

So, it is crucial to strike an appropriate balance between:

- on the one hand, encouraging a local diversity of authentic views and positions to be expressed (so as not to compromise the independence, integrity and credibility of the media as an institution exemplary of democracy), and
- on the other hand, ensuring that the media reflects qualities compatible with peace-building (non-sensationalist, non-violent, ethnically tolerant, objective, responsible reporting).

Bearing this in mind, in a given situation we should consider a combination of the following roles for the media as an aspect of a peace-building intervention:

The media should:

specifically:

- provide information – hopefully accurate;
- provide an alternative view;
- provide a voice for the voiceless;
- entertain;
- advocate peace;
- translate highly political or technical information into popular language;
- act as a watchdog by monitoring implementation of agreements and holding public officials accountable;
- through responsible reporting, contribute to the building of a culture of peace as opposed to sensationalizing violence;
- serve as a communication mechanism when warring parties can't talk to each other (debate: another view holds that this is not possible because all players – including the media/journalists - are tainted in a conflict situation).

in general:

- do everything to provide an opportunity for individuals to make informed choices;
- facilitate democratic development and good governance;
- serve as a model of the democratic process;

When deciding on the ultimate role for the media to play, what should the overall focus be?

In some instances the MESSAGE will be most important. That is, it will be most important to ensure that the media puts out messages compatible with peace-building. During a conflict, for example, peace-builders should ensure that the media relays messages which support tolerance rather than those which incite violence; messages which give proper and balanced attention to peace. In post-conflict situations, and where a relatively free media is in place, it is important to train journalists to move beyond traditional and sensationalist “war mongering” coverage to more sophisticated peace