



School of journalism students at work: emphasis on quality training

Journalism may move to Education Building

BY JULIUS KOMBO

A REQUEST has been made to move the School of Journalism from the "slum" which it has been occupying since its inception in 1978, to Education Building in the heart of the University of Nairobi.

This was revealed recently to The Anvil by the School of Journalism's administrative assistant, Mr. K. Ngugi.

Reasons to have the school moved from here range from the place's inability to cater for all the schools demands due to its small size to the dilapidated nature of the building.

Following the current expansion of the University of Nairobi which has involved the shifting of some faculties from the main campus premises to other areas, it appears that some room could be created to cater adequately for the School of Journalism and move it from the premises of the Institute of Development Studies which it has been occupying for about two decades now.

According to Mr. Ngugi, the School was started 18 years ago and ever since it has been training mass-media personnel not only from East and Central Africa, but also from Europe and USA. The School admits 22 students each year although it receives a large number of applications. This is because of lack enough facilities. Therefore to maintain the School's high standards of training,

Inferior

the school strictly admits a number which it can handle comfortably. Although a high rate of unemployment is widespread in the country, Mr. Ngugi disclosed that graduates from the school do not face this problem because they are immediately absorbed in both private and public sectors, thanks to the excellent training which they go through in the school.

The reason as to why the school was started in this "slum" raises questions as to how people in developing countries view Journalism. It is still regarded by many as an inferior pro-

fession in most of these countries. This regrettable state of affairs can be attributed to the large numbers of our people who are unaware of the role that the mass-media plays in their lives.

'It will take time in Africa to

place journalism where it belongs'

If well used, the mass-media enhance the development of a country. Ironically, Third World countries which in essence are the ones in need of this development look down upon the profession of journalism. This leaves them prone to poverty, disease, and backwardness, a thing which makes them even more dependent on the developed countries.

When we view Journalism and the role it plays in mobilising the people, it becomes a mistake to consider it as an inferior profession. The media has been known to create political unity or to strengthen nations torn apart by different political ideologies. It has also been known to cause political instability in others. It follows that for the politics of a nation to become significant to its people, the mass-media

Misreporting

must be involved actively in development.

It will take time, in Africa, to place journalism where it belongs. This is so when we hear that people placed high in political offices talk of caning journalists for alleged misreporting. Such talk only serves to prove that the

Press is deemed as inferior to Politics, Science, Medicine or any other profession.

Journalism should be seen as profession just like any other. Today for example, we have journalists who are specialists in various areas such as Economics, Medicine, Law and Psychology. This means that such people know exactly the things they write about and so the readers have more confidence in them. It is obvious that quality journalism is not for everybody.

In developed countries, great strides have been made to place the Press where it belongs. No wonder journalists in these countries can benefit from the freedom of press, something absent in Africa.

It is high time that journalists in Third World countries realised their importance, as the link between the politicians, the scientists, the engineers and the masses, a link that is so crucial that no nation can stand without it. For this reason they should make a concerted effort to get the kind of recognition which befits such people.

Journal of

It's 1

Read t

Get your c