

# JOCID – JOURNALISM FOR CIVIC INVOLVEMENT, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

**Coordinator:** Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak), Finland

**Partners:** Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland; Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN), Namibia; Tumaini University – Iringa University College (IUCo), Tanzania; University of Liberia (UL), Liberia

**Study areas:** Communication and Information Sciences

## What are the main aims of your network?

The main aim is to develop radio and cross-media journalism training in all partner institutions in ways which support civic participation, development and democracy. Apart from the high quality radio journalism training with strong professional and ethical standards, this means emphasising the importance of citizen- and community-based journalistic practices in professional mainstream journalism and the role of community radios in media diversity, community empowerment and civic involvement.

JOCID puts a specific emphasis on ideals and practices of public journalism and on local community radios. This emphasis serves the goal of making media more accessible to different communities of the society in the participating countries.

In the context of JOCID the word *accessible* has two meanings: there is a need for access to the media and information by citizens as receivers of the information. But to enable the citizens to fully act as active members of the society and to participate in democratic processes, there is also the need for the citizens to have access to the media as participants in the media content and production process. This means bringing out their topics, interests, viewpoints and voices, whether through a professional journalist using citizen-based public journalism practices, or by participating in doing community radio themselves as volunteers. In this project journalism and media, particularly community media, are seen as an agent of social change and as a resource for civic participation on a local and national level, and as a means of community empowerment.

JOCID meets a growing demand for cooperation in the educational sector in Africa. As the result of the cooperation, experiences on the training methods and pedagogical expertise in the field of media are shared between the European and African partners using student and teacher exchanges, intensive courses, network meetings and regular communication via e-mail.

## What kind of activities are there in your network?

The first two years of JOCID Network have been successful with altogether 8 outgoing and 6 incoming students and 4 outgoing and 3 incoming lecturers participating in student and teacher exchange. There has been delightfully active cooperation and communication between all partners. During JOCID cooperation there has been student exchange to both HEIs in the



North; to Diak (Cross-media Journalism module) and to Metropolia (Radio Work module). In student exchanges to the South Finnish students have in addition to their studies been engaged in assisting in radio journalism training of local students and teaching in radio workshops for community radio volunteers. During the first two years of JOCID activities University of Liberia was not yet part of the network

Teacher exchanges have all been two weeks long. Lecturers visiting Finland have in most cases spent one week at Metropolia and one at Diak. They have acquainted themselves with the Finnish student radio practices, radio techniques and higher education journalism training as well as shared their expertise by giving lectures and workshops to the Finnish journalism students. Finnish students have found these opportunities refreshing, eye opening and challenging.

Finnish teachers participating in the exchange in the South have had the main emphasis on student radio activities. They have participated in the technical improvement of the existing radio studios, given consultation to the local teaching staff about starting a student radio, and given radio related lectures and workshops. The same theme will continue during the second funding period of the JOCID Network.

The intensive course of the first JOCID Network funding period will be held in Tanzania in August 2009. The theme of the course will be Civic Journalism and Community Media. Participants and lecturers of the course come from all partner organisations. In order to save in travelling expenses, the JOCID Network meeting will be held at the same time with the intensive course.

### What sort of successes and challenges have you encountered during your project?

The project has achieved its results in increasing mobility between North and South. The bilateral student and teacher mobility has encouraged dialogue between the partner universities in terms of community journalism.

The consultative approach rather than a prescriptive approach has been the hallmark of the successful cooperation amongst the partner institutions during JOCID cooperation. Constant contact as well as staff and student exchanges at certain times of the year, as well as opportunities for research about the partners' journalism curricula have ensured that the goals of each of the academic institutions are constantly considered. JOCID Network cooperation has also lead to other project ideas and applications within the consortium.

During the student and teacher exchanges it has become evident that the southern participants of the network have plenty of expertise to give into our cooperation. For once we have a funding programme where we can also bring southern expertise to the North and not just share our knowledge to the South.

### Your advice to forthcoming networks

E-mail can't compete with face-to-face communication. Try to get the whole network together as soon as possible and agree on practical details in a face-to-face meeting.

