authorities were threatened with the cancelling of advertisements. 72 Even though the isolated threats remain in practice, the cases of physical threats diminished in the second half of the decade.

In Afghanistan, political pressure is evident today despite the changes in the law that guaranteed the freedom of speech. This is partly because the amendment to the first media law added restriction on the “content contrary to the principles of Islam.” The language on the restriction was left purposely vague and contained barely any specifications of what constitutes the principles of Islam. 73 In practice, the journalists were uncertain of the kind of content that could get them in trouble. Frequent and prominent cases of repression against journalists only prolonged the uncertainty among them. For example, a student of journalism was sentenced to death for downloading and distributing a report criticizing the strict interpretation of Islam. 74 Furthermore, murders of the Peace Radio director and the local fixer working with an international media solidified the fear among the local journalists who found themselves attacked by both the Taliban and the government. Uncertain of how to exercise free speech, journalists turned to self-censorship. All in all, while the media laws facilitated liberalization of media, its deliberately vague language greatly stifled the daily practices of journalists.

Obviously, the struggle for securing an enabling environment for media to function freely and independently is an on-going process. This three-fold set of practices does not constitute an entire regulatory regime for media. It represents the most pervasive set of practices over the last 20 years and it has resulted in a media environment that produces less biased and more reliable information. It cannot guarantee peace, but it can enable individuals at all levels in society to make better decisions about whether to support or participate in conflict.

How can the impact of media in conflict he improved?
Now that 20 year practice demonstrate positive yet inconclusive impact of media on peacebuilding, it is necessary to examine in what ways media impact on peacebuilding can be further improved. Overall, the majority of experts in academia and field-practice agree that media impact in general can be increased by:

1) coordinating multiple media practices at the same time (journalism, entertainment, marketing, new media and regulation) and

2) coordinating media with other peacebuilding processes and social institutions.  

Coordinating media practices
Coordinating the peacebuilding efforts of all media practices at the same time (journalism, entertainment, marketing, new media and regulation) is a common sense solution to improving media impacts. The most elementary logic suggest that combination and simultaneous use of three different media has a better chance to achieve a more complete change than an isolated, uncoordinated message. While this is an empirically untested hypothesis, there is some evidence in related fields that buttress these claims.

Similar fields have coordinated their practice. Evidence from the field of propaganda, commercial marketing and development communication shows that highly coordinated efforts have been a preferable modus operandi in each practice. In the case of propaganda, the use of multiple media practices brought most effective results for war governments. Propaganda became effective when it was consolidated into orchestrated machinery by the war governments. In the words of the American propagandists George Creel, no medium of appeal was ignored in persuading Americans to engage in the World War I. Similarly, the British utilized every available media technology for persuasion in both World Wars. The Nazi dominance over film, radio and the early public relation industry is still the most notorious example of comprehensive use of mass communication technology. Although the intent of the ill-intended lessons of the effective propaganda is condemnable, the methods offer us many lessons in how to utilize media in peace.

Today, similarly comprehensive use of media practices, strategies and communication channels are universally accepted in commercial marketing of all major business enterprises. Media plans for a launch of most major products now assume a coordinated approach to persuasion in all media venues: radio and TV spots, internet, advertising, promotional events, sponsorships, product placements in entertainment shows etc. Commercial industry pursuing behavioral change employs a comprehensive media strategy that targets the entire behavioral change process.

When multiple strategies work congruently the chance for success increases even for international development. This is why health practitioners use entertainment-education, news sources and public advocacy regulation when attempting to prevent HIV infections outbursts. Behavioral change experts Singhal and Rogers summarize this eloquently when they suggest that: "file effects produced by a single shot message, are vastly different than the effects produced by repeated persuasive message."
Behavioral change requires coordinated change of cognition and emotion. The field of international development is based on the behavioral change model that describes mass communication's impact on human behavior as a multifaceted process — changed behavior is the result of multiple sets of changes in cognitive and emotional facets. A change of behavior begins with a cognitive change, which is change from unawareness to the exposure to the new information. It is followed by emotional response or attitude formation toward the new information. This is another reason for congruent use of three media practices because journalism primarily informs thus contributing to cognition, edutainment and marketing utilize fictitious plots that appeal to emotions while regulation compliments cognitive and emotional change by eliminating conditions (e.g. bias, incitement) that obstruct the positive change.

All media practices are capable of affecting cognitive change because they all can effectively supply new information and new knowledge. But journalism is the most effective tool for cognitive change because it is extremely efficient and capable of supplying information to the audience. Journalists, regardless of the media that employs them, specialize in succinct and accurate transfer of relevant information to the people that need it. Therefore, effectiveness of any media project depends on the journalists' ability to deliver information to the audience.

Once information is acquired, an audience forms an attitude based on the new knowledge. An audience contemplates the value of the message and formulates a positive or negative response to it. An audience considers multiple factors when forming an attitude toward newly acquired knowledge (e.g. credibility, intent, expertise of the message source, appeal of message, relevance of the message to their personal values etc.). All media, but especially marketing and entertainment, contribute toward creating such positive attitudes. Commercial marketing specialize in creating attitudes by identifying the positive product values and attributes, emphasizing its benefits and associating the products with positive feelings. Social marketing can do the same for peacebuilding through powerful stories, images and direct associations. In entertainment, radio dramas, soap-operas, music, and theater can make a strong emotional appeal for peace, by dramatizing the horrors of conflict and benefits of peace.

Cognitive and attitude formation are complex processes dependent on not only positive reinforcement of change but also elimination of negative conditions that stand in the way of positive change. A number of factors like biased media, conflict inciting messages and attacks on journalists can obstruct the process of positive media development. Therefore, in addition to supplying the positive peace-oriented messages for cognitive change, it is essential to regulate negative conditions from the media environment by a comprehensive regulatory system.

Coordination so far. Coordination among projects is rarely disputed as beneficial in field practice. But it is far easier to agree about the need for coordination than it is to get the actors to do so in the field. Despite the appearance of an orchestrated message apparatus, current media efforts in peace development are haphazardly coordinated. Diverse set of actors, chaotic conflict conditions and relative novelty of practice are some of the reasons
why coordination of efforts have been poor in the last 20 years of practice. Nevertheless, a few conflict zones have seen some degree of coordination even though the circumstance that helped produce it may not be exemplary.

Typically, coordination is accomplished when a single controlling body is in charge of media development. This was the case in Bosnia and Kosovo. In the conflicts where a single authority oversees most of the peacebuilding process, it is much easier to deploy the projects strategically and congruently. However, authoritarian political implementation is hardly a model of democratic governance, even though it may be executed by a benevolent power (International community in Bosnia and Kosovo and the UN in Cambodia). Coordination without the heavy-handed intervention of singular body appears unlikely. The models of coordination that emerged in Bosnia and Kosovo are not without obvious faults.

Alternatively, decentralized peacebuilding (e.g. Afghanistan) often involves numerous actors (local government, military actors, local civil society, and international NGOs) with incompatible agendas. Not only are their politics different but it is not uncommon for several similar NGOs to compete for the same funding. In this environment of scarce financial resources and various political agenda, it is more likely to encounter the atmosphere of competition than cooperation.

There should be no doubt that coordination improves the practice at least because it helps avoid duplication of similar efforts and squandering of the scarce funding. Additionally, hearing a message multiple times in multiple venues or channels improves the outcome as evidence by academic research, lessons of effective propaganda and commercial media.

2. Coordination of media and peacebuilding practice

Secondly, the impact of conflict is so pervasive that it would be unrealistic to expect a significant social change from a radio or television broadcast. This is because an entire century of scientific research has proven that media impacts on people, while substantial, cannot change the entire society. Media cannot stop the wars on their own. Just like war propaganda did not single-handedly cause the war, peace-oriented media cannot single-handedly end a conflict. Even a very successful media project may not be able to prevent violence because the formation of violence is caused by a combination of multiple causes and conditions out of the media's control. Despite the ability to shape attitudes and opinion in favor of peace, media institutions remain only a small segment of a conflict society. Media can insure a significant move toward a peaceful society but they cannot deliver it themselves. Media are capable of affecting beliefs, opinions and attitudes, but their impact wanes when it comes to affecting the root causes of conflict. Christopher Spurk’s justification explains it best:

In pre- or post-conflict settings, media are not able to change, the underlying causes of conflict. The uneven distribution of land, jobs and income might be, for example, an issue of intense reporting, but cannot be altered by the media, only by other means (p. 18).

The transformation of underlying causes of conflict requires an integrated plan of action.
Such plan of action usually comes as a result of peace negotiations that produce peacebuilding plans. Those plans often entail legal reform, institution building, electoral policy etc. They aim to address the improvements in the various structures of society by outlining a set of specific peacebuilding goals (e.g. law, economy, democratic institutions). Societies emerging from conflict often need a comprehensive change within those structures. When legal, political, economic and other social institutions are working towards peacebuilding, media can simply amplify their message instead of working in isolation.

The practice has shown that media can help bring about the change in people and institutions, but such change is only a part of what is needed for successful social transformation. When it accompanies other social and political institutions in their pursuit of peacebuilding, media builds along the comprehensive reform brought about by others. The role of media, as Walter Lippmann suggested in the 1920s, is not to substitute for inadequate social organization and institutions. Media can be only as strong as social institutions and processes. Legal, political, economic and other social institutions must assist in transforming the conflict and media must be understood as an integral yet singular segment of peacebuilding.

The success of the peacebuilding process depends primarily on the readiness of people and institutions to end conflict policies. The media must be understood as an integral and important segment of peace development with all its limitations and constraints. Despite the ability to shape attitudes and opinions in favor of peace, media institutions should be seen as one component of a peacebuilding strategy.

Therefore, integrating media practices within the overarching strategy of conflict prevention and peacebuilding improves the effectiveness of both practices. This integration is crucial because both practices have their own limitations and benefit from proposed interdependence. Strategic planners for conflict prevention and peacebuilding would do well to recognize and integrate the functions of conflict sensitive journalism, social marketing and media regulation. These three media practices assist in achieving cognitive and attitudinal changes that contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Likewise, media professionals working on conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs would do well to more closely integrate their programs into larger peacebuilding strategies since media programs alone are unlikely to produce the massive shifts often needed within a country prone to violence.

What is promising in the end is the increasing number of projects, multiple media practices and commitment to develop more effective practice. Considering that the media became an indispensable part of peacebuilding in a relative short period of time, it is possible that new improvements of practice are just a matter of time.

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Impact studies for individual projects are available from the websites of Search for Common Ground, Foundation Hirondelle, Sesame Workshop etc.


Ibid


For example, the Canadian government claims to be the first government that made media and peacebuilding its foreign policy priority while the Swiss government invested 4.2 million Euros in media assistance in just one year (2002).


Ibid
36 Ibid.
44 Ibid

80 Propaganda studies details examples of effective coordination of pro-war messages; e.g. Creel's description of concurrent use of coordinated media channels in the American WWI propaganda, coordination and versatility of media efforts by the Nazi propaganda machine, Pentagon program placing multiple messages is support of war in Iraq, etc.
