Because ACCOUNTABILITY COUNTS

A Journalist Guide for covering Post-elections in Ghana

Open Society Initiative for West Africa

Pen+Bytes

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ICT JOURNALISM
Because Accountability Counts – A Journalist Guide for covering post elections in Ghana

ISBN: 978-9988-1-2343-7

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Published by International Institute for ICT Journalism (penplusbytes) Accra, Ghana September 2010

Design and Production Team:
Organ Multimedia, Jeremiah Sam, Kofi Mangesi, Prince Deh Ogochukwu Nweke

Editor:
James Hottor

Printed in Ghana
Digital copies of this book are available online

www.newmediaskool.org  www.penplusbytes.org  www.africanelections.org
Because Accountability Counts – A Journalist guide for covering post-elections in Ghana is one of the key building blocks for Ghana Post-elections Intervention Project whose main objective is to help overcome the challenges and problems affecting citizens’ ability to hold elected representatives accountable for promises they make during pre-election campaigns. The guide’s main objective is to empower journalists and other stakeholders with an information and knowledge resource for playing the watch and guide dog role in holding elected officers accountable. It provides an overview of post-elections landscape of Ghana, covering governance, legislative issues, political parties and their manifestoes, ruling party, opposition and governing after an election and provides guides for covering:

1. Parliament, Political Parties, Ruling Government (mapping campaign promises & manifesto), Opposition and Key Governance Issues

2. Investigative journalism and post-elections coverage

3. ICTs and Covering Post-Elections

4. Covering Budget and Extractive Industries and

5. Lessons to be learned from the post 2007 election crisis in Kenya
Contents

Foreward ........................................................................................................................................5
About African Election Project ........................................................................................................7
Ghana's Post Elections Intervention Project ....................................................................................9
About the Authors ............................................................................................................................10
Acronyms .......................................................................................................................................11

Chapter 1:
Political History & Media Landscape of Ghana .................................................................................16
1.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................16
1.2 Short political history. .................................................................................................................16
1.2 The 4th Republican Parliament in Perspective ...........................................................................20
1.3 The Executive in the Fourth Republic .........................................................................................20
1.3.1 Media in Post-Elections Coverage .........................................................................................21
1.3.2 Adherence to Code of Conduct ..............................................................................................22
1.4 Post Elections and Accountability .............................................................................................23

Chapter 2:
Covering Post-Elections ..................................................................................................................28
2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................28
2.2 Guidelines ..................................................................................................................................29

Chapter 3:
ICTs In Post-Elections Coverage ....................................................................................................32
3.1 General Background to ICT Journalism and Definitions .............................................................32
3.1.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................32
3.1.2 Elements of ICT Journalism in Post Elections .....................................................................33
3.1.3 Impact of ICT on Journalism ..................................................................................................33
3.1.4 Using ICTs in Journalism ........................................................................................................33
3.1.4.1 News Processing Front End ...............................................................................................34
3.1.4.2 News Processing Back End ..............................................................................................35
3.1.5 All Inclusive ICT Journalism? .................................................................................................35
3.1.6 ICTs and Post-elections Coverage ...........................................................................................36
3.2 Guidelines ..................................................................................................................................36
3.2.1 Guideline 1: Online ................................................................................................................36
3.2.2 Guideline 2 – Emails .............................................................................................................37
3.2.3 Guideline 3 – SMS/Text Messages .........................................................................................37
3.2.4 Guideline 4: Phone-ins ..........................................................................................................37
3.2.5 Guideline 5: Social Media ......................................................................................................37
3.2.6 Guideline 6: Using online sources................................................................. 38
3.2.7 Guideline 7: National ICTs Policy and Issues............................................... 38
3.2.8 Guideline 8: Citizen Journalism................................................................... 38
3.2.9 Guideline 9: News Aggregation................................................................. 38
3.2.10 Guideline 10: Privacy and Copyright....................................................... 39

Chapter 4:
Investigative Journalism in Post-Election Period................................................. 42
4.1 General Background to Investigative Journalism in Post-Election Period........ 42
4.1.1 Introduction................................................................................................. 42
4.1.2 Why is post-election worth investigating?.................................................. 42
4.2 Guidelines...................................................................................................... 43
4.2.1 Guideline 1: Generate and formulate story ideas.......................................... 43
4.2.2 Know What You are Looking For............................................................... 44
4.2.3 Documentary research................................................................................ 44
4.2.3.1 Hypothesis as a Method of Testing a Story............................................... 44
4.2.4 Finding reliable sources for information gathering...................................... 45
4.2.4.1 Witnesses............................................................................................... 46
4.2.4.2 Current associates................................................................................ 46
4.2.4.3 Experts.................................................................................................. 46
4.2.4.4 Open sources........................................................................................ 46
4.2.5 General ethical principles......................................................................... 47
4.2.6 Breaking the barrier of secrecy to get the information................................. 48
4.2.6.1 Succeeding the immersion in order to collect information.................... 48
4.2.6.2 Using undercover techniques or deception........................................... 49
4.2.6 Summary of the Steps in Investigating a Story.......................................... 50

Chapter 5:
Covering Budgets & Extractive Industries........................................................... 52
5.1 General Background to Covering Budgets & Ghana’s Extractive Industry....... 52
5.1.1 Introduction............................................................................................... 52
5.1.2 The Extractive Industry of Ghana.............................................................. 52
5.2 Guidelines..................................................................................................... 56
Appendix
Appendix 1............................................................................................................................................. 62
Appendix 2............................................................................................................................................ 65
Appendix 3............................................................................................................................................68
Appendix 4.............................................................................................................................................69

List of Tables
Table 1:  National Elections and Referenda in Ghana Since 1951.................................................17
Table 2:  Guidelines for Covering Post-elections Period................................................................. 29
Table 3:  Tips for Getting Information at the Interview ................................................................. 49
Table 4:  Summary of Steps in Investigating a Story ................................................................. 50
Table 5:  Extractive industry of Ghana ..................................................................................55

List of Charts
Chart 1: Hypothesis Graphic on Campaign Spending.................................................................44
Chart 2: Schematics of Story Development.............................................................................45
Foreward

In the last three decades, and with varying degrees of success, there has been a strong attempt by many African countries to reform their political systems from autocratic or military regimes to multiparty democratic systems. Among the 54 countries that make up the continent, Ghana has emerged as the poster child for a successful transition to democratic governance, having held five successive elections and alternated power via the ballot box twice (2000 and 2008). As observed by President Barack Obama during his visit to the country in July 2009, "the people of Ghana have worked hard to put democracy on a firmer footing, with repeated peaceful transfers of power even in the wake of closely contested elections."

It is true that elections alone do not make a democracy, but credible elections are important for a political system in which citizens are confident that their votes and voices matter and that they have a say in who governs them and how they ought to be governed.

The electoral machinery alone is insufficient to guarantee good quality elections. Institutions such as the media play a key role in the processes of elections and their aftermath. The media do not only afford a conduit of communication between politicians and voters, during elections, they also perform a watchdog and monitoring function that contribute to the credibility of the polls.

The ability of the media to discharge this role is of course variable. While a few media organisations have over the years worked hard to improve upon their election coverage, there is still considerable deficit in the quality of coverage provided by many newspapers, radio and television stations in the country.

Over the years attempts have been made to address media shortcomings through guidelines such as have been issued by the National Media Commission and the Ghana Journalists Association, and through short training programmes mounted ahead of elections.

PenPlusByte’s new guide for journalists covering elections in Ghana complements these ongoing efforts at improving the quality of election news and information. Having launched the innovative African Elections Project in 2008 and conducted several workshops on election coverage, PenPlusBytes is in a strong position to share the growing knowledge it has garnered in the field in an easily accessible format such as a guide book.

The timing and significance of this book cannot be lost on us, moreso as Ghana is being
applauded as a model African democracy those of us who work with the media understand that their performance in past elections have been anything but stellar.

I urge therefore that journalists read this important resource book on election coverage and that those involved in training take cognisance of the many valuable nuggets of information the book has to offer.

Audrey Gadzekpo
School of Communication Studies
University of Ghana, Legon.
About the African Elections Project

PenPlusBytes, the International Institute of ICT Journalism, is a non profit registered company in Ghana since 18th July 2001. It is a network of journalists and media organizations (453 active members from 49 countries) which has been using ICTs to empower the media and to advance the cause of journalism. To date, it has trained over 500 journalists from various parts of Africa and across the globe in the use of cutting edge media technology applications in the newsroom and contemporary ICT Journalism. PenPlusBytes has been involved in other significant projects such as the annual Design Communication Course. This course enhances the knowledge and skills of often neglected newspaper design editors on contemporary newsprint design; a New Media online resource course for journalists on the uses of technology in the newsroom; and the Reporting Oil and Gas Project which enhances the skills of journalists in monitoring and reporting relevant indicators in the oil and gas sector.

In year 2008, PenPlusBytes established the ground breaking African Elections Project with the vision of enhancing the ability of journalists, citizen journalists, and the news media to provide more timely and relevant elections information and knowledge while monitoring specific and important aspects of governance. The African Elections Project uses a range of ICTs and traditional information tools as effective advocacy tools to enhance democracy and election processes in Africa.

In the year 2010, PenPlusBytes, working with Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) as main funding and strategic partner with other key partners, launched the Post-elections Intervention Project in Ghana with the main objective of promoting the culture of political accountability by strengthening processes that lead to fulfillment of electoral promises and the delivery of visible and impact-driven dividends of democracy. Because Accountability Counts – A Journalists’ guide for covering post-elections in Ghana is one of the key building blocks for Ghana Post-elections Intervention Project whose main objective is to help overcome the challenges and problems affecting citizens’ ability to hold elected representatives accountable for promises made during elections. The guide’s main aim is to empower journalists and other media stakeholders with an information and

1. Penplusbytes website can be found at www.penplusbytes.org
2. OSIWA’s website address is www.osiwa.org
knowledge resource for playing this watch and guide dog role, working hand-in-hand with other stakeholders. The specific objectives include:

1. Improving the quality and quantity of coverage
2. Providing direction and guidance to journalist on post-election reporting
3. Strengthening the capacity of journalists in post-elections reporting
4. Promoting professional journalistic conduct in post-elections reporting

The key implementing partners of Ghana Post-elections Intervention Project are:

- African University College of Communications
- Ghana Journalist Association
- CDD Ghana
- FrontlineSMS

- West African Democracy Radio
- Media Foundation for West Africa
- FrontlineSMS
- SMS GH.
Ghana’s Post-Elections Intervention Project

Elections are important building blocks for democratic development in West Africa. A free, peaceful and credible election ensures regime legitimacy, prevents violence and promotes national unity. One of the cardinal principles of democracy is accountability. However, it is the least of the democratic principles adhered to by politicians and governments.

Unfortunately, Ghana as well as other African countries has weak institutions of accountability. Worse of all, the electorate either has no interest in post-election performance of governments or are ignorant about principles and processes of ensuring accountability. The role of the electorate in the democratic process has therefore been reduced to the event of voting during elections. In adhering to constitutional demands and electoral regulations and procedures, politicians and political parties develop their manifestoes outlining their development plans and agenda for the nation when voted to power. Promises normally cover all areas of governance and development.

Objectives: The project is conceived to overcome the challenges and problems affecting citizen's ability to hold the elected representatives accountable for promises made during elections.

1. Providing easy and accessible information on political promises and development plans of elected representatives to the public
2. To enhance media performance and redirect media engagements to development issues
3. To create citizens awareness on development issues
4. To make informed choices during elections
5. To reduce acrimonious campaign messages and redirect politicians campaigning to development issues rather than personality attacks.

Project activities: developing a media guide for journalist, face-to-face forums, setting up of online space for debate and knowledge sharing, statements and alerts, SMS, website, live reports from parliament and radio programmes

www.africanelections.org/ghana/postelections/
About the authors

1. **Absalom Mutere** is the immediate past Dean of Journalism and Communications at African University College of Communication (AUCC). Currently, he is a visiting faculty member of St. Augustine University Tanzania (SAUT) teaching journalism and communication courses. He served the same institution as external examiner. Until December 2007, he was the chairman of the Board of Trustees of Media Council of Kenya and a founding member. He also taught university level journalism and communication courses for 26 years in Kenya, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

2. **Gerard S Guedegbe** (Benin) is a leading expert in new media and facilitator/trainer in investigative reporting. He has facilitated workshops on investigative journalism and new media in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, South Africa and Benin. Currently he is the Secretary General of Forum of African Investigative Reporters http://www.fairreporters.org. He has won a number of prizes in ICT Journalism and serves as a reporter for Voice of America.

3. **Kwami Ahiabenu II** is an ICT and New Media Specialist affiliated to the International Institute for ICT Journalism www.penplusbyts.org where he provides leadership and serves as trainer. With expertise in helping media professionals acquire ICT skills he has trained a large number of journalists globally. He provided leadership for the first ever online global course in ICT Journalism out of Africa. He is currently the team leader for African Elections Project www.africanelections.org, a ground breaking project devoted to covering elections in Africa using ICTs.

4. **Jonas Quashie Klutsey** holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with Philosophy in 2002; and admitted to the Degree of Master of Philosophy, Political Science, in 2007 with Conflict and Development as his Thesis Area. He served as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Political Science from 2006 to 2009 handling courses spanning Conflict Studies, Human Rights, Politics in Ghana and Public Administration among many others. Jonas was a member of the Penplusbytes group of Editors responsible for the content development of the Malawi Media Monitoring Report in 2009.
### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUCC</td>
<td>African University College of Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDD</td>
<td>Centre for Democratic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRAJ</td>
<td>National Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJA</td>
<td>Committee for Joint Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Consumer Protection Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Convention Peoples Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIB</td>
<td>Coalition on the Right to Information Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFP</td>
<td>Democratic Freedom Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCPPP</td>
<td>Great Consolidated Popular Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNA</td>
<td>Ghana News Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>Global Positioning System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>Institute of Economic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAC</td>
<td>Inter Party Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Gen.</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>National Communications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHIS</td>
<td>National Health Insurance Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIMP</td>
<td>Netherlands Institute of Multi-Party Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMC</td>
<td>National Media Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSIWA</td>
<td>Open Society Initiative for West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>People National Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNDC</td>
<td>Provisional National Defence Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNF</td>
<td>Progressive Nationalist Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rtd</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFO</td>
<td>Serious Fraud Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>Short Message Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSS</td>
<td>Single Spine Salary Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>United Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Symbol: Adinkrahene  
(chief of Adinkra symbols)  
Significance: greatness, charisma and leadership
Political History & Media Landscape of Ghana

Jonas Quashie Klutse

This Chapter will expose you to:

» Post-independence political history of Ghana.
» The development of the media in Ghana.
» Ghana Post-election Intervention Project; and
» The post-election political landscape.
» The performance of the government, legislature and political parties so far regarding some key aspects of governance and party manifestoes.
» Some recommendations for effective governance.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.2 Short political history

Ghana’s political system is a multi-party, presidential, representative and democratic republic headed by a President who serves as head of both state and government. It has a democratically elected legislature and a judiciary. Like the president, the members of parliament are elected for a four-year term whilst members of the judiciary, who are not elected, may continue to serve until they retire or are unable to, due to poor mental or physical health, conviction by the courts of a crime, resignation or death. The president has an opportunity to serve an additional term of four years if re-elected but parliamentarians do not have a limit on the number of terms they serve provided they are voted into office by their constituents and are capable (mentally, physically and legally). Executive powers are vested in the government while legislative roles are vested in both parliament and government. The judiciary, which is totally independent of the executive and the parliament, is responsible for interpretation and application of the law.

The current constitution (1992) established the Fourth Republic and provides a basic charter for republican democratic government and reflecting lessons learned from the abrogated constitutions of 1957, 1960, 1969, and 1979. Also it incorporates provisions and institutions drawn from British and American constitutional models. The constitution provides a system of checks and balances with power shared between a president, a unicameral parliament, a council of state and an independent judiciary. The 1992
constitution has seen smooth multiparty elections and change of government with full participation of all political parties and the electorate. At the local level Ghana’s 170 district assemblies play an important role in delivering critical services. Members of district assemblies are elected but the heads of districts are not. There has however been a recent demand for such heads to be elected as well.

Recent years saw the New Patriotic Party (NPP), led by John A.Kufour, taking over power from the ruling government of the New Democratic Congress (NDC) and reigning for two straight terms of four years each from 2001–2008. In December 2008 through to January 2009, Ghana placed its mark as a maturing democracy when it successfully conducted a closely fought elections with votes going to a second round and at the end effected a change of government from the ruling NPP to NDC led by Professor Atta Mills. Ghana’s next parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled for 2012 preceded by local government elections in 2010. The political landscape has become increasingly interesting and competitive, as demonstrated by the close margins by which the recent elections were won. A summary of national elections and referenda held since 1951 as shown in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Contesting Parties/Candidates/Issue</th>
<th>Winner/Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC)/Joseph Boakyé Danquah Convention People’s Party (CPP)/Dr Kwame Nkrumah</td>
<td>CPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>CPP, Northern People’s Party (NPP), Ghana Congress Party (GCP), Togoland Congress (TC), Anlo Youth Organisation (AYO), Muslim Association Party (MAP), Ghana National Party (GNP), Ghana Action Party (GAP)</td>
<td>CPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Contesting Parties/Candidates/Issue</td>
<td>Winner/Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>CPP, NPP, TC, Federal Youth Organization (FYO), National Liberation Movement (NLM)</td>
<td>CPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
<td>A Republican Status for Ghana</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah (CPP), J. B. Danquah (United Party [UP])</td>
<td>CPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
<td>One Party system for Ghana</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>Progress Party (PP)/K. A. Busia, National Alliance of Liberals (NAL)/K. A. Gbedemah, United Nationalist Party (UNP)/H.S. Bannerman, People’s Action Party (PAP)/Imoro Ayarna, All Peoples’ Republican Party (APRP)/P.K.K. Quaidoo, and one independent candidate</td>
<td>PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
<td>Union Government</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
<td>Adoption of 1992 Constitution</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Contesting Parties/Candidates/Issue</td>
<td>Winner/Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: National Elections and Referenda in Ghana Since 1951*
1.2 The 4th Republican Parliament in Perspective

The Fourth Republican Parliament has a chequered history. The first parliament was boycotted by the NPP, the main opposition party making the House a mere extension of the executive or a rubber stamp. When the NPP joined in 1996, they could only manage a third of the 200 seats. But the table turned in 2001 when the NDC lost power to NPP. By 2005, the NDC had been pushed into a minority position following a massive NPP victory in Parliament appropriating 127 out of the 230 seats.

The Fifth Parliament of the Fourth Republic is witnessing some interesting developments under the Mills administration. To begin with, the House has seen its first female Speaker. At the time of its composition, the House was saddled with the dilemma of a Hang-Parliament. This, however, was resolved first by the decision of the three PNC members to join the majority side and later by the declaration of the Asutifi South seat for the NDC. The final solution came when in a by-election the NDC annexed one more seat from the NPP. More fascinating was the fact that the majority and minority leaders in the previous administration only swapped positions.

1.1.3 The Executive in the Fourth Republic

The 1992 constitution, which established the Fourth Republic provided a basic charter for a republican democratic government. The constitution was adopted through a referendum on 28th April, 1992; and entered into force on January 7, 1993. Executive authority is vested in the Office of the President, together with his Council of State. The President is the Head of State, Head of Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ghana. He is popularly elected for a maximum of two 4-year terms. The 25-member Council of State, properly constituted in accordance with the constitution, counsels the president in the performance of his functions. The executive is that arm of government with the responsibility for governance. It is through the activities of the executive that government delivers on its manifesto promises, formulates and implements policies and programmes, and meets the expectations of the electorates.
1.3 The Media in Ghana

After severe restrictions and challenges mostly under military dispensations, Ghana’s media has grown into one of the most free in Africa. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees freedom of the press, prohibits censorship and assures independence of the media. In year 2010, Reporters without Borders classified the environment as being 27th freest in the world and freest in Africa. Current commitment of the ruling NDC government to pass the Information Bill will no doubt go a long way to strengthen the conducive environment for Ghana’s media landscape.

Currently, the media landscape is made up of over 149 radio stations (NCA), 450 newspapers (NMC) and 10 television stations. Some media houses have websites and there are only few exclusive news websites. These statistics represent a quantum leap from a meagre 84, 90 and 6 for radio, print media and television respectively in 2005.

The role of strong and growing media deserves special mention in its contribution to the deepening of Ghana’s democracy especially the private radio stations and increasingly available ICT tools such as mobile telephony. The combination of these two media has given Ghanaians tremendous voice and space to contribute to matters of political, economic and social interest.

The contribution of radio stations in enhancing debate during electioneering has helped promote lively and constructive political campaign and transparency during vote counting and declaration of results. However, there have been reported cases of excesses on the part of the electronic media, a situation which has been attributed to inadequacy of broadcasting laws in Ghana. There are attempts currently ongoing aimed at developing a broadcasting law but the process is somewhat slow and the law is expected to take some time to be promulgated.

Though it is growing fast and has achieved a number of successes, the media, like any other institution, is faced with many challenges, including but not limited to substandard output on the part of some journalists, inability of some journalist to undergo continuing professional education, low level of remuneration and poor resources in the newsroom, perceived partiality of some media outlets, growing ownership of media houses by politicians and high brain-drain of journalists from the sector. Overcoming these challenges will not happen overnight, but it is comforting to note that stakeholders have recognized the challenges and are working to resolve them over time.
1.3.1 Media in Post-Elections Coverage

The media is said to be the fourth estate of the realm in any democracy. It provides the participatory platform for discourses in the country. Today in Ghana, the role of the media in bringing the public up-to-speed on events in the country is more critical than ever. Media coverage in the post-election era however is politically skewed at the expense of development. Besides, the media has lately received a lot of criticisms for reneging on its watchdog role turning itself into an appendage for the two leading political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP.

1.3.4 Adherence to Code of Conduct

The preamble of the USA code of conduct for journalists is instructive. “Public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and provide a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of journalists’ credibility.”

The Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) Code of Ethics espouses the same ideals and aims to “ensure that members adhere to the highest ethical standards, professional competence and good behaviour in carrying out their duties”. It calls on its membership to play their watchdog role with a high sense of responsibility without infringing on the rights of individuals and the society in general and to write and report the truth, bearing in mind their duty to serve the public which has the right to unbiased, accurate, balanced and comprehensive information.

The media is becoming increasingly susceptible to political manipulation. The hot exchanges that greet the public on the airwaves every morning: the invectives and name callings; the verbal violence and intemperate language cannot be in harmony with professional or moral code of ethics in any profession and/or society that is determined to develop.
1.4 Post-Elections and Accountability

A free, peaceful and credible election ensures regime legitimacy, prevents violence and promotes national unity. Free elections therefore are important building blocks for democratic development. One of the cardinal principles of democracy is accountability. In spite of its importance, accountability is the democratic principle least adhered to by politicians and governments. Ghana as well as other African countries, with their weak institutions of accountability, is not exempted from this fundamental malaise. Making matters worse is the fact that, some electorates either have no interest in post-elections performance of governments or ignorant of the principles and processes of ensuring accountability. The role of the electorate in the democratic process has therefore been reduced to the event of just queuing to vote during elections.

In adhering to constitutional demands and electoral regulations and procedures, politicians and political parties develop their manifestoes outlining their development plans and agenda for the nation before they are voted into power. Promises normally cover all areas of governance and development, ranging from social and infrastructural development to better economic and human security.

In their 2008 manifesto for “A Better Ghana” the ruling NDC party made certain key promises to the Ghanaian electorate. Similarly, their predecessors, the now opposition NPP also made promises to Ghanians before the 2000 general elections. Generally, while some promises are fulfilled others tend not to be fulfilled.

Against this backdrop, the effectiveness of the democratic development role of manifestoes in ensuring that candidates are voted into government and assessed on the basis of pre-election plans as contained in their manifestoes, policies and campaign promises has to be questioned. Some other relevant questions that arise are: Are there mechanisms for checking the performance of politicians after elections? Is there any correlation between voting pattern on one hand and the relevance of party manifestoes and campaign promises to the development needs of the people, and the actual
implementation of the manifestoes on the other hand? Are citizens well-informed on issues of post-election accountability? Do citizens have access to the required information to hold politicians accountable? To what extent can the media, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other watchdog institutions perform effectively their roles in connection with post-election accountability?

These and many other questions informed the establishment of Ghana Post-elections Intervention Project which seeks to put in place a mechanism to provide citizens with up-to-date information and well-designed indicators to track the performance of politicians and to hold them accountable.
**Symbol:** Ese ne tekrema  
( the teeth and the tongue)  
**Significance:** friendship and interdependence
CHAPTER 2

COVERING POST-ELECTIONS
Covering Post-Elections

Kwami Ahiabenu II

This Chapter addresses:

» The importance of covering post elections period.
» Key issues to be covered during post-elections period.
» Guidelines for covering post-elections for productive journalism.

2.1 Introduction

After successful elections and declaration of results comes post-elections period and this period extends to the next general elections. Even though coverage of this period is not as prominent as pre-elections and elections period it is equally important. We have to note that an election is not a one-time event but a long drawn process. The post-elections period forms a very crucial period and processes over this period must receive our full attention and coverage. During Post-elections coverage we should watch out for the following key issues in our coverage:

1. Civic Education and Voter registration
2. Local elections
3. By- Elections
4. Stakeholder engagements
5. Constitutional Review
2.2 Guidelines

A simple guideline for accurate and fair reporting to guide covering post-elections is presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Further comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Duty to Inform</td>
<td>The primary aim of post-elections coverage is to ensure the electorate is kept informed about the electoral process with the view of strengthening their understanding of the processes and encourage their active participation in processes such as new voter registration. Therefore over post-elections period we must work to provide accurate, fair, balanced and unbiased information about post-elections procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Duty of Balance, Impartiality and Fairness to all Parties</td>
<td>We must ensure that we do not focus on only the activities of the ruling government but also those of other political parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Corrections and Replies</td>
<td>We should afford all political parties and/or candidates the right of reply where our content published about them contains inaccuracies, errors, distortions of facts and unfair criticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Report the news truthfully, accurately and objectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Present news in the correct context and in a balanced way, taking care not to change facts, for example, distorting them, or leaving them out by over-summarising</td>
<td>To this extent, the media should not be used as a tool to publicise political propaganda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Present things that are reasonably true as fact. Say clearly when a report is based on opinion, rumours or allegations</td>
<td>When not sure of the accuracy of a report, check it out. If it is not possible to check, say this clearly in the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Polls and test of opinions</td>
<td>Polls and test of opinions should be reported carefully with full information given about the source of the poll, period it was conducted, who commissioned it, likely margin of error, sample size and full context of the polls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Guidelines for Covering Post-elections
Symbol: Nkyinkyim (twisting)
Significance: Initiative, dynamism, versatility.
ICTs In Post-Elections Coverage

Kwami Ahiabenu II

After reading this Chapter, you will understand:

» ICTs and ICT Journalism.
» Emerging trends in Journalism and how ICT is at the cutting edge of Journalism.
» How the modern day journalist can utilize ICT tools to deliver compelling stories.

3.1 General Background to ICT Journalism and Definitions

3.1.1 Introduction

Technology has always been the mechanism through which humankind has leveraged its efforts, both individually and collectively, to improve its quality of life. In our area, we can say the quill pen as a tool gave way to the pen, we moved on to manual typewriter, currently we have a wide range of tools for our trade with unlimited potentials. There are a thousand and one examples of how journalists and their media houses are benefiting from investing in ICT. Boosts in productivity, global access to information, learning, distribution of content, expression of creativity, innovation and new opportunities plus cost cutting can be stated as examples of these benefits. In a practical way, ICT tools can facilitate content creativity which is a core function of any journalist.

It becomes important that we take a look at the impact, challenges and prospects of technology broadly and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) specifically in the Journalism space.

According to Gary Hanson, since the early 1950s, computers have played a major role in journalism and mass communication. As early as 1956, computers were used to analyze political polling data and national election returns in the USA. In the beginning, only the largest media organizations could afford computer-based technology. Today, computers are present in virtually every news room in the USA. Globally, computers have now become part and parcel of most news rooms.
3.1.2 Elements of ICT Journalism in Post Elections

1. ICT can be applied as a tool in day to day operations of Journalism and media organisation.

2. ICT as a specialization: where journalists assume the title of ICT journalist with the main focus of collection and delivery of ICT content in mainstream and alternative media. This follows the line of specialist journalism such as economy/business, sports, agriculture, etc. A popular variation of ICT Journalism is an Online Journalism which is applied online.

3. ICT Journalism invariably leads to innovation and change

4. ICT Journalism works hand in hand with the theory of information and knowledge management

5. The interplay of ICT and Journalism provide unlimited possibilities

3.1.3 Impact of ICT on Journalism

One is totally at a disadvantage when practicing journalism if he or she is not equipped with ICT skills and tool set required to improve the level of the trade. Today, all over the world, ICT is now assuming increasing roles in the newsroom, and even some newsrooms which you least expect to have ICT tools are utilizing one tool or the other. The speed, immediacy, lower cost and global reach they provide make ICTs very exciting tools for journalism.

The major impact is felt in the various ways ICT is contributing to the improvement of journalism. One school of thought however argues that ICT is also eroding the power of journalists as gatekeepers and their monopoly over information flow. Furthermore, the power of ICT is giving birth to a group of new type of journalists- the so called 'citizen journalists' which is further fueling the debate about who qualifies as a “true journalist” is a typical example.

3.1.4 Using ICTs in Journalism

There are a thousand and one opportunities for using ICT in Journalism. An attempt to draw up a list of ICT Journalism applications would be a futile exercise since this list would be endless. Journalists can make use of ICTs in four major areas:
a) Gathering and researching information to be used in news stories;  
b) Producing content for all types of media both new and traditional,  
c) Distributing news stories to a wide range of audience; and  
d) Learning, training, change and new unlimited opportunities

There is no doubt the use of ICTs has enabled latest news stories to be disseminated more quickly than before. That is, the news cycle has become shorter due to the availability of tools to get instant news stories out quickly aided by the use of technology. Furthermore technology allows high quality news stories which could have taken ages to do within a shorter period of time. One could argue that without ICT tools some stories would have been impossible to produce.

Let us explore the usage of ICT in Journalism by looking at what is called front end and back end areas:

3.1.4.1 News Processing Front End

The front end part of the equation, mostly relates to the media. For example, traditional media such as print or electronic, can repackage and publish content using ICT such as putting content online, via SMS on cell phones, digital radio, etc. The key point here is content originally created for traditional media is pushed onto new media creating a hybrid interface.

Another new phenomenon is new media where creation of news content is done solely for new media. For example, having a new media house such as an online newspaper without any link to ‘offline’ hard copy newspaper; this version is known as exclusive electronic version. Journalists working in this environment call themselves full time online journalists.

Also at the front end is news aggregation where the unique factor is the creation of a central source of content. Here instead of engaging in the process of content generation, this central source takes content from numerous sources and makes them available at this central repository. A typical example is a news portal which aggregates content from different sources based on subject matter, geographical area, etc.

We can also state that, organizations that provide the tools for getting content out are key operators in the front end. In this direction, the organisations do not generate nor push out content but they are a vehicle for a media organisation to reach out to their audiences. For example, a mobile phone company may not be generating or pushing out content but it provides the pipeline for news to get out via SMS technology. The role of this category
of companies has become crucial since they are providing more channels for news organisation to serve their clients in new and exciting ways.

Another growing movement is “citizen journalism” or ‘grassroots journalism’ where mostly technology enables and empowers so called “non journalists” (Citizen Joe) to have a strong voice in the mass media mostly online. Central to the work of a “citizen journalist” is the ability to generate content and publish them without the constraints of newsroom bureaucracy, hierarchy and tradition. Fundamental to “citizen journalism” is the lack of professional ethics and traditions powered by the notion to “speak freely without any restrictions”.

3.1.4.2 News Processing Back End

At the back end, where content is generated, ICT allows Journalists to collect, package and deliver content. Emphasis is placed on the technical component, where a specific technology is applied in the news production cycle. We have on the market today, news production system that is enabled by information and communications technologies in response to changes on the media landscape. Think of this as a new factory with latest technology providing an efficient and effective means of production. Beyond the use of new technologies, ICT is also changing work culture and practices as well. Furthermore, the demands of “informed audiences” mean that producing shallow content cannot serve their needs, their requirement of news demands more research, provision of detailed background and deep analysis. The use of ICT is a welcome tool to achieve excellence in the new wave of journalism.

3.1.5 All Inclusive ICT Journalism?

There are a lot of key words in this subject area as we are using ICT Journalism as an all-inclusive and catch all term which seeks to capture all related and relevant issues/subject found in Information and Communication Technologies and Journalism linkage. Some of the key words include:

1. New Media
2. Media bloggers
3. Computer assisted editing
4. Technology in Electronic media (digital radio and television broadcast)
5. Digital Newsroom management system
6. Virtual Newsroom
7. Computer Assisted Journalism (Use of computer software applications (manipulation of database, Geographic Information System, etc.)
8. Computer assisted reporting
9. Computer assisted investigative journalism
10. Online Journalism
11. Electronic Publishing
12. Online Research

3.1.6 ICTs and Post-elections Coverage

ICTs provide a myriad of opportunities for journalists covering elections all over the world today. Almost every elections taking place is increasingly employing ICTs in their coverage. Overall it is providing a lot of interesting tools to tell elections stories in compelling manner. Post-elections coverage is therefore following this growing trend. ICTs now have a very important and indispensable position in our newsroom providing us with a powerful tool to improve on our level of journalism. Examples of ways in which ICTs are used are:

1. online research
2. polls and test of opinions
3. virtual newsroom
4. online interviews
5. enriching your stories with news maps
6. processing statistics,
7. mobile phones in the newsroom
8. interacting with your audience.

3.2 Guidelines

3.2.1 Guideline 1: Online

All radio, TV and newspaper guidelines are applicable to online outputs including websites, blogs, podcasts, downloads, social networking, forums, message boards and blog comments, and any other online publishing platforms. The general rule of thumb should be, if it does not fit for radio, newspaper or TV it should not be online. Moderation of user content generation is strongly suggested in order to prevent libelous, distortions or content that inflames violence among others. In the areas of linking to other websites this must be actively moderate to ensure wide range of views and opinions. For example, your newsroom should link to political parties, tracking and indicating the availability of their websites. If and when such websites are available or unavailable it should be indicated. Online polls and test of opinions should provide information and statistics on how final outcomes are determined and results of such polls set within proper timeframe.
3.2.2 Guideline 2 – Emails

Emails, like phone-in and text messages, are an expression of opinion but not an indication of the weight of an opinion, they must therefore be selected impartially. Phone-in and text messages are sometimes organized by political parties or groups to advance their agenda. It is important to be alert to organized mass email campaigns and if in doubt, you should request additional information such as telephone numbers to double check these e-mails.

3.2.3 Guideline 3 – SMS/Text Messages

Text messages are similar to phone-ins however emails and vigorous process of establishing the origins of such messages is strongly recommended before they are used. You can seek further clarification/verification by calling or texting the user back. Care must be taken with text messages coming from bulk SMS providers which do not allow for such checks. In case you need to edit text messages, it is important to ensure the original content is not distorted. Results of text votes must be presented as sample of public opinion within the timeframe of such votes but not representation of public opinion as a whole. It is important to issue a disclaimer about the fact that text messages do not reflect your newsroom’s opinion.

3.2.4 Guideline 4: Phone-ins

Phone-ins share some similarities with emails and text messages. The moderator must be willing and able to disconnect calls which are putting out false information, inciting violence and are providing distorted information. It is strongly recommended for an interface to pick calls before putting them on air. Ultimately, delayed broadcasting equipment should be purchased and used. For sensitive issues, it is recommended that callers call in prior to the programme with their phone numbers so that the station can call them back and put them on air to ensure the confirmation of their identity. A database of callers matching calls to programmes can be kept but should not be used for any other purposes apart from using it as a reference point. Producers should watch out for calls without caller IDs and organised mass phone-ins as well.

3.2.5 Guideline 5: Social Media

Social media is now assuming an important role in the newsroom. From Facebook to twitter, newsrooms are increasingly relying on these tools to interact with their audience. Generally online guidelines are applicable here. Care should be taken to distinguish
between official and unofficial social networking sites, since it is possible for someone to create an unofficial Facebook page for a political party. This page, not being official, would pose a problem as information obtained from it is not trustworthy.

3.2.6 Guideline 6: Using online sources

The first and most important statement to avoid is “according to the internet”. The internet is made up of online spaces that can be traced to an individual or institutions. It is important to state, the name of the website and the time you accessed it when you are using information from online sources. Some websites are notorious for housing a lot of false and unreliable information, so it is very important to verify information from online sources before making use of them. Being on the internet does not mean the information is true. Therefore you should take precautions not to reproduce or amplify false information.

3.2.7 Guideline 7: National ICTs Policy and Issues

National ICTs policies and issues are now assuming important role in any country’s development agenda placing it in the same basket as health, agriculture, education, etc. It therefore becomes very important to provide adequate and in-depth coverage of ICTs policy and issues focusing on how ICTs are contributing to national development. Build contacts and relationship with key ICTs stakeholders and policy makers to ensure that your coverage is not limited to events alone but includes features and in-depth articles.

3.2.8 Guideline 8: Citizen Journalism

Whereas citizen journalists can be everywhere traditional journalists cannot be found everywhere a news story breaks out. The newsroom must therefore develop a policy to work hand-in-hand with citizen journalists. Also using outputs from citizen journalists must be guided by such a policy. When outputs from citizen journalists are used it must be clearly indicated as such and rightly attributed to them.

3.2.9 Guideline 9: News Aggregation

Newsrooms generally can generate their own content or make use of news from other sources. News aggregation is the process of collecting and publishing news from other websites on your newsroom website. You must go through a careful process before using news from other websites since the website in question may not be using editorial policy similar to yours. You must subject such news items to your editorial policy before using them. The rule should be ‘copy, process by taking it through your editorial policy and
paste’ not ‘copy and paste’ it on your website. It is important to give full information on
the source of the news you aggregated, by clearly indicating the full link for the article
and not just the name of the news organisation you took the article from. Some websites
have copyright content so ensure you have permission to use such content to avoid a legal
tussle.

There are a lot of news aggregation software, which automate the aggregation process.
When you make use of such software, periodically review the content they are generating
to ensure it conforms with your editorial policy

3.2.10 Guideline 10: Privacy and Copyright

It is important to note that, some materials on the internet are subject to copyright
protection therefore to avoid copyright infringement take steps to ask permission from
copyright owners before making use of copyright information online. In addition to
copyright, there are other protections offered to content producers such as Creative
Commons, which provides free licenses and other legal tools to mark creative work with
the freedom the creator wants it to carry, so others can share, remix, use commercially, or
any combination thereof.

It is important to protect the privacy of our audience as we invariably collect information
about them online, for example, when we require them to register on our news website. An
editorial policy with privacy component is now a must for the newsroom. In such policy we
should protect the ability of our audience to control what information they reveal about
themselves and how to control who can access such information.
Symbol: Hwe mu dua (measuring stick)
Significance: examination and quality control
Investigative Journalism in Post-Election Period

Gerald S Guedegbe

By the time you read this chapter and study through the practical case studies, you will be able to:

» Generate and formulate story ideas on issues relevant for coverage after the election

» Find potentially good sources of information gathering

» Succeed your immersion in conservative environments as Institute of Journalism (IJ)

» Break the barrier of secrecy and get the information

4.1 General Background to Investigative Journalism in Post-Election Period

4.1.1 Introduction

Though investigative journalism generally exposes the reporter to some classic challenges, investigating political or financial issues in the African context poses more challenges or even threats to the journalist. Helping African journalists to effectively excavate and dig deep into issues which still make news after the election is the aim of this chapter. Through case studies and relevant experiences from the field, the reader will be prepared to appreciate the subtle realities of covering post-elections.

4.1.2 Why is post-election worth investigating?

Most journalists are not interested in looking critically at the after elections period, though they sometimes provide ideas for stories, the importance of which can surpass corruption and industrial pollution, disasters and other issues that tend to be topical. The importance of reporting post-elections can be seen in the sense that it helps track the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of promises political leaders make during electoral campaigns. Moreover, it
is an important means to hold leaders accountable.

An added reason for African journalists to investigate post-election subjects is to provide a solid response to the trend which considers that investigative journalism is worth doing only if it tackles classical issues such as those mentioned in the foregoing paragraph.

4.2 Guidelines

4.2.1 Guideline 1: Generate and formulate story ideas

Look at the following statements and comment on how else you can generate story ideas in investigating post-election period and issues

1. “I wanted to know if the members of parliament have been able to keep their electoral promise to pass laws to promote external trade”

2. “I’m quite surprised by the amount of money candidate A or candidate B spent during the last electoral campaign and I wonder if their campaign spending was in accordance with what is prescribed by the laws”

3. I’m interested by the rumors that many non–citizens and people under 18 years old were able to vote; and I decided to go ahead to investigate whether the voters list was clean.

4. “I marked my calendar with all the most important promises of the politicians during electioneering campaign and tried to track their steps during their term”

Unlike the traditional methods of generating story ideas where the journalists can start his/her story after reading a press release or browsing the web or using other documentary research methods, the journalist will need to investigate issues related to post-elections period. So, finding out ideas for investigative journalism demand that the journalist employs other strategies to verify his story. The most common strategies at hand include: observation, curiosity and use of tip-off. But here again, the use of tip-off must be deeply evaluated in establishing the truth around it because a strong response to inopportune curiosity is false information and misleading. The journalist can be given a tip-off which may push him out of the scope of the story.
4.2.2 Know What You are Looking For

Journalists Mark Hunter and Luuk Sengers gave a presentation to the University of the Witwatersrand Investigative Journalism Workshop in 2007. Among the advice they provided was the following:

You’re looking first and foremost for a good story, not a phone book. We gather information to get a story out of it; we don’t work on stories simply to gather information. You want to stir emotions. You want your readers to get angry, to weep, to become determined to change things. Otherwise, what is the point of spending so much time collecting evidence, risking your life and your relationships? People are real characters in your investigations, not just quotes.

4.2.3 Documentary research

Which document is telling the truth? It is difficult to determine the right from the wrong. As an investigative journalist, it is important to collect contradictory findings as they will help plan the story and conduct a hypothesis-based inquiry. You do not need to reject any of the versions of information you collect about your story on the internet or in the books.

4.2.3.1 Hypothesis as a Method of Testing a Story

Chart 1 presents a hypothesis on the story idea presented in Section 4.2.1 Point B and the questions raised around it. Take a look at the chart and comment on whether the hypothesis and questions raised can help the journalist build a strong story.

![Chart 1: Hypothesis Graphic on Campaign Spending](image)
4.2.4 Finding reliable sources of information gathering

Never forget that the usefulness of human sources depends not only on who they are, but also on your skill as a reporter in building a relationship of trust, asking good questions and recording answers with meticulous accuracy. Investigation is one type of reporting where – whether or not you can use it in court – you should record, and not simply note, your interactions with sources. Your starting point always is listing the main role-players in your story and planning how you will interview them. But often an investigative project benefits from doing your most important interviews at a later stage, when you are in possession of more information and background and can frame your questions very precisely. So there are other people you need to find first – and some of them, you may not even know at this early stage. The next subsections outline some sources of information.
4.2.4.1 Witnesses

The most important, reliable and vivid sources are usually witnesses: the people who have experienced or are otherwise directly involved in a story. You begin identifying witnesses by combing previous accounts of your topic for the names of people who were involved, or simply on the scene. If people claim to have been present or involved, you must of course verify that they were.

4.2.4.2 Current associates

Look for people currently associated with the subject. Consider organizations in which the subject is active. Remember that such people, because they are in some kind of relationship with the subject or the institution, will have an attitude towards him, her or it. Factor this into your enquiries.

4.2.4.3 Experts

There are experts on almost every area of endeavour e.g. election, political science, theatrical arts, etc.

Make sure you have done solid preliminary research before you talk to your chosen expert, so that your questions are clear and reasonably well-informed. An expert does not expect you to know as much as he or she does, but it is insulting to go in unprepared. However, it is quite legitimate to ask for explanations in layman’s language, so that you can explain things better to your readers. Always be careful to record what experts tell you accurately. It is acceptable to ask: “Is this correct?” And never twist, omit or distort what they tell you if it does not fit your hypothesis.

4.2.4.4 Open sources

In the contemporary world, open sources are practically infinite. They include:

1. Information that has been published in any freely accessible media. Usually these can be accessed at a public library or through the archives of the media concerned:

2. News (newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, internet)

3. Special interest publications (unions, political parties, trade associations, etc.)

4. Scholarly publications
5. Stakeholder media (such as Internet user forums, financial analysts, union newsletters or magazines, protest groups, etc.)

4.2.5 General ethical principles

Ethics is a personal and professional responsibility for all journalists, not simply a theoretical debate. Ethical decision-making is underpinned by four broad principles:

1. **Tell the truth** – or, more accurately, truths, since situations are often complex and many-sided. This is our mission as journalists; when we stop doing it, we cease to deserve the name.

2. **Minimise harm**. If we said ‘do no harm’ we might be advocating writing no stories, since all actions have consequences. But by balancing truth-telling and doing the least possible harm, we have constructed a framework that allows us to do our job while always being mindful of consequences.

3. **Stay independent**. Do not be bullied, bought, or even muted by the weight of conventional opinion. It’s legitimate to have views, and to write stories motivated by your convictions, but your views should never lead to your changing the truths you discover.

4. **Stay accountable**. This means always thinking about how you would justify a story, or an aspect of a story, if challenged.

Ethics come into play in many of the decisions you make in the newsroom:

1. How you collect information

2. How you relate to your community while you do your work

3. The words you choose when you write or script your stories

4. How you relate to newsroom colleagues

5. What news values your media organization embraces and therefore the stories it runs and how it presents them
4.2.6 Breaking the barrier of secrecy to get the information

Secrecy is the bottleneck to accessing information by an investigative journalist. It reduces the opportunity to ask a human source sensitive or critical questions and get satisfactory responses. The only questions that can receive favorable answers are those that praise the actions and performance of the interviewee. And this can be a good start for the journalist who can use these ‘easy’ questions to cement the climate of trust between him/her and the interviewee. But as an investigative journalist you can make use of some strategies that will convince your source to release the information to you.

4.2.6.1 Succeeding the immersion in order to collect information

In order to achieve his or her goal, it is important for an investigative journalist to consider these aspects:

The preparation: In the process of preparation, the journalist must carefully look at the physical setting; the language, the demeanour/ attitude (including the sense of humour) of the interviewee. In the event that the interview is conducted in a language you do not speak, a trustworthy interpreter must be carefully selected and prepared to avoid getting false information all the way.

The capacity to adapt: After you have carefully selected the area you want to investigate, you must now upgrade your knowledge in your subject area. Thus, the journalist should get complete information about the place or area he or she wants to investigate and use the information he gathers when necessary.

Some helpful tips for conducting an interview are summarized in Table 3:
1. Prepare carefully for your interview and remember to let your interviewee designate the venue.

2. You might need to buy a drink for the interviewee before the interview starts. This must not be seen as “buying the source”. It is sheer courtesy just as offering coffee to your interviewee in a restaurant or your office but it helps to set a friendly tone for the interview.

3. Do not start your interview with critical questions, instead, come up with questions that valorize your interviewee’s job or practices.

4. Avoid closed questions and multi-part questions, especially if your interviewee is an old person.

5. You may have to take your question again to make sure your interviewee clearly understand what you mean.

6. You must get the consent of your interviewee before recording, filming or taking his or her photographs.

Table 3: Tips for getting information at the interview

4.2.6.2 Using undercover techniques or deception

Sometimes, in order to expose the dirtiest secrets, one has to be dirty also. However, before going undercover or misrepresenting yourself as part of your investigation strategy, you must think twice, because you might be in serious trouble if you end up being uncovered as a “spy” by your host. Here, there is no need of scientific techniques or knowledge to detect an undercover Journalist.

That said, if you feel it is necessary to go undercover you must prepare carefully. Make sure you get at least one source or two in the host institution. You must put in place defense mechanisms, and activate it when sensing trouble. Below are a few guidelines:

1. Don’t refuse the meal you are offered, but avoid eating it. The same applies to drinks.

2. Check regularly the fidelity of your guide or interpreter. He could have changed his mind and shifted to the side of the interviewee.
3. Though, it is vital to activate your security measures in hostile environment, you need not be too sceptical for fear of failing your integration in the host environment.

4.2.7 Summary of the Steps in Investigating a Story

Table 4 summarizes the steps to follow to investigate a story

1. Find a story idea.
2. Develop a hypothesis to verify your idea.
3. Seek open source data (writings by historians, sociologists, researchers, etc.) to verify the hypothesis, refine it or change it.
4. Draft your story plan and prepare your descent in the field
5. Seek human sources to get information
6. Collect and organize (analyse) the data
7. Cross-check and double-check the information you collected with political parties, electoral commission, judicial institutions, sociologists, other specialists and other human sources.
8. Put the data in a narrative order and compose the story.
9. Undertake quality control to make sure the story is right.
10. Publish the story.

*Table 4: Summary of Steps in Investigating a Story*
Exercise 1

Draw the hypothesis graphic for the following hypothesis

1. Some qualified parties and candidates were not allowed to run in the election

2. The election rules and limits were not applied equally to all parties

3. The newly elected president is building a different type of bridge than what he promised during the campaign

Exercise 2

After reading this chapter, try to find out a story idea and do the following tasks

1. Create a hypothesis to verify your story idea?

2. Seek open source data to verify the hypothesis. Decide whether to keep it or refine it?

3. List the potential sources that can provide you with necessary information and try to locate where to find them?
   Plan your story and prepare your descent
Symbol: Besa Saka
(sack of cola nuts)
Significance: afluence, abundance and unity.
Covering Budgets & Extractive Industries

Kwami Ahiabenu II

In this Chapter, you will learn about:

» Ghana’s Extractive industry including gold, timber, diamonds, bauxite.
» Where they are found in the country and in what quantities
» Relevant issues regarding the extractive industry that should engage the attention of the journalist.
» Budgets and how to keep the focus of coverage on the improvement of the lives of the people of Ghana.

5.1 General Background to Covering Budgets & Ghana’s Extractive Industry

5.1.1 Introduction

Governments make many instruments to achieve their priorities and the annual national budget remains an important example of such instruments. In this light, journalists must invest in understanding how budgets are developed and implemented in order for them to report effectively and efficiently on them. Monitoring revenue from extractive industries (oil, gas and minerals) is now a key part of budget coverage since it is of great importance to Ghana especially in the light of our recent oil and gas find.

The core of your budget stories are not about numbers but how budget numbers relate to issues that affect people’s lives from health, education and social services, to how national wealth is shared among citizens. More importantly, how budgets can contribute to poverty reduction and wealth creation should be the centre of every budget story or coverage. Thus a budget story that tells how government is using public funds to meet the basic needs of the society, especially the needs of the poor can serve your audience better.

5.1.2 The Extractive Industry of Ghana

The article presented in Table 5, summarises the status of Ghana’s extractive industry and provides useful information to the journalist seeking to cover the sector.
Ghana has a resource-rich landscape spreading from the north to the south of the country. Major resources available include gold, diamonds, bauxite, manganese, limestone, crude oil, forestry and cultivable lands. Other minerals include iron ore and industrial minerals like sand, ornamental granite and other gravels. There are reports of occurrences of chromite, asbestos, andalusite, barite, mica, nepheline, syenite, cassiterite, columbite, monazite, beryl, spodumene, molybdenite, noshore alluvial ilmenite and rutile among others. Currently, it is difficult to state precisely the quantities of the various minerals in the country. Estimates exist, however, on the quantity of some minerals including gold, diamonds, bauxite and manganese occurring within specific geographic boundaries. The lack of data has been attributed to the huge investments required to conduct extensive studies. As a result, the government’s effort is complemented by that of mining companies.

Under an EU-sponsored Mining Sector Support Programme, the Ministry of Lands, Forestry and Mines is working with stakeholders to provide up-to-date geological information on up to one-third of the surface area of Ghana. This is being done through airborne geophysical surveys and geographical mapping. A component of the initiative is to develop an Information Management System, which is investor-friendly and would facilitate information flow among the various sector agencies and mining institutions. Under the initiative, geo-scientific maps would be developed.

Solid Materials

Gold

1. Gold deposits are economically by far the most important solid mineral deposit type in Ghana. Historic cumulated production is estimated to be in excess of 2,000 Mt of gold. Five important types of gold mineralization occur: Steeply dipping quartz vein with native gold in shear zones at Birim belt/basin boundaries (e.g. Konongo, Ashanti and Prestea mines);

2. Disseminated sulphide bodies, spatially though not necessarily genetically in association with the shear zones and quartz veins, with auriferous arsenopyrites as major host of gold (Obenemase, Ashanti, Bogosu and Prestea mines);
In Ghana, gold is largely concentrated in three major areas: the Ashanti, Western and Eastern regions. Deposits also occur in northern parts of Ghana. According to the Minerals Commission, there are six major gold belts: Kibi-Winneba, Ashanti, Sefwi, Bui, Bole-Nangodi and Lawra belt. Currently no comprehensive study has been done to estimate the total quantity of gold reserves in the country. Guessstimates do exist, and a report compiled by the Minerals Commission in 1987 estimated the total gold potential in the Birimiam and Tarkwain systems (the two most important gold-occurring geological systems in the country) to be 1,836,087,020 oz. Specific estimates for areas being prospected by the major mining companies also exist.

**Diamonds**

Diamonds commonly occur in the Western, Eastern and Central Regions of Ghana. They are found in gravels of river beds. The mineral has been mined from what is known as the Birim and Bonza diamond fields since the early twentieth century. Diamonds occur in towns like Akwatia, Otwereso, Dompim and Bonsaso. Available reserves stretch over an area of 240 km² along the Birim River, and are estimated to contain 14 million carats of proven reserve at an average grade of over 1.0 carat per cubic metre, 4.6 million carats of probable reserve and about 30 million carats of possible reserve in addition to associated fine gold.

**Bauxite**

The main high-quality bauxite reserves in Ghana are found in the Western, Central and Ashanti regions of the country. Major deposits occur in the Sefwi-Bekwai (Awaso), Aya-Nyinahin, Kibi and Ejuanema belts. Reserves of 15Mt have been...
Manganese
The main manganese deposits occur at Nsuta in the Western Region. Deposits are also found in six other regions of Ghana: Eastern, Central, Western, Ashanti, the Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions. An interesting geological find is that most manganese deposits are close to gold occurrences in the Birimian system. Total reserves are given as 4.7 Mt.

Oil/gas
Prospecting for oil and gas in Ghana goes as far back as the late nineteenth century but it was not until the late twentieth century that encouraging results were found, after the drilling of dozens of wells. The most significant movement occurred in June 2007 when Ghana discovered its first oil in commercial quantities at the Cape Three Points in the Tano Basin of the Western Region. The first oil is expected to be drilled from Cape Three Points in late 2010. Speculations on Ghana’s oil find range from 170 million to 1.3 billion barrels (Bauchowitz and Nguyen-Thanh, 2008). Earlier estimates/speculations put the figure at 3 billion barrels. According to the GNPC, Ghana will produce 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) and gradually increase this to 200,000 bpd.

Forests
The country’s forest has reduced from 8.2 million hectares at the beginning of the twentieth century to a current cover of 1.6 million hectares. Officially, there are about 200 licensed timber companies operating in Ghana, which are under obligation to replant areas under their operation. But the number is estimated to be much higher with illegal operators also known as ‘chain saw operators’ being blamed for the indiscriminate felling of trees and failing to replant depleted lands. More disturbing is the fact that some of these illegal operators have been cutting endangered species like the Mahogany whose population is declining very fast.

Credit: Natural Resource Management Capacity in West Africa, 2008 (OSIWA Publication)
5.1.3 The role of the media in covering extractive industries.

The role of the media in covering extractive industries includes, but is not limited to:

1. Investment in capacity building in the area of basic economic literacy, contracts/agreements, economics and extractives in order to generate in-depth discussion;

2. Increasing the scope, frequency and quality of extractive industries content across all media outlets.

3. Neutrality and balance in coverage.

4. Developing strong partnerships and networking with other key stakeholders such as civil society, industry experts, think tanks and academia in order to strengthen research capacity and enrich analysis.

5.2 Guidelines

Guideline 1: Give life to budget numbers
Numbers alone do not mean much to a lot of people so it becomes important not to throw numbers about in your article but relate them to real life situations in order that your audience will put these numbers into context.

Guideline 2: Adopt people- and issue- driven approach
People should be the centre of your budget coverage as much as possible, report clearly on how the budget is solving people’s socioeconomic issues. Every budget item should be related to key issue(s) rather than numbers.

Guideline 3: Interrogate the numbers
Interrogating numbers can go a long way to ensure that meanings are derived from them. It is easy to read in a budget statement that government is planning to build a number of hospitals but it is only when the cost of the buildings are actually matched by the sources of revenue for the budget year in question that people can actually discern if those hospitals will be built or not.

Guideline 4: Use illustrations in telling budget stories focusing on interesting aspects
Budget statements are mostly made up of numbers and can be dull and boring. In covering budgets, therefore, you have to take steps to illustrate your stories and also focus on key
interesting aspects in order to engage the interest of your readership.

Guideline 5: Map out priorities and political promises
Government’s priorities and political promises are usually contained in a budget statement, therefore it is imperative to research what priorities and political promises were met from previous years, what new ones are contained in the present budget and how do these priorities and political promises sit within the framework of the ruling party’s manifesto, national plans and other international goals such as the MDGs.

Guideline 6: Seek independent analysis to support your story
An analyst can always help us enrich our stories and provide insightful angles we might not have considered. It is important to interact with experts on various aspects of the budget in order to incorporate their inputs into our overall budget discussion.

Guideline 7: Watchdog role in reporting
Budgets provide much information for investigative journalism. Here our journalism will be aimed at holding public office holders and institutions accountable for their actions especially the ones that impact our social, economic and political life. A focus on public finances management should also be a key feature of our coverage.

Guideline 8: Connecting the dots- the work of civil society and think tanks
Some key civil society groups and think tanks are at the forefront of monitoring budgets and use to which national revenue is put especially revenue from extractive sector. Your newsroom can benefit a lot from the work of these groups, using them as resource persons in your work and also covering the various monitoring work of their organizations.

Guideline 9: Highlight extractive resources management
Some countries, rich in natural resources such as oil, gas, and mining, have tended not to perform well economically, suffer from poor governance and sometimes record higher incidence of conflict. This situation is summarized by the phrase “resource curse”. Though it is not automatic that resource rich countries will go down this route, the risks are quite high so the work of the media to encourage and promote greater transparency in order to mitigate these negative impacts becomes very important. Highlighting transparency in budget discussions regarding how revenue from natural resources are utilized, can serve the public interest tremendously. So will reporting on contracts and agreements and how these are usually negotiated between government and companies focusing on the issues of transparency.

Guideline 10: Key development issues
Like most developing countries, Ghana faces many development issues, key among which
are poverty reduction and wealth creation. Budget discussions should always pinpoint how national governments faired in tackling key development issues in the previous years, highlighting the areas of success and failures. Also, the government’s plans for the present budget year should be at the centre of our coverage. The rule of thumb is that key development issues should be highlighted in all aspects of our budget coverage.

**Guideline 11: Use new media to reach audience outside mainstream media**

With the emergence of new media, it is possible to reach audience who do not patronize the conventional media. Many people work online and would read various materials online and even watch television or listen to radio there. Limiting your media outlets to the conventional ones may rob you of the opportunity to reach these. It is imperative, therefore, to use new media as outlets in order to reach out to audience outside mainstream media.
APPENDIX
Appendix 1:

GJA Code of Ethics

(Adopted by the National Council of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) at Sunyani on July 27, 1994).

PREAMBLE
The GJA Code of Ethics has been drawn up as a ready guide and is applicable to members of the association in the state-owned media, private media and local freelance journalists. The code provides a frame of reference to the National Executive and the Disciplinary Committee and members of the association when it becomes necessary to initiate disciplinary action against any member who flouts any Article of the Code.

The code is meant to ensure that members adhere to the highest ethical standards, professional competence and good behaviour in carrying out their duties. As the fourth estate of the realm, the public expect the media to play their watchdog role. They should do this with a high sense of responsibility without infringing on the rights of individuals and the society in general.

ARTICLE 1: PEOPLE’S RIGHT TO TRUE INFORMATION
The duty of every journalist is to write and report the truth, bearing in mind his/her duty to serve the public.

The public have the right to unbiased, accurate, balanced and comprehensive information as well as express themselves freely through the media. A journalist should make adequate enquiries and cross-check his/her facts.

ARTICLE 2: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
In collecting and disseminating information, the journalist should bear in mind his/her responsibility to the public at large and the various interests in society.

ARTICLE 3: PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY
Journalists should not accept bribe or any form of inducement to influence the performance of his/her professional duties.

ARTICLE 4: PLAGIARISM
A journalist should not plagiarise because it is unethical and illegal. Where there is the need to use another’s material, it is proper to credit the source.

ARTICLE 5: RESPECT FOR PRIVACY AND HUMAN DIGNITY
Journalists should respect the right of the individual, the privacy and human dignity. Enquiries and intrusions into a person’s private life can only be justified when done in public interest.

A journalist should guard against defamation, libel, slander and obscenity.

ARTICLE 6: RESPECT FOR NATIONAL AND ETHNIC VALUES
A journalist should not originate material, which encourages discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, color, creed, gender or sexual orientation.

ARTICLE 7: CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES
Journalists are bound to protect confidential sources of information.

ARTICLE 8: SUPPRESSION OF NEWS
Under no circumstances should news or a publication be suppressed unless it borders on national security or is in public interest to do so.

ARTICLE 9: CORRECTIONS
Whenever there is an inaccurate or a misleading report, it should be corrected promptly and given due prominence. An apology should be published whenever appropriate.

ARTICLE 10: REJOINDERS
A fair opportunity should be given to individuals and organisations. Any report or a write-up affecting the reputation of an individual or an organisation without a chance to reply is unfair and must be avoided by journalists.

ARTICLE 11: SEPARATING COMMENTS FROM FACTS
While free to take positions on any journalists should draw a clear line between comment, conjecture and fact.

ARTICLE 12: INFORMATION AND PICTURES
A journalist shall obtain information, photographs and illustration only by straightforward means.
The use of other means can be justified only by overriding considerations of the public interest.

The journalist is entitled to exercise a personal conscientious objection to the use of such means.

ARTICLE 13: RESPECTING EMBARGOES
Journalists should respect embargoes on stories.

ARTICLE 14: VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT
Journalists should avoid identifying victims of sexual assault.

ARTICLE 15: DEALING WITH THE UNDER-AGED
Journalists should protect the rights of minors and in criminal and other cases secure the consent of parents or guardians before interviewing or photographing them.

ARTICLE 16: PERSONAL GRIEF OR DISTRESS
In case of personal grief or distress, journalists should exercise tact and diplomacy in seeking information and publishing.

ARTICLE 17: HEADLINES & SENSATIONALISM
Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany.

Photographs and telecasts should be given an accurate picture of an event and not highlight an incident out of context.
Appendix 2:
Lessons from Post-2007 Election Crisis in Kenya

In summary, the story of media and the post 2007 election crisis in Kenya reads like the saga of a neo-colony struggling to become a legitimate democracy.

By neo-colony we refer to countries like Kenya where political structures were designed for minority interests. During colonial times they were designed to serve the interests of a white settler farming community. When they departed at independence, they left a small ruling elite to manage their interests on their behalf.

Because the President of newly independent Kenya came from the Kikuyu tribe, he tended to favor his people when it came to appointments in high offices. Herein lies the tribal nature of neo-colonialism.

The pattern replicates itself in other former settler colonies which include Zimbabwe. Political structures designed for minority settler interests translated after independence into monopoly power for President Robert Mugabe’s tribe, the Shona, the massacre of 20,000 Ndebele and election malpractices and violence in 2008.

South Africa under apartheid was dominated by a white minority regime. The ANC took over after independence but economic structures never changed. That reality partly explains why xenophobia is so rampant in that country. Foreigners perceived to be coming in to take jobs from South Africans were attacked and killed in 2008.

The battle for power in the ANC resulted in the ousting of President Thabo Mbeki and the rise of Jacob Zuma as heir apparent. That battle has taken on tribal dimensions with Mbeki’s Xhosa tribe breaking away from the ANC block to form a splinter party. Zuma’s Zulu block promised to oust Mbeki violently had he not stepped down.

In all three former settler countries, power structures designed to cater to minority interests have kept out majorities in the independent reality. At election time, violence has as a matter of course represented a culmination of frustration of majorities and the intransigence of a ruling minority that is willing to suppress opposition in ways that are undemocratic and often inhumane.

These minority elites buy out media in their quest to influence reality in ways that favor their interests. The independent broadcaster becomes a mouthpiece of the ruling party. FM licenses are issued to political cronies. Politicians buy majority shares in mainstream media.
Ultimately, editors who do not conform to their dictates get fired. In Kenya, the 2007 elections erupted into violence when the results of voting announced at the electoral commission did not tally with those that had been announced daily from polling stations.

The owners of two mainstream media outlets made sure that data collected in the buildup could not be recalled. Indeed databases crashed. Not surprisingly, there was no backup. Live broadcasting was banned for a while.

At all these level, one saw minority political elites actively seeking to control and compromise media professionals. It is a matter of grave concern today - the problem being the disempowerment of the fourth estate by the elite establishment in times of political transition.

Under such circumstances, the way forward for media professionals seems pretty clear cut:

1. Professional independence is a must.
2. Media professionals must fight for copyrights to own their own work.
3. The Freedom of Information Act is critical in democratization processes.
4. We need policy frameworks that define equitable distribution of media outlets.
5. Monitoring and evaluation of professional behavior becomes important.

In the bigger scheme of things, we may be talking about the need to shift professional paradigm if media professionals are to be empowered. The following become important considerations in the shift:

1. Breaking from authoritarian to libertarian and social responsibility theories of the press.
2. Breaking the neo-liberal death trap.
3. Deconstructing the inverted pyramid news format which has evidently favored prominent elites in the daily coverage of news.
4. Going Afrocentric and Multicultural in a globalizing world. This consideration is important if one recognizes how the 80% rural majority is only given a voice in times when catastrophes have struck.
5. Building media policies via stakeholder alliances for legitimacy. Elite minorities have historically monopolized policy making. Media professionals need to reach out to a broader range of stakeholders if they are to realize more legitimate formats. Such stakeholders include grassroots communities, civil society organisations, trade unions and the private sector.
In terms of professional behavior, the need to move from 'passive journalism', which has rendered them vulnerable to manipulation, to 'pro-active’ alternatives that are more robust and resilient. “Pro-active” reporting styles and “pro-active” presentation formats that address conflict and corruption in Africa may ultimately be what we are looking for.

Such formats differ from traditional basic training norms where the approach has been to have cub reporters exposed to “the facts” as determined by experts because such approaches have too often perpetuated elitist versions of the reality, and by extension, dominant world views of reality. Other world views have been consistently marginalized in such discourse.

Africa needs a cadre of journalists who can build other world views into a dialogue about conflict and corruption that is balanced in ways that manage alternative perspectives. Recognizing that objectivity is relative, reporting formats that are best able to attain relative objectivity should be promoted. By working with alternative world views especially in conflict situations, professional training aimed at ensuring that the relevance of issues highlight majority perspectives should be promoted.

Traditional training norms have not been able to handle that ideal effectively. They are static and problematic in today’s world where diverse cultural forces are fast becoming primary factors in human relations.

"Pro-active” reporting entails the following:

1. Brainstorming as an important aspect of story origination.
2. Networking as an effective way of increasing sources of news stories.
3. Multiple sourcing of information.
4. Data basing as an important way of accumulating knowledge about the subject area.
5. Conferencing with editors and influencing the agenda of the newsroom in that manner.
6. Moving from "events oriented" to "process oriented" journalism so as to effectively capture the political, social and economic impact of conflict and corruption.
7. Follow up coverage, particularly in a process oriented reality where issues range way beyond specific events.

In contrast to the above, the other format, standardised journalism training programs, seems passive and re-active. It is not versatile enough to address issues on a sustained basis; it is limited to events. It is notorious for single sourcing of information, the source, mainly being limited to people who create events. As a result, single sourcing, rather than explaining a phenomenon, too often merely represents one version of the true state of affairs. It also disempowers the reporter and subjects him/her to the parochial agenda of news sources and their vested interests.

In packaging both for print and broadcast, as in the sourcing of information, the pro-active format recognizes the following approaches:

1. Multiple sourcing to establish and validate issues.

2. Strong introductory paragraphs and statements which clearly establish what these issues are.

3. Sequencing as a way of taking the reader logically from one set of ideas to another.

4. The use of advanced organisers to hold together and lead the reader into discussions containing multiple concepts and perspectives.

Appendix 3: Information and knowledge resources


4. African elections project – elections coverage guide

5. Ghana Journalists Association elections reporting guide 2008


9. BBC editorial Policy http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/onguide/

10. Twelve things journalists need to remember to be good economic reporters http://www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=background.view&backgroundid=0093

Appendix 4: Useful websites


4. NDC http://www.ndcghanaonline.com/

5. NPP http://www.npp-ghana.org/

6. CDD GHANA http://www.cddghana.org


9. Centre for Public Integrity http://www.publicintegrity.org/

PROFILE OF THE BOOK

Because Accountability counts – A Journalist guide for covering post-elections in Ghana is one of the key building blocks for Ghana Post-elections Intervention Project whose main objective is to help overcome the challenges and problems affecting citizens’ ability to hold elected representatives accountable for promises they make during pre-election campaigns.

The guide’s main objective is to empower journalists and other stakeholders with an information and knowledge resource for playing the watch and guide dog role in holding elected officers accountable.

It provides an overview of post-elections landscape of Ghana, covering governance, legislative issues, political parties and their manifestoes, ruling party, opposition and governing after an election and provides guides for covering:

» Parliament, Political Parties, Ruling Government (mapping campaign promises & manifesto), Opposition and Key Governance Issues

» Investigative journalism and post-elections coverage

» ICTs and Covering Post-Elections

» Covering Budget and Extractive Industries and

» Lessons to be learned from the post 2007 election crisis in Kenya