



**News Insert Production Training  
At Somali National Television SNTV  
February 2018**

**Pasi Toivonen**

**4.3.2018**



# **1. Basic information**

## **1.1. Project in question**

- EU project / Better journalism through increased professionalism of Somali media

## **1.2. Title of the training**

- News insert production training at SNTV

## **1.3. Training venue, city and dates of training**

- SNTV Studios in Mogadishu 5.–9.2.2018

## **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**

- 31 participants: 6 female and 25 male

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

- XX producers, xx female and yy male
- XX journalists, xx female and yy male
- XX camerawomen/men, xx female and yy male
- XX video editors, xx female and yy male

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS BY PROFESSION AND GENDER NEEDED FROM LIBAN & FAYSAL!

## **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 peer trainers, producer **Pasi Toivonen** from Finnish Broadcasting Company, broadcast technology expert **Andreas Wirth** and Finnish-Somali journalist **Abdi Musse Mohamud** participated hands on in the everyday production process of SNTV News. The aim was to:

- gather information of the planning, decision making, news gathering, video and audio recording, editing and broadcasting of SNTV News.
- implement the recommendations of two previous TV News insert workshops arranged by Vikes in 2016 and 2017.
- work out new practices that would smoothen the production process and improve the quality of the news broadcasts. This was done in close cooperation with the editorial leaders of SNTV News.

## 3. Background

Vikes has arranged two workshops on TV insert production in SNTV, one in May 2016 (How to make better TV news inserts?) and the other one in May 2017 (Moro! for better TV news inserts). The recommendations of those workshops have not fully been put into practice, due to lack of financial and technical resources, lack of professionalism and because of political pressures dictating the agenda of the SNTV News. True, there have been exceptions, journalistically ambitious and technically improved inserts. But they are still too few and the big picture remains one of poor journalistic and technical quality.

## 4. Key goals of the training

The key goal of the training was to improve the journalistic planning and production process of SNTV News and increase the professionalism among SNTV staff. Focal points:

- How to increase the editorial independence of SNTV News.
- How to improve the planning process of news broadcasts and individual inserts.
- How to improve the quality of the video and audio material gathered by the camera crews.
- How to improve the video editing process - with special emphasis on audio editing.
- How to develop the physical structures of SNTV office and studios to make them better support the production process.

## 5. Description of the training

### 5.1. Training methods

The training was arranged as in-house training fully integrated into the daily production process of SNTV news. This was a logical continuation of the process that had started with two workshop-type trainings in 2016 and 2017. The training method was peer learning by more experienced producers and hands-on mentoring of the planning, shooting and editing of the news inserts.

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

The trainers took part every morning in the daily 10 am editorial meeting hosted by editor-in-chief Faysal Muuse Mohamed in the production room. They participated in the discussion and gave feedback of the previous day's news broadcast. After the meeting Mr. Toivonen discussed the journalistic points of view, narrative and casting of individual inserts with the respective journalists and cameramen. Mr. Wirth gave detailed technical guidance to the cameramen. During the afternoon and evening hours Mr. Toivonen and Mr. Abdi Musse were closely cooperating with the video editors and journalists in the edit suites. Mr. Wirth spent his afternoons and evenings in the news broadcast studio, installing the new camera equipment Vikes brought to SNTV and solving the technical problems of the studio system with technical director Mr. Abdulkadir Muhudin Khalif.

**Monday the 5th of February:** The editor-in-chief explained the structure of the planning process. The editorial meeting discussed the selection of the news items and a number of possible topics were raised and discussed. Three feature news projects were launched: The problem of big lorry trucks blocking the traffic on the narrow streets of Mogadishu, the situation of Yemeni refugees in Somalia and a story of a disabled boy who graduated with best possible marks and is now working in a Mogadishu bank. These inserts were treated as examples of journalistically independent work and were given a closer look by the trainers.

**Tuesday the 6th of February:** In the editorial meeting the structures and technical quality of all the inserts were discussed in detail. The trainers gave feedback of previous night's main news broadcast and the possible ways that could have made the inserts better. The first materials of the truck story were brought for inspection. Part of the clips had no audio and it was agreed that the crew will film those parts anew. The Yemeni refugee story crew managed to find two protagonists for the insert and started the filming. Mr. Toivonen was hand-on mentoring the editing process of the news inserts of the evening with special emphasis on the audio editing. Mr. Wirth worked on the installation of the new cameras for SNTV news studio.

**Wednesday the 7th of February:** A detailed feedback of the previous night's main news was again given in the morning meeting: How to create a good beginning to the insert, how to end it, how to use the sound of the cutaway clips. The editing process of truck story was started as well as the filming of Yemeni refugee story. There were new structural arrangements decided by editor-in-chief: Three producers were put in charge of the quality of the inserts. The video editors were given the task of reporting about the quality of the video and audio material. They were also given the right to refuse editing material that does not meet professional standards. Mr. Toivonen gave a presentation about social media journalism in a NUSOJ training that was taking place in the Ministry of Information and participated again in the editing processes of the day's news inserts. Mr. Wirth worked to recover the broadcast software in the news studio.

**Thursday the 8th of February:** Normal morning meeting feedback was given. The trainers worked out a check list for the planning, filming and editing processes in SNTV. The truck feature story was finished and broadcast in the main news broadcast at 21 hours. In that broadcast there were half a dozen news inserts that had properly edited audio tracks! The last parts of the Yemeni refugee story were filmed and the editing process started.

**Friday the 9th of February:** The Yemeni refugee story was finalised and broadcast. The trainers, representatives of SNTV News and Ministry of Information had a final meeting to sum up the results and conclusions of the training.

## **6. Results and impact of the training**

### **Increasing the editorial independence of SNTV News**

- A very difficult challenge. SNTV is still considered as a government media and most of the news items are requests from government bodies and politicians. It seems this only can be changed in connection of the new Media Law and the by-law defining SNTV a public broadcaster. Editorial independence can only grow if it has the support and backing of the biggest holders of political power in the country.

### **Improving the planning process of news broadcasts and individual inserts**

- A model for daily editorial meetings, choosing relevant topics and developing the journalistic point of view, narrative and audiovisual ideas was created and tested.
- Most of the news topics only arrive as telephone orders during the day. This leaves very little room for planning or independent journalistic decision making.
- There is no digital planning system. The scripts are sent by e-mail and printed out for approval. The use of Google Drive as journalistic planning platform was discussed and will be tested.

### **Improving the quality of the video and audio material gathered**

- The camera crews checked their equipment with the trainers before leaving SNTV for shooting the materials. Basic rules of exposure and audio recording were repeated and if possible the inadequacies of the equipment were solved.
- It was strongly emphasized that the task of a cameraman/woman is to bring back not only professional quality video, but also professional quality audio. No clips without audio track should be accepted.
- The cooperation between cameramen/women and journalists was emphasized. They should have a common idea of the narrative of the news inserts and the video & audio clips needed to build a coherent story - with a beginning and an end, with wide, medium and close-up pictures.

### **Improving the video editing process**

- SNTV video editors are very quick and technically talented with their Adobe Premier software. They are capable of doing much better quality if requested to do so.
- The video editors routinely delete the audio of the cutaway clips, which results as mute cutaway pictures under the voiceovers. In most cases there is no audio editing whatsoever in the inserts. This was changed and the video editors quickly understood how much the quality of the inserts can be improved with a careful audio editing.

### **Developing the physical structures of SNTV offices and studios**

- This was discussed in depth with the director of SNTV mr. Liban Abdi Ali and the editor-in-chief mr. Faysal Muuse Mohamed.

## 7. Recommendations

- 1) The trainers prepared a check list of important things to be taken into consideration in the daily news production process of SNTV. Our main recommendation is to get this checklist translated into Somali, distributed to the staff of SNTV News and applied in the production process. The links to the English and Somali versions of the checklist can be found below.
- 2) There should be at least 1-3 feature inserts in SNTV News every day, based on the journalistic decisions made in the SNTV editorial meeting.
- 3) The editorial leaders of SNTV News should have the required freedom and power from the political authorities and leaders to limit the number of news stories that are demanded from outside the editorial office.
- 4) The outside sources of conference news should make their suggestions known to SNTV in good time (at least days before the occasion) to enable a proper planning process. The journalistic decision making of the newsworthiness of each meeting or conference should remain in the hands of editorial leaders of SNTV.
- 5) We further suggest to start a separate program on conferences (e.g. after the news). This program could be called "*Conferences Today*" and the aim would be to outsource part of the inserts that deal with conferences from the news broadcasts and make more room for genuine news items. The materials for conference news should be provided by the arrangers of the respective meetings, which would ease the pressure on limited SNTV resources.
- 6) In order to increase overall quality of news inserts we encourage to reduce the number of news items in a news program and to do shorter news inserts. With less news items and shorter inserts there will be more time to produce better quality with the resources available. Currently editors are under too much time pressure to rush through the video material and quickly hack everything together. There is not enough time to select the best camera shots and edit quality audio.
- 7) There should be a routine procedure whereby the journalists and camera crews will have a consultation with editor-in-chief or a producer before leaving for the filming. The technical director should organize a routine check-up of the camera equipment and the visual & audio plan of the camera crew, also before leaving to do the shooting. A foreman/woman should be nominated amongst cameramen/women and video editors to guarantee the improvement of technical, visual and audio quality.
- 8) The budget for running costs of SNTV should be increased in order to have enough funds to buy proper camera and microphone equipment for every film crew. Professionals need professional tools.
- 9) We recommend the creation of a systematic journalistic and technical feedback system. It is especially important to give positive feedback and thus enhance the best practices. But there also has to be a monitoring and tackling of work that does not reach the minimum professional standards.
- 10) We recommend the use of Google Docs (or corresponding cloud service) in the production process. The daily planning lists, scripts of the inserts and playlist of the broadcasts should be written on shared documents.
- 11) We recommend a thorough cleaning up and fixing of the premises of SNTV News. Clean rooms and corridors, signs on the doorposts, freshly painted walls, acoustic panel

absorbers, peaceful and roomy edit suites, clean and working toilets - all these will contribute to a sense of professionalism and pride in the journalistic work done.

#### **8. Links to publications, photos, videos related to the training (if available)**

Title: SNTV News insert production checklist

Link: [https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/SNTV\\_News\\_insert\\_production\\_checklist.pdf](https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/SNTV_News_insert_production_checklist.pdf)

Title: SNTV News insert production checklist IN SOMALI

Link: [https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/SNTV\\_News\\_insert\\_production\\_checklist-SOMALI\\_1.pdf](https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/SNTV_News_insert_production_checklist-SOMALI_1.pdf)

Title: Vikes Facebook picture album of the training

Link:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/Vikes.fi/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10156383292628933](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Vikes.fi/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10156383292628933)

Title: Article of the training in the journal of the Union of Journalists in Finland

Link: <https://www.journalisti.fi/artikkelit/2018/3/uutta-vaihdetta-silmn-somaliassa/>

Title: SNTV main news broadcast on the 8th of February 2018

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1n6c0zMzu6M>

Title: 2016 How to make better TV news inserts?

Link: [https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/How\\_to\\_make\\_better\\_TV\\_news\\_inserts.pdf](https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/How_to_make_better_TV_news_inserts.pdf)

Title: 2017 Moro! for better TV news inserts

Link: [https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/Moro\\_for\\_better\\_TV\\_inserts.pdf](https://vikes.fi/assets/files/uploads/Moro_for_better_TV_inserts.pdf)

#### **9. List of participants (if available, including roles or positions, media companies, locations)**

#### **10. Training programme in table format (if available)**