

E – NEWS

Access to Information

Fall Edition

Volume 4



THE
CARTER CENTER



ACCESS TO INFORMATION, THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA AND INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Welcome to Volume 4 of the Access to Information E-News with focus on Access to Information, the role of the media and investigative journalism. The objective of *E-NEWS* is to create a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about Jamaica's Access to Information Act and to provide an opportunity to focus on specific issues, themes, and news relating to the public's "Right to Know." We hope that through the distribution of *E-NEWS* we can raise awareness of the Access to Information Act in Jamaica and encourage people to use this new right.

The Northern Caribbean University, Media Communications Department has assisted in the preparation of Volume 4 of this *E-NEWS*. In this volume, there is a discussion of Access to Information and the role of the media, the state of investigative journalism in Jamaica and training on investigative journalism.

In this edition you will find articles on:

- Access to Information, the role of the media and investigative journalism
- The use of the Access to Information Act in Jamaica for investigative journalism
- The Access to Information Act 2002- Does the public understand its relevance?
- Findings from the Workshop on "Creating a culture for Investigative Journalism in Jamaica and use of Access to Information" and survey of media owners, editors and journalists
- Excerpt from "A culture of secrecy" –What has happened to the principle that American democracy should be accessible and transparent?
- The Access to Information Investigative Journalism Student Award
- Training and awards for investigative journalism
- Recent and upcoming events
- ATI in the NEWS- links to articles written using the Access to Information Act
- Quote of the month on the right to know

The Carter Center

One Copenhill
453 Freedom Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30307
Phone: (404) 420-5179
Fax: (404) 420-5196
www.cartercenter.org

The Carter Center

Jamaica Field Office
1 Grants Pen Road
Kingston 8
Phone: (876) 755-3641
Fax: (876) 925-2821
E-mail: cartercenterja@mail.infochan.com

Northern Caribbean University

Manchester Road
Mandeville
Phone: 1-(876) 523-2105
www.ncu.edu.jm

Access to Information, the role of the media and investigative journalism

The theme for this edition of E-NEWS is Access to Information, the role of the media and Investigative Journalism. But what is Investigative Journalism and how do journalists use an Access to Information Act in their work? In *The Reporter's Handbook: An Investigator's Guide to Documents and Techniques*, Steve Weinberg defined it as:

"Reporting, through one's own initiative and work product, matters of importance to readers, viewers or listeners. In many cases, the subjects of the reporting wish the matters under scrutiny to remain undisclosed."

Investigative Reporting has been defined by Lucinda S. Fleeson in *Dig Deep Aim High: A training model for investigative reporting* as

"Stories that contain original work, not leaked investigations from law authorities; Show a pattern of systematic problems, not just one isolated incident affecting one individual; right a wrong; explain complex social problems; reveal corruption, wrongdoing or abuse of power".

When considering the value of an access to information law, most people think that one is discussing a media law or that its greatest value is for journalists. This is not the case. For most journalists, the need for information is immediate. They cannot wait the 20 days to receive the documents as their story is going to print tomorrow. Rather an access to information law is most beneficial to the investigative journalist, a different breed of reporter altogether. The investigative journalist digs deep to get a story, they find numerous sources, and they back their features with documents that often lead to critical revelations. For an investigative journalist, an access to information law, which provides a right to seek, request and receive information, serves as another critical tool in their arsenal.

This is not to say that the passage and implementation of an access to information law does not serve all members of the media. For those responsible for producing news on a daily basis, the establishment of an information regime means that in general there is more information available, even without the need for making a request and waiting for a response. Experience has shown that in countries with effective access to information laws, governments are more transparent and increased automatic disclosure of vast quantities of public documents assists all journalists in meeting the challenges of delivering credible and vital news to the citizens.

An access to information regime serves the media, but the media has a responsibility as well. It is the media, as one of the greatest checks and balances in our society, to promote the passage of a comprehensive and strong access to information law and then to take the lead in making requests and reporting on others' findings. Without the leadership of the media houses, editors, and particularly investigative journalists, the fundamental right to information will not meet its potential for anyone.

The use of the Access to Information Act in Jamaica for investigative journalism

By Leonardo Blair, Gleaner Co. Ltd.

After just over four months of using the Access to Information Act to investigate stories for the Gleaner Co. Ltd. I have been forced to master the art of patience as I await government appointed access officers to find and dust records, which are then released in 30 days. Accessing Information under this new Act could impulsively be described as the process of 'pulling teeth' from a tangled web, however since it is early days yet, I will be measured in this report. Firstly, the Act has established one powerful, almost all encompassing decree for Government officials, -every request must be acknowledged and attended to in a prescribed period of time- if any Government office is unable to do so, a valid reason must be given.

As a result of this Act, reporters seeking information through interviews or faxed questions can no longer be promised then invariably be forgotten. So even if Government Officials do not wish to address a specific request they are bound by law to respond whether the documents are embarrassing or not. That said however formulating a request for formerly 'secret' information can be difficult if the reporter is not too sure of the exact information he is looking for. Most Access Officers from experience so far, will not give you more information than you ask for. If requests are left to broad interpretation, some Access Officers may provide information based on their interpretation, which may not agree with the reporters.

If the request is to be amended, a new request has to be done and that information will take another 30 days of searching and waiting. Of more than a dozen requests sent to individual Government agencies in April 2005 seeking the travel expenditure of Government Ministers in the last four years, more than half of the Government Ministries took more than 30 days to provide the requested information. The only thing that has remained consistently positive with these agencies is the acknowledgement of the receipt of your request. Some ministries have reported difficulty sourcing certain information or having to deal with a barrage of requests from the general public. Some access officers are almost invariably never at their desks. In my experience so far the act works a little better than having personal government press releases but as far as investigative journalism goes, it is an experience in digging for the story yourself.

The Access to Information Act 2002- Does the public understand its relevance?

By Grace Cameron, Assistant Professor, Northern Caribbean University

It's a theatre for the dispossessed that plays out against a backdrop of blocked roads and scenes of people screaming for justice. On television newscasts and from the pages of newspapers, demonstrators often vent anger and frustration at their general sense of disempowerment and of being shut out of the system that governs their lives. What is frequently lost in the cacophony is the message that people want access to information to better understand the workings of their society. The Access to Information Act, passed in 2002, helps to empower Jamaicans by providing the media, companies, lobby groups and members of the public with a right to access official documents and information that are of public concern. The people's right to know how their government operates (and to participate in their government) is a fundamental part of democracy.

Access to information engenders public debate and participation in national issues, thereby informing and empowering the populace. In addition, this freedom of information law helps to foster open, transparent and accountable government. In other words, it helps to key public officials on their toes. For the media, which is another underpinning of our democracy, the access to state-controlled information is an effective tool to get the story behind the headlines by shedding the spotlight on key issues and developments. In short, the Access to Information Act is a tool, which gives Jamaicans an information platform from which to air their views, and gives them insight into the decisions that are taken, particularly in political circles.

Findings from the Workshop on “Creating a culture for Investigative Journalism in Jamaica and survey of media owners, editors and journalists”

by Carole Excell, The Carter Center

Journalists in Jamaica are being challenged daily by the public to conduct investigative journalism on diverse issues including the economy, crime, corruption, environment, health and education. There are those that say that investigative journalism happens rarely in Jamaica while others criticize journalists and say they have lost their objectivity,

creativeness and imagination in sourcing government held information and presenting “the story behind the story”. The Carter Center in association with the Press Association of Jamaica (PAJ), Media Association of Jamaica (MAJ), and Management Systems International (Civil Society Project) held a workshop entitled “Creating a Culture of Investigative Journalism in Jamaica and the Use of Access to Information,” in November 2004 to discuss some of these issues. The objectives of the workshop included examining the state of investigative journalism in Jamaica and promoting awareness of, and the use of the Access to Information Act 2002 (ATT) by the Jamaican media. In addition to local speakers, international participants included The Carter Center’s Senior Program Associate and Access to Information Project Manager Laura Neuman; Charles Lewis, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Public Integrity, a non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization that conducts investigative research and reporting on public policy issues in the United States and around the world; and Paul Williams, Chief Crime Correspondent for the Sunday World who has been a leading voice in investigative reporting done on elements of organized crime in his native Dublin, Ireland. Some of the questions raised at the workshop included:

1. Is there a need to focus on investigative journalism in Jamaica given recent statistics from Reporters without Borders showing that Jamaica ranks 24th in the world in freedom of the press?
2. Are Jamaican journalists able to take advantage of this purported freedom of the press to engage in investigative journalism, and if not, why?
3. What is the role of the media in using and encouraging the use of the new Jamaican right to information?
4. Are owners of the commercial media committed to investigative reporting?
5. Are journalists being provided a nurturing environment to do investigative work by media houses that employ them?

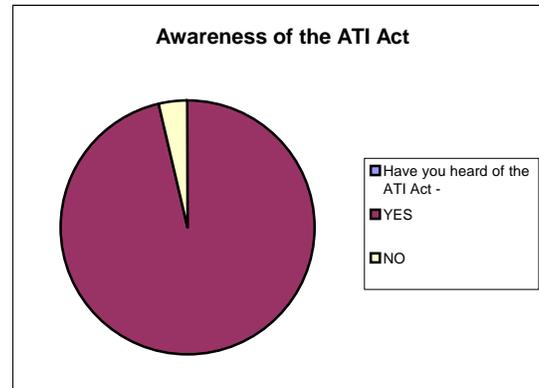
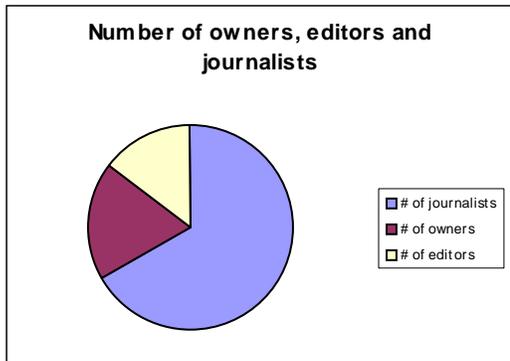
Participants discussed the role of libel, the economic viability of investigative journalism given the human and financial resources required, the time to conduct investigations, the availability of training in investigative journalism and the effect on the profession of high attrition rates. Participants also raised and discussed issues associated with the challenges of the culture of the newsroom, the partisan nature of the Jamaican society, the problems with performing investigative journalism in a small society, and the role of increasingly commercial and advertising interests in media, to understand the extent to which investigative journalism was possible in Jamaica. It was emphasised by the facilitators that although there are a number of obstacles to the development of a culture for investigative journalism these problems should not be seen as deterrents to doing good investigative reporting and that journalists, editors and media owners have to find solutions to these problems and aggressively pursue stories as a commitment to being the watchdogs of democracy.

In relation to Access to Information, journalists and editors participated in a case study where they had to go through the steps to do an investigative journalism piece using the Access to Information Act. Case studies were presented and participants were asked how they would develop the story and use access to information to make the story better and ensure impact.

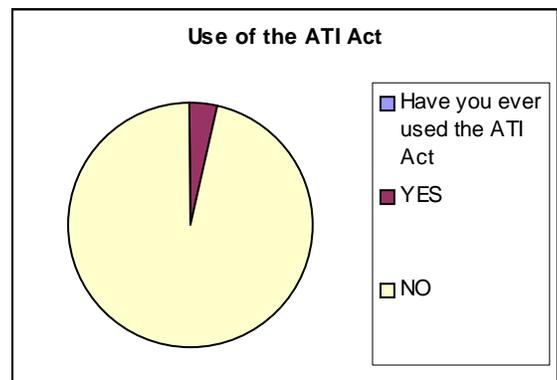
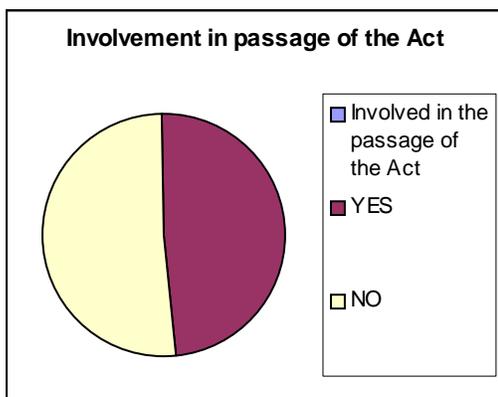
The recommendations from the workshop included:

1. Development of specific training in the techniques of investigative reporting and ethics for journalists in Jamaica including rural areas.
2. Development by each media house of a formal manual outlining a particular newsrooms policies and standards in regards to the integrity of a story.
3. Organisation of follow-up workshops on Access to Information for journalists by the Carter Center.
4. The need for the development of a course on investigative journalism at both the University of the West Indies and Northern Caribbean University to increase the capacity of students in this area (no course currently exists).
5. PAJ and MAJ to work on establishment of a position paper on current libel laws.
6. The need for encouragement of discussion and consensus on media standards.

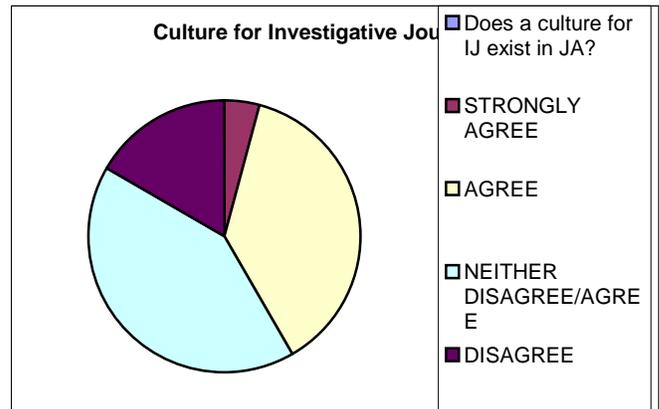
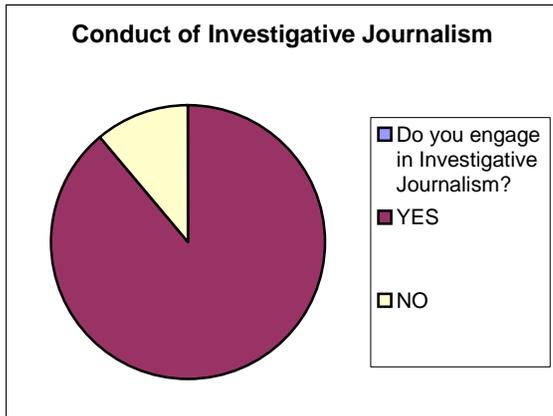
The Carter Center issued a survey to the participants (media owners, editors and journalists) who attended the workshop to measure their knowledge of the Access to Information Act 2002, its use in investigative journalism and the important role the Act could play in Jamaica. The sample size was small with only twenty-seven of our fifty-one workshop participants responding to the questionnaire but the proportion of respondents to workshop participants is a large enough sample size to suggest the general impression that the workshop attendees had towards access to information and investigative journalism. There were a larger percentage of journalists in the survey sample than owners and editors, which was reflective of the number of media houses in Jamaica.



The results suggest that there is a widespread awareness of the ATI Act. All but one of the respondents had heard of the Access to Information Act citing government services, the ATI Unit, workshops and the media as including information on the Act. 48% of the respondents were active in the passage of the Access to Information Act by participating in seminars, making comments through the Press Association of Jamaica or covering the parliamentary debates.



These statistics suggest that there is a relative appreciation of the importance of the Act in the field of journalism. Nonetheless, only two of the twenty-seven media representatives had actually used the Access to Information Act, with the Act being in effect for almost a year. Media representatives cited a number of reasons including their unfamiliarity with the process, the fact that there was no need to use it in their work, and the amount of time taken to receive documents. This result may suggest that the media is still conducted news reporting on the basis of their sources, information publicly available or supplied through press releases.



The results of the survey suggest that the representatives from the media were conflicted as to whether a culture for investigative journalism exists in Jamaica with a higher number of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing to this suggestion. This despite the fact that almost 100% of the respondents stated that they had conducted some investigative reporting in the past. Furthermore, all the respondents held that access to information is important to their work, as it is critical for investigative journalism.

Support from media owners to journalists both in terms of time and resources is needed to conduct investigative journalism but also important is independent, creative, hardworking journalists who are dedicated to their role to making a difference with a story. Also important will be technical support for journalists to make use of this valuable new right to information. Creating a culture for investigative journalism in Jamaica is a process, which is critical if the media fraternity is to make full use of the Access to Information Act. This is a process that we hope has begun with the Carter Center's continued work with the media in Jamaica.

Excerpt from A Culture of Secrecy – What has happened to the principle that American democracy should be accessible and transparent?

Permission to publish the extract given by Charles Lewis, author

"Political language . . . is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." –George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*

WASHINGTON, February 3, 2005 — In the world's oldest democracy, pressure on investigative journalists is usually exerted in sophisticated, non-lethal ways, under the public radar. Every day in Washington, D.C., thousands of government and corporate public relations flaks and lobbyists purvey their "talking points" with a friendly smile, no matter how odious the client, no matter how intellectually dishonest or morally dubious their message. Journalists must trudge through the shameless "spin"-that vanilla word admiringly used these days instead of "lying," which has a harshly judgmental, jarringly rude ring in Washington power circles.

Sometimes the persuasion becomes less subtle. For example, when the Center for Public Integrity obtained and prepared to publish online the secret, proposed draft sequel to the USA Patriot Act, known as "Patriot II," we got calls from the U.S. Justice Department beseeching us **not** to publish.

Over the years, those unhappy with my investigations have tried just about everything to discourage our work. They have issued subpoenas, stalked my hotel room, escorted me off military bases, threatened physical arrest, suggested I leave via a second-story window, made a death threat personally communicated by concerned state troopers who asked that we leave the area immediately (we didn't), hired public relations people to infiltrate my news conferences and pose as "reporters" to ask distracting questions, attempted to pressure the Center's donors, and even brought expensive,

frivolous libel litigation that takes years and costs millions of dollars to defend.

Being despised and frozen out by those in power is an occupational hazard-indeed, a badge of honor-for investigative reporters everywhere. Certainly no one at the nonpartisan Center for Public Integrity harbors any illusions that he or she will ever be invited to dinner at the White House. This is hardly surprising given that the Center broke the Clinton White House "Lincoln Bedroom" fundraising scandal, first revealed that Enron was George W. Bush's top career patron and years later disclosed that Vice President Dick Cheney's former company, Halliburton, is by far the Bush administration's favourite contractor in Iraq. For these impertinent affronts to officialdom, the Center's reports have received 28 awards from respected journalism organizations since 1996.

Public apathy, though, is another matter. Take our 2003 Center report in which we posted and tallied up all of the major U.S. government contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan-a project which won the George Polk Award for online journalism. Center investigators found that nearly every one of the 10 largest contracts awarded for work in Iraq and Afghanistan went to companies employing former high-ranking government officials, and **all** 10 top contractors are established donors in American politics, contributing nearly \$11 million to national political parties, candidates, and political action committees since 1990. And on the eve of the Iraq war, at least nine of the 30 members of the Defense Policy Board, the government-appointed group that advises the Pentagon, had ties to companies that had won more than \$76 billion in defense contracts in 2001 and 2002.

The personal financial disclosure forms of those advisers are secret, and much about the entire contracting process is deliberately hidden, and therefore unknown to the public. For example, it took 20 researchers, writers, and editors at the Center for Public Integrity six months and 73 Freedom of Information Act requests, including successful litigation in federal court against the Army and State Department, to begin to discern who was getting the Iraq and Afghanistan contracts, and for how much. Why? What has happened to the principles of accessible information and transparency in the decision-making process in our democracy?

True, there is nothing illegal about such cozy, convenient confluences in the mercenary culture of Washington, D.C. But what does it say about the state of our democracy that, beyond some spot news coverage of the Center's findings around the world, there was almost no reaction or interest by Congressional oversight committees, which are controlled by Republicans loath to criticize the Bush administration? Of course, no official reaction means no second day story, no "hook" for the cautious and sometimes deferential national news media, no mounting public awareness or concern, and no political problem. Welcome to business-as-usual Washington.

Undeterred by what we had found, we plunged even deeper, producing a report entitled [*Outsourcing the Pentagon*](#), in which a team of 23 researchers, writers and editors examined more than 2.2 million Pentagon contract actions totaling \$900 billion spent over six years. This massive nine-month investigative report profiled the 737 largest Defense Department contractors who, including their subsidiaries and affiliates, have received at least \$100 million in contracts. Once again, the Center found, the largest contractors are among the most lavish spenders on political influence. And, most notably, we found that no-bid contracts like the infamous one Halliburton received to do business in Iraq have accounted for more than 40 percent of Pentagon contracting since 1998. That's at least \$362 billion in taxpayer money given to companies without competitive bidding.

Following news coverage of our findings, what was the reaction? Another Washington yawn. There was barely any sign of an official pulse, let alone government investigative interest or, perish the thought, outrage. And yet most Americans assume-and expect-that government contracts are competitively bid, partly because White House, Pentagon and company officials have, year after year, emphasized what they want us to know and, like a circus magician, misdirected our attention away from what would expose them.

Despite the inhospitable landscape and the grim nature of the work-forensically excavating the cold corpus of

unvarnished reality-most investigative reporters would probably grudgingly acknowledge that they are, to paraphrase John Kennedy, "idealists without illusions," with some modicum of hope that things can and should be better than they are. Hope and perspective are essential, for there is much work to be done.

The Access to Information Investigative Journalism Student Award

The Student Access to Information Investigative Journalism award was conceptualised in October 2004 by The Carter Center to encourage and recognize excellence in student investigative journalism that upholds the objectives of enhancing the right to know, promoting public access to information and encouraging public participation in national decision-making. The award was created to highlight the importance of the use of Jamaica's Access to Information Act for investigative journalism. Stories for submission must be investigative reports that use the Access to Information Act as one of the tools in gathering information and applicants are required to submit a statement of method which outlines the authors experience in the use of the Act in carrying out their investigations. The award is co-sponsored by the Carter Center, Management Systems International MSI CIV-JAM, the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication and the Northern Caribbean University's Mass Communication Department. Only students at the two Universities are eligible for the award for any radio, television, or print story produced by a student or group of students during the university term.

Submissions are judged by practicing journalists with experience in investigative journalism. The Prize for the 2005 award is US \$300 and Jamaican media houses (Nationwide News Network, CVM-TV, the Gleaner Co. Ltd.) have agreed to publish the winning entries. It is hoped that Jamaican Mass Communication students use this opportunity to showcase their talents and ability to dig for the story behind the story for both local and national issues affecting Jamaicans. For more information about the Access to Information Student Investigative Journalism Award contact:- The Carter Center at 1 Grants Pen Road, Kingston 8, TEL: 755-3641 or by e-mail at cartercenterja@mail.infochan.com

Training and Awards for Investigative Journalism

by **Monika Goforth, Carter Center (Intern, JAMAICA)**

Jamaican journalists who are interested in furthering their training on investigative journalism have a number of opportunities to broaden their knowledge base both from first degree and masters programs at international universities or through training courses specifically offered on investigative journalism. There are also a number of opportunities to highlight some of the work done in Jamaica by journalists through the submission of investigative pieces for international awards. The development of a number of new Jamaican awards for investigative journalism from the private sector and civil society is also an encouraging development. The following is a brief list of some of the international awards, fellowships and training opportunities that are available and posted online.

Awards/Fellowships:

ICIJ Award for Investigative Reporting

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) Award for Outstanding International Investigative Reporting honours excellence in trans-national investigative journalism with a U.S. \$20,000 cash prize. The competition is open to any professional journalist or team of journalists of any nationality working in any medium pursuing an investigation - either a single work or a single-subject series – that involves reporting in at least two countries on a topic of world significance. Application criteria and deadlines are available from ICIJ at www.icij.org.

Best Investigative Journalism Report on Corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean: Transparency

International in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Press and Society Institute award a Prize for the Best Investigative Journalism Report on Corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean annually. The prize is an award of U.S. \$25,000.00. The Award is open to any journalist or team of journalists who may present one or several reports published in Caribbean or Latin America media. Associations or media companies may also forward reports.

Application criteria and deadlines may be found at

http://www.transparency.org/in_focus_archive/award/tilac_award_eng.html#english

Fund for Investigative Journalism: The Fund for Investigative Journalism gives grants, ranging from \$500 to \$10,000, to reporters working outside the protection and backing of major news organizations. To apply: Write a proposal. The applicant must write a letter outlining the story, what he or she expects to prove, how this will be done, and the sources for the proof.

More information: visit <http://fij.org/>, or contact johnchhyde@yahoo.com.

International Federation of Journalists

Lorenzo Natali Prize for Journalism

This competition promotes reporting on human rights and democracy as crucial elements of development. Only entries from print journalists are eligible, and articles must have been published in a developing country or in a European Union member state.

More Information: contact nataliprize@pophost.eunet.be

Commonwealth Broadcasting Association

The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) is offering an award for broadcasting on human rights or development issues. Radio or TV journalists working in [Commonwealth countries](#) are eligible. The deadline for both categories is October 15. Programs should be from 10 to 60 minutes long. The World Bank is sponsoring the award for development issues; Amnesty International sponsors the award on human rights.

For more details, including other award categories:

<http://www.cba.org.uk/awards/CBABroadcastingAwards2006.htm>

A useful website to find similar resources see <http://canada.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/425/>

Fellowships and Training:

Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships

This Fellowship enables a journalist to engage in reporting, writing and editing as a staff reporter in an American newsroom for six months. **Costs:** AFPF pays all costs of program-related international and domestic U.S. travel and provides a monthly stipend to cover basic living expenses. **Application Deadline:** September 1 each year

More information: visit www.pressfellowships.org, or contact AFPF at info@pressfellowships.org

World Press Institute Fellowships This fellowship enables a journalist to receive training and firsthand experience in the role and responsibilities of a free press in a democracy. Fellows travel the United States for four months, interviewing the famous and non-famous, visiting large and small institutions, experiencing this country first hand. **Costs:** All expenses paid. **Application Deadline:** December 31 each year. **More information:** visit

www.worldpressinstitute.org or contact ullmann@macalester.edu

The Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program

This Fellowship enables a journalist to enhance their ability to promote democracy. Fellows will be in residence at the International Forum for Democratic Studies, the research and publications arm of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington D.C. **Costs:** Receive a monthly stipend for living expenses, health insurance and reimbursement for travel to and from Washington D.C. **Application Deadline:** April 1 – encouraged to submit materials earlier. **More Information:** visit www.ned.org/forum/fellowship_program.html or contact kristin@ned.org

The Gordon Fisher Fellowship

This fellowship covers the stay of a Commonwealth newspaper journalist each year enabling the winner to spend a year at the University of Toronto doing postgraduate study in the field of journalism of their choosing. **Costs:** Living accommodations and travel are covered by the Fellowship. **Application Deadline:** February 18
More Information: visit http://www.cpu.org.uk/fellowsh_gf.html or contact cpu@org.uk

World Bank Institute Online Courses

The World Bank Institute offers online Investigative Journalism courses at the introductory and advanced levels. Investigative Journalism I is a course designed to assist younger reporters in developing the skills they need to operate as effective reporters in a democratic society and within a market economy. This course is built around a case study featuring bribery and corruption that has proven popular with hundreds of young journalists in developing countries. Investigative Journalism II aims to strengthen the capacity of the news media so they can play a critical role in holding governments and businesses to account. Focusing on mid-level reporters with the means to carry out and deliver well-researched and clearly written stories that expose wrongdoing, corruption and systemic malfunction in developing and transitional nations, the course identifies constraints to doing watchdog journalism, and provides a tool kit to reporters on how to do investigative projects.

More Information: contact skpundeh1@worldbank.org or visit www.worldbank.org

Recent and Upcoming Events

Recent Events:

Media: - The Carter Center held a number of internal training workshops for the Media on the Access to Information Act in June and July 2005. Workshops have been held for the Gleaner Co. Ltd., RJR Communications Group, Jamaica Observer and The Sunday Herald. Topics covered in the 2 hour training course included: The basics of the Access to Information Act for journalists, Tips for making requests and avoiding pitfalls, Access to Information and investigating special issues, challenging refusals and enforcing your right to information.

Press Conference: The Access to Information Stakeholders Committee hosted a Press Conference to highlight July 5, 2005 when all Government Agencies, wholly owned Government Companies and Parish Councils were brought under the Access to Information Act. This was an important day as it brought the Act into effect throughout Government and highlights the Government's continuing commitment to timely implementation of the Act.

Vulnerable Communities Network: A presentation was made on the Access to Information Act at the offices of Jamaica Aids Support on July 22 with the Vulnerable Communities Network, a group of Non- Governmental Organisations who work to protect the most vulnerable, such as children, the elderly, women, those suffering from diseases and disabilities, the displaced as well as all those living in poverty or suffering from deprivation and loss as a consequence of difficult circumstances. The Chairperson for Jamaicans for Justice, Susan Goffe presented on her experiences using the Act at this event.

It Inna De Law: The Carter Center was invited by Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) to make a presentation at a workshop on July 28, 2005 on the Access to Information Act. The workshop was held for community members on a new book produced by JET on environmental and planning laws in Jamaica called "It Inna de Law". The book contains

a short description of the Access to Information Act and how to use it for environmental advocacy. For more information on “It Inna de Law” contact:- Ms. Akilah Anderson c/o Jamaica Environment Trust, 11 Waterloo Road, Kingston 10 Tel: 960 3693, Fax: 926-0212 E-mail:- aanderson.jet@cwjamaica.com

International Right to Know Day – September 28, 2005: International Right to Know Day was proposed by Freedom of Information Advocates from around the world, in order to symbolize the global movement for the promotion of the right to information. The objective of the day is to raise awareness of the right to information and highlight fundamental human rights. Jamaica celebrated International Right to Know Day by a meeting of a number of civil society groups to discuss what has been accomplished by civil society groups working on using ATI for advocacy and lobbying, how best to work together towards the Review of the ATI Act and how to strengthening the network of groups interested in the Act. If you would like additional information about this ATI Network and the decisions made at the meeting please contact **Jamaicans for Justice at TEL: 755-4524, FAX: 755-4355 or by E-mail: ja.for.justice@cwjamaica.com**

Human Rights Jamboree – December 10, 2005: The Independent Jamaica Council for Human Rights (IJCHR) is commemorating Human Rights Day in Jamaica with a Human Rights Jamboree at Emancipation Park from 10:00am-6:00pm on Saturday December 10, 2005. The objective of the day is to raise awareness of non- governmental organisations committed to serve citizens through the defence of human rights. A number of human rights organisations in Jamaica will be participating and The Carter Center will be there to promote the RIGHT TO INFORMATION. If you would like additional information please contact the IJCHR -Peta Gaye Levy at 967-1204/948-5863.

ATI in the NEWS- links to articles written using the Access to Information Act

There have been a number of Print articles that have mentioned the use of the Access to Information Act in Jamaica recently, below are some links to these articles:

“Off the record Parish council books in shambles – published Sunday | August 7, ...”: <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20050807/lead/lead1.html>

“All government agencies, departments on board by July Access to Information Act - published Sunday | May 22, 2005” <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20050522/lead/lead7.html>

“Lawyers ready for Info Act published: Wednesday | April 20, 2005” <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20050420/news/news3.html>

“JFJ wants index of documents available under ATI law published-Launches help desk”
Wednesday, June 15, 2005:- http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/html/20050614t230000-0500_82446_obs_jfj_wants_index_of_documents_available_under_ati_law_published.asp

Quote of the month on the Right to Know

“Our privilege and duty as investigative journalists is to defend free speech, inform self-governing citizens, encourage deliberation on public policy and serve the public interest. These duties sometimes require that journalists reveal criminal activity, investigate abuses of power, expose wrong-doing, protecting the public’s health and safety and support the open administration of justice and government. Investigative journalism employs special methods that raise ethical and legal issues. The stories of investigative journalism have serious consequences for individuals, organizations and society. Investigative journalism, therefore, has distinct responsibilities”.

Canadian Association of Journalists *Statement of Principles for Investigative Journalism* approved at 2004 Annual General Meeting

ABOUT THE E-NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 of the Access to Information Newsletter will focus on Access to Information, Record Keeping and the Archives and we are happy to announce that the Jamaica Archives will assist in its production. We are looking for persons or groups interested in working on Volume 6. Please tell us if you want the newsletter to focus on a specific theme for the month, or if you wish to submit information or articles. We welcome your input, and any information you care to share with us about your special interests.

Jamaicans for Justice is considering the possibility of setting up a list serve for this E-newsletter please give us your views on this and whether you believe this would be beneficial to the work to create this.

If you do not want to receive this e-newsletter please e-mail Carole Excell at cartercenterja@mail.infochan.com or call her at 755-3641. Again, we apologize for any cross postings, and are currently working on a database of e-mails to avoid future duplications.

NOTE: Please note that the Carter Center reserve the right to edit the newsletter or articles or information submitted. The materials contained in this newsletter are provided for general information purposes only and are not necessarily the views of Carter Center.

