Yearbook on Media Quality in Tanzania

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Media quality in Tanzania: What do we know?

YEARBOOK ON MEDIA QUALITY IN TANZANIA

REPORT ON THE PILOT PROJECT 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Considering the importance of quality reporting for democracy and the scarcity of sound data on media quality in Tanzania, the Yearbook on Media Quality Project is a practical solution as it intends to generate realistic data to enable media houses and other stakeholders to improve the quality of media reporting.

To test the methodological approach and procedures, a pilot project was conducted from September to December 2017 by Spurk Media Consulting Ltd with the financial support from the Swiss Embassy in Tanzania. It is the first study in Tanzania that systematically compares the media genres of Print, Radio and TV in the same study. Most of the studies have been limited to print only.

The study content analysed a randomized sample of 537 journalistic units (print articles, radio and TV news and programs) from 12 media houses namely Mwananchi, The Citizen, The Guardian, Nipashe, Daily News, Radio One, TBC Taifa, Radio Free Africa (RFA), Clouds FM, ITV, TBC1, and Azam TV.

The quality of reporting was measured according to specific criteria, which are related to the fields of journalism techniques (e.g. diversity in sourcing, triggering coverage by official calendar or not, balance in stories, probing); comprehensiveness of information (e.g. covering root causes, background, diversity of viewpoints); and understandibility for the audience (e.g. explaining figures, giving stories a good structure, clear idea in story). These criteria were discussed and agreed upon by editors and media stakeholders in a quality criteria workshop organised on 19th September 2017 in Dar es Salaam.

Broadly, the study found out that the topics covered are relevant to a developing country like Tanzania; a large portion of articles showed a crystal clear idea; most articles referred to the perspective of ordinary people and most sources were made transparent.

However, the study also discovered challenging performances on a general level in the following criteria: too many articles (over 50%) were triggered by organized events, only following the official calendar of events instead of creating own news agenda; too many articles with single source; few articles (only 24%) covering root causes of events of issues or the history to an event; too many articles (72%) with just one viewpoint; few articles (25%) putting figures into a good context; too many articles with not good structure, i.e. logical links between the different paragraphs, were missing and little probing in interviews and radio programs.

In terms of media categories, the study established that **Radio news** is of low quality compared to newspapers and TV news. This is worrying as radio news is listened to by large parts of the population in the country.

As a topic and as a perspective, **Politics** is hardly covered by many media houses, which points to a lack of debate culture, lack of culture of having diverse opinion.

In order to improve on the quality of media reporting, it is recommended that the media houses use the project results to improve on the quality of their reporting, and particularly in areas where their performance is below the average. To better help the media houses assess themselves, the study invented an individual performance sheet in which individual media house performance is compared v/s average and highest performer. This sheet acts as a mirror and training needs assessment for the respective media house.

As this was a pilot study, it is also recommended that a fully-fledged Yearbook on Media Quality be conducted in 2018 with more samples including weekly newspapers, community radios and online platforms. With more samples, the study is likely to generate sound data upon which major decisions can be derived from.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The history of media in Tanzania Mainland – print and broadcasting – dates back to 1888 and 1951 when Msimulizi (The Storyteller) newspaper and Sauti ya Dar es Salaam (The Voice of Dar es Salaam) were established (Sturmer, 1998). After independence in 1961, the media was nationalised and became part and parcel of the state machinery.

The liberalisation of the media towards the end of 1980's saw the mushrooming of media outlets with the Business Times newspaper – the first weekly – published in 1988, Majira – first daily – published in 1993, Radio One in 1994, and Coastal Television Network (CTN) in 1994 (Ibid). Since then, the industry has significantly grown and currently there are 148 radio stations, 32 TV stations, and 140 newspapers and magazines .

The existence of media pluralism notwithstanding, the quality of the media reporting in the country has not been thoroughly researched. Yet, research on the quality of media reporting has been attracting enormous interest and attention among scholars, media professionals, NGOs, Governments, international organisations, and development partners.

Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) developed democratic expectations of the media performance as including surveillance of the social-political environment, reporting developments likely to impinge, positively or negatively, on the welfare of citizens; setting agenda; dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders (actual and prospective) and mass public; incentive for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved, rather than merely to follow and kibitz over the political process etc. For these expectations to be met, the quality of media reporting is essential and must be of a high standard.

The interest and attention in media reporting quality notwithstanding, many organisations in Tanzania such as UNESCO, the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) and the Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF), have been concentrating on a limited focus such as reporting quality of supported community radio stations under media support project, grantees and specific types of media.

This pilot study is an exception as it sought to address this research gap. It content analysed the media reporting quality across the board – print, radio and TV – the first ever content analysis to compare print, radio and TV simultaneously in the country.

The pilot study under the initiative to produce an annual report on Quality, called the **Yearbook on Media Quality in Tanzania**, responds to the need to have a systematic and continuous knowledge of media quality, especially to identify strengths and weaknesses.

This report, therefore, describes the results of a pilot project which was supported by the Swiss Embassy in Tanzania. The pilot was intended to test the methodology, although with a reduced sample, and to raise the interest and awareness of the media fraternity, the Government and other stakeholders, and finally to discuss the results with the media fraternity, especially on usability of those data and the future set-up of such a Yearbook.

2.0   METHODOLOGY

One of the acknowledged scientific methods for assessing quality of media reporting is content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic and objective method of analysing media reports (news stories, features, news bulletins, programmes etc.) using the same criteria.

Sampling of media outlets

A total of 12 media outlets were involved in this sample – 5 newspapers, 4 radio stations and 3 TV stations. These were:
- ■   **Print:** The Guardian, The Citizen, Mwananchi, Daily News, Nipashe
- ■   **Radio**: TBC Taifa, RFA, Radio One, Clouds FM,
- ■   **TV:**   TBC1, ITV, Azam TV.

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[1]*http://www.maelezo.go.tz/statistics;   and   http://www.maelezo.go.tz/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/MACHAPISHO.pdf*

The selection of these media outlets was guided by these criteria: government media (Daily News, TBC Taifa and TBC 1), oldest private media (ITV, Guardian, Nipashe, RFA, Radio One, and Mwananchi); newly private media that are rapidly growing (Azam TV); media targeting youths (Clouds FM) and an English newspaper (Citizen).

Quality criteria workshop
The selected media pieces were all measured using a codebook – a content analysis research instrument made up of quality criteria. These quality criteria were discussed and agreed upon by editors of the sampled media houses and other media stakeholders . This is the best way to assess media quality as practice-based reporting qualities are used, and not mere academic qualities. It is significant to note that these criteria have also been used to measure reporting quality in Tanzania before .

Selection and training of coders
The pilot study involved 10 research assistants (coders) – 4 experienced coders and 6 new ones. The selected coders were trained for three days at the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT). All selected coders have the requisite knowledge and experience in journalism practice.

Sampling of media pieces
A total of 573 media pieces – excluding international and sports news – were selected between 28th September and 23rd October 2017. For newspapers, 12 news items were selected from each edition with prominence being given to all front page stories and lead stories on inside pages. In case where 12 news items were hard to get, second and third stories on inside pages were also selected. For TV and radio, the first 6 news items in news bulletins and 3 programmes were selected from each media outlet per day. In circumstances where a programme (s) misses on that day, the missed programme (s) was selected from the following day or that particular week. To ensure diversity of programmes, one programme was selected twice at maximum, though rare. The exception, however, was with Clouds FM whose programmes' titles are permanent. It is significant to note that there were sampled programmes with various segments; in such case, only one segment was selected for inclusion.

Quality assurance in coding
Coders were assigned media pieces to code. For newspapers, coders coded news pieces and articles while for radio and TV pieces they transcribed and coded all assigned pieces. All media pieces (print) and transcriptions for radio and TV were kept for references in case there was a need to clarify anything regarding coding during analysis. This practice ensures quality of coding as researchers are able to review either a newspaper article or a transcription of a radio/TV programme in question.

Challenges encountered during selection of media pieces
Sometimes it was extremely difficult to decide which programme to record as not all media houses publish their schedules. Additionally, there were cases of un-followed programme, where a media houses has a programme schedule but it is not fully adhered to. A programme X may have been sampled for recording based on the programme schedule only to realise during actual recording that it is not on the actual airing of programmes.

3.0   FINDINGS
A total 537 units (articles, radio and TV pieces) were analysed as indicated in the tables below:

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[2]*The quality criteria workshop was attended by 12 editors (and their representatives), Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA),Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF), Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), Tanzania Information Services (Maelezo), and Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF)*
[3]*This involves assignments from UNESCO, TMF, MCT etc*
[4]*1 coder has a PhD in Mass Communication, experienced journalist and serves as a judge in MCT-EJAT Awards; 2 coders are PhD candidates and teaches journalism studies at universities; 2 has masters' degree, 2 have first degree and 3 are currently in their final year of studies at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (UDSM)*

Table 1: Number of sampled pieces by media categories

Print		300
Radio news	78	
Radio programmes	57	
Sub-total Radio		135
TV news	62	
TV programmes	40	
Sub-total TV		102
Grand Total		**537**

Table 2: Sampled pieces by Media Houses

Print	No. of Units		Total
The Citizen	61		**61**
The Guardian	60		**60**
Mwananchi	60		**60**
Daily News	59		**59**
Nipashe	60		**60**
Radio	**Radio News**	**Radio Programmes**	
Radio TBC Taifa	24	16	**40**
Radio Free Africa	18	13	**31**
Radio One	16	15	**31**
Radio Clouds FM	20	13	**33**
TV	**TV news**	**TV programmes**	
TV TBC 1	18	14	**32**
ITV	15	12	**27**
Azam TV	29	14	**43**
			537

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[5]*In selecting programs, the following were excluded: sponsored programs, international programs, entertainment programs*

3.1   POSITIVE FINDINGS

3.1.1 Main Topics
Every coder had to identify the main topic of the journalistic unit (article, radio or TV piece) from a list of topics. For the entire sample, media covers very relevant issues for a developing country like Tanzania. For example

- **Economy** is largely covered (We add up «other economic», «infrastructure», "tourism" and «mining, oil and gas». This adds up to 26% in total of the entire coverage.
- **Development** issues are covered with **21%**. This entails:
- **Health** covered by **10.4%.**
- **Agriculture** (plus forestry plus hunger) are covered with **6%.**
- **Education** with **4.5%.**
- The polity and legal issues are covered.
- The contentious issues like conflict issues (3.8%) / corruption (1.9) / gender-based violence (2.6) / human rights issues (1.9) add up to roughly 10%.
- Politics – however, which is the political struggle as such between parties or stakeholders is hardly covered as the main topic, but might be covered within articles on other topics.

Table 3: Main topics covered
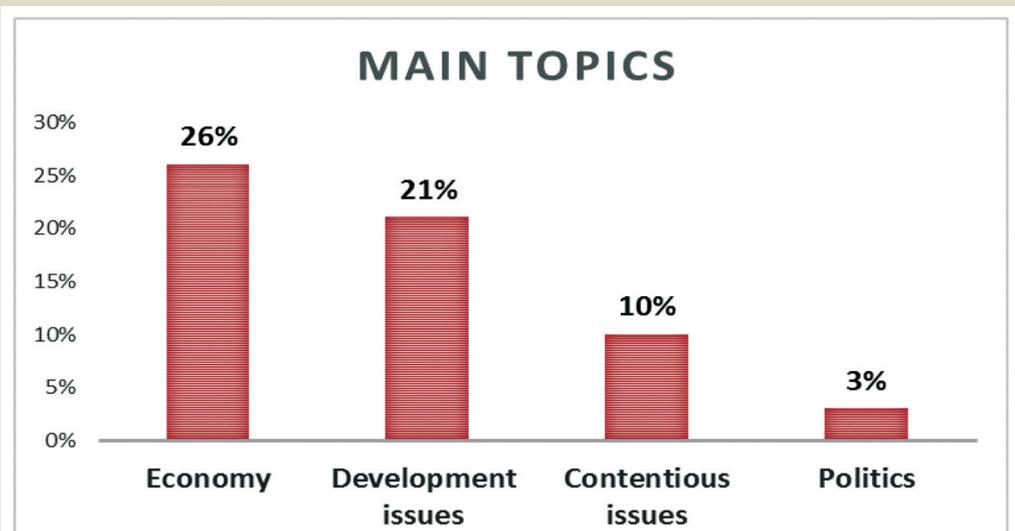
3.1.2 Clear cut Idea
The study assessed whether the story of the journalistic unit had a clear-cut idea, like a main statement that was obvious to the media user. The study distinguished three levels:

- No clear cut idea at all (when unit was confusing or mixed topics)
- Weak Clear- cut idea, (when unit showed some clarity, but was not crystal clear)
- Strong clear-cut idea (when text was overall crystal clear what story to tell)

For the entire sample, the majority of units show a strong clear idea (56%), and fewer showed a weak clear cut idea, and there were very few with no clear idea.

Table 4: Clear-cut idea in the text
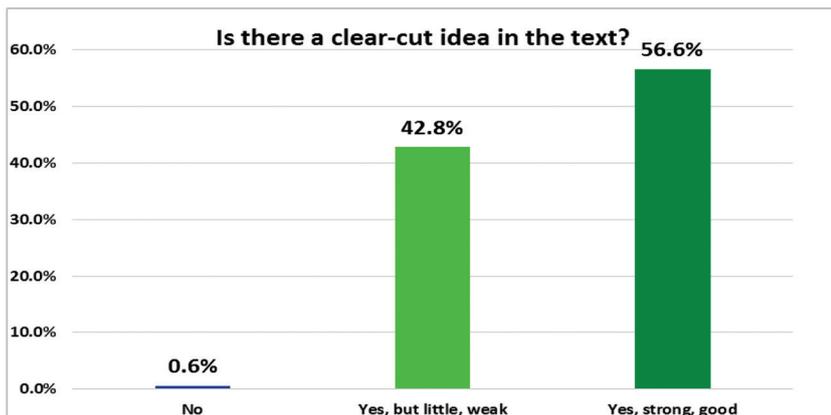
But for some media genres the performance is not that good. Especially Radio News has only 23% of their units with a strong clear-cut idea. This is worrying as Radio news is an essential part of the information provided to Tanzanian citizen, especially in the rural areas. Amongst the print media the Guardian is lowest on strong structure (38% only), amongst the radio stations it is TBC Taifa with only 23% of units with good structure, and amongst the TV stations it is Azam TV with only 44% of good structure.

3.1.3 Perspectives
The study assessed for every unit under which perspective the topic was treated. One topic can be treated under various perspectives in the same article. For example, a health story can have an economic perspective and a polity perspective, when describing a new health insurance policy, and as well as the costs for the state budget. A perspective is coded as existent when at least on paragraph it is explicitly dedicated to it. Just a mention of some buzz words, is not sufficient to count as a perspective. The study distinguished the following perspectives:

- **Ordinary people perspective** (when an article mentions and describes the concerns of ordinary citizen or the consequences for them)
- **Economic perspective** (when an article describes or explains the economic consequences or implications of the topic)
- **Polity perspective** (when an article describes the political content of a topic)
- **Politics perspective** (when an article describes the political struggle between parties or stakeholders about a topic)
- **Science perspective** (when an article describes the scientific contributions or the research perspective)
- **Security perspective** (when an article describes a topic from its implications for national security or the security of the people).

Tanzanian media in general covers very well the perspective of ordinary people. So, most media reports look relevant. This is followed by the economic perspective and the polity perspective. However, the perspective of politics is presented rarely, only 10% of the units entail this perspective. This means that the political struggle and the debate are hardly reflected in the media. For a healthy democracy, the competition between different ideas needs to be shown and informed about.

Regarding media genres, there is little difference between print, radio and TV. Only print covers the economic perspective more.

However, at the level of single media houses, the **perspective of politics is only covered by The Citizen and by Mwananchi (both 16%),** amongst radio stations Radio Free Africa is highest on ordinary people (80%) and on politics (15%), whereas TBC is low on ordinary citizen perspective (49%), and low on politics (8%). Amongst TV stations, TBC 1 is lowest on ordinary people (51%), whereas **Azam TV** is highest on ordinary people (74%) and on politics (14%). In addition, most units cover only one perspective (47%), some of them cover two perspectives (36%). In general, it is a sign of good quality to add perspectives, to make the information more comprehensive.

Chart 1: Perspectives
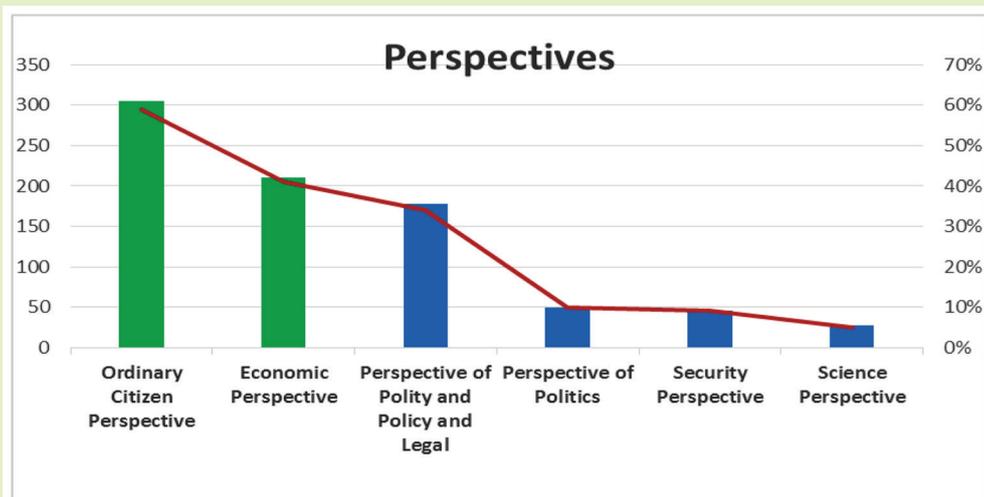
3.2 CHALLENGES IN FINDINGS

The study identified many challenges in the quality of Tanzanian media. These can be grouped into four sections, i.e. there are challenges in the following fields:

      3.2.1   Journalism techniques
      3.2.2   Comprehensiveness of information
      3.2.3   Ethics
      3.2.4   Understandability for the audience
   3.2.1   Challenges in Journalism Techniques

Sourcing

To have multiple sources in a story is one of the oldest journalistic rules, valid almost in all contexts over the globe. This was re-confirmed by the editors' workshop in the beginning of this Pilot project (in September 2017).

Coders counted for every unit how many sources were used in that text (the reporter or presenter himself is not a source), and also attributed those sources to societal groups, like government, NGOs, foreign bodies, business actors, experts etc. Therefore we have information for every unit how many sources and which sources were used.

Overall, the Tanzanian media too often uses only one source (sometimes even none) as the graph below shows. Normally, every unit should have at least two sources, but radio News and programmes, as well as TV programs have more than 40% of their units with only one source. TV news does slightly better, and Print has only 17% of articles with only one source. This overall picture needs to change obviously.

Table 5: Share of Sources
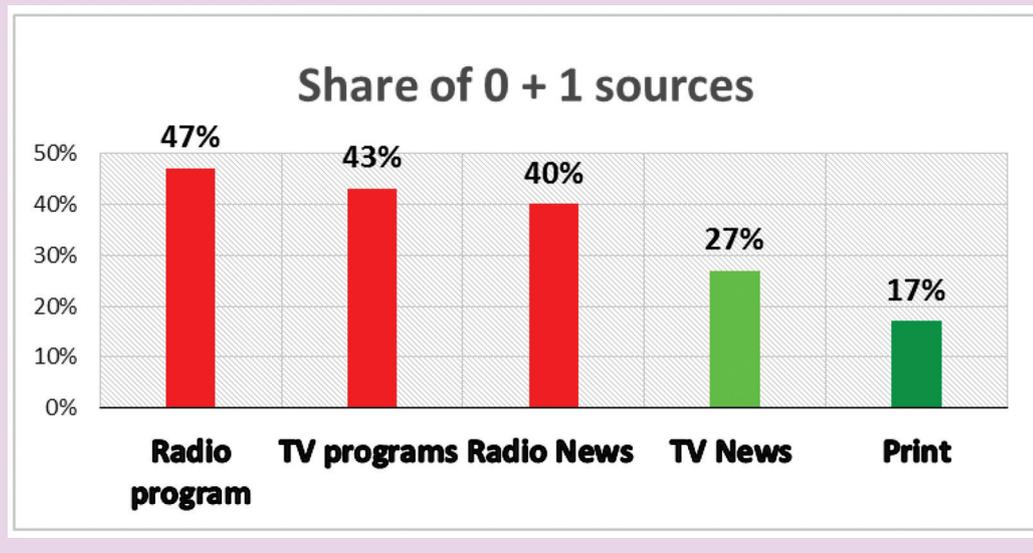
In print it is the Daily News that performs low (29% single source). In radio news, RFA has the lowest performance (56% single sourcing), and in TV news it is Azam TV has the lowest performance (35% single sourcing)

Table 6: Share of news with 0 or 1 source

Radio Stations	%	TV Stations	%
Clouds FM	10%	TBC1	11%
Radio One	50%	ITV	33%
TBC Taifa	46%	Azam TV	35%
RFA	56%		

The share of sources in programs looks different as per the table below:

Table 7: Share of programs with only one source

Radio Stations	%	TV Stations	%
Radio One	20%	TBC1	36%
TBC Taifa	50%	Azam TV	36%
RFA	54%	ITV	58%
Clouds FM	69%		

Actors as sources

The study assessed which actors were used as sources. In general, authorities (government, local administrations) are heavily used as sources (on average 56% of all sources come from official authorities). Ordinary people are also used (25%) which is good, followed by business people (18%) and NGOs (16%). With radio news, more than 70% of their sources come from government or officials. This is worrying considering that the majority of Tanzanians listen mainly to Radio news. Surely, authorities need to be integrated as sources, but additionally other sources need to be used from other actor groups. Then automatically, the weight of authorities as sources will decrease.

Table 8: Share of articles using authorities as sources

Share of articles using authorities as source

	Print	Radio news	Radio programmes	TV news	TV programmes
	58.30%	71.40%	41.80%	50.00%	32.50%
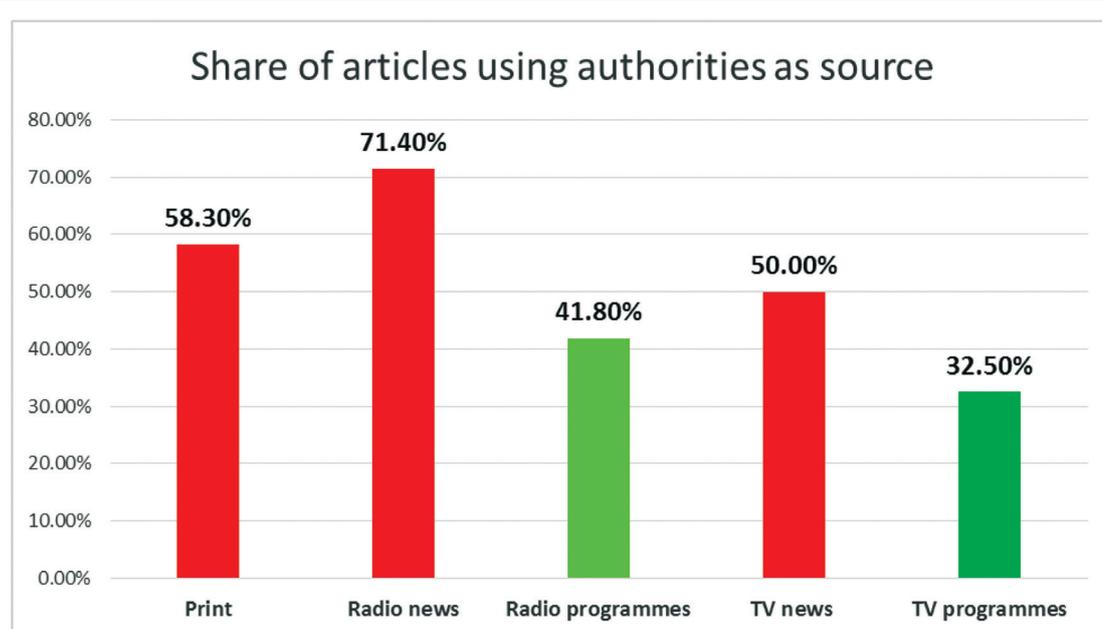
Within the print media category, it is Nipashe that uses authorities at the most (71%), in radio stations it is TBC Taifa (70%) and Clouds FM (69%), while in TV stations it is TBC1 (57%). Azam TV has the lowest number of authorities as sources (35%).

Gender of Sources

In sourcing, media should also give women and their representatives a voice in order to strengthen their viewpoints and roles in society. Therefore, coders had to assess how many sources in a unit were clearly identified as female sources. In general, the average of female sources is very low with only 36% of all units identified as having female sources. The average was 0.6 female sources, so less than one female source. The chart below shows the gender of sources as per the media categories:

Chart 2: Gender of sources
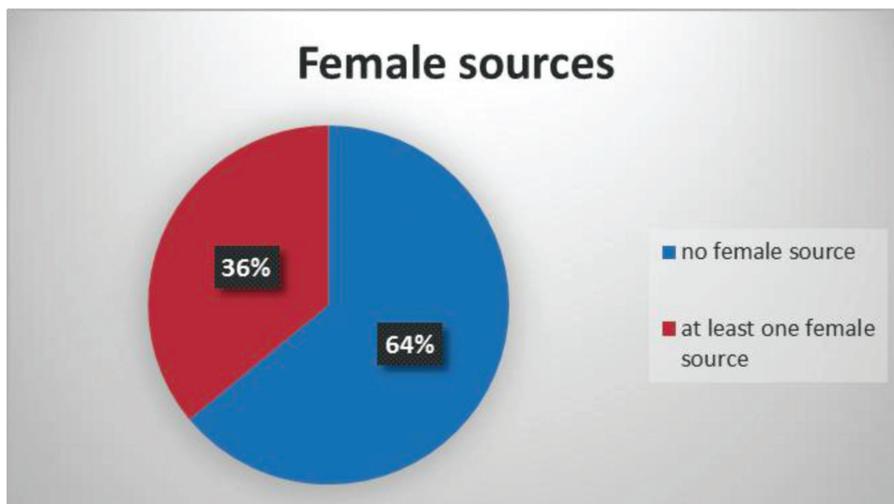
Radio news are the lowest in using female sources (only 21% with at least one female source), followed by print (35%), Radio programs and TV news have both 40% and TV Programmes are leading with 55% of units with at least one female source. Regarding single media houses, Radio One is lowest in this category (16% only), TBC1 and ITV are the highest (50% and 48%) respectively. Most print media perform around average (36%).

Diversity of Actor Groups
As a new quality indicator, the researchers calculated the number of different actor groups used as sources having in mind that a text can have multiple sources, but all coming from the same group of actors. On average, print uses two actor groups as sources, whereas TV and Radio use on average only one actor group.

Transparency of Sources
Generally, only 10% of all sources mentioned were not transparent. That is a good performance in general. The results according to Print, Radio or TV are very alike; only TV programs are slightly lower with 18% of non-transparent sources. There are larger differences between single media houses. TBC1 has a significantly larger amount of non-transparent sources (24%), while RFA – the best performing station – with only 4% of non-transparent sources, followed by Guardian and Mwananchi (both 7%).
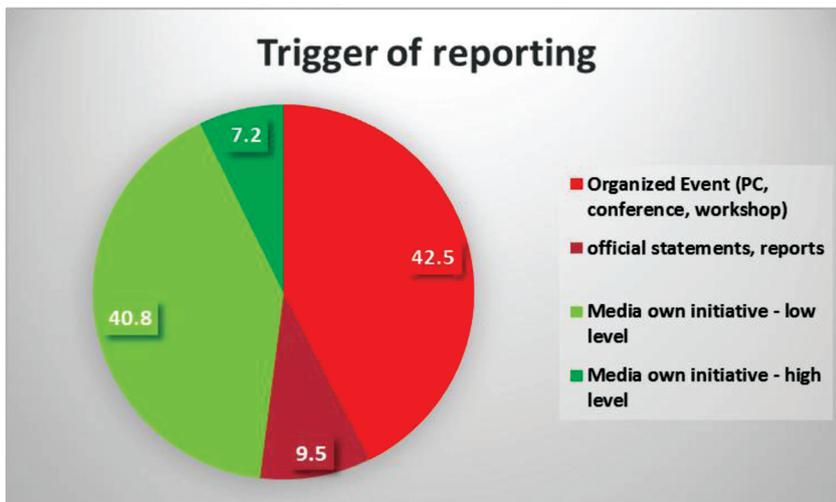
Context of Reporting
The study also assessed the context by which the reporting was triggered. That is not easy as it is not a journalistic routine to mention this context always. The study wanted to explore how often journalists' reports based on their own initiative and how often they just react to the official calendar of events. The study distinguished four options as described below:

- **Organized event** (press conference, workshop, topical conferences, etc.)
- **Official reports** (launch of studies, official statements etc.)
- **Low level of own initiative** (when it could be the journalists' initiative to treat the topic, but it could also be that it is only said "this newspaper asked Dr. XYZ…", but that this meeting happened during a press conference, without the journalist mentioning these circumstances). So, there is a lot of ambiguity and subjective judgement in this option.
- **High level of own initiative** (when journalistic text explicitly mentions that reporters wanted to treat this topic and then went out…)

Nevertheless, we see that the Tanzanian media highly relies on organized events and official reports. More than half (52%) of all units were triggered by those two options. That is too much as the media should go beyond the official calendar of events. It is only 7% of units that show media's own initiative clearly.

Chart 3: Context of Reporting

Trigger of reporting

- Organized Event (PC, conference, workshop) — 42.5
- official statements, reports — 9.5
- Media own initiative - low level — 40.8
- Media own initiative - high level — 7.2

A total of 83% of Radio News and 48% of TV news are heavily based on organized events, whereas programmes are not triggered by organized events. However, especially worrying again are the Radio news. They seem almost only reflecting the official calendar.

Within the print media, Mwananchi shows the highest level (12%) of own initiative, amongst Radio stations RFA has 25%, and amongst TV, ITV scores 15%.

Probing
Probing in interviews is an important technique applied by journalists to let interviewees and guests explain or confront them with other opinions. Good probing increases the quality of reporting, and helps listeners and viewers to understand issues better.

The study assessed meticulously in interviews within our sample (interviews in print, interviews or discussions in radio and TV programmes) how much probing and follow-up was executed by the presenter or the interviewer. The study had three options:
- No probing at all
- Few probing (there were only a few opportunities used to probe)
- Lots of probing or follow-up (most of the opportunities were used to probe)

Generally, the opportunity of probing is not well used: 14% do not probe at all, and in 48% of all interview formats, probing was executed only a few times as summarised in the chart below.

Chart 4: Probing in interviews

Extent of probing in interviews

- no probing at all — 14%
- few probing — 48%
- lot of probing and follow-up — 38%
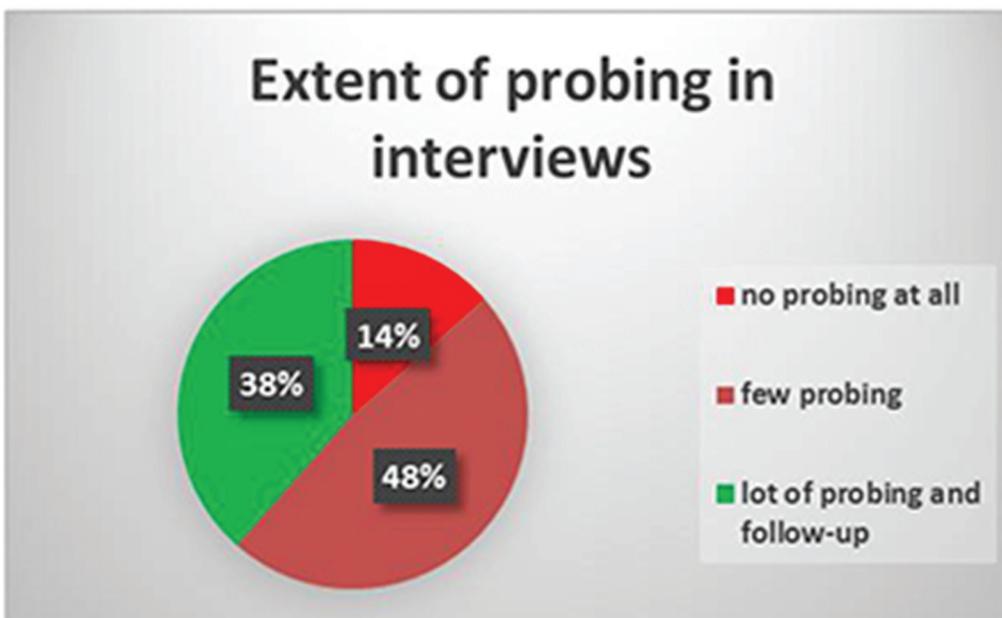
Radio and TV programs have a slightly higher share of "lots of probing", compared to Print, Radio and TV news. Amongst the Radio stations, Radio One has 60% in "lots of probing", and ITV has 58%.

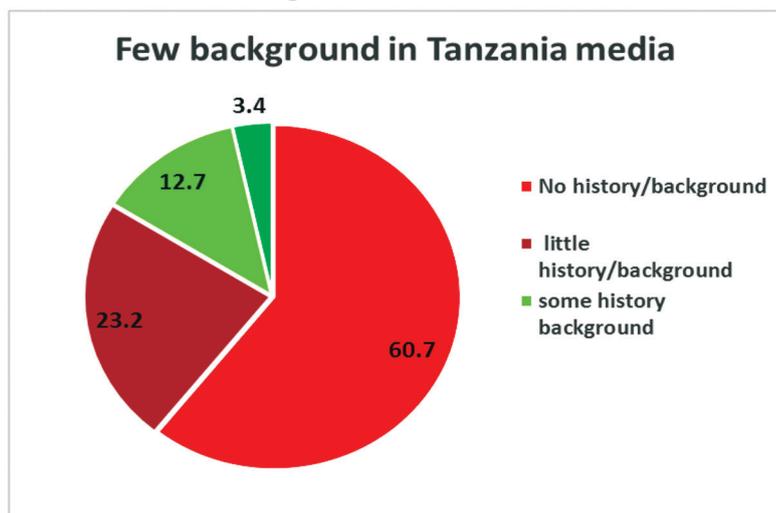### 3.2.2 Challenges in Comprehensiveness of information

Background
The study was aimed at finding out whether in media pieces (articles) some historical background to an issue is given and to what extent it is guided by pre-defined four options:
  - ■ No historical background (not even one paragraph, or no time in Radio or TV)
  - ■ Little historical background (at least one paragraph)
  - ■ Some historical background (2 to 3 paragraphs, or 31 to 60 seconds)
  - ■ Large historical background (4 paragraphs or more, 1 minute or more)

The study found out that there are very few articles that give some (historical) background to a story, so the information is more event-oriented, than understanding - oriented as indicated in the chart below.
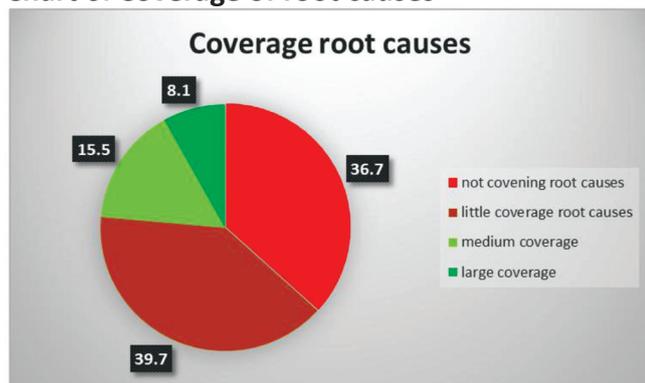
Chart 5: Share of background information

Few background in Tanzania media

- No history/background — 60.7
- little history/background — 23.2
- some history background — 12.7
- 3.4

Root causes
Understanding the root causes of an issue is an essential element to make the information complete and to enrich the audience with information beyond the pure event that took place. The study identified whether the reviewed articles included information on the root causes of the issue that was identified in the clear cut idea guided by four options below.
  - ■ No root causes at all (not even one paragraph, or no time in Radio or TV)
  - ■ Little root causes covered (at least one paragraph)
  - ■ Medium root causes covered (2 to 3 paragraphs, or 31 to60 seconds)
  - ■ Large root causes covered (4 paragraphs or more, 1 minute or more)

The finding reveals that the media does not cover sufficiently root causes. A total of 36% have none and 40% of articles only have little coverage of root causes. It looks that reporters rarely describe more than the actual event. Usually it needs efforts to cover root causes. The chart below shows the percentages of root causes as per the options above.

Chart 6: Coverage of root causes

Coverage root causes

- not covening root causes — 36.7
- little coverage root causes — 39.7
- medium coverage — 15.5
- large coverage — 8.1

Comparing between Radio and TV news, Radio news is weaker (5%) than TV news (18%). Overall, they are weak in covering root causes well (well = medium plus large). On the contrary, TV programmes are better with 47%.

Within the media categories, Nipashe has 36% of its articles covering root causes well (medium plus large) in print category, Radio One (60%) in radio category and ITV (58%) in TV category, but only in their programs – and not news.
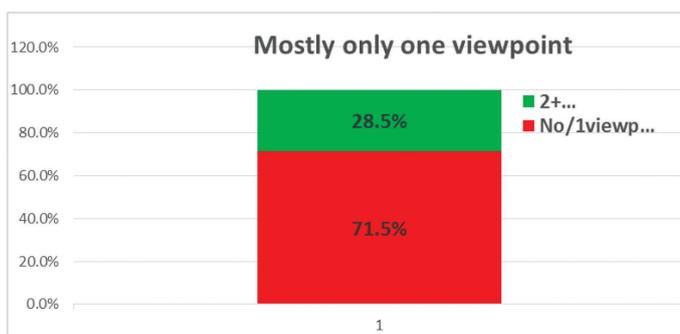
Viewpoints

Having different viewpoints on an issue (a viewpoint is kind of an opinion, a judgement with regard to the central idea of an article), is essential to inform the public. It offers the possibility of always showing that people can be of different opinions, and thus balancing the story and makes it be seen as more comprehensive.

Additionally, when stories contain at least two viewpoints, only then is there an opportunity for them to be of different sides. They can also be on the same side of opinion, but with different justifications. The study assessed, for every unit, which viewpoints with regard to the main idea were present and counted them. Surprisingly, the majority of media coverage had only 1 viewpoint (72%) as indicated in the chart below.

Chart 7: Inclusion of viewpoints in media pieces

Chart 7: Inclusion of viewpoints in media pieces

It is important to note that print (26%) and TV programmes (25%) have the lowest performance, but Radio news (29%) and TV news (32%) do hardly better. On the opposite, Radio programmes do better with 44% of units having two viewpoints or even more. Amongst the media houses, Nipashe (35% of 2+ viewpoints), Radio One (52%) and Azam TV (48%) are best performers in their categories.

Opposing viewpoints

To get a clear picture on balancing in reporting, the study assessed whether the identified viewpoints were opposing regarding the main idea in the unit. The finding reveals that only 13% of articles carry opposing viewpoints. This is mainly due to the fact that many articles (see above) have only 1 viewpoint. Automatically, one viewpoint cannot be opposing to itself. Even in those articles with two or more viewpoints, only 44% of them show opposing viewpoints as indicated in the chart below.

Chart 8: Opposing viewpoints

Radio and TV programmes are a bit better on that (60% and 65%) respectively compared to the 44% on average. But it means that a lot needs to be improved.

Amongst the media houses, The Citizen exhibits the best performance with 72% opposing viewpoints of those articles with 2 and more viewpoints, while Radio One having 69%, and Azam TV with 65%. However, there are still a lot of articles with only one viewpoint.

3.2.3 Challenges in Ethics
Regarding media ethics, previous studies in media monitoring by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), have shown that the media often recognizes ethical requirements, but the right to reply has been a challenge for quite some time. This is also established in this study. The overall result shows that there were rarely stories where people were accused (in total: 67), most of them (47 pieces) in print, 15 pieces in Radio and 5 pieces in TV programs. The number notwithstanding, the study finds out that 60% of articles with accused people, the right of reply was not conceded. The table below shows the performance of each media category in relation to the right of reply.

Table 9: Right to reply per media category
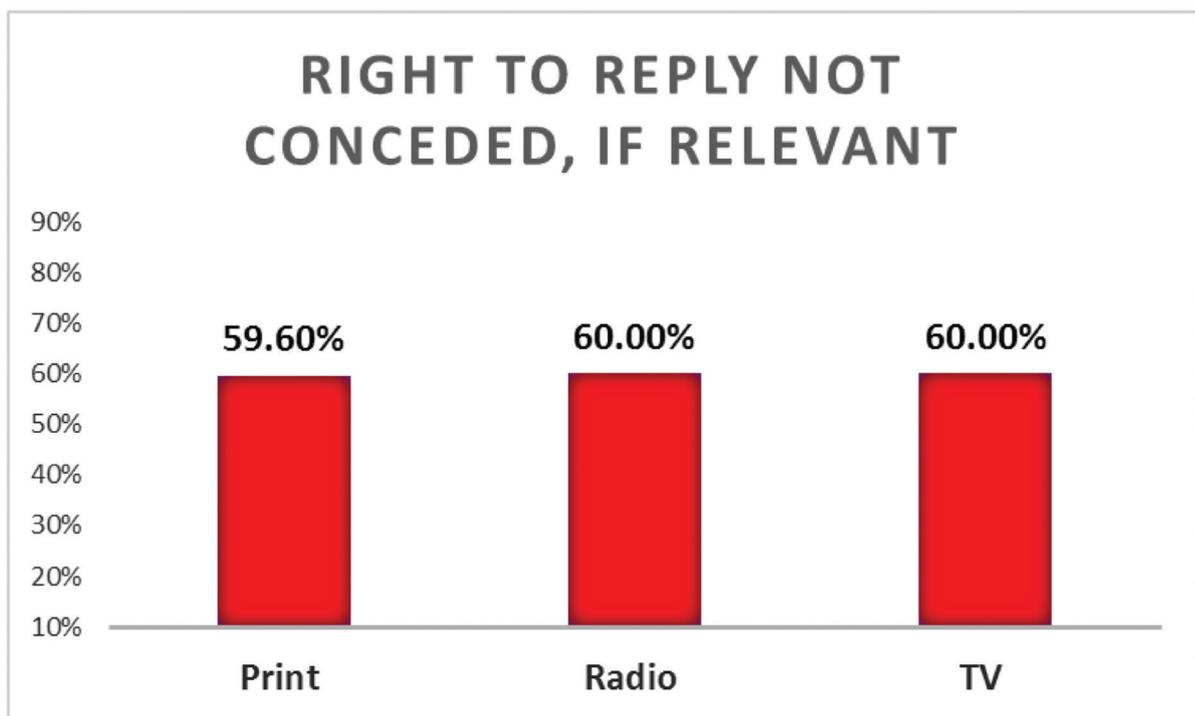
3.2.4   Challenges in Understandability for the audience

Figures in Good Context
Putting figures into a good context is essential for audience understanding. The importance of explaining or simplifying data/figures was also highlighted during the quality criteria workshop with editors as data don't speak for themselves; they have to be made understandable. This often works by putting them into a good context, for example by comparing them to something ordinary readers know. The study assessed two things: whether the articles included figures and whether the figures were put into context guided by four options:

- No figures in context (all figures),
- Few figures in context (up to 20% of figures are put into good context, the rest not),
- Medium (21 to 50%), and
- Mostly (51 – 100%).

The overall result shows that only 71% of articles included relevant figures, and only 24% of them put figures in good context (24% = sum of medium and mostly). A total of 75% do not put any figures into context as shown in the chart below.

Figures put into good context

- No
- Few (up to 20%)
- Medium (21 to 50%)
- Mostly/Always (51 + %)

6.3%
18.1%
40.4%
35.2%
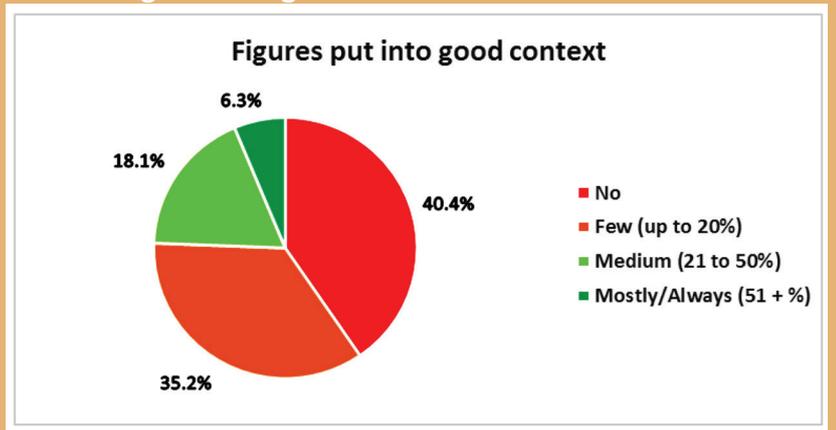
Radio, both news (7%) and programmes (18%) are rather weak in putting figures into good context, whereas TV news (37%) and programs (53%) are much better in this category. Overall, Nipashe (29%), RFA (19%) and ITV (55%) are best performers in print, radio and TV respectively.
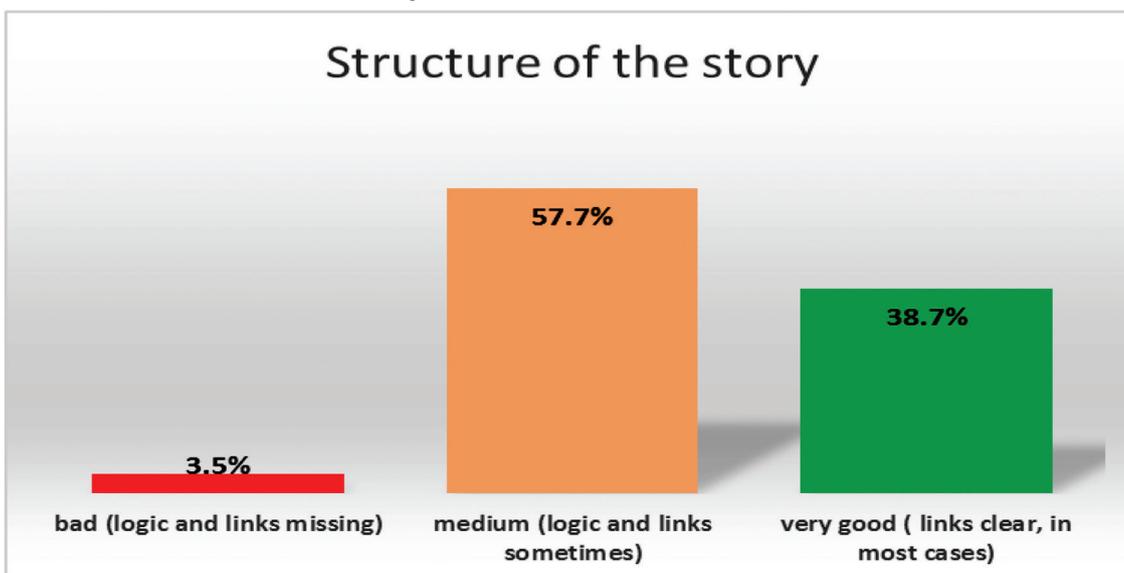
Structure in Stories

This study operationalized structure as the logical links between the different parts of a journalistic text. Ideally, these parts are clearly linked up using linkage words such as "to the contrary", "although" or "in addition". Those linkage words can also be used by presenters in radio and TV. Ideally, a good structure leads the reader or listener through the story from the beginning to the end. The study assessed how the structure of an article was based on:

■ Bad structure (missing links between parts and paragraphs, presenter just announces next speaker),
■ Medium structure (links are sometimes made, sometimes not), and
■ Good structure (links between different parts are often, almost always done).

The general picture is that the media is sometimes good (39% of articles show good linkages) and sometimes only medium (58%). Bad structure was rarely noted. Nevertheless, there is a room for improvement to increase the understandibility for the audience.

Chart 10: Structure of the story

Structure of the story

3.5%	57.7%	38.7%
bad (logic and links missing)	medium (logic and links sometimes)	very good (links clear, in most cases)

Radio News (19%) and TV News (27%) rarely show a good structure, but programs perform much better (Radio program 44%; TV programs 65%). Print media has 44% of good structure.

The differences between media houses are not too big, many perform on similar level. In the Print category, the Guardian and Mwananchi (47% and 45%) are leading, while in Radio it is Clouds FM/TBC Taifa with both 33%, and in TV category TBC1 (50%) and ITV (52%) lead. This shows that there is large room for improvement.

Demand for Action
Some stakeholders and parts of the audience require that the media not only describe current events and look at challenges, but also include covering the consequences, for example by explicitly making sources talk about demands for actions or policies to mitigate challenge and find solutions to the problems.

The study assessed whether the sampled articles included a demand for action or operational policy. This requires some concrete action, not only appeals (Like "all Tanzanians should be aware of the importance of good education". Action means that some activities should be implemented or some policies changed. Overall, 53% of articles included demand for action, while 47% did not. However, this can still be improved.

There are some differences between Print, Radio and TV, but TV programs are largely covering demands for actions (73%). The differences of media houses are considerable. Radio One performs the highest with 71% of pieces with coverage of demand for action. The Citizen has the lowest score (37%), behind Daily News (43%) and RFA (48%).

4.0   INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE OF MEDIA HOUSES
In order to help media houses grasp quickly the findings of this pilot project and how each media house fairs within the pilot project, the researchers developed individual media house performance sheets (see in annexes). The sheets summarise the performance of each media house using the quality criteria used in this study while providing information on individual performance of media house, average performance of all media houses, and best performance amongst media houses in the specific quality indicator. With this performance sheet, every media house can immediately see its strengths and weaknesses, and compare to others.

The quality indicators used for the performance sheets are the following:
a)   **Own initiative to report:** share of articles with highest level of own initiative report
b)   **Minimum 2 sources:** share of articles with 2 sources or more
c)   **Very good structure:** share of articles with very good logical links between all parts of the story
d)   **Two viewpoints or more:** share of articles with at least two viewpoints
e)   **Opposing viewpoints:** share of articles showing opposing viewpoints (when articles have at least two viewpoints)
f)   **Figures in good context**: share of articles with figures put often into good context
g)   **Large coverage or root causes:** share of articles with at least 2 paragraphs dedicated to root causes
h)   **Gender of sources:** share of articles with at least one female source
i)   **Lots of probing in Interviews:** share of radio or TV pieces with a lot of follow-up questions by presenter

5.0   SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
At the core of this pilot study, was an attempt to assess the quality of media in Tanzania using set of criterion discussed and agreed upon by editors and other media stakeholders. The findings gathered through content analysis established some positive and disturbing results.

The findings established that most of the reviewed media pieces have strong clear cut idea (57%), the media covers mostly relevant topics – economics, development issues, politics etc, media cover largely ordinary people's perspective (60%) and 50% of reviewed media pieces have good reporting structure. On the other hand, the findings uncovered challenging findings including single source syndrome with radio and TV relying too much on single sources; the media relies heavily on authoritative sources (72%); over 50% of the reviewed media pieces are based on organised events; there is little probing in radio and TV (only 38% of media pieces have lots of probing and follow up); there is little background in media coverage (70% of media pieces do not have background information); low coverage of root causes (only 24% cover root causes well); coverage of viewpoints is limited to single viewpoints (72%); only 13% of media pieces show opposing viewpoints; and 75% of media pieces do not put figures into good context.

Based on the aforementioned findings, it is obvious that the quality of media reporting in Tanzania is a matter of concern to all stakeholders and the quality needs to be strengthened. It is even alarming when some basic quality indicators are not met such as the need to have more than one source in a story, the need to look for stories outside the normal calendar of events etc. It is equally alarming considering the number of media training interventions that have been organised for years, and the general results are not showing any positive trends.

Failure to meet these basic quality indicators may compromise the democratic function of the media as the media won't be able to provide the real information diet for most of the people leading to information malnutrition in the society. A society suffering from information malnutrition cannot meaningfully engage in democratic debate, and chances of their ability to improve on governance become slim.

Consequently, there is a need to reverse the situation with all stakeholders involved – development partners, government, media owners, media managers and editors, journalists, journalism training institutions, media organisations etc. With this view of the study findings, the researchers recommend several actions to be taken as shown below.

- **Fully-fledged Yearbook:** as this was a pilot study, there is a need to embark on a fully-fledged Yearbook on Media Quality in 2018 with a bigger sample including weekly newspapers, community radio stations, and online platforms. This will help to get a realistic picture at national level and develop a realistic roadmap of intervention regarding quality reporting in the country;
- **Media context chapter:** Include a section/chapter in the Yearbook report on context of media and its development in the country. The inclusion of this section/chapter enables stakeholders to gauge the media quality v/s the context in which the media operates. This includes, among others, engaging media stakeholders in a qualitative study to uncover the causes behind media performances. In some instances what may be seen as a low performance in media quality, may in fact be the opposite considering the rough terrains the media and journalists have to endure to get stories out;
- **Using performance sheet:** as the study has invented the individual performance sheet – a sheet summarizing individual media house performance, it can be used by media houses as a training needs assessment to guide them in organising training of journalists especially in areas where their performance is below the average;
- **Working with radio stations to improve radio news:** the results have shown that radio news is the least performer in most of the quality indicators, and this is not healthy as radio is the dominant medium for most Tanzanians especially those residing in rural areas. There is therefore an urgent need to engage radio stations to better their news programs technically (journalism skills) and structurally (news formats);
- **Presentation of results to media houses and wider audience:** as quality of media reporting concerns many stakeholders, there is a need to engage them as a way to further disseminate the research findings. These groups of stakeholders have to be engaged: editors and media managers (through presentation), government (through research report), journalism university lecturers and students (through presentation), media houses (through individual performance report and presentation), development partners interested in media support (presentation and short report) etc;
- **Publication of results:** for the fully-fledged Yearbook, the results of all stations be openly published and the media (editors and journalists) are in favour of transparency.

Annex 1: Feedback from practitioners on Pilot Yearbook 2017 results

The Pilot Yearbook 2017 results were presented on two occasions to various stakeholders including high-level media managers, government representatives, representatives from media organisations, editors and reporters from various media houses.

Realistic picture of media quality in Tanzania
The general feedback was very positive, confirming that the results draw a realistic picture of the status of media in Tanzania. Most of the participants bought the idea of the Yearbook and recommended embarking on a fully-fledged Yearbook in 2018, with more media houses included.

The deplorable status of Radio News was discussed at both occasions. The discussion focussed on whether radio stations can extend their newscast from 10 minutes to half an hour. Most workshop participants expected a sensible improvement in quality of reporting by that extension. The discussion was conducted on the shared background that the majority of Tanzania's population relies on Radio News as their main information source. Especially, the analytical part (background, root causes) does hardly happen in Radio News, and it may not help to shift that analytical part to programs.

Usability of Results
Regarding the usefulness of results, the following was discussed:
   a)   Individual media performance sheets can be used within media houses to design training courses and finally to **improve reporting.**
   b)   It was suggested by one media manager to open up the opportunity that interested media houses get their **journalistic production assessed** more often (than once a year) by the Yearbook method and get immediate feedback in order to see whether improvements happen.
   c)   The results were seen as useful on a **political level** as well. Media houses showing that they get assessed externally, proving their transparency, can tell the government that they have nothing to hide and that they are on the way to improve. That is most probably welcomed and acknowledged by the government.
   d)   The results on quality can help to solve other problems, for example in increasing advertisements base, or defending media houses against unfair accusations. It may also convince the government not to put pressure on people with differing viewpoints, as this is essential for any debate.

Reasons for low performance
Naturally, many debates centred on the reasons for this kind of performance regarding quality. The currently harsh **political and economic conditions** were mentioned as reasons for low quality in reporting, for example, the silence of many potential sources, the limited spending in adverts by the government to private media houses, which voice differing opinions; the self-censorship due to many closures of media houses; violations of journalistic rights, and the precarious economic situation of many reporters.
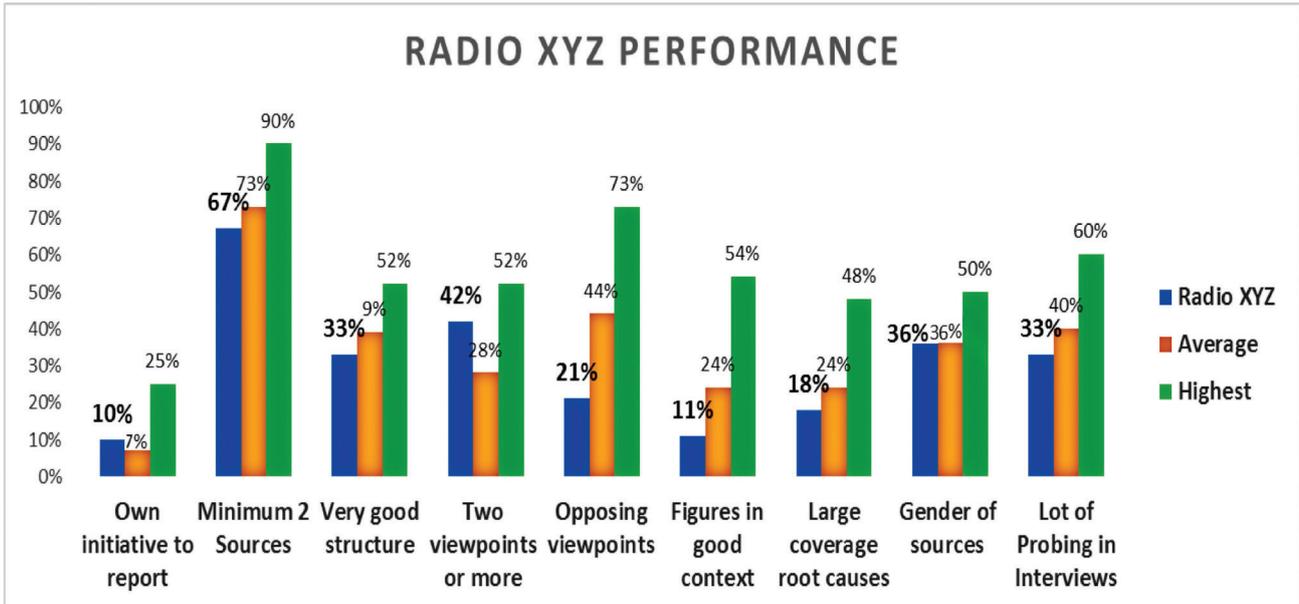
Nevertheless, other elements were presented that had nothing to do with the political and economic context.
   a)   **Laziness:** it was said that many journalists do not act professionally, although they know the rules of journalism profession. Sometimes, the quality in reporting could be easily improved by investing a little more time and effort, not necessarily finances. For example, many media houses use too many government sources. However, the government doesn't force media houses to use only them; they are still free to find others. Or many journalists do not make efforts to find their own stories; they just trust the official calendar, thus missing the agenda setting function of media.
   b)   **Non-Compliance:** it was mentioned that journalistic rules are known and set. However, editors often do not require fulfilment of the rules and publish reports below standard quality. Some media houses point mainly to editors and owners who fail to establish the rules as the newsroom culture. Journalistic standards and culture need to be taken seriously. Editors need to be encouraged to demand better quality.

This has to be supported by owners of media houses.

c) **Journalistic capacity and human resources strategy:** Some "journalists" do not have the capacity to act as journalists, they are only qualified as entertainers. With the Media Services Act of 2016 and the Diploma requirement for someone to practice journalism, this may probably come to an end especially in radio.

d) **Brain drain:** Some editors mentioned that often good reporters are poached, not by other media houses (which would be normal competition) but by NGOs, and foreign missions, or UN organizations that offer much higher salaries.

Annex 2 – Media performance sheet sample
MEDIA QUALITY IN TANZANIA (2017 PILOT PROJECT)

RADIO XYZ PERFORMANCE

Legend: ■ Radio XYZ ■ Average ■ Highest

Category	Radio XYZ	Average	Highest
Own initiative to report	10%	7%	25%
Minimum 2 Sources	67%	73%	90%
Very good structure	33%	9%	52%
Two viewpoints or more	42%	28%	52%
Opposing viewpoints	21%	44%	73%
Figures in good context	11%	24%	54%
Large coverage root causes	18%	24%	48%
Gender of sources	36%	36%	50%
Lot of Probing in Interviews	33%	40%	60%

Key	
	Own initiative to report: Share of articles with highest level of own initiative report
	Minimum 2 sources: share of articles with 2 sources or more
	Very good structure: share of articles with very good logical links between all parts of the story
	Two viewpoints or more: Share of articles with at least two viewpoints
	Opposing viewpoints: Share of articles showing opposing viewpoints (when articles have at least two viewpoints)
	Figures in good context: Share of articles with figures put often into good context
	Large coverage or root causes: Share of articles with at least 2 paragraphs dedicated to root causes
	Gender of sources: share of articles with at least one female source
	Lots of probing in Interviews: Share of radio or TV pieces with a lot of follow-up questions by presenter

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