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**Radio and Audio Strategies
for External Cultural Relations**

Conference Report

Berlin, 24–25 October 2013

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RADIO AND AUDIO STRATEGIES FOR EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS



On 24 and 25 October 2013, about 60 experts from the field of international broadcasting and intercultural work, including producers, media scholars and artists, participated in the experts' seminar "Radio and Audio Strategies for External Cultural Relations" in Berlin. The seminar was part of the research project "Audio Strategies as Means for International Cultural Work" by ifa's Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy" and Deutsche Welle (DW). It took place within the framework of the international media festival "Prix Europa". The seminar presented best-practice examples and innovations in order to assess the potential of radio and audio programmes for meeting the aims of international cultural work, education and media development.

In many parts of the world, the primary medium delivering independent information, knowledge and education is still radio. But, as Odila Triebel, the head of ifa's Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy", pointed out in her welcome address, "the whole radio culture is in a fundamental state of transition". Terrestrial broadcasting has widely been replaced by online distribution and mobile Internet services. "The question of how radio can re-invent itself within this changing media landscape is a core issue for international broadcasting", said Triebel.

"Radio is about to become a part of online multimedia", said Adelheid Feilcke, the head of Deutsche Welle's Culture Department. In the course of taking radio from the airwaves to the web there are a lot of new strategies to consider", she added. How can radio create new ways of storytelling by adopting a multimedia approach? How can social media and mobile Internet foster new radio formats and enable users to become co-producers?

How can bilateral education programmes be presented in an innovative and interactive way? Which audio strategies can help alternative voices find an audience in a state-controlled media-landscape, and create forums for free speech? How can radio reach out into remote areas and empower people to create their own programmes and strengthen their communities? These questions were addressed in four panel discussions on 25 October and in a background talk on 24 October.

Panel 1, "From Audio to Multimedia", focussed on innovative audio formats, discussed ways of involving the audience, and considered how to initiate intercultural dialogue.

Panel 2, "Education", compared the approaches of language courses and "edutainment" programmes designed for a number of different regions and cultural backgrounds.

Panel 3, "Independent Voices", examined strategies for countering censorship in restricted media environments and discussed ways to invigorate public debate and encourage diversity.

Panel 4, "Media and Development", illustrated the relevance of radio for international media training programmes and community infrastructure support. On 24 October Swiss author and director Milo Rau gave the background talk "Hate Radio – How an Interactive Pop Radio Station Inflamed the Genocide in Rwanda". Rau introduced his documentary-theatre production "Hate Radio" in which he examined the role of Rwanda's radio station RTLM during the civil war in 1994. In his talk he explained how the popular hit radio station, partly financed by international development aid, turned into an efficient propaganda tool. As Milo Rau was also a panellist on 25 October, his contribution will be summed up in the resumé of Panel 3, "Independent Voices", in this report.

Panel 1: From Audio to Multimedia



Radio has seen major changes in the way programmes are distributed and produced. Since the mid 1990s the Internet has gained relevance as a new channel, especially for international broadcasters. After the Cold War, stations such as BBC World Service, Voice of America (VOA), Radio France Internationale (RFI), Deutsche Welle (DW) and Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW) faced severe budget cuts and had to seek a new role in the changing political landscape. After the global confrontation of political systems had come to an end, many Western broadcasters focussed on promoting independent journalism, on knowledge transfer to developing countries, and on moderating a dialogue of cultures. They took advantage of the opportunity to cooperate with partner stations that broadcast content via FM signal, and were located

in or close to their target countries. Distribution shifted mainly to satellite transmissions, re-broadcasts by local partners and online services. Costly shortwave service has been reduced and shut down gradually, beginning in Europe and North America, where an increasing number of people have access to the Internet, FM radio and satellite TV, while shortwave radio has been losing listeners for years. Today the DW and most international broadcasters limit their shortwave service to Africa and some regions in Asia where the infrastructure still does not offer real alternatives for reaching listeners.

The shift in distribution also affects international broadcasters' approach to editorial work overall, and the editing of individual programmes. At DW the radio and Internet sections have already

been merged into “Multimedia Departments”. Audio programmes are designed right from the beginning to be distributed on various platforms: as modular elements of a multimedia presentation on DW’s website, as a radio-programme package to be broadcast by a local partner station, as audio-on-demand, a podcast or via mobile online service. Audio is now one element within a mix of media, including text, photography, video and graphic design. But audio still plays a vital role, and the new media environment offers the opportunity to recognise the value of specific audio qualities, and to deliberately choose a particular medium suited to a specific task. At the same time, the Internet and social media allow for more participation by the audience. Listeners can comment on programmes and exert influence on editorial decisions by voting for their favourite themes or making clear what is relevant to their lives. Some programme slots even invite listeners to become co-producers, while professionals are inspired by bloggers and podcasters working independently.

The Internet can be a good place to rediscover the virtues of the earliest days of radio. That is what Tim Pritlove, one of Germany’s best known podcasters, does when he produces his talks on technology and its social and cultural impacts on life today. With a spare set-up – one desk, two microphones, an expert and a curious interviewer – Pritlove creates thrilling programmes. As the moderator of the first panel, Pritlove led discussions with four radio experts and independent producers that focussed on the creative options that radio gains by combining the potential offered by various media, ways to get the audience involved while maintaining professional journalistic standards, and how audio programmes can initiate intercultural dialogue.



Changes in the relationship of listeners and producers

Tiziano Bonini, media sociologist at the *Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione* (IULM), observed that in the history of radio, the distance between the medium and its audience has decreased more and more, which has led to fundamental changes in the relationship of listeners and producers. In the “networked public” of today, listeners can communicate directly with producers, and what is more, they are entering into the process of production, whereas the traditional role of the producer as author/presenter is changing, and professional producers are beginning to function as curators by collecting, connecting and contextualizing information, including information from blogs or social networks, and presenting it to a broader public.

Bonini, who also works as an independent radio producer, spoke of a general shift in radio’s mission, leading from “educating, informing, entertaining” the audience to “connecting, participating and engaging” the listeners. He gave an example by introducing his own radio show, “*Voi Siete Qui*”



(You Are Here), which airs five days a week on the Italian channel “Radio 24”. Bonini and his team collect stories from the lives of their listeners and present them live on air in a dramatised form enriched with additional content collected by the editors and related stories sent in by fans of the show. The programme is designed as a multimedia show, including a website with an interactive map, and material from Facebook and Twitter. Social media allow the editors to involve their audience in the production process and to build a community, which has become the driving force of collectively produced multimedia stories. Thus the audience is no longer a mass of passive consumers, but has taken on an active role. “You have to play with the listeners as if they were other media you can engage with and exchange content with”, said Bonini. “We are all nodes of the same network.”

Francesca Panetta, multimedia special projects editor for “The Guardian” in London, demonstrated how audio can give multimedia stories a powerful immersive quality. Her interactive production “[A View From The Shard](#)” invites visitors to the Guardian’s website to enter a 360-degree-panorama of London that can be navigated by sight and sound. From the imaginative standpoint on the platform of the city’s highest skyscraper the visitor can zoom into numerous London hotspots to observe streets, squares and parks in detail, and to listen to the sounds and stories of the various locations. The interactive map allows readers to enter their own comments. The skillfully composed sound design of the page creates a very inviting and emotional atmosphere.

“Crafted transmedia pieces”

Panetta regards her department as a laboratory for online storytelling. Her mission is to experiment with “crafted transmedia pieces”. She launches three or four ambitious productions a year. In Berlin she also presented examples of interactive documentaries: “[Firestorm](#)” tells the story of a Tasmanian family and their rescue from a bushfire.



The piece combines text, photography and video, but what make it especially intense and gripping are the subtle sound dramaturgy and the personal accounts of the family members, which are to a great extent presented via audio. The series “Faces of War” began with press photos that had been published worldwide in newspapers and magazines during the Iraq Conflict. Panetta and her team met the people who had unwittingly become well-known “Faces of War” to ask for their personal view on the events, and present it in complex audio short stories.



Internet radio in states of transition

“Independent radio makers in Egypt rely on the Internet, because there is no independent FM radio, and there is not even a legal way to apply for a license to broadcast on FM.”

Julia Tieke, Alexandria Streets Project

Berit Schuck and Julia Tieke introduced their jointly curated “Alexandria Streets Project”.

Schuck, who has a background in theatre and as a fine arts curator, and Tieke, an experimental radio producer, recorded interviews with residents of Alexandria from various backgrounds and collaborated with local musicians and people who run an independent online radio station to create a sonic map of the city. On the project’s website one can explore 20 audio pieces in Arabic and English, which refer to specific locations of Alexandria and express residents’ views on events of the past and present day in the city. “We wanted to present Alexandria from the perspective of the people who actually live there”, said Schuck. The mix of voices, ambient sound and music creates a dense atmosphere, and the well-balanced combination of the

two languages allows Alexandrians as well as interested listeners from all over the world to follow the personal stories.

The project included a “Mini Radio Academy” conducted together with the local Internet radio programme “Radio Tram”, the Goethe-Institut in Alexandria and the Egyptian NGO “Agora Arts and Culture”. The three-day workshop was also a forum for debate about independent radio-making in Egypt, the barriers of state-controlled media, censorship and ways to foster freedom of speech. “Independent radio makers in Egypt rely on the Internet”, said Julia Tieke, “because there is no independent FM radio, and there is not even a legal way to apply for a license to broadcast on FM.” The sonic map of the “Alexandria Streets Project” was designed as an online presentation from the beginning for two reasons: to allow global access and to make it possible to connect every audio piece with a specific location. Most Alexandrians access the Web via smartphone rather than with laptops or tablets, and many people followed the invitation to listen on the spot.

Panel 2: Education



Radio and audio formats are instruments for knowledge transfer and often the best means for delivering education programmes to people in a variety of locations. They can be listened to while people are occupied with other things. They can inform and educate people at home who do not have the opportunity to go to school. They are accessible to illiterate listeners and to people in remote areas who do not have access to TV or the Internet. In many African countries and in Afghanistan, radio is still the first-choice medium for approaching the target groups of education programmes.

However, there is a special challenge in kindling the audience's interest in this kind of programme. "Education can be very boring", said Anja Krieger, a freelance radio journalist specialising in science and digital culture who works collaboratively in international networks. "If we really want to have an impact here, we have to find ways to present education programmes in an inspiring, interactive and fun way", she said. As the moderator of the second panel, Krieger led discussions with three editors from international broadcasters on ways in which their programmes can involve and activate the listeners, how they can be adapted to various cultural environments, and practical considerations in various partner countries. The panel also considered how successful concepts, such as DW's "Learning by Ear", could be further developed.

Language courses as interactive radio drama

Vincent Guiltat, projects manager at Radio France Internationale (RFI), presented a programme called “*Le Talisman Brisé*” (The Broken Charm) as an example of RFI’s interactive language courses. It is a bilingual programme for people learning French (who are fluent speakers of English, Swahili or Portuguese), which is designed as an entertaining radio drama in 25 episodes. The core idea of the programme is: learn a language to survive. “*Le Talisman Brisé*” is a tongue-in-cheek detective story. The protagonist, a sober young man, happens upon a crime by accident. To help his kidnapped professor and to unveil what has happened, he has to become familiar with the French language.

The episodes were recorded in France and Kenya with professional African actors, and the rich soundwork with a lot of ambient recordings gives listeners the feeling of taking an audio tour through Francophone Africa. There are no explicit pedagogical elements in the story, but online and offline learning material is provided. The website contains further tools, illustrations and background information.



Radionovela on social issues

“With a radio drama, every listener is free to imagine if a young girl wears a traditional veil, a burka – or not.”

Florian Weigand, Deutsche Welle

Maja Braun, multimedia editor for the Africa team at Deutsche Welle in Bonn, presented the educational short-drama series “Learning by Ear”. Since 2008 the series has dealt with a wide range of topics for a young audience, including health and social issues, politics and society, the economy and the environment. Each story comes in ten episodes and is produced as a lively radio drama. “Learning by Ear” is broadcast in six languages for several African regions and distributed across the continent by some 250 partner stations all over Africa. Braun pointed out that the series was developed in close cooperation with local authors and actors. All recordings were made on location in six African countries. The series has become a benchmark for DW’s programmes in Africa and has proven to be a “door opener” when it comes to collaborations with partner stations, said Braun: “In difficult markets, like Nigeria, stations might have a problem with taking over our political content, but they broadcast the educational content, and later on they might think of taking some political programmes as well.”

Meanwhile DW has pushed the series one step beyond: At the experts’ seminar Maja Braun introduced the new radionovela “Crossroads Generation”, which started in November 2013 and will run for 52 episodes with the same set of characters. The new series also includes an online video-diary by two of the main characters and invites listeners to join a discussion on Facebook. Braun said that the producers get a lot of feedback from the audience and react to

Panel 3: Independent Voices

proposals for topics of interest. In 2012 the team of “Learning by Ear” invited listeners to send in personal stories and eventually set up a theatre workshop in Togo to bring the winning text on stage.

Florian Weigand, the head of DW’s service in Dari and Pashto, explained how “Learning by Ear” has been adapted for Afghanistan. “Radio is a very important medium there”, said Weigand, “since TV-stations are limited to the big cities, and electric power is in short supply in the provinces. In fact, apart from Africa, Afghanistan is located in one of the few regions where DW still broadcasts its service via shortwave. There is also a cultural aspect involved: It is radio that has a chance of reaching women and girls who spend a lot of their time at home, many of whom are not allowed to attend schools or institutions of higher education. There is a quality specific to audio programmes that allows authors to touch on issues that might offend the traditional elites when shown on TV: “With a radio drama, every listener is free to imagine if a young girl wears a traditional veil, a burka – or not,” says Weigand. “Everyone has his own picture, and people are concentrating more on the content.”

Weigand gave an account of the demanding circumstances of producing “Learning by Ear” in Kabul. The schedule is often interrupted because of security issues, and the actors and the production teams are taking a serious risk by working on the programme. Recently the series was made available through an additional channel: “Learning by Ear” can now be received via mobile phone by calling a special number. Hundreds of thousands of people have called the number since the start of the new service in February 2013, said Weigand. Thus, the call-a-drama service offers a rare chance to estimate the impact of the programme.

When it comes to countries with state-controlled and restricted media, international broadcasters and other producers of international cultural programmes face big challenges: How to provide independent information, support the broadcasting of alternative voices, and establish forums for open debate. Which specific qualities can radio and audio programmes offer to help meet these aims?

On the third panel, two editors from international broadcasters spoke about the special conditions of producing their services for audiences in Iran and China, and an independent artist presented his research on a “Hate Radio” station in Rwanda that incited the genocide of 1994. With moderator Anja Krieger they discussed the subversive potential of audio and considered how, on the other hand, “alternative voices” can turn out to be clever agitators who use popular radio formats as an effective means of propaganda.

The power of radio

“Radio spreads the word to places that you cannot penetrate with the Internet.”

Fred Petrossian, Radio Farda

Fred Petrossian, online editor in chief of “Radio Farda”, pointed out that audio plays an important role, especially for highlighting themes and perspectives that are not represented in Iran’s official media. Radio Farda is a 24-hour programme for Iran providing news, entertainment and music, which is produced in Prague and distributed via FM broadcast. It is part of “Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty”, an international broadcasting service of the American government-supported Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). “There are many voices unheard in the country”, said Petrossian. When

Radio Farda addresses taboo topics, such as the persecution of religious minorities or the question as to whether homosexuality is compatible with Islam, listeners can take part in live discussions via phone call. Petrossian: “Radio spreads the word to places that you cannot penetrate with the Internet”. In a controlled media landscape, radio can overcome barriers, for example by letting political prisoners know that they have not been forgotten.

However, audio also plays a vital role in the online media context. Many Iranians use platforms like “Soundcloud” to share audio files. The actor and political journalist Kambiz Hosseini, who became a very popular TV host due to his satire show “Parazit” on “Voice of America”, has some 40,000 followers with his new Human Rights podcast. In 2013 he received one of DW’s “Best of Blogs” awards for this programme. Petrossian held that the power of audio lies in the direct and emotional quality of the human voice, which has a great impact on the listener. As it is not possible for Radio Farda to have reporters in the country, the personal accounts of Iranian activists and of ordinary citizens, who often give very clear analyses of the political situation, are an important source of

information for the programme, he said.

Audio as a tool for subverting censorship

“Unlike text documents, which are quite easy to handle for censors, audio cannot be read effectively by search robots yet.”

Matthias von Hein, Deutsche Welle

In China, there is a situation similar to the one in Iran: The Internet in China is filtered and strictly censored, and all media is controlled by the state. At the same time, China’s media market has become highly commercial, competitive and very colourful and diverse, as Matthias von Hein, head of the Chinese service at Deutsche Welle, pointed out. DW’s Chinese service was introduced in 1965, and for most of the time since then, traditional shortwave radio was the primary means of distribution, before this channel was shut down at the end of the year 2012. But online audio is still an important tool, and even offers strategies for subverting censorship.

Von Hein presented the project “Forbidden Books”, a programme of DW’s Chinese service that offers books which are forbidden in China as



audiobooks via download. The project started in 2010 with the controversial book “Wen Jiabao, China’s Greatest Actor”, a harsh critique of China’s then-prime minister by Chinese dissident author Yu Jie. The DW team got the author’s permission to produce an audio version of the book and published it online on DW’s Chinese website. Within the first ten days the title was downloaded 600,000 times. In the meantime there have been more than 20 million downloads of the book, and ten more “Forbidden Books” have been made available in China. “Audio content is very difficult to filter”, said von Hein. “Unlike text documents, which are quite easy to handle for censors, audio cannot be read effectively by search robots yet.”

Another advantage of the acoustic medium: Since many people in China spend hours every day commuting to and from work, they like listening to audio content on their mobile devices. To provide their listeners easy access to the audio files, DW supplies anti-filtering software that makes it possible to circumvent censorship on the Web. Nevertheless, there was a lot of criticism from listeners and political observers in China when DW ceased its shortwave service in China, as von Hein remarked. The shift from shortwave to the Internet went hand in hand with the decision to address a new target group. Like other international broadcasters DW decided to focus on young, urban, well educated “information seekers”, while listeners outside the big cities, who could not get or afford access to the

Chinas media market

- highly commercial
- highly competitive
- colourful and diverse

But strictly censored: „Guidance of public opinion“



The image is a presentation slide with a dark blue background. At the top left, the title 'Chinas media market' is written in a light blue, sans-serif font. Below the title, there is a bulleted list of three characteristics: '- highly commercial', '- highly competitive', and '- colourful and diverse'. A large, diagonal banner with a dark red background and white text reads 'But strictly censored: „Guidance of public opinion“'. To the right of the banner is a collage of several small images: a woman in a dark suit speaking, a person in a red and white outfit, a person in a blue cap, and a person in a white lab coat. At the bottom left, there is a photograph of a traditional Chinese building with a blue roof and a wooden structure in front of it.

Internet, were left behind, along with illiterate or less educated people. Critics have noted, in addition, that shortwave transmissions are less vulnerable when it comes to technical attacks and allow for an anonymity that the Internet cannot provide. That's why there is an ongoing controversy in the international broadcasting community as to whether shortwave is still needed to serve audiences in countries with state-controlled and restricted media.

Radio as a tool for propaganda

“They (RTLM) wanted to give the impression that it was the people who wanted to kill the Tutsi minority and not just a president who was talking on the radio, or the armed forces of Rwanda.”

Milo Rau

The situation in China shows that a dynamic and diverse media landscape does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with democratic values. The Swiss author, director and filmmaker Milo Rau has re-examined an event in Africa's recent history to show how a radio station combined entertainment with racist agitation in a very cynical yet effective way. Rau's theatre production “Hate Radio” is a case-study of the combination of pop music and propaganda. In 1994, during the genocide in Rwanda, the popular radio station RTLM mixed pop music and political communiqués with hate-filled calls for murder. An estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000 people of the Tutsi minority and thousands of moderate members of the Hutu majority were killed in less than three months, while the moderators at RTLM highlighted and incited the killing in the manner of a campaign. Rau has brought a reconstruction of RTLM's propaganda to the stage, using actors who are survivors of the genocide.

“People in Rwanda were not prepared for this kind of propaganda”, said Rau, when he discussed “Hate Radio” with participants in the experts' seminar and Prix Europa in a kick-off session on 24 October. RTLM was the first radio station in Rwanda that played international pop music, and had moderators who invited listeners from all walks of life to call in, and then talked to them live on the air. The entertaining Western style of the programme had a great impact, especially on young people, who made up the majority of the perpetrators. “The genocide was a youth movement”, as Rau put it. “Hate Radio” sheds light on the dark side of international media and development work. “Western aid organisations gave money because they wanted to support political diversity”, said Rau. It was part of RTLM's strategy to give the programme a democratic tenor with call-in shows and political debate. According to Rau, “they wanted to give the impression that it was the people who wanted to kill the Tutsi minority and not just a president who was talking on the radio, or the armed forces of Rwanda.”



Panel 4: Media and Development

Despite the general shift from audio to multimedia, from traditional broadcasting to the Internet, radio still plays an important role in international media training programmes and in media development work. Whether in commercialised and rapidly developing media markets such as China's, or in African or Latin American countries with a vibrant and extensive community-radio scene, radio remains an attractive medium: It is not too expensive, easy to handle, mobile, and can reach audiences in remote areas that lack the infrastructure required for TV or the Internet. Where radio meets up with the online-world, it can bring in a genuine culture of dialogue for which the new tools of communication are well suited.

In the fourth panel, moderator Tim Pritlove led a discussion with three experienced radio producers and media trainers that focused on how radio can empower people to raise their voices and strengthen local communities, how a dialogue of radio cultures might promote journalistic virtues, and how audio formats together with social media can activate young listeners and foster political dialogue, online as well as in "real life".

Community radio

Matthias Kopp, project manager for Latin America at Deutsche Welle Academy in Berlin, introduced two media development projects in Colombia. "Tayrona Stereo" is an indigenous community radio station, located in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the north of the country. The indigenous population has experienced great suffering in a series of violent conflicts that have been going on for decades. Kopp explained that the local radio station helps people to share and sustain their own culture and to make themselves heard when they enter into political negotiations to further their interests. In the remote listening area, the radio station is also an important tool for organising the daily life of the community. DW Academy supports "Tayrona Stereo" with journalist training programmes, with advice on administrative issues, and by initiating knowledge exchange activities between media initiatives.

Colombia has progressive legislation in the area of community radio. "The constitution of the country guarantees freedom of the press and participative initiatives are supported," said Kopp, "but there are strong illegal forces that prevent this." Any kind of social engagement, including even cultural activities, poses for participants the risk of being threatened or attacked. Indigenous groups have often been caught between the lines of armed conflicts. On the other hand, many indigenous groups have very well organised communities that can build on the stable foundation of a common culture. That is where international broadcasters and development organisations like the GIZ (the German Society for International Cooperation) can help and reinforce existing initiatives. The second project that DW Academy supports in Colombia is

“Vokaribe”, an urban community radio station in the city of Barranquilla, located in an area with many refugees from other countries. The station is still in the preparation phase, but it is already sponsoring cultural events. It will be a challenge to compete with commercial radio stations in Barranquilla, said Matthias Kopp.

Demand for journalistic know-how

In the highly commercialised and fast-growing Chinese media market, one would expect to see an increasing demand for journalistic know-how. Since the 1990s the number of privately financed but state-controlled media outlets has been on the rise, and established state-run media organisations, such as China National Radio (CNR) are competing with them in terms of programmes, said Jens Jarisch, a documentary producer and editor in the Radiofeatures department at Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg (rbb) in Berlin. At the experts’ seminar he shared his experience as a freelance trainer for Chinese journalists.

Jarisch was hired by CNR to give workshops on radio storytelling. “The old state media had to learn that their propaganda-style programming was driving away the listeners”, he said. But how can a radio trainer convey professional standards and values in a country where journalists cannot touch on politically sensitive topics, and where the ruling Communist Party promotes “Guidance of Public Opinion”, as Matthias von Hein reported in his panel contribution? Jens Jarisch explained that he usually focusses on formal aspects in his workshops: topic finding, and the perspective and dramaturgy of a radio feature. “China has a tradition of well-crafted radio documentaries dating back to the 1950s”, he said, but “the journalists



there are used to clipping their own wings”. Jarisch stated that the way of telling a story can amount to a critical perspective in itself. That’s why he generally encourages the participants in his workshops to show more subjectivity: “By teaching formats we are also teaching a way of thinking that is subversive in a way, and at the same time permits them to use the full range of their originality,” said Jarisch. “That is what I like about this idea.”

“The Loop”

“We create stimulating content and safe places where young people can tell their stories.”

Hélène Michaud, Radio Netherlands

Hélène Michaud, head of the Africa desk at Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW), illustrated different ways to foster political debate among young people in RNW’s partner countries. The Africa team launches youth projects in Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Rwanda. The topics they focus on are freedom of expression, human rights, international justice, governance and sexual health. RNW Africa works with young people aged

Conclusion and Outlook for the Future

15 to 35. Michaud said, “we create stimulating content and safe places where they can tell their stories.” A debate usually begins with a call for topics on Facebook. Then a meeting is held with a local partner in person, recorded and broadcast by a partner station to provoke further discussion via social networks. This is a way to spread the debate and let it move between environments, jumping from online to offline and back online, which Michaud calls, “The Loop”.

“We want to help young people to speak up”, said Michaud. “Young people often don’t have the right to speak. But they need to be heard. And they want to be heard.” RNW addresses young people by shifting the focus of political topics to the personal level. This is also the idea behind the series “*Ma Chanson*” (My Song): popular musicians talk about the personal background of their lyrics. Recently RNW had to digest a 70% cut in its budget. “We have refocussed”, said Michaud. All broadcasting is done by African partner stations now. RNW produces content and offers training programmes for local journalists. “In that way the skills are transferred to the continent,” Michaud said.

Radio and online audio-formats are valuable instruments for international cultural work, and for education and development programmes. However, political developments following the end of the Cold War and the rise of satellite TV and online media have brought with them far-reaching cuts in the radio programming of international broadcasters, and led to fundamental changes in the way radio and audio programmes are produced and distributed. Major western broadcasters, such as BBC World Service, BBG, RFI and DW, have limited their shortwave services to a small selection of countries, mainly in Africa and parts of Asia, where the infrastructure does not offer real alternatives for addressing the respective target groups. In these regions, radio still plays a vital role, not only for reasons related to infrastructure, but also because a great number of illiterate listeners can access information, knowledge and education best via audio. Traditional radio production and terrestrial transmission are also useful and efficient tools in media development work, as they can reach out into remote or rural areas and empower people to strengthen their community and cultural identity.

But radio’s relevance goes beyond the local needs of regions that have not kept pace with the rate of recent technological change and media innovation. Radio has been at the core of international broadcasting right from the start, and now that it has become one element in a new mix of media, it turns out that there are some attractive core qualities of radio and audio that remain. These qualities are: 1. the direct and emotional impact of the human voice, 2. radio’s well-established culture of dialogue, 3. its potential to involve listeners as co-producers, 4. the flexibility, mobility and comparatively low production costs of audio, 5. its ability to subvert censorship.

Several panellists pointed out that the sound of the human voice gives audio programmes as well as multimedia stories emotional intensity and encourages listeners to relate to them personally. The voice has an intrinsic potential for intercultural understanding: by acting as a witness to the experience of individual people, and conveying their attitude, it invites the listener to follow an alternative individual view on the world. The limitations associated with the spoken word can even help to avoid cultural or religious conflicts that might be stirred up by pictures (as in, for example, the taboo in Afghanistan on women appearing in images accessible to the public, which is skirted through the freedom of imagination offered by a radio drama, as mentioned in Panel 2). Dialogue is an authentic radio format that has experienced an online renaissance in podcasts, and provides a heritage that social networks and mobile Internet can build upon, while offering a lot of new options for getting in touch with the audience. Actual audience participation was a utopia of the earliest days of radio; now it can be realised with an intelligent mix of involvement and editorial back-up. Audio's comparatively low-cost and low-tech handling allows it to be faster and closer to events and people than TV, and makes it an ideal medium for training people and enabling them to themselves become producers. Finally, when it comes to censorship, audio has some specific advantages to offer, as the example of DW's "Forbidden Books" has shown (Panel 3).

Radio has proved to be an old medium that embraces technological and aesthetic innovations. That is why it remains attractive for international broadcasters and draws attention from artists and curators of intercultural projects as can be seen in the multilingual sound-pieces of the "Alexandria

Streets Project", Milo Rau's original mix of reconstruction and drama in "Hate Radio", and in the advanced transmedia storytelling of "A View From The Shard", produced by The Guardian. The gathering of editors and independent producers, of media trainers, artists and curators has shown that radio and audio can bring in a lot of new strategies as tools for international cultural work. It was a fitting coincidence that the experts' seminar took place in the room where "Prix Europa's" online-jury meets, and where competition entries have shown in recent years that radio producers were often the ones to apply the potential of new media in the most creative and imaginative way. "Prix Europa" is one of the few places worldwide where radio receives the same level of attention as television and online media.

The seminar put two main questions on the agenda for the future of intercultural media work. First: How can international broadcasters find better ways to measure the impact of programmes on their listeners and be aware of the "intercultural gaps and traps we can easily step into"? Second: Taking into account how rapidly the relations of developing regions and countries in transition towards Europe are changing, how could international broadcasters and other players in intercultural relations find their way to cooperation on a horizontal level with their partner countries? In other words: How could real participation work, and the traditional divide between donor/sender and receiver be overcome? This is envisioned not as a radio-utopia, but as an actual model for external relations in the future.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Experts' Seminar Radio- and Audio-Strategies for External Cultural Relations

Time:

24 October 2013, 7:30 pm
25 October 2013, 10:00 am – 5:15 pm

Venue:

Haus des Rundfunks,
Masurenallee 8–14, 14046 Berlin

Organisation:

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen),
Deutsche Welle (DW)
in cooperation with “Prix Europa”

Thursday, 24 October 2013

7:30 pm **Discussion:**
„Hate Radio“ – How an interactive Pop-Radio inflamed the Genocide in Rwanda

Milo Rau (theatre director, GER/CH)
Moderator: **Frank Kaspar**

In 1994 The radio station RTLM played a gruesome role during the genocide in Rwanda. DJs of the popular station featured and incited the killing in the manner of a campaign. The programme consisted of pop music, political communiqués and hate-filled calls for murder. The Hutu militia and agitated young men received word over their transistor radios on where to attack. An estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000 people of the Tutsi minority and thousands of moderate members of the Hutu majority were killed in less than three months.

In the theatre piece “Hate Radio” by Swiss-German director Milo Rau, survivors of the genocide play the roles of the RTLM-agitators in a precise reenactment. At “Prix Europa” Milo Rau speaks about his extensive background-research and the experience of bringing RTLM’s barbaric incitement back to its original location: The first performance of the piece took place in November 2011 at RTLM’s former studio in Kigali.

Friday, 25 October 2013**10.00 am Welcome Address**

Susanne Hoffmann (Prix Europa)
Adelheid Feilcke (DW)
Odila Triebel (ifa)

**10.15 am Panel 1:
“From Audio to Multimedia”**

How can radio be re-invented within a media landscape in which classic broadcasting via shortwave, FM and satellite is losing ground, while audio is becoming part of online multimedia? Are there innovative ways through which radio and audio programmes can build public forums and foster intercultural dialogue?

Tiziano Bonini, IULM University, Milan:
 “Social Radio” (ITA)
Francesca Panetta, The Guardian:
 Multimedia Storytelling (GBR)
Berit Schuck/Julia Tieke:
 “Alexandria Streets Project” (DEU/EGY)
 Moderator: **Tim Pritlove**

11.30 am Coffee Break**11.45 am Panel 2:
“Education”**

How can education programmes be presented in an inspiring and interactive way and be adapted to the local needs of various cultural and social constituencies? The panel will discuss a radio drama series and an interactive language course, both of which are being produced for a wide range of languages and regions in Afghanistan, Africa and the Arab World.

Vincent Guiltat, RFI: Interactive Language Courses (Africa/Arab World)
Maja Braun/Florian Weigand, DW:
 “Learning by Ear” (AFG/Africa)
 Moderator: **Anja Krieger**

1.00 pm Lunch**2.00 pm Panel 3:
“Independent Voices”**

How can international broadcasters help alternative voices to be heard in countries with restricted media? Which radio/audio strategies address and involve young listeners? Why does “Pop” not always go hand-in-hand with Western values, and why can it be transformed into crude propaganda?

Fred Petrossian: “Radio Farda” (IRN/CZE/USA)
Matthias von Hein: “The Chinese Service of Deutsche Welle” (DEU/CHN)
Milo Rau: “Hate Radio” (DEU/CHE/RWA)
 Moderator: **Anja Krieger**

3.15 pm Coffee Break

3.45 pm **Panel 4:**
“Media and Development”

Which kinds of programmes are suitable for supporting media literacy and local media initiatives in partner regions? How can community radio and media training programmes help to establish a democratically oriented public, good governance and political participation in developing countries?

Matthias Kopp, DW-Akademie:

Community Radio in Colombia (DEU/COL)

Jens Jarisch, rbb: Radio feature courses
in China (DEU/CHN)

Hélène Michaud, RNW: Cross-Media Dialogue
in Africa (NLD)

Moderator: **Tim Pritlove**

5.00 pm **Closing Remarks**

Odila Triebel, ifa

5.15 pm **End**

Speakers

Tiziano Bonini is a researcher in media sociology at IULM University, Milan, where he teaches Radio Theory. In his work on the history, aesthetics and social uses of web radio, he observes that the role of the radio producer is becoming more curatorial, while the distance from the public is decreasing and listeners are participating in the production process. His most recent book, *“Così lontano, così vicino”* is about migrants, media and the sense of “home”. He also works as a free-lance radio producer for Italian national public radio, and for privately owned stations as well. For his own broadcasts, he collects listeners’ stories and combines them with archive footage, interviews and other content, co-creating the programme in a kind of public-professional-partnership.

Maja Braun is multimedia editor for the Africa Team at *Deutsche Welle* (DW). She studied Journalism and African Studies, went on research trips to Eastern Africa, and became a trainee at DW, where she co-developed the audio format “Learning by Ear”. This programme provides knowledge and education to a young audience. Brought to the listeners as an entertaining radio drama series, “Learning by Ear” features stories about health care, family planning, girls’ and women’s rights, about how to start a business, how to get involved in politics, or what one might experience when leaving Africa for a destination in Europe. The producers at DW work closely together with authors, actors and partner-stations in the target-countries. “Learning by Ear” is being produced in six languages for six African regions. The series has been relaunched, and a long-term radionovela began in November 2013.

Adelheid Feilcke is Head of *Deutsche Welle’s* Culture Department. She joined the DW in 1992 and has worked as a trainer for *DW Akademie* since 1995.

She studied music, theatre, film and television, as well as anthropology in Cologne and as a DAAD scholar in Tirana, Albania. She obtained her master’s degree in ethnomusicology in 1990 and a second degree in cultural management at the *Hochschule für Musik und Theater* in Hamburg in 1993.

Vincent Guiltat is projects manager at “*RFI planète radio*”, a programme of Radio France Internationale who works with community radios around the world. The language learning and teaching department at RFI produces French courses for radio and Internet in 14 languages. The department specialises in innovation for language courses through multimedia. In their bilingual radiodramas, language learning is part of the quest of a foreign hero in a French-speaking environment. The producers received the European Language Label (2008) and a Life Long Learning Award (2009) for their multilingual production “Mission Europe” co-produced with *Deutsche Welle* and the Bronze World Medal “Best radio drama” (2012) for “*Le talisman brisé*”.

Matthias von Hein is head of the Chinese Service at *Deutsche Welle* (DW). Although DW stopped the analogue broadcasting of its Chinese programme via short-wave at the end of 2012, the Chinese Service still includes audio that is distributed via podcast. The audio-on-demand offers of DW-Chinese are so successful that they are at the top of DW’s user statistics. A substantial part of this success is due to the project “Forbidden Books”, which was launched in 2010: Books that are forbidden in China have been made available, chapter by chapter, as audio books on DW’s Chinese website. These audios include works of the Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo and the artist Ai Weiwei.

Susanne Hoffmann is the festival director of “*Prix Europa*”, an annual forum highlighting the latest trends in European media. Since its founding in 1987, the “*Prix Europa*” has grown into Europe’s largest festival for television, radio and online media, establishing pan-European networks for those working in creative jobs in the field of media, and thus helping European audio-visual programmes cross national and cultural borders. The festival invites programme makers from across the continent to join its juries, and in public and open debates, evaluate the productions that have been nominated. “*Prix Europa*” is supported by the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and an alliance of 28 broadcasters. In addition to her role at “*Prix Europa*”, Susanne Hoffmann is the Secretary General of INPUT-International Public TV Screening Conference.

Jens Jarisch works as an author, director and producer of radio features for German and international broadcasters. Since 2012 he has been an editor in the radio features department at rbb Berlin (*Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg*). He grew up in Berlin, Teheran and Lima, studied German and English philology, and German as a foreign language, and worked as a lecturer at Shanghai Technical University (USST). He has received numerous international awards for his radio documentaries, including the “*Prix Europa*” 2005 and 2006. Since 2005, he has trained journalists and held feature workshops in various countries around the world, including the USA, Russia and China.

Frank Kaspar is expert in ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy” on “Audio Strategies as a Means for International Cultural Work”. Within this framework he initiated and organised

the conference “Radio and Audio Strategies for External Cultural Relations”. Frank Kaspar works both within the world of radio and observes it from outside as a culture journalist, lecturer and curator. Together with the publicist Gaby Hartel he curated the International Festival of Radio Art for the Berlin Academy of Arts (2007), and together with other curators, the bilateral programme “*radio d-cz*” and the exhibition “*Sounds. Radio – Kunst – Neue Musik*”, within the “Zipp – German-Czech Culture Projects”, an initiative of the German Federal Cultural Foundation (2008-2010).

Matthias Kopp is the project manager for the Latin America team at *DW Akademie* and the coordinator for Colombia. The *DW Akademie* is providing training and advisory services to set up a radio station for indigenous people in the country’s northeast area. The community radio station is expected to foster the culture and community of ethnic minorities who have suffered severe losses during the armed conflicts in the area in recent decades. In the remote area of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, radio is the best medium for reaching and connecting with people, and functions as an effective tool for the organisation of life in the community. At the same time the *DW Akademie* is helping a young urban local radio station in the City of Barranquilla to create an independent and professional programme.

Anja Krieger is a freelance journalist based in Berlin. She reports for radio, online and print media on digital culture, science, and the environment. Having studied at universities in Frankfurt (Oder), Salamanca, and Berkeley, Krieger holds a graduate degree in Cultural Studies. In 2010 she began working full time as a freelance journalist, and since then, she has produced reports and features for *Deutschlandradio Kultur*, *Deutschlandfunk*, *Die Zeit*, and

other German media. Together with freelance journalists from four continents, Anja Krieger is currently working on a collaborative journalism project called the Climate News Mosaic – a CC-licensed live blog on the upcoming UN climate summit in Warsaw with a “glocal” perspective.

Hélène Michaud is head of the Africa desk at Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW). RNW’s mission is to spark discussion and introduce young people in a non-judgemental way to information that is lacking in their local media. Hélène Michaud oversees co-productions and the exchange of radio, web and social media content with partner media organisations in a number of African countries. She has produced numerous features and radio documentaries around the world, and also works as a journalism skills trainer. In addition, Hélène Michaud has also organised interactive on- and offline debates for young people in a number of African countries.

Francesca Panetta works as a multimedia special projects editor at the Guardian, focusing on innovation in storytelling, and new platforms. She combines audio with pictures, film and text to create complex background stories. One story, “Faces of War”, gives a voice to people whose images have been seen by an international audience, in press photographs of the Iraq conflict. Another, “Firestorm”, gives a personal account of a family’s struggle to survive a bushfire in Tasmania. Before joining the newspaper’s newly formed audio team in December, 2006, Francesca Panetta worked at BBC radio 3 and 4. She also works as an independent producer and sound artist. Specialising in feature-making, she has picked up international awards for her sound-rich work including four Sony Radio Academy Awards and two New York Festival Awards.

Fred Petrossian is a Europe-based Iranian journalist and researcher. Since 2009 he has worked in Prague, Czech Republic, as Online Editor in Chief of “Radio Farda”, a Persian language service for Iran, produced by the American international broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “Radio Farda” is a 24-hour programme that broadcasts political, cultural and social news. It has successfully been designed to address young listeners, especially via social media. The station’s website has about 600,000 Facebook friends. Fred Petrossian co-edited and co-wrote “Hope, Votes and Bullets”, a book about Iran’s protest movement and social media. In 2009 he received a “Think Social” media award for an Internet-based project to spread awareness of bloggers’ rights in Iran and other countries with restricted media. Fred has been involved with several leading digital projects, such as Global Voices. He has been an international speaker on citizen media and civil society in the media and at academic centres such as Yale University.

Tim Pritlove started using and programming computers in the early 1980s, and later on, he became a member of the hacker community. As a member of Chaos Computer Club he managed the organisation of Europe’s largest alternative technology conference, “Chaos Communication Congress”, from 1998 to 2006. From 2000 to 2005 he worked as an artistic and scientific assistant at the University of the Arts (UdK) in Berlin. In 2001, Tim Pritlove kicked off “Project Blinkenlights” to create a series of interactive media art installations: *Blinkenlights* (Berlin 2001), *Arcade* (Paris 2002) and *Stereoscope* (Toronto 2008). Since 1995 Tim Pritlove has been co-producing the monthly radio show “*Chaosradio*” on German FM radio. In 2005 he began producing his own podcast series and he now works

as an independent podcaster, project manager and consultant. His podcast network *Metaebene Personal Media* produces some of the best-known podcasting projects in Germany. He is also project coordinator for the “Podlove” project, and in that capacity develops software and standards for podcasting technology.

Milo Rau works as a theatre director, filmmaker, journalist, author and lecturer. In 2007 he founded the International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM) to produce theatre plays and films dedicated to the re-enactment of pivotal political and historic events. His theatrical works have been presented at some of the biggest national and international festivals, among them in 2012-2013 the Berliner Theatertreffen, Noorderzon Performing Arts Festival Groningen, Wiener Festwochen, the Kunstenfestival Brussels and the Radikal Jung Festival, where he was awarded the critic’s prize for direction. His theatre play “Hate Radio” is based on detailed research about the murderous impact the radio station RTLM had on the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. With unspeakable cynicism the staff of the popular station set the stage for the genocide in the manner of an election campaign. The original programme mixed music, sports coverage and hate-filled calls for murder. In the theatre-performance, survivors of the genocide play the roles of the agitators.

Berit Schuck received a master’s degree in comparative literature from the Free University Berlin and works as a curator and producer in theatre, performance, new media and sound art. She was the artistic director of “*Heimspiel 2011*”, a festival by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, and a host resident curator at *Ashkal Alwan*, the Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts, in Beirut. Berit Schuck and Julia Tieke initiated and co-curated the „Alexandria

Streets Project“. They had conversations with writers, activists, taxi drivers and architects, and combined these interviews with ambient sounds and music to compose twenty audio pieces, which refer to specific locations in Alexandria.

Julia Tieke is a freelance scholar in cultural studies, author and director of radio programmes. As a lecturer at the Universities of Hildesheim and Bielefeld she has held seminars and run projects in the thematic field of audio play and feature. Since 2007 she has been responsible for the experimental mini-radio-drama series “*Wurfsendung*” at *Deutschlandradio Kultur*. Berit Schuck and Julia Tieke initiated and co-curated the „Alexandria Streets Project“. They had conversations with writers, activists, taxi drivers and architects, and combined these interviews with ambient sounds and music to compose twenty audio pieces, which refer to specific locations in Alexandria.

Odila Triebel is Head of the sections “Dialogue Forums” and “Research Programme ‘Culture and Foreign Policy’” at ifa (*Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen*). She studied literature and public law in Heidelberg, Sussex (UK) and Berlin, and obtained her PhD in the field of international cultural studies at the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder). Odila Triebel was a fellow at the international graduate school “Representation-Rhetorics-Knowledge” and worked in the field of foreign cultural diplomacy in the USA and Estonia before joining ifa in 2010.

Florian Weigand is head of *Deutsche Welle’s* service in Dari and Pashto. Since 2009, “Learning by Ear” has been produced in these two languages for listeners in Afghanistan. As of 2013, the programme is also available via mobile phone with free call-in

Organisation

codes. Florian Weigand studied Communication Studies, History and Sinology and has worked for various media organisations. From 2003 to 2008 he worked in Afghanistan, at first as a press officer, and then as a public relations manager for the German Development Service. Back in Germany, he worked as coordinator for Afghanistan/Pakistan at the *DW-Akademie*.

DW (*Deutsche Welle*)

DW represents Germany in the international media landscape. Germany's international broadcaster conveys the country as a nation rooted in European culture and as a liberal, democratic state based on the rule of law. As part of its statutory mission, DW works independently to present events and developments in Germany and the world and picks up on German and other points of view on important issues. It promotes exchange and understanding between the world's cultures and people. DW also provides access to the German language, and a window into the daily life and way of thinking of the German people.

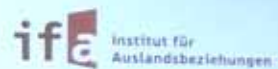
ifa (*Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen*)

The ifa is engaged worldwide in promoting dialogue among civil societies, in the mediation of foreign cultural policy information and in artistic exchange. It promotes and funds cultural, artistic and arts exchanges through a programme of exhibitions, meetings, dialogues and conferences. It contributes to maintaining peace through civil conflict resolution work, and it fosters cultural diversity by supporting cultural minorities. As a centre of competence for foreign cultural and educational policy, ifa works to connect practice to scientific research and media. Within the framework of ifa's Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy" researchers examine current issues related to Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy.



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Experts' Seminar

Radio and Audio Strategies for External Cultural Relations

24 and 25 October 2013

Organised by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)
and Deutsche Welle (DW)
in cooperation with „Prix Europa“