

## PARTNERS

Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

Fondation Hironnelle

Internews Network

United States Broadcasting Board of Governors

United States Institute of Peace

## FURTHER READING

A full copy of the Caux Principles is included in the USIP Peaceworks Report:

Amelia Arsenault, Sheldon Himelfarb, and Susan Abbott. "Evaluating Media Interventions in Conflict Countries: Toward Developing Common Principles and a Community of Practice" (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2011). Available at <http://www.usip.org/>

Background Papers Prepared for the Caux Workshop:

Bruce, Daniel. 2010. Presumption of Peace: Northern Uganda and Media Development 2006-8.

Gagliardone, Iginio. 2010. From Mapping Information Ecologies to Evaluating Media Interventions: An Experts Survey on Evaluating Media Interventions in Conflict Countries.

Taylor, Maureen. 2010. Methods of Evaluating Media Interventions in Conflict Environments.

Available at <http://www.global.asc.upenn.edu/caux>

# MEDIA IN CONFLICT: THE EVALUATION IMPERATIVE

## The Caux Guiding Principles



## About The Caux Guiding Principles

An open and inclusive media system is vital to conflict management. The media play a pivotal role as a conduit for dialogue among dissenting parties and as a purveyor of critical information about available services or potential threats that might make the difference between life and death for those living in conflict environments. In order to improve policymaking and usefully guide future programs, we must continually strive to improve media programs designed to achieve these objectives. Implementers, donors, and methodologists alike need to provide better support for evaluation in order to expand knowledge about what the media can and cannot achieve in conflict environments.

In recognition of this fact, an international group of media experts, media development professionals, international broadcasters, methodologists, NGOs, and government officials met in Caux, Switzerland from December 13 to 17, 2010 to develop a shared set of approaches and best practices for evaluating the role that media and information programs can and do play in conflict and post-conflict countries.

The Caux Guiding Principles for conducting evaluation research in conflict-affected areas are the result of this five-day meeting. They are designed to be evolving rather than confining or exhaustive. The Caux participants hope that other stakeholders will support these principles and participate in an ongoing, open, and inclusive dialogue about how to improve and expand them in order to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of media's role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

## Key Takeaways for the International Community

The Caux Guiding Principles set forward critical steps for improving the evaluation of media's role in conflict. They can be summarized as follows:

- I. **Expand Financial Support for Evaluation of Media Interventions in Conflict Countries:** Improving the efficacy and impact of media-related peacebuilding programs through evaluation requires a serious financial commitment. In nearly all cases, between 3% and 10% of the total project budget should be dedicated to its evaluation.
- II. **Encourage Flexible Program and Research Designs that are Sensitive to Conflict Conditions:** The outbreak of physical violence, unexpected renegotiations of political power, the rapid movement of populations, and unforeseen humanitarian emergencies are just a few factors that might influence project activities and their evaluation. Project outcomes, objectives, and evaluation methods should be reassessed and reevaluated in the face of rapidly changing on the ground conditions.
- III. **Foster the Development and Effective Application of Media-Specific Conflict Indicators:** Methodologists, donors, and practitioners can support better evaluation by carefully selecting and utilizing standardized project-level indicators that probe the ability of media projects to promote peacebuilding and track the evolution of the media's role in conflict.
- IV. **Engage and Collaborate with Local Researchers Familiar with Conflict Conditions:** Conducting research in conflict environments requires that evaluators foresee resistance to the demographics of research teams, respond appropriately to quickly-shifting safety conditions, and navigate the often complex steps to securing formal and informal permissions necessary to collect data. Local researchers are often in the best position to advise on these issues. Regularly engaging with local researchers also builds local research capacity to the benefit of future programs and evaluations.
- V. **Foster Learning, Sharing, and Collaboration about Evaluation of Media Interventions in Conflict Countries:** Conflict countries present a steep learning curve for even the most seasoned researchers and program implementers. Collaboration, dialogue, and sharing among implementers, methodologists, and donors helps to avoid duplicating mistakes and maximizes the efficient allocation of the all-too-scarce human and financial resources available for evaluation.
- VI. **Integrate Evaluation into the Entire Project Lifecycle and Beyond:** Embedding evaluation into the execution of a project can create a valuable feedback loop that improves the conduct of project activities as well as guides future project planning. Where possible, funding agencies should provide support for baseline studies, regular program monitoring, and evaluation at the close of the project cycle, as well as follow up evaluation activities conducted well after the project's conclusion.
- VII. **Promote Realistic Evaluations:** Evaluation informs future programs and policymaking best when it is based upon realistic expectations of what programs can achieve and what even the best research methods can document. Funding organizations must be aware of—and implementers must be honest about—what can be realistically achieved and measured.
- VIII. **Practice Greater Clarity Surrounding Evaluation:** Implementers struggle to understand and fulfill the expectations of their different funders. Funding bodies should work towards standardizing evaluation requirements and vocabulary between and across organizations.