



Journalistically and technically better discussion programmes

Vikes training at SNTV from 21st to 25th October 2018

Pasi Toivonen
producer
Finnish Broadcasting Company
28.10.2018



1. Basic information

1.1. Project in question

EU project / Better journalism through increased professionalism of Somali media

1.2. Title of the training

Discussion programme production training at SNTV

1.3. Training venue, city and dates of training

SNTV premises, Mogadishu, from 21st to 25th October 2018

1.4. Host organization, co-organizer of the training

Somali National Television SNTV

1.5. Number of training participants, including number of female and male participants

20 participants, 15 men and 5 women

1.6. Specification of participants and number of each participant groups as relevant for the training

11 journalists, 1 producer, 1 mixer/director, 6 cameramen/women, 1 IT specialist

1.7. Specific objective of training as defined in the project logframe

Improved production process and technical quality of TV news and talk shows.

Increased diversity and improved journalistic quality of TV news and other programmes.

1.8. Indicators for achievement of specific objective

Noticeable technical, journalistic and editorial improvements in SNTV programme production.

2. Executive summary

The target of this training was to improve the quality of SNTV discussion programmes, both journalistically and technically. 12 of the trainees were journalists from SNTV or Radio Mogadishu, eight were cameramen/women or other technical staff from the SNTV television studio. Some of the journalists had already been hosting discussion programmes in television, some had only been working in radio and some had no previous experience of discussion programmes. The training consisted of one day of lecturing and discussion and four days of very practical hands-on rehearsals with real interviewees in the SNTV discussion studio.

The journalistic trainers were Vikes coordinator, journalist and producer Mr. Wali Hashi and myself, producer Mr. Pasi Toivonen from Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE. The technical evaluation and training at the SNTV discussion studio was done by technical specialist Mr. Ossi Laakso. He will produce a separate report on his part of the training.

3. Background

I have visited SNTV three times before: in 2016, 2017 and February this year. The previous trainings have been concentrating on improving the quality of the television news inserts in SNTV. This time the emphasis was put for the first time on discussion programmes. The basic journalistic challenges are alike in news insert production and discussion programmes: lack of professional self-esteem and ambition, restricted journalistic and technical capabilities, inadequate technical equipment and the partly unorganized nature of the production process. The strong starting point for the training was also the same as in previous ones: the motivation of the SNTV staff to learn and improve their professional performance was very high.

4. Key goals of the training

- Ø Improve the performance of the SNTV discussion programme hosts.
- Ø Enhance background research skills and script writing of discussion programmes.
- Ø Improve the interviewing techniques of the discussion programme hosts.
- Ø Improve the journalistic management of the SNTV discussion programmes.
- Ø Improve the visual quality and direction skills of the discussion programmes. Locating the technical and operational shortcomings in the studio production.

5. Description of the training

5.1. Training methods

Discussing the basic principles of interview techniques and script writing of a discussion programme. Hands-on examples of the journalistic and technical production process, each day with real interviewees from Somali public life. Immediate feedback session at the end of each production day.

5.2. Short summary of training programme/topics covered each day (including any challenges and how they were overcome)

Sunday the 21st of October

Discussion about the basic principles of discussion programming, based on the examples of SNTV and YLE discussion programmes. First draft of the discussion programme checklist for journalists. Division of the trainees to working groups A and B, both containing more experienced journalists as well as first timers in television discussions. Opening ceremony of the training course.

Monday the 22nd of October

First production day for group A. Interviewee of the day was senator of the upper house of Somali parliament, Mrs. Muna Oman. Special emphasis was put on the background research, crystallizing the point of view of the interview and the attentive presence of the interviewer in the studio.

Tuesday the 23rd of October

First production day for group B. The interviewee was famous Somali poet and the director of Somali National theatre, mr. Abwaam Gure. Special emphasis on the formulation of exact and targeted questions.

Wednesday the 24th of October

Second working day for group A. Interviewee of the day was imaam Shiikh Omar. Special emphasis was put on the contact between the interviewer and interviewee and the courage to ask direct questions also on difficult issues.

Thursday the 25th of October

Second working day for group B. Interviewee was the Somali-Finnish journalist Mr. Wali Hashi, whose life story was the subject of the day's interviews. Special emphasis was put on the questions dealing with personal experiences and emotions of the interviewee. The closing ceremony and handing out of diplomas for the trainees.

6. Results and impact of the training

Progress was clearly made on most key goals set for this training: The performance of the hosts was improved, the idea of background research was enhanced and script writing skills developed. There was also considerable improvement in the interviewing techniques of the trainees. Some new visual and rhythmical elements to the direction of the discussion programmes were also introduced.

Notable progress in the quality of the discussion programming of SNTV will of course take its time and more training will be needed. But we can look forward to improvement, as most of the trainees were very motivated to discuss, to learn and to practice new ideas of how to do their work in discussion programming. They say they have learned some very important lessons, that they will make them a part of their everyday work.

- The topic and the selection of interviewee has to be well motivated. Always ask why you are doing this interview, what interesting and important it will offer to your audience, the Somali people.
- Do your background research properly. If possible, do a pre-interview with your guest/s.
- Bear the responsibility for your interview = don't ask general questions that let your interviewee answer whatever he/she wants to.
- Keep your questions simple and well targeted. Prepare more, but use only 4-5 main questions in a 10-minute interview.
- Listen carefully what your guest says, keep your attention to him/her. React, do follow-up questions. Don't let your notes distract you from the discussion.
- Work together with your colleagues. Cooperation will give better results.

A comprehensive check list for discussion programmes in English and Somali is attached to this report and will be delivered to the trainees. The 12 ten minute long interviews that were produced during the training are the concrete proofs of the progress that was made. They can be watched in YouTube via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAGAN7aKBepRd2s1hGvdwfnDVC4BDrKqv>.

A wider selection of feedback from the trainees is included in the training course diary attached to this report.

7. Recommendations

- 1) The journalistic leadership should give the trained journalists chances to test and further develop their skills in the present and possible new discussion programmes of SNTV and Radio Mogadishu.
- 2) The journalists should be encouraged to generate their own ideas for the selection of topics and interviewees.
- 3) The *Check list for discussion programmes* should be distributed to the trainees and all the SNTV journalists doing discussion programmes.
- 4) There should be more cooperation between the journalists in preparing the discussion programmes. The questionnaires and the scripts for the interviews should be commented and further developed at least by the producer of the programme, preferably also by one of the colleagues.
- 5) The members of this training should give collegial feedback to each other - always remembering to start from the positive, then looking for the things that can be further improved. The group should have a monthly meeting to share experiences and assess the development of their work in doing discussion programmes.
- 6) The training on discussion programmes should continue in near future. The next step could be hands-on training in the actual day-to-day production of SNTV. There seems also be need for training in how to prepare and host a debate of two guests - or even bigger number of interviewees.
- 7) The tables in the SNTV discussion studio should be made movable. They are now bolted to the floor, thus restricting considerably the use of the red and blue plants.
- 8) Discussion programmes could also be done having the interviewer and the guest/s in middle of the studio floor, using both the red and blue plants as backgrounds.
- 9) The side cameras 1 & 3 should be placed as close to the eye line of the interlocutors as possible. This will give the audience an impression of being inside the discussion, not only looking at it from aside.

8. Links to publications, photos, videos related to the training

Title: The 12 interviews done during the training

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAGAN7aKBepRd2s1hGvdwfnDVC4BDrKqv>

Title: SNTV news insert on the training 21.10.2018

Link: <https://youtu.be/q1Pdoqdox6c>

Title: SNTV news insert on the closing ceremony 25.10.2018

Link: https://youtu.be/J1_fAkQfI00

9. List of participants

Group A

Samiira Adirahman Liban, journalist, morning television
Abdinasir Daahir Sebriye, journalist, health programmes
Maida Mohodin Dbiblawe, journalist, cultural programmes
Abdirashid Nor Ibrahim, journalist, Raad Raac
Muhudin Moalim Abdulle, producer, morning television
Mohamed Ali Ahmed, journalist, Radio Mogadishu

Group B

Abdishakur Ali Ahmed, journalist, youth programmes
Abdirisaq Mohamed Faarah Shiine, Radio Mogadishu, youth programmes
Hamdi Abdulahi Hussein, journalist, cultural programmes
Ali Abdirahman Adam, journalist
Abdulqadir Yusuf Irshad, journalist, Radio Mogadishu, current affairs
Mohamed Kafi Sheikh Abukar, journalist, Radio Mogadishu.

Studio staff

Hayat Mahamed Hersi, mixer/director
Nasteho Abdi Jaliil, camerawoman
Abdikadar Atosh, cameraman
Hassan Kafi Farah, cameraman
Abdulkadir Haruun, cameraman
Ahmed Nur Ahmed, cameraman
Abdi Kadar Abdullahi Ibrahim, cameraman
Ahmed Nuradin, IT

10. Training programme in table format

<i>Sunday the 21st of October</i>	<i>Monday the 22nd of October</i>	<i>Tuesday the 23rd of October</i>	<i>Wednesday the 24th of October</i>	<i>Thursday the 25th of October</i>
The basic principles of discussion programming. First draft of the discussion programme checklist for journalists. Division of the trainees to working groups A and B. Opening ceremony of the training course.	First production day for group A. Interviews with senator of the upper house Mrs. Muna Oman. Special emphasis on the background research, crystallizing the point of view of the interview and the attentive presence of the interviewer in the studio.	First production day for group B. Interviews with the director of Somali National theatre, mr. Abwaam Gure. Special emphasis on the formulation of exact and targeted questions.	Second working day for group A. Interviews with Imaam Shiikh Omar. Special emphasis on the contact between the interviewer and interviewee and the courage to ask direct questions also on difficult issues.	Second working day for group B. Interviews with Somali-Finnish journalist Mr. Wali Hashi. Special emphasis on the questions dealing with personal experiences and emotions of the interviewee. The closing ceremony and handing out of diplomas for the trainees.

Appendix 1

Training course diary

Journalistically and technically better discussion programmes

Vikes training at SNTV from 21st to 25th October 2018

Pasi Toivonen
producer
Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE



Saturday the 20th of October

Arrival of Pasi Toivonen to Mogadishu. Planning meeting with Mr. Toivonen and Wali Hashi and the representatives of Ministry of Information (Abdirahman Yusuf Al-Adala, Nasser Hussein and Abdirahim Isse Addow) and SNTV (Abdi Jeite and Faysal Muuse). Visit to the new discussion studio and technical consultation with Qeys Ahmed and Fuad Mohiddin Khalif.

Sunday the 21th of October

We had an introduction round to clarify the participants' role in discussion program production. Then we asked the basic question: Why this program? What is the point of view of a particular discussion program, what is it offering to its audience? Using three existing SNTV program as examples we did a small brand definition exercise, trying to develop a clear slogan for each program. The idea is that it is very healthy to ask yourself and your team the basic rationales of your program. If the team can agree on the basic purpose and a slogan for the program, it will ease the cooperation in future.

- 1) Kulaanka Toodobaadka – Weekly Meeting is one hour long discussion program broadcast live every Friday evening. The host of the program is editor-in-chief Faysaal Muuse. Kulaanka Toodobaadka usually has one interviewee, a high ranking political or religious leader. The

purpose of the program is to bring the questions of the ordinary Somali people to the leaders, either via the host journalist or directly by phone in live broadcast. The slogan for the program could be: We bring your questions to the decision makers.

- 2) Weydii Dhaqtarka – Ask the Doctor. Is a live discussion program concentrating on questions of individual and public health. The host of the program is Abdi Nasir Sabriye. The promise to the audience and the slogan of this program could be Your health matters.
- 3) Saaka iyo Dunida – Morning and World is the morning show of SNTV television. It has two hosts each morning, news and sports bulletins, news inserts and one 7 minute long interview. The idea is to update the viewers of the relevant news of the previous night and the morning, making them well prepared for a new day. The domestic and international news are included in Saaka iyo Dunida. The proposed slogan for the program would be All you have to know this morning.

We didn't have enough time to go through all the SNTV discussion programs in such a detail, but these should serve as examples of thinking, how to dig deep into the very core of each program concept.



Wali interviewing Abdishakur about SNTV youth programmes.

The next exercise was Mr. Wali Hashi interviewing three SNTV journalists about their discussion programs. His task was to bring out the most important qualities of each program in only three minute long interview. The performance of Mr. Hashi was then evaluated and discussed by the participants. With these concrete examples we got hold of the very core questions of interview techniques.

In the afternoon Mr. Toivonen was showing examples of Finnish Broadcasting Company's discussion programs, including his own project Yle Perjantai. We also discussed in detail the first draft of Discussion programme production checklist, the final version of which is attached to my report of the training.

At the end of the afternoon the participants were divided into two groups for the practical exercises in the SNTV discussion studio. Group A would work on Monday and Wednesday, Group B on Tuesday and Thursday.



Front left to right: Sabriye, Abdulle, Abdirahman, Abdishakuur, Mohamed Kafi, Atosh.

Middle: Samiira, Hamdi, Shiine, Hassan Kafi, Maida, Saleh.

Back: Abdirashid, Ali Ahmed, Irshad, Jeite, Faysaal.

Group A - Monday and Wednesday

Samiira Adirahman Liban, journalist, morning television
 Abdinasir Daahir Sabriye, journalist, health programmes
 Maida Mohodin Dbiblawe, journalist, cultural programmes
 Abdirashid Nor Ibrahim, journalist, Raad Raac
 Muhudin Moalim Abdulle, producer, morning television
 Mohamed Ali Ahmed, journalist, Radio Mogadishu
 Abdikadar Atosh, cameraman

Group B - Tuesday and Thursday

Abdishakuur Ali Ahmed, journalist, youth programmes
 Abdirisaq Mohamed Faarah Shiine, journalist, Radio Mogadishu, youth programmes
 Hamdi Abdulahi Hussein, journalist, cultural programmes
 Ali Abdirahman Adam, journalist
 Abdulqadir Yusuf Irshad, journalist, Radio Mogadishu, current affairs
 Mohamed Kafi Sheikh Abukar, journalist, Radio Mogadishu.
 Hassan Kafi Farah, cameraman

Monday the 22nd of October

This was the first day of practical hands-on training with group A. The interviewee of the day was a very prominent figure in Somali public life, a former journalist and present senator in the upper chamber of Somali Parliament, Mrs. Muna Omar.

The morning started with an editorial meeting, where the trainees introduced their ideas for the point of view of their afternoon interview with Mrs. Muna. This was first done in pairs, two journalists together, and then discussed amongst the whole group. After the first round the trainees were asked to invent three more possible approaches to Mrs. Muna – and out of those six possible departure points three were selected for the working pairs.

The journalistic duos were given one hour to prepare their questionnaire to Mrs. Muna and then we had another editorial meeting discussing and finalizing the main points of each interview. Before the lunch the scripts were ready written:

- 1) Samiira & Sabriye: Mrs. Muna's public roles, How does a former journalist see the relationship between media and political power in Somalia?
- 2) Maida & Abdirashiid: The relationship between federal government and states, the parliament's role in the acute discussion on this matter and the status of Somaliland.
- 3) Abdulle & Ali Ahmed: What has happened to Mrs. Muna's popularity when she has moved from a celebrated cultural journalist to a parliamentarian?



Ossi and the studio crew adjusting cameras.

In the middle of our editorial meeting we received a surprise visit from the highest political level: The prime minister of Somalia, mr. Hassan Ali Khayre entered the studio and had we had a brief discussion with him about the training and VIKES project in general.

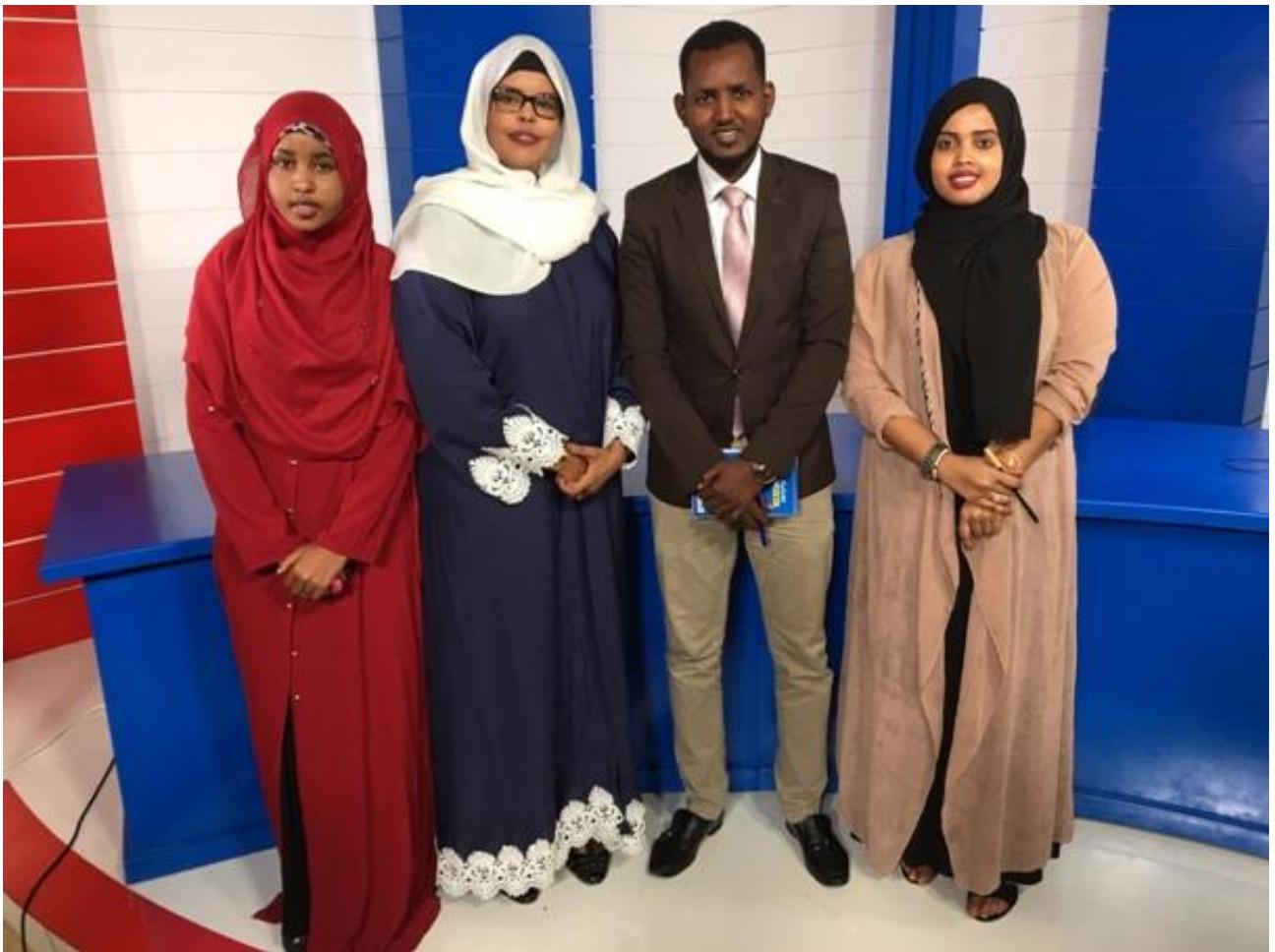


Pasi and Wali with prime minister Hassan Ali Khayre.

After lunch the SNTV discussion studio was set ready for the interviews with the guidance of Mr. Ossi Laakso. The cameras and microphones were adjusted and the camera angles and lightning set. Mrs. Muna arrived and one trainee of each pair made maximum 10-minute long interview with her: Samiira, Maida and Abdulle were on stage.

After the recordings we had a feedback session with Mrs. Muna and the trainees. Some main points from there:

- Mrs. Muna felt that the journalist's were hiding something, as they didn't present all the questions to her in advance. It felt as if the journalists wanted to surprise her – and to her that was a good thing.
- Interviewer should always build trust with the guest, one should not be too aggressive.
- There should be a balance between the subject of the discussion and the appearance of the journalist. Discussing relaxed cultural things but being dressed like a news anchor does not work very well.
- Looking at the eyes of the interviewee gives an impression of attention, helps the communication. If the journalist reads his/her notes and concentrates on the next question, he/she cannot listen properly and loses the connection to the interviewee.
- The trainees said they had already learned two important lessons: How improve the interviews by doing more planning and thinking in beforehand and how to benefit from the group work and cooperation with colleagues.



The interviewers and the interviewee: Maida, Mrs. Muna Omar, Abdulle and Samiira.

Tuesday the 23rd of October

The interview made by Maida was shown in the morning to group B and the top journalist leaders of SNTV and Radio Mogadishu. The feedback was mostly positive: The use of pictures and cuts and the contact between the journalist and the guest were good. The interviewer did not look at her notes but was listening and doing good follow-up questions. Maida also got credit for being well prepared for the interview, asking the questions in a relaxed but intensive manner. This was her first interview on a political question, having her experience on the cultural programming – and she managed to surprise her superiors and colleagues in a positive manner.

Having said all that, it was stated that the interview could not be broadcast as the subject – the relationship between Somali federal government and Somaliland – remains politically too sensitive.

After the feedback session group B was also divided to three journalistic duos, the cameraman Hassan Kafi joined Mr. Ossi Laakso at the discussion studio. The pairs prepared quickly two possible approaches each for the interviews of day's guest, Mr. Abwaan Gure, a famous Somali poet and director of Somali National Theatre. One approach was selected for each duo and then they were given an hour to prepare the questionnaires. And again, those were discussed and further developed and final scripts were written for the afternoon recording.



Tuesday morning editorial meeting was started with looking at Maida's interview with Mrs. Muna Omar.

- 1) Abdishakur & Shiine: Peace and poetry, can poems and songs help to build peace in Somalia?
- 2) Hamdi & Abdirahman: Renovating the National Theatre with the help of voluntary labour.
- 3) Irshad & Kafi: Is National Theatre needed in the age of internet and social media?

The three interviews were done in SNTV discussion studio: Shiine, Abdirahman and Irshad were the journalists on stage. After the recording session Mr. Gure still stayed with us for a brief feedback session. He stated that the journalists seemed to be a bit hasty, already asking the next question before he had answered the previous. Explaining factor could be that the interviewers really were too concerned about asking all the planned questions and not able to listen properly for Mr. Gure's answers, not to mention making wise follow-up questions. The other possible explanation here could be, that the journalist wanted to make the interview up tempo, rhythmical – not one with lengthy questions and minutes long answers.

At the feedback session the trainees also got a powerful experience of the power of words and carefully targeted questions. Abdirahman had opened his interview by asking what kind of history mr. Gure has with the National Theatre – and got rather general answer with that rather wide question. In the editorial meeting we had discussed of a more exact formulation of the first questions and now Wali Hashi demonstrated how those would have worked: "What is your first memory of the National theatre? How did you feel later on, walking past the destroyed building?"



Tuesday's all male panel: Irshad, Shiine, Mr. Abwaan Gure and Abdirahman.

These simple personal questions brought about very strong and emotional answers from Mr. Gure, first telling about his first visit to the theatre as a child: He had got a ticket with a number, and in the seat inside the theatre there was this same number! At that moment the little boy thought he had landed in Europe instead of Africa. And when asked about the present state of things, he compared the damage done to the theatre to somebody killing the woman you love. It was a strong and emotional moment in our feedback session, one that probably left a strong lesson for the trainees.



Group B in feedback session with Mr. Abwaan Gure.

Wednesday the 24th of October

Only one of the group A trainees was in time for the morning editorial meeting. This is a serious issue where a lot of improvement is needed. Television production is a very complex process that can only work properly if people are able to stick to the set timetables.

In twenty minutes the group was full, except for Abdirashid who didn't show up the whole day. We were prepared to welcome two guests today: Journalist and Facebook star Asya from Puntland and Imam Shiikh Mohamed. Asya cancelled her coming during the meeting so all the groups prepared an interview with imam Shiikh.

As Abdirashid was not present, it was decided that Maida will make an interview also this time. The groups had 10 minutes to prepare their basic ideas which were then further developed by the whole group and the trainers. All of the interviews were more or less build around the role of Islamic religion in building peace to Somalia.

- 1) Ali Ahmed & Abdulle: What is the relationship between Islam and reconciliation?
- 2) Samiira & Sabriye: What is the imam's role in building peace?
- 3) Maida: What do you think of the reconstruction process of National Theatre? Do you approve of building peace through plays and songs?



Group A having the editorial meeting in the news studio.

Ali Ahmed, Sabriye and Maida did the interviews this time. Again, we had a small feedback session immediately after the recording. Imam Shiikh said all of the interviews were good and that he could see that the training had improved the journalists' professional skills. He also had no problem with a young female journalist putting him the questions.



Sabriye, Imam Shiikh, Ali Ahmed and Maida were on stage on Wednesday.

Members of the group assessed that the journalists were perhaps a bit cautious, a bit afraid of the imam and concerned of not doing any mistakes. Sabriye explained that that was partly because he knew he would not have enough knowledge about Islamic religion and the Koran to challenge the opinions of a respected imam. This led us to quite an interesting discussion about the amount of knowledge that is enough for a journalist to do his work.

One should always try to do the best possible background research, given the time limitations. In our training there was close to no time to study the issue of Islam and peace. But given the time, a journalist can discuss with experts who know Koran and Islam better than him, read texts and develop the point of view of the interview with colleagues. The journalist needs to do his/her homework as well as possible, but he/she needs not be the best expert in any issue, and he/she should never pretend to know more than what he/she knows. It is also good to keep in mind that the journalist is in service of the audience, the Somali public. And most people are not experts in theological questions – but they are the best experts of everyday life in Somalia. That's why the journalist must always think what is of interest to the audience, what is important to them. And build his/her questionnaires from that point of view, not from the point of view of very specific theoretical discussion.

As a demonstration of this the trainer Mr. Wali Hashi still made a 10-minute bonus interview with Imam Shiikh. He was the only interviewer of the day who dare ask direct questions about Al-Shabaab and the Islamic churches attitude towards the terrorist organization. The questions were the ones that ordinary people on the street are thinking of and they were put to Imam Shiikh in a rather straightforward way – but he had no problem in answering them.

"Journalist is not a theological interlocutor that debates about the details of the Koran. He represents the people, who are not theological specialists either, but who know fully the life realities of Somali life."

The day was put to a encouraging end by the trainees telling they had already learned a lesson during the training: They felt they now can better stick to the timeline of their questionnaire, choose the point of view and stick to that all trough the interview. They have learned to depart from the basic question: WHY this interview – and to build a logical questionnaire based on the chosen point of view. One interview – one point of view. The shorter the interview is, the more important is the definition of its purpose. In a lengthy, perhaps one hour long interview there might be several topics and points of view included.

Thursday the 25th of October

For Group A's second day we were trying to invite survivors of October 14 tragedy, the massive bomb attack by Al-Shabaab one year ago. The idea was to demonstrate that it is also possible to deal with human interest issues in a discussion studio, and that also ordinary people with strong stories can be interviewees in a studio setting.

Unfortunately this couldn't be arranged at such a short notice. But we had a well working plan b: the interviewee of the day was the other one of the trainers, mr. Wali Hashi. The task given to the group was to prepare three interviews portraying the life of Wali: One from the early childhood years in the countryside, the youngster years in Mogadishu and moving to exile in Finland. Second one would deal with Wali's 28 years in Finland and the third one with his future plans at the moment, when he is about to move to Nairobi with his Finnish wife.

This exercise had at least two big targets: Firstly, to make the trainees realize, how important it is to do pre-interviews with their guests, especially in the case of the interview being more on a personal level. It would very difficult to get background information about Wali's life from other sources than discussing with himself. The other big message was that one should be able to ask questions about personal motivations and feelings. The trainees told that it is very seldom they would ask somebody in an interview the question "How did you feel when... How does it feel to..." .

The group had only 20 minutes to make this pre-interview with Wali, but even in that short time they could find out the basic facts about his life. And even more importantly, they got an idea of some of the important and decisive moments in Wali's life. How his father left the family when Wali was only 9 years old, how he had to take responsibility as the first born, how moved he was when a Somali army soldier showed kindness to a hungry little boy, what was his life like as a shoe polisher in the streets of Mogadishu, how did he feel when arriving to the eastern border of Finland, what were his best and worst moments in Finland, how could he deal with the racist behaviour he had to face in Finland.

The trainees were advised to avoid general and loose questions and encouraged to search for the decisive moments of Wali's life and his emotional memories of things that have happened to him. Questions like:

How did you feel when...? Why did you do that? What was it like? The best/worst things.
What lessons have you learned from... ? What has it meant to you? What has been the most important/difficult thing/moment?

The Somali culture is build predominantly around factual communication, how things are. Very seldom people are talking about how they felt in a specific situation, or how they are feeling right now. Especially this is true in the Somali journalistic culture. In Finland there is a longer tradition of opening also personal matters and emotions in journalism. In this sense Finnish people, who have the reputation of being rather reserved might actually be a lot more open minded than Somalis.

I personally believe in the old rule: If the information does not spark any emotional reaction, then it will leave no track in the memory either. Journalism with facts after facts will not create a lasting mark in a person's mind. What you hear goes in from the other ear and disappears from the other, if the information doesn't really touch your emotions.

As a background to this exercise the trainees were reminded of Mr. Gure's interview by Wali Hashi: When being asked how he felt when walking past the ruined National Theatre of Somalia Mr. Gure answered that it was like if somebody had killed the woman you love. A strong and emotional answer, which will be remembered by everybody that heard it. Listing facts about him and National Theatre would not have such a lasting effect.

After less than an hour of work the questionnaires of the three interviews were done and again further developed in a quick editorial meeting in the discussion studio. The setting for the interviews was this time different: Wali and the interviewers were set on the middle of the studio, using both the red and the blue corner of the studio as backgrounds. This seemed to be a well working solution, leaving more room to operate the cameras and creating a less news-like atmosphere to the interview.



Hamdi, Wali, Irshrad and Shiine.



Hamdi and Wali talking about Wali's childhood.

The interviews were made by Hamdi, Irhsad and Shiine. After the recording we followed the normal procedure and had a feedback session.

According to Wali the interviewers did a solid job, they could bring out the essential questions in short interviews. Wali gave credit to Hamdi of her attitude towards his stories about personally important childhood experiences. "It seemed she was feeling the same things I was feeling, the reactions in her eyes were genuine. It seemed as if she understood the situation of that little boy in a difficult life situation."

Hamdi concentrated very much on Wali through the whole interview, she did not get distracted with her own notes and did fluent and prompt follow-up questions. Irshad had chosen a tactic of asking short prompt questions and not doing follow up questions. His questionnaire was solid, but left Wali (and probably also the viewers) at a distance. Shiines questions and follow/up questions were, according to the interviewee, very accurate and to the point.

The interviewers themselves felt they had learned something new with this exercise. Hamdi said she normally concentrates on her own questions and does not pay enough attention to the answers of her guest. Now her scope of attention was in the interviewee and on his feelings, and that seemed to be working very well. Something she will apply to her future work as an interviewer. Irshad emphasized the difference between the interview he had done with mr. Gure and this one with Mr. Hashi. "Now that we

had done a proper background interview with you it was much easier to prepare the questions. This also made me less nervous in the interview." Also Shiine thought this second interview was better than the first one: "Normally there is a lot of excitement with all the cameras and lights and important people that I interview. This time it was a lot easier to concentrate on the personality of the interviewee."

This understanding of personal level and the importance of emotions could also be brought to the interviews of prominent people of politics, culture or business. Asking the prime minister how he felt when he heard of a terrorist attack in Mogadishu or rivers flooding in Kismayo would make the news much stronger.



Hayat Mahamed Hersi and Ossi took care of the mixing of the interviews.

The closing ceremony and trainees' feedback



Director of SNTV, Mr. Liban Abdi Ali talking at the closing ceremony of the training.

The closing ceremony of the training was held in the conference hall of the Ministry of Information, with the presence of director general, Mr. Abdirahman Yusuf Al-Adala. We first showed clips of three interviews produced during the training and then heard the feedback of the trainees. Here are some lessons they said they had learned during the five days together:

- Choose subjects that are truly of interest to your audience. You need to know why you are doing this interview. What is the purpose, how is it serving your audience?
- Before you go to your interview, you have to do your homework.
- The questions need to be short and exact.
- Four to five main questions are enough for a 10 minute interview. But be prepared to do follow-up questions. The follow-ups can be more important than the main questions.
- Prepare for 10 questions, choose 5 of them and then stick to those themes. Don't let yourself be led astray.
- Learn your main questions and the purpose of the interview so well that you don't have to look at your notes during the interview. Keep the eye contact with your guest.
- Be relaxed. It is not about the studio and the lights and the cameras, it is about you and your interviewee having an intensive discussion. Concentrate on that.



Sabriye got his diploma from the director of training Abdirahim Isse Addow.

- You are responsible for the interview, the guest is not. Interviewing is your area of expertise, don't be afraid, you will master it.
- If your questions are too general, you will shift the responsibility of the discussion to your interviewee. A very loose question will mean your guest may answer whatever he/she wants. If you go to a supermarket, you have to know yourself what you are looking for. Letting the shopkeeper freely fill in your chart would not serve you or your family (audience in case of journalism) properly.
- Choose your tone of voice according to your guest. With a musician you should be rather casual, when interviewing a person that has lost a family member you need to emphasize with your guest's feelings.
- The most important lesson: You yourself can decide what you are doing, which topic, guest and questions you will choose. Think yourself, don't wait for somebody else to do it for you.
- What we learned from Ossi: the preparations in studio, camera angles, adjustment of lights and cameras, ability to repair broken wires and plugs, how to prepare for the programme systematically in the studio and control room.
- Stick to your timetable. In television work that is crucial, for everyone involved in the production process. If one is late the whole process will be delayed.
- The importance of cooperation. Discussing the matter with your colleagues and writing the questions together has been new and very fruitful.
- Thanks for making this training so practical.



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Appendix 2

SNTV Discussion programmes check list Habka Barnaamijka SNTV ee taxanaha

- Always ask the most important question: Why am I doing this interview? How does it serve my audience?
- Had iyo jeer su'aasha l weeydi ah: Maxaan u qabanayaa wareysigan? Sidee ugu adeegaa dhageystayaasheyda ama daawadayaasheeyda?
- Do your homework. Study the topic, use internet and phone, discuss with your colleagues.
- Horay uga sii fikir una diyaargaroow mawduucaaga. Baro oo u kuur gal mowduuca, isticmaal internetka iyo taleefanka, kala sheekeyso asxaabtaada.
- Select the best guest/s. If possible, call the possible people before deciding whom to invite. Always think of several alternatives, as you can't be sure that the ones you ask first can make it to the studio.
- Xulo martida ugu fiican. Haddii ay suurtagal tahay, wac dadka suurogalka ah ka hor intaadan go'aansan qofka aad ku martiqadeyso brogaraamkaag. Had iyo jeer ka feker dhowr qofood lana sii hadal si aad u xulato qofka ugu fiican oo aad ku martglin doontit Studiogaaga.
- Make a background interview with your guest/s always when it is possible.
- Sii wareeyso martida oo waxka sii ogow inta aadan soo fariisin Studioga. Wax ka sii baro.
- Write your main questions. Write more than what you are going to use, then select the best ones for the final script. For a 10 minute interview you should write 10 questions and then select four or five of them.
- Qor su'aalahaga. Qor wax ka badan suaalaha aad rabto inaad isticmaasho, ka dibna dooro kuwa ugu fiican. Wixii wareysi 10 daqiiqo ah waa inaad qortaa 10 su'aalood kadibna dooro afar ama shan ka mid ah.
- Make your questions well targeted. If you ask too general questions you let your interviewee answer whatever he/she wants. You are responsible for your interview, don't transfer that responsibility to your guest.
- Sualahaaga ha mid taabaneeysa mesha loogu talagalay. Hadaad suaalo iska caam ah weeydiiso la wareeystaha wuxuu ama waxeey rabaan ayeey kuu shegayaan. Adaa masuul ka ah sualahaaga, ha u galin gacanta la wareeystaha.

- Choose your tactics: Are you going straight to the most interesting point or are you going to build the interview towards that main point?
 - Kasii fikir xeeladahaaga: Miyaad si toos ah u abaareeyso suaalahaaga kuwa ugu xiisaha badan mise waxaad mase kuwa ugu dabacasan adiga oo ku dabaqaya dhaqanka ama dabeecada xilka qofka aad wareeysaneeyso?

- Be so well aware of the purpose of your interview and your main questions that you don't need to look at your notes during the interview.
 - Si fiican u ogyahay ujeedad waraysigaaga iyo su'aalaha muhiimka ah ee aadan u baahnayn inaad eegto qoraaladaada inta lagu jiro waraysiga.

- Listen to the answers, react, do follow-up questions - like in a normal natural discussion.
 - Dhageyso jawaabaha, falcelin suaaleedna ka bixi, samee su'aalaha dabagalka ah , siina Xafid suaalaha si aadan ugu baahan in aad waraaqaha ka eegto

- Dare to ask difficult questions. The best way to serve your audience and your interviewee is to ask the difficult thing in a clear and straightforward manner. That gives your interviewee the chance of giving out his/her best arguments.
 - Inaad weydiiso su'aalo adag. Waa habka ugu fiican ee aad ugu adeegi karto dhagaystayaashaada ama daawadayaashaad. Wareysigaaga ayaa ah inaad waydiiso qofkaad wareeysaneeyso suaalaha loo weeydiyo hab cad oo toos ah.

- Dare to ask about feelings. The information will leave a permanent mark to your audience's memory only if it also raises some emotions.
 - Suaalaha aad u waydiiso si dareen ka muuqdo. Waxey dawadayaasha ku reebi kartaa calaamad joogto ah oo wax ku ool ah dareena la socdo

- Dare to interrupt. This is what you do in normal life, why wouldn't you do it in television studio? Do it in a friendly but determined manner.
 - Jawaabaha dheeraada oo la joojiyo. Tani waa mid aad sameeysaan u sameeyseen studioga. Si wanaag ku jiro ayaa laga codsadaa in uu la wareeystuhu soo gaabiyo jawaabtiisa.

- Keep yourself and your questions neutral. Don't take sides but still ask also the critical questions, from all the relevant points of view.
 - Su'aalahaaga dhexdhexaad ha ahaadaan. Ha eexanin laakiin mar walba weeydii su'aalaha muhiimka ah, qimahana ku fadhiya.

- Be strict, critical and always friendly.
 - Noqo mid adag, oo muhiim ah oo mar walbana saaxiibtinimo.