



ABOVE: DDP STAFF WITH SPEAKERS AT THE INAUGURAL MEDIA SUMMIT HELD AT MARINE PARADE HOTEL IN DURBAN ON 13-14 AUGUST 2019.

DDP MEDIA **SUMMIT 2019** **: The Role** **Community Media** **in Promoting** **Active Citizenship**

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Community Media Needs to Strengthen Its Relationship with Civil Society and Communities

By Lizeka Maduna

The Democracy Development Program held an Inaugural Media Summit aimed at enhancing and strengthening existing relationship between community media, civil society and communities; through long term solutions.

This comes after an observation of detachment of community media from its civil society allies.

The Democracy Development Program held its Inaugural media Summit in Durban.

The two-day event saw media practitioners, student journalists, academics, civil society organizations and community members come together to explore issues affecting community media at grassroots level; and seek long term solutions to unravel them through discussions.

Media guru and Witwatersrand Journalism Department Professor Anton Harber opened his keynote address by noting a plethora of



Above: Prof Anton Harber from Wits Journalism delivering a keynote address at a DDP Media Summit in Durban.

challenges facing media as a collective in South Africa.

"I am sure that we are all concerned about the state of our media. We rely on our news media to act as eyes and ears on our government. If they can't do this effectively and properly, our democracy is at risk," he said.

Although the state of the media has been questioned and heavily criticized over the years, Professor

Harber noted the challenges faced by community media, which render the sector dysfunctional at times, including financial constraints.

"We know about the instability of community media and the shortage of resources among other things. We live in challenging times for all news media," Professor Harber said.

Since its inception back in the 90s, under the Independent Broadcasting Act (IBA, 1993); community media has been the force that brings communities together through its mandate, which is reporting for the people.

However, the persistent issues facing the industry, including lack of access to resources has resulted in the sector falling short of fulfilling its tasks



Above: DDP Executive Director, Dr Kariuki, with one of the speakers Advocate Robin Sewlal from DUT Journalism.

During the summit, many issues were highlighted as hindrance for community media to fully carry out its duty, this includes maintaining its supposed relationship with communities it serves.

According to the National Community Radio Forum KwaZulu-Natal chairperson Simon Ntsele, one of the issues the sector is constantly faced with is the continued exploitation by political elitism that continues to push its agenda using budgets allocated for community media, especially by some people the sector works with from various departments.

Civil society is one of the left wings that continue to keep society sustained through its efforts in educating communities; and as one of the vehicles that fights to drive social and political change in different spheres of life for communities.

It is worth noting that some of the ally-ship they rely on is community media sector.

However, since the hardships arising from the conflict of interest within the sector; this is one of the relationships that has been hard to maintain.... [read more here](#)

Community media plays a critical role in educating citizens on many aspects of life, including democracy and nation building. The Democracy Development Program (DDP) brought together the content executives, academics and the civil society to the 2019 inaugural media summit.



Above: Simon Ntsel, Chairperson of KZN NCRF, Paseka Maleka from ICASA, Peter Rice from Radio Kwezi, Adv Robin Sewlal

from DUT Journalism and DDP Board member Nickolaus Bauer preparing for day 2 of the summit.



Above: Delegates at the media summit during a Q & A session.

Tags: [DUT Journalism](#), [IEC](#), [BCCSA](#), [ICASA](#), [WITS Journalism](#) [democracy](#), [DDP](#), [KAS](#), [politics](#)

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