

PhD Scholarship on Media, Empowerment and Democracy in Tanzania – media ethnographic perspectives

The research project, “People Speaking Back? Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa (MEDIeA)” offers a full-time PhD scholarship (36 months) starting on June 1st 2010. The PhD student will be registered at University of Dar es Salaam, Salaries follow national standards for PhD students in Tanzania.

About MEDIeA

The overall objective of MEDIeA (see detailed description in the MEDIeA project document at <http://mediaa.ruc.dk>) is to explore the role civil society driven media and communication technologies potentially can have in enhancing participatory governance processes in East Africa, more specifically in Kenya and Tanzania. The core inquiry of MEDIeA grows from a concern about how young people are secured a role in both the local, national and regional development processes they belong to and, ideally, should be centrally placed within. The research project’s analytical challenge is to understand the ways and means in which youth as ordinary citizens engage with such civil society driven media and communication platforms and what socio-cultural and policy related outcomes this may have.

MEDIeA comprises of a team of four researchers in addition to the two PhD students. In Kenya, the team consists of Associate Research Professor Winnie Mitullah from University of Nairobi, PhD-student Grace Gathiaga (started January 1st) and Associate Professor Norbert Wildermuth from Roskilde University. In Tanzania the team consists of Dr. Datus Rweyemanu from Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Dar es Salaam and Professor Thomas Tufte, Principal Investigator of MEDIeA, from Roskilde University, Denmark.

In addition to empirical research, the MEDIeA project comprises of components of dissemination, capacity building and policy dialogue. The MEDIeA research program is hosted by *ØRECOMM – Consortium for Communication and Glocal Change* at Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies, Roskilde University, Denmark (for further information see: <http://mediaa.ruc.dk>).

Objectives of the PhD

It is the general objective of the announced PhD scholarship to strengthen the overall research efforts of MEDIeA in Tanzania. The PhD student is expected to provide community based research which uncovers the synergies and communication relations between everyday life, media use, and citizen engagement in social and political processes.

A key working hypothesis in this research proposal is that in the course of the last many years’ fight against HIV/AIDS, civil society organisations have engaged and empowered local communities in ways whereby processes empowerment and social change have been articulated. It is MEDIeA’s claim that this is a phenomenon seen across Africa, with initiatives as the Straight Talk organisations in Uganda and Kenya, with ADRA Malawi’s communication initiatives, with N’weti in Mozambique, and not least with the Soul City initiative in South Africa. FEMINA HIP is – with 10 years of experience – one of these sustained initiatives which have achieved societal impact, including at community level. It is the aim of this PhD candidate to test this hypothesis. The question is what exactly is going on at community level, and to which degree some of the identified

processes of empowerment and social change may have to do with some of the FEMINA HIP initiated media and communication activities.

It is suggested that the study will primarily, but not exclusively, explore the situation amongst young women. This is a priority given the fact that young women constitute a particularly vulnerable population in many African countries, including in Tanzania. Furthermore, women have traditionally been close to invisible and non-participants in the mediated public sphere and public debate on development issues.

In the process of seeking to identify processes of empowerment and social change in the community and amongst young women in particular, this study will necessarily include a grounded analysis of the strategic communication approach employed by Femina at community level. Deconstructing their communication strategy will be a fundamental element of the study in order to establish possible synergies and links – or the ‘connectivity - between the Femina communication strategy and community-based social change and governance processes. Both individual and collective change processes should be assessed. It is further suggested that the analysis will include issues such as identifying forms of participation, notions of own role in local development, connectivity to and opinions about local and other decision-makers.

Methodology

To explore the above hypothesis the methodology will be qualitative. The study will inscribe itself into the tradition of media ethnographies, where the relationship between mediated discourse and the social and cultural practices of everyday life is explored. This will include medium-term field studies in selected districts.

It is suggested to make use of research tools developed by international organisations such as UNDP/OSG – the information and communication audit tool – or possibly the methodologies developed by PANOS for similar purposes. This should be further investigated.

Included in the PhD scholarship is 3 x three months study at Roskilde University in Denmark, in 2010, 2011 and 2012. This is to have access to literature review, working in a different academic environment and to have access to the co-supervisor, Professor Thomas Tufte. On a daily basis in Dar es Salaam, the supervisor will be Dr. Rweyemamu.

Geographical focus areas

Two-three districts will be selected to focus the in-depth study. The selection will be based on a series of criteria, including: a) having both rural and urban cases; b) long-term involvement by selected civil society organization; c) areas where the selected organization has strong collaboration with other NGOs and with CBOs, and d) areas where the selected organization has collaboration with government authorities.

Who can apply?

We invite applications from primarily Tanzanian citizens with an MA in Social Sciences or Humanities and with experience in qualitative empirical research, preferably in the field of qualitative reception studies, media ethnography and/or participatory communication studies. Applicants should be prepared to work extended periods in the rural areas, in close and prolonged cooperation with the non-governmental and community-based organisations selected as case studies by the MEDIeA team of senior researchers. Applicants must be able to communicate in Swahili,

16 February 2010

besides English, as well as demonstrate the necessary 'social' abilities to do research based on a participant observation approach. Finally, it would be beneficial if applicants also have experience with survey-based, quantitative research designs

Application procedure

As the description for the Tanzania scholarship are already quite elaborate, the applicants are expected to provide their own theoretical-methodological reflection upon the initial outline as well as suggesting and justifying a research design for the actual study.

The selection will be based on both the relevant experience of the applicant and quality research proposal.

Successful candidates selected for interviews will be announced on 20th of March 2010. Interviews will be conducted on 24th and 25th of March at University of Dar es Salaam. Final selection will be announced by 30th of March.

Please submit:

1. A research proposal of up to five pages. A proposal must have a link with the two Tanzania projects as shown at <http://mediea.ruc.dk>
2. A curriculum vitae including list of publications, if any.
3. A writing sample/publication of 5-10.000 words
4. Certified copies of Official transcripts of undergraduate degree and Master's degree
5. Two Reference letters

Please send your application including appendices in one single pdf file to Dr. Datus Rweyemamu (datiusr@yahoo.com) at University of Dar es Salaam, with copy to Thomas Tufte (ttufte@ruc.dk). Should you have questions regarding the content of the proposal, please contact Dr. Rweyemamu or Prof. Thomas Tufte (ttufte@ruc.dk).

Deadline for submission of applications: 14th of March 2010.