

## **Broadcasting: A Driver for Development**

**Carl Hanlon, The World Bank**  
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Good afternoon. Thank you members of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, broadcasters, ladies and gentlemen. It is my great pleasure to join you today, to speak about how broadcasting is a powerful driver for development.

Currently at the World Bank, my colleagues and I are looking at ways radio and TV and new multimedia platforms can play a greater role in the fight against poverty, which is the Bank's core mission.

Just by way of background, before joining the Bank a couple of years ago, I was a television correspondent working for a number of Canadian TV stations and networks. And now I have the good fortune to have been invited by Elizabeth to discuss how these two worlds – development and broadcasting – intersect. We know from our discussions with many of you that development issues are increasingly urgent in our interconnected world, where the challenges of developing nations are shared by all of us. And where broadcasting can play a key role.

Perhaps it is appropriate since we're in India to open with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi. He said, "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it. Another is to arouse among people certain desirable sentiments. The third is to fearlessly expose popular defects"

A quote that could well ring true for broadcasters today.

Indeed, this is a very exciting time for broadcasters here in India, with many new networks starting up – as you know just two weeks ago Reuters jumped into the market, in partnership with Times of India, launching the 24-hour network, *Times Now*. Clearly, foreign investors see India as an exciting and profitable place to be – all at a time when the country has recently adopted a new Right to Information Act.

And we know that press freedom is important to development because it brings accountability. And that prevents corruption, which remains one of the biggest threats to progress.

There's no doubt broadcast influences development and is clearly a driver in the fight against poverty.

In his book – "The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development" – Daniel Kaufman, a colleague of mine at the World Bank, showed how the media can play a role in reducing poverty and boosting economic development in poor countries. The degree

of success – not surprisingly – is related to media independence, and its inherent ability to reach a wide audience.

One of the book’s contributors, Joseph Stiglitz (a Nobel Prize winner) stated that “free speech and a free press not only make abuses of government powers less likely, they also enhance the likelihood that people’s basic social needs will be met.”

The bottom line he said was that better and more timely information results in better and more efficient allocation of resources – and that can only be good for reducing poverty. When talking about media in this context, Kaufman likes to pose a test. Say you go to your car late at night. It’s in an empty garage. Next to the car you find an envelope with fifty 100 dollar bills. There’s no camera around, no guard, no chance you will be seen.

So what do you do? Well, in this test at least, statistics show that 50 percent of people are undecided. 33 percent say they will return the money. And 17 percent say they’ll keep it.

Now take the same situation, but with a camera in the garage and a chance the information will be shared. What happens? 74 percent will report and return the money. Only 4 percent – 4 percent – will decide to keep it.

It’s a simple demonstration of the power of the camera.

Like the camera in the garage, journalists can shine a light on governments and hold them accountable.

World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, who has spoken strongly about how corruption undermines development, says a free media is part of the solution. He says, “It’s about holding officials and governments accountable. It’s a critical part of sustainable development.”

And Kaufman’s research shows that countries can derive a large dividend when corruption is reduced. He estimates that countries with better governance can significantly increase per capita income.

And, he says, reducing corruption is directly related to people having access to information. That means a free media and effective freedom of information laws.

Now let’s look at some specific examples of how broadcasting drives development at the local level –

- In Indonesia, local language radio broadcasts helped poor farmers in isolated areas get together and set up vegetable markets.
- In Nicaragua radio is helping traditional schools by enhancing teaching of mathematics to primary students – resulting in better test scores.

- In Brazil, school lunches in one state cost eight times as much as those in another. Because of media publicity, prices were equalized at the cheaper rate in just two weeks.
- And in Nepal, a doctor reported that after listening to radio soap operas about the importance of good health, people were more likely to visit him and follow his advice. The first series of programs in that country was so successful, more were produced.

The World Bank is involved in a number of partnerships in both radio and television.

- An innovative program called “Africa Good Governance on the Radio Waves” supports local communities in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania, using digital radio technology to connect remote rural areas with their governments.
- And through the Bank’s Development Marketplace, funds were provided to a Pygmy community in the Congo Basin so they could produce radio programs in their own language.
- Last month, about 10 women journalists from community radio stations around Timor Leste began a 16-week training program aimed at boosting women’s participation in media around the country. A great example of how community radio can give voice to poor people, who too often go unheard.

Just over a year ago we saw what a critical role broadcast played in spreading information around the globe as the Tsunami disaster unfolded. Now it’s helping them rebuild. A number of donors are supporting the Aceh Reconstruction Radio Network to help meet people's basic needs for information. Its community radio, staffed and operated by survivors.

The Tsunami of course provides a stark example of the power of pictures. Images of the devastation prompted an unprecedented outpouring of aid, with some of the most compelling pictures coming from hand held video recorders.

As all of you know very well, high-quality small-format equipment is bringing down the cost of TV and giving filmmakers and broadcasters in developing countries more opportunities to share their stories with their fellow citizens and with audiences around the world.

When I recently participated in training in Bangkok for broadcast journalists from 16 developing countries, it was striking how technology is so rapidly changing the landscape. At the session, where the Bank teamed up with the Asian Broadcasting Union and Television for the Environment, reporters from the Philippines and Pakistan came equipped with mini cameras and laptop editing equipment, ready to roll. Clearly, technology is leveling the playing field not just in terms of cost but also in terms of content delivery, with a proliferation of new platforms.

To conclude, there is plenty of research and many concrete examples of how broadcast is already driving development and having a real impact on the lives of the poor.

The challenge is to do even more – to take full advantage of the technology and the opportunity.

At the World Bank we are now exploring ways to dedicate more resources to support developing country filmmakers and broadcasters with content production, distribution, and training.

This means building on the partnerships we already have with broadcasters, foundations, and associations like the CBA. That's why we sponsored the first CBA broadcasting Award for a documentary on Development, to be presented tomorrow evening. As you will see, the winning entry is a great example of how broadcasters can tell a compelling story that will attract audiences and at the same time stimulate discussion about the challenges and solutions of development.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you. I look forward to our discussions over the coming days.