

Focus :

THE ROLE OF ACTORS

INTERACTIVE EVENING

CAN THE MEDIA CHANGE THE WORLD?

[SN]

Grand Auditorium
Palais Brongniart

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MAIN FINDINGS

The media, which has the main aim of informing the public, is often considered a bird of ill omen, bringing nothing but bad news. However, the media also has the duty of sharing solutions to society's problems. As a matter of fact, although it is difficult to find good news stories when trying to put forward answers to problems, the media can sometimes become true opinion mobilisers and can inspire its audience to strive for the response to modern-day problems. Nevertheless, in order to achieve this, serious reporting in which each piece of information is checked and validated must be carried out. For example, the "Love India/Love Pakistan" initiative launched by the Times of India has had a huge impact on opinion regarding the conflict between India and Pakistan. Other interesting initiatives include Libé des Solutions, Libération's best selling publication for the year, or International Solutions Day, in which Sparknews will ensure that 20 large media outlets share content that offers

SPEAKERS

Christian De Boisredon

Founder, Sparknews / Initiator, International Solutions Day

Rahul Kansal

Editorial Director, Times of India

Didier Pourquery

Associate Director of the Editorial Group, Le Monde

Monique Villa

CEO, Thomson Reuters Foundation

FLASH TALKERS

Félix Beaulie, Co-founder, MakeSense London HotSpot

Frédérique Bedos, Head, Imagine Project

Catherine Bertiller, Producer and Director, Shamengo

Hélène Bienvenu, Film Director, Detroit je t'aime

Isabelle Hennebelle, Jobs, Employment & Careers Section Editor, and Chief Editor, Special Issues, L'Express

Rainer Nölvak, Chairman, Let's Do It*

Angela de Santiago, Executive President, Youphil

OPEN MICS

Guillaume Battin, Great Reporter, Radio France

François Siegel, Director of Publications, We remain

MODERATORS

Adèle Galey, Project Manager, Sparknews

Judith Jakubowicz, General Coordinator, Convergences 2015

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Convergences 2015 – The World Forum
Toward Innovative Partnerships for Poverty Reduction

SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS

Media solutions for social change

After working as a journalist for AFP up until the year 2000, **Monique Villa** became chairperson for Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2008. She created AlertNet, a humanitarian website which became the second largest website in the world dealing with humanitarian emergencies. When an earthquake happens, all media outlets travel to the area, but they do not think about providing the citizens with information such as where water distribution points can be found or the list of those who have died. With this in mind, the Foundation created the Emergency Information Service shortly before the earthquake in Haiti. This is an information tool based on different technologies including the mobile phone. The Foundation also set up the TrustLaw platform, which has the aim of developing pro-bono practices around the world, whether it be through legal or humanitarian aid, or through help via journalism. Today, the site brings together roughly twenty large businesses and 900 individuals, many of whom are lawyers.

Didier Pourquery, currently Deputy Editor at Le Monde, was the editor of Libération when the first edition of “Libé des solutions” was produced, initiated by Reporters d’Espoirs (Reporters of Hope) when Christian de Boisredon was chairperson. The idea was to put together a publication which puts forward solutions and initiatives which seek to solve social problems. According to Didier Pourquery, it was a difficult task because it is hard to trace back all stories, and each story has to be checked before being published. At the outset, the journalists at Libération showed scarce interest and very few of them participated. In order to limit the risks, he had to put out the publication the weekend after Christmas, a day when sales are not good. It ended up at the top of the newspaper’s sales for the whole year. The reader can sense when a newspaper is written with a real desire for sharing and is all the more interested when that desire is palpable. What is more, the work carried out was useful for society, as the blog “Même pas mal!” bears witness to on lemonde.fr.

Christian De Boisredon introduces himself as someone who ‘sources’ projects. He begins with the observation that the media tends to be too negative, because they often find it hard to come across ways of offering solutions. Sparknews was set up for this reason and in order to highlight positive and alternative solutions, particularly in the format of a video platform with more than 1000 videos from TF1, CNN, BBC, Youtube, etc. As the famous phrase of Gandhi goes, “a falling tree makes more noise than a growing forest”. The solutions put forward in Sparknews allow journalists to come across sources of inspiration. The founder of Sparknews does not stop there: he is now starting a new operation, International Solutions Day, with the aim of 20 newspapers publishing “articles that change the world” all at the same time. He has also suggested that businesses get involved in order to spread knowledge about innovative solutions that deserve to be replicated.

Rahul Kansal explains that there is palpable rage in India about corruption among political elites, and that the internet, a formidable tool for spreading information, feeds this rage. Faced with this issue, many media outlets are not getting involved as they should. However, the Times of India practices a form of social activism through huge media campaigns, particularly via the radio and television. The Prime Minister has acknowledged this work, congratulating the newspaper, even though it has not brought about radical change. A further example is the fact that The Times of India has launched the “Aman KiAsha” initiative, which aims to encourage cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan in order to foster peace. The newspaper publishes a number of articles which promote love between these two peoples, and has put together a video which can be viewed on a number of different devices. Finally, in order to close the campaign, a large concert was held with many politicians in attendance. Thanks to this initiative, many ministers from both countries met and trade has improved. A survey was carried out which showed that before the campaign, only 59% of the Indians were in favour of peace with Pakistan, but after the campaign, this figure had risen to 74%. This is what is called impact journalism.

Flash Talks

Isabelle Hennebelle introduces a special edition project about solutions for changing the world, with possible solutions involving businesses, employees or schools. There will also be a skills-based sponsorship programme addressed towards social entrepreneurs and a programme involving roughly ten partners, including Convergences 2015, Le Mouves, Sife and Ashoka. L'Express hopes to get involved with regards to long-term problems.

Catherine Bertiller explains that the Shamengo name comes from the words Shaman, men and go. Shamengo is a TV website which brings together all the stakeholders that take part in building a new economy and new ways of living.

Rainer Nõlvak describes World Cleanup Day, a day of mobilisation started in Estonia and which is held in more than one hundred countries. On this day, as many stakeholders as possible are invited to lead local and national initiatives for cleaning up waste. In Estonia, 50,000 people, or rather 4% of the population, were mobilised to clean up fly-tipping sites in one day.

Félix Beaulieu explains that MakeSense started out as a media outlet. After creating a blog while on a world tour, Christian and Romain decided to set up a community of social entrepreneurs who solve problems. Today, MakeSense is a flexible and agile movement made

up of 500 people who have organised more than 400 events, reaching out to over 10,000 people.

Hélène Bienvenu mentions a web documentary on Detroit, "Shrinking city". Detroit has lost more than half of its population in the space of 50 years, and a true "Do It Yourself" revolution has been started.

Frédérique Bedos explains that the Imagine project is an alternative form of media, which is useful and based on philanthropy, and which draws attention to anonymous people who bring about revolution away from the limelight.

Angela de Santiago explains that Youphil is a media outlet that demystifies the world of solidarity, dealing in particular with humanitarian work, social aspects, the economy, politics and the environment.

Open Mics

François Siegel, cofounder of SVD and Monde 2, explains that We Demain (which he is the co-creator of) is a magazine which deciphers the changes that we live through and presents projects and initiatives that are created on a daily basis.

Guillaume Battin explains that Radio MUCODEC is a radio station that broadcasts in Brazzaville and the surrounding urban area. It is backed by Mutuelles Congolaises d'Épargne et de Crédit, which today represents the main microfinance network in terms of geographic penetration and coverage in the Congo.

REPORTER

Boris Marcel
Officer, L'Avisé

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- Detroit je t'aime: detroitjetaime.com/
- Let's Do It* : www.letsdoitworld.org/
- L'Express Business et sens, Hors Série "Ces métiers qui changent le monde": www.lexpress.fr/emploi-carriere/emploi/ces-metiers-qui-changent-le-monde_1189257.html
- Libé des solutions: www.reportersdespoirs.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/liberation_20111223_23-12-20113.pdf
- MakeSense: we.makesense.org/
- Même pas mal ! alternatives.blog.lemonde.fr
- Imagine Project: www.leprojetimagine.com
- Radio MUCODEC: mucodec.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=128
- Shamengo: shamengo.com/
- Sparknews and International Solutions Day: www.sparknews.com and www.sparknews.com/en/international-solutions-day
- Times of India and Initiative Aman KiAsha: timesofindia.indiatimes.com and timesofindia.indiatimes.com/amankiasha.cms
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