



FROM THE MEDIA PROJECT

The monthly newsletter from the UNESCO/UNDP project:

"Strengthening Democracy and Governance through Development of the Media in Mozambique"

Supporting independent publications in Nampula and Niassa

While new tabloid newspapers are coming to the streets in Nampula, a plan for the fusion of two local newspapers in Niassa looks like a positive initiative to be encouraged, in view of the need to ensure sustainability in that still very fragile readership universe. The Media Project is closely following up on both processes, through coaching and mentoring processes.

Lurio is the name of the new weekly tabloid launched in Nampula on 12 November with central support from the Media Project. The new publication results from a project that the local independent media association, **ASONAMI**, had started some five months ago, bearing in mind the Communication Centre of Nampula (**Cecon**) that the Media Project had recently established to provide emerging print media with production facilities. *Lurio* is the second newspaper in Nampula, adding to *Wampula Fax*.

In the meantime, *Wampula Fax* has also just started a tabloid newspaper to come to the streets every three months. The 16-page last edition of the paper, launched on 30 November, is an attractive colorful celebration of the new national football champion, the local "Ferroviário de Nampula".

In a recent monitoring mission to Nampula, the project agreed with both publications' editors and managers on the organization of capacitation activities that will include layout techniques and overall modern newspaper production practices.

Parallel to this, in Niassa Province a process for the fusion of two small, local newspapers is also being developed, with the view to create a single publication in this far northern region, a move that is likely to ensure a better potential of sustainability. *Faisca* and *Amanhecer*, the two local newspapers partners of the Media Project, have decided to joint their scarce technical and human resources in a one single, new publication for Niassa.

The Media Project is closely supporting the process with technical assistance and partnerships mobilization. In his recent mission to Lichinga, the project's print media coach, Elias Cossa, prepared the ground for a capacitation training programme, with a funding request to the Irish Embassy. The request has already received initial positive reaction from the Irish Embassy, one of the Media Project's funding partners and with special cooperation focus on Niassa Province.

Partnership strategies revised

Representatives from the eight partner community radio stations met during the second week of December in the central city of Chimoio, to analyze their achievements and constraints in the process for the attraction of strategic partners that can ensure their long term sustainability, as the Media Project is quickly heading to the closing down phase.

Main findings indicate different potentials and opportunities for the eight radios, according to each one's socio-economic environment and surrounding dynamics. In overall terms, the results are still not very encouraging, although positive signs for future may be foreseen for the Manica Province region, potentially benefiting GESOM and Macequece, as well as Dondo Community Radio, in Sofala. Most needy and critical cases could be identified in relation to Metangula, Homoine and Milange.

Strengthening newspapers in Nampula and Niassa

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In the meantime, in Niassa Province a process for the **fusion of two small, local newspapers** is presently being developed, with the view to allow for a single publication in this far northern region, that is likely to ensure a better potential of sustainability. *Faisca* and *Amanhecer*, the two local newspapers partners of the Media Project, have decided to joint their scarce technical and human resources in a one single, new publication for Niassa.

Technical support to newspapers

Equipment supply to five selected newspapers has been completed in October 2004. Benefiting publications are : *Faisca* and *Amanhecer* in Niassa; *Whampula fax* in Nampula, and *Demos* and *Vertical* in Maputo. The equipment includes two powerful computers and respective printers for each newspaper; tape recorders; page makers, etc., with a total budget of **\$25.218,89** (Overview attached: annex 2).

Revisiting the role of AIM Agency

AIM – the national news agency. Exploratory contacts have been launched, with the view to determine possible ways of helping a process of reform for this state-funded media institution. A request has been formulated by **GABINFO** for the Media Project to consider assisting in a study to be carried out on how to support a process for the transformation of the news agency into a credible news service, to be used by the other "conventional" media. **Portugal** has been initially approached to join the process.