



The role of media in creating inclusive, just and peaceful societies

Guidelines for SDC media assistance



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**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

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1 Introduction

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has been supporting media for many years and has accumulated considerable experience in this regard. SDC takes a two-fold approach to working with the media: as a vehicle for development (see Communication for development (C4Dev)), and as an important actor in governance. This guidance is about the latter approach.

In 2017, SDC conducted a knowledge sharing exercise and literature review, which highlighted the need to update its previous guidance (published in 2004 and 2007), taking into account new trends, international standards and identified gaps. This renewed guidance replaces the previous two documents.

The guidance aims to give SDC staff and members of the Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance (DDLG) network an updated view on media development – a field that is still relatively new and for which there is more and more demand. The guidance provides an overall understanding of the media sector and its reference framework, as well as needs assessments for various media types, information on SDC's approach to media assistance,

and a range of media interventions (including in specific contexts). It also offers guidance on how to assess and mitigate risks and how to monitor and evaluate media work.

The document is structured in nine chapters, the core being chapter 6, 'Designing interventions'. This sets out six 'segments' of the media through which SDC can intervene (individual journalists, media outlets, media institutions, economic and technological factors, political and legal environment and safety, and social beliefs/cultural values). For each segment, the chapter gives a short introduction to the topic, describes potential interventions, and discusses issues to keep in mind.

Given that the literature has expanded significantly since the previous edition of the SDC Media Guidelines, and that there are now many examples of projects and interventions, we have adopted a twin-track approach to publishing the new edition. There is a printed version, available in French and English, with an extensive bibliography; there is also an on-line version, with links to reference documents, examples and videos, which will be regularly updated and enriched to make it a living document.



Niambie. © BBC Media Action

2 Significance for the SDC

2.1 The media as an important pillar of a democratic society

The media are key intermediaries between individuals and the rest of the society. The media also play an important role in shaping the very nature of society. They connect citizens with what is happening around them and with the prevailing social, economic, cultural and political institutions. The media also provide channels for these institutions to interact with citizens.

In the digital era, the term 'media' is sometimes used to encompass, without distinction, all the popular information and communication technologies (ICTs) (e.g. mobile phone and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube). However, for the purpose of this guidance, the term 'media' is not to be confounded with simple communication channels. We use the term to encompass both online media and traditional mass media houses such as press, radio and TV stations, but more specifically those media that are expected to be bound by journalistic ethics, and other professional standards, with specific roles to fulfil.

The first role conferred on media and journalists is to report on what is going on in the world and to provide impartial, fact-based information of public interest. By doing so, the media can help citizens to take informed decisions and to govern themselves.

However, media and journalists do not only mirror reality, they also construct it. The media can either balance or amplify a 'natural asymmetry of information' between those who govern and those who are governed, and between marginalised groups and the rest of the society (Islam 2006). By contributing to a more inclusive and deliberative public sphere, the media can help in the identification of shared interests and shared identities within society, and in the building of consensual solutions to conflicts.

The media can also act as a watchdog, speaking on behalf of citizens, disclosing abuses of power, challenging political authority, and holding powerful people to account.

Thus, as intermediaries, the media perform a variety of roles:

- disseminating information on relevant topics
- giving voice to different parts of society, including marginalised groups
- providing a forum for exchange of diverse views and dialogue
- providing channels for political actors to raise the public's attention, and to communicate and interact with citizens
- fulfilling a watchdog function vis-à-vis those in power
- influencing the perception of social norms and realities
- contributing to social integration.

Considering these multiple roles in state and society, it is evident that a healthy media sector is an important factor in promoting inclusive and effective development. It contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030, particularly SDG 16, by fostering inclusive, just and peaceful societies.

2.2 Responding to pressing challenges

However, the media often fall short of their responsibilities as providers of public interest information, platforms of inclusive dialogue, and watchdogs speaking truth to power. Instead, the media often act as mouthpieces of the powerful, repeating rumours without verification, discriminating against minorities and feeding the polarisation of societies. Today, in many contexts, the media sector faces significant challenges, as discussed below.

• *Shrinking public space*

The media are increasingly confronted by measures aimed at silencing critical voices and providing oversight. Restrictive laws, punitive legal measures, barriers to advertisement revenues and physical violence combine to restrict media freedom. These factors violate several human rights, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to information and the right to life. Too often, these threats emanate from governments, and even when they are not the source of the problem, govern-

ments often fail to provide solutions to counteract the actions of those who attack media freedom.

In the early 2000s and in the wake of the Arab Spring, the Zeitgeist was largely techno-optimist and focused on the empowering potential of ICTs. Yet in a relatively short space of time, attention is increasingly being drawn to how ICTs are contributing to this shrinking of public space.

All over the world, ICTs can provide alternative spaces for civil society to organise and collaborate. However, they also provide authoritative states and private actors with unprecedented surveillance and censorship capacities. It is therefore paramount to assess the risks attached to the use of ICTs and to choose the right technologies according to the local context. This might include training partner organisations in cybersecurity and, when deemed necessary, moving away from online spaces to engage in offline bridge-building initiatives (see, for example, Widmer and Grossenbacher 2019).

• *Digital divide*

It is also important to consider who has access to different types of ICTs. While access to internet and mobile phones is growing, in many developing contexts there is still a large gap between those who have access to those technologies and know how to use them, and those who don't. The digital divide therefore risks deepening already existing inequalities – for example, between rural and urban areas, between rich and poor families, between educated and uneducated people, between younger and older generations, and between men and women. (In least developed countries (LDCs), women use the internet 31 per cent less than men on average) (Samuli 2018). Efforts must therefore be people-oriented and not technology-driven.

• *More fragmented and polarised public sphere*

Digital and mobile technologies present people with overwhelming information options. In this flood of information, the algorithms of social media and web search engines are designed to put before us the online contents we are most likely to click on. These two factors combined reinforce our natural tendency to consume information that confirms our pre-existing biases. As a result, we are increasingly trapped into echo chambers of like-minded tribes. Our capacity to find common ground with antagonist groups therefore diminishes, and so does the trust of citizens in their institutions. Ultimately,

A radio receiver in a street in Niamey, Niger. © Anne Mimault, Fondation Hirondelle



3 The global reference framework



Code of ethics Fondation Hirondelle. © Fondation Hirondelle

this undermines deliberative democratic processes, atomising the public sphere into special interest constituencies that lack the capacity to talk to and respect each other.

- **Disrupted business models**

The digitalisation of communication flows creates situations of monopolistic control and capture of advertisement and subscription revenues by actors such as the GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft). It jeopardises the business models and the sustainability of news media. A frequent strategy in this context is to cut costs as much as possible, pressuring journalists to deliver a maximum of articles in a very short space of time. This means journalists have less and less time to search for and cross-check information. They increasingly rely on reports from press agencies, making the media content more homogenous, and less attractive to the public. This in turn weakens the media's anchoring in society.

- **Misinformation and disinformation¹**

Less viable media houses are more easily captured by partisan political or financial interest groups. Furthermore, social media and web search engines

create the dangerous illusion of access to free and unmediated information flows – at a time when fake social media accounts and algorithms are increasingly being used by those who want to target the grievances and vulnerabilities of audiences to confuse or manipulate them as amplifiers.

As a consequence, trust in traditional media and journalists as information gatekeepers is being eroded. The role of journalists tends to be disregarded, at a time when the need for professionals who are trained and paid to check information and prioritise it according to public interest is greater than ever before.

It is essential to strengthen the capacity of the media to overcome these substantial challenges. SDC therefore remains committed to trying to contribute to a healthy public interest media sector.

¹ See glossary (Annexe 2) for definitions of disinformation, misinformation and mal-information

The rights to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to access information, are enshrined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). Taken together, these rights are considered as indispensable for full human development, enjoyment of other human rights, and for the principles of transparency and accountability. As such, they constitute one of the cornerstones of a democratic society (United Nations Human Rights Committee 2011).

SDG 16, to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels', includes a specific target (16.10) to 'ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements' (for the function of the media in relation to the SDGs, see UNDP and UNESCO 2019).

The fulfilment of those human rights and development goals implies a media free to carry out their functions to report on public issues and to inform public opinion. The public has a corresponding right to receive such media output. Therefore, states should take particular care to encourage an independent and diverse media to protect the rights of media users, including members of ethnic, linguistic or other minorities, to receive a wide range of information and ideas (United Nations Human Rights Committee 2011).

The European Court of Human Rights has stated that:

... the State, as the ultimate guarantor of pluralism, must ensure, through its law and practice, that the public has access through television and radio to impartial and accurate information and a range of opinion and comment, reflecting inter alia the diversity of political outlook within the country and that journalists and other professionals working in the audio-visual media are not prevented from imparting this information and comment.

(Manole and others v Moldova, 17 December 2009, § 107)

Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights also guarantee the right to freedom of expression and information. A number of UNESCO declarations (for example, the Windhoek Declaration of 1991) emphasise the importance of an independent and pluralistic media to promote those rights.

Finally, journalists' responsibilities in promoting those rights are largely provided for by self-regulation and codes of media ethics adopted in countries all over the world.²

² See <https://accountablejournalism.org/ethics-codes>

4 Media types and environments

4.1 Different types of media

The choice of media platforms and formats depends on the targeted populations and their actual access to and use of media in a specific context. We live in an era of multi-media consumption. In addition to the 'traditional' media such as TV or radio broadcasters and print media outlets, digital and social media have become ubiquitous thanks to the rise of mobile telephony and internet access, even in less developed contexts. This opens up new opportunities to connect quickly and widely with audiences and to interact with them.

However, journalists increasingly have to produce in multi-media format (words, sounds, images and videos) and to push their content on social media as well as traditional platforms (press, radio, TV) in order to adapt to the rapidly evolving consumption habits of their audiences, particularly younger people. While the use of various formats and media platforms can be complementary and not mutually exclusive, it requires more skills, time, resources and due consideration of the digital divide (see Chapter 2.2, 'Pressing challenges').

In rural areas, radio often remains the most accessible and sometimes the only mass media available. While considering content, one should distinguish between rational content (such as news and debate programmes) and fictional or dramatic contents (such as soap operas and entertainment) geared towards emotional responses. However, the two are not mutually exclusive and can even complement each other in the broadcast programming of a generalist media. Emotional and rational media content correspond to the two basic systems that govern human behaviour as social and personality psychology has demonstrated: so-called 'system 1 thinking', which is fast, instinctive and emotional, reflecting the reptilian brain, which runs on emotion and instinct; and 'system 2 thinking', which is slow, deliberative and more logical (Kahneman 2011).

Much media content, particularly on the internet and social media, feeds system 1 thinking, and the need for immediate, emotional content. However, democracies largely aspire to run on system 2 logic, with the institutions and principles that underpin them resting on the assumption of rational citizen, fact-driven decisions and a deliberative public sphere (Bartlett 2018).

Another distinction is between partisan versus non-partisan media content. Media content that strives for impartiality should clearly distinguish between facts and opinions and should seek to balance different points of view. The goal is to enable the media consumer to make up his or her own mind. The goal of impartial media content is to inform; partisan media content seeks to convince.

Again, a variety of media productions allow for a combination of the two types. For example, the same media can broadcast fact-based news and balanced debates on the one hand, and on the other, more partisan programmes designed to convince audiences to adopt certain behaviours. However, there should be a clear distinction between these two different types of programme in the media productions. Blurring the distinction between the two endeavours can be self-defeating as it might create false expectations on the providing side and genuine apprehension or distrust on the receiving side.

A non-partisan and public service-oriented media allowing for the different viewpoints to meet and for dialogue on a balanced and fair basis remains a key component of a healthy media landscape, particularly in fragile and divided societies.

4.2 The media environment

The media and the environment they operate in can mutually reinforce each other in a positive or a negative way:

- Independent and responsible media can contribute to but are also conditioned by the existence of an enabling environment characterised by institutions such as supportive laws and regulations, support from political actors for free press, healthy markets, active citizens, supporting educational bodies, and professional associations.
- A negative environment – characterised by an authoritarian state, a flawed legal and regulatory framework, political actors that see the media as either mouthpieces or adversaries, passive citizens, weak markets, or a lack of supportive civil society and educational institutions – leads to and is reinforced by a flawed or captured media system that produces biased information, analysis and propaganda, polarises public views, and suppresses cultural diversity and shared identities.

Hence, the media cannot be considered in isolation from their environment. The media can contribute to the promotion of a more democratic society (e.g. fighting corruption, encouraging participation in political processes, etc.) but cannot do so alone. Improving the media's capacity to play a constructive role requires a strategy to analyse and foster the conditions for a broader enabling environment.

Demonstrators in Gafsa, Tunisia interviewed by a journalist from the regional public radio station.
© Gwenn Dubourthoumieu, Fondation Hirondelle.



5 SDC's approach to media assistance

5.1 SDC's vision, goals and underlying values

SDC aims to strengthen different aspects of a healthy media sector³ in order to promote the media's multiple roles in fostering inclusive, just and peaceful societies. This ultimate vision encompasses the following overarching goals:

- to provide access to information for building **informed public opinion** – providing a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of events in a context that gives them meaning;
- to ensure freedom of expression for **citizens' voices and participation** – giving voice to different groups within society, projecting the opinions and attitudes of groups to one another, and facilitating civic engagement among all sectors of society;
- to offer public space for **open and non-violent debate**;
- to provide mechanisms for **controlling public and private powers** – increasing transparency among public and private power-holders and holding them to account for their actions.

³ See Figure 2 and guidance for media segments in chapter 6

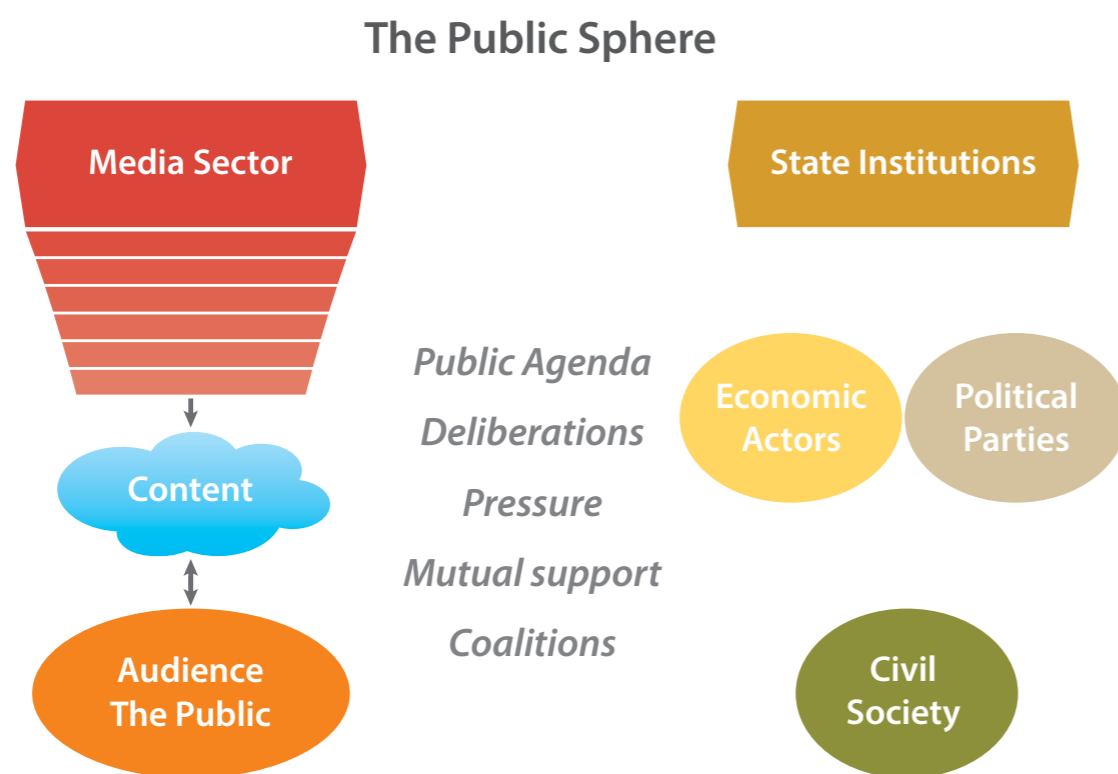


Figure 1 The position of the media sector in the public sphere

To achieve these goals, society needs a media sector that embodies the following core values and that fosters social cohesion rather than fragmentation and discord:

- **Inclusion, equality, non-discrimination and social cohesion:** The concern is not only the absence of restrictions on the media, but the extent to which all sectors of society, especially the most marginalised, can access the media to gain information and participate by making their voices heard. It is also about how the media presents marginalised groups, either propagating stigma or promoting social cohesion. To achieve better social inclusion through the media, infrastructural capacities and investments in ICTs are crucial, but not sufficient. As stated by UNESCO, 'limited access to – or lack of engagement with – the media is a function of poverty and poor education. It may also be caused or exacerbated by language, gender, age, ethnicity or the urban-rural divide. There is also a need to promote information and media literacy' (UNESCO 2008). When those factors are taken into account to better enable the participation of marginalised groups in the public sphere, it allows for more consensual solutions to conflicts and greater social cohesion.
- **Professionalism:** The value of professionalism calls for journalistic practice of providing fact-based, verified information and balanced coverage of the diverse viewpoints and concerns of different layers of society. Professionalism is key because the public need to have access to reliable information, from media they can trust. Without this relationship of trust, there can be no well-governed society.
- **Pluralism:** Media pluralism forms an essential part of this vision. It is composed of external pluralism (i.e. a diversity of media outlets) and internal pluralism (a large diversity of views and background reflected in the editorial team and the outlet's productions). In more fragmented and polarised media landscapes, and especially where

governance and the mechanisms of democratic deliberation are weak, it is particularly important to strengthen media that cultivate internal pluralism by presenting a variety of viewpoints in a balanced manner, therefore contributing to building bridges between antagonist groups. Pluralism requires economic resources for sustainable media and legal provisions that ensure a level economic playing field. It also requires provisions for public and community-based as well as private media.

- **Independence and trust:** Media independence is defined as the autonomous control over editorial content by publishers, broadcasters, editors and journalists within the framework of editorial aims that are articulated by the professionals involved. Control over editorial content has to be protected against a variety of external pressures, including direct and indirect political pressures, the use of financial resources, the control of distribution, or other efforts to pressure and use the media to promote factional sociocultural, economic or political interests. Control over editorial content also has to be protected against internal pressures, such as efforts by owners, publishers and managers to make that content subordinate to interests other than the agreed editorial aims. Independence is key for the media to promote transparency in public life and public scrutiny of those with power through exposing corruption, maladministration and corporate wrongdoing. It is also capital with which to build trust with audiences.

6 Designing interventions



A journalist from Studio Kalangou interviewing in the streets of Niamey. © Anne Mimault, Fondation Hironnelle

6.1 Guiding principles for designing interventions

In supporting the media, SDC is aligned to international principles of media assistance (OECD 2014), and will apply the following five guiding principles.

a. Adopt an holistic approach to media assistance

Improving the media's capacity to play its multiple roles is best done if the media sector is considered as a whole. One should avoid merely limited interventions that support individual media outlets or even single journalists, or that promote information dissemination without attention to the infrastructure and environment needed to sustain free flow of information in the longer run. This implies working along a range of complementary entry points and pursuing a cross- and multi-media approach, based on the consumption habits of the population and longer-term trends in the development of digital media and their consumption (podcasts, video on demand, news platforms, etc.). SDC cannot address all challenges in the media sector in a given country; it needs to work in close collaboration and coordination with others.

This holistic approach implies a combination/coordination with other elements of democracy building (UNDP and UNESCO 2019), which will be mutually beneficial. Media sustainability depends on economic potentials, an enabling legal environment, and political transparency. A combined approach to media and democratisation work is especially important in post-conflict societies, as independent media can hardly spring to life in non-democratic societies. Such a broad approach requires a sustained partnership with other supporters of democratic societies to create an enabling environment. Media indicators and audits should also be included in assessments of quality or effectiveness of governance in a given country, which is not the case at present.

b. Action must be demand-driven at the local level, not supply-driven

SDC will focus on the rights, needs and means of local people and will try to conduct activities strictly oriented to these rights and needs. Supporting the media is not about fostering a specific technology or promoting certain communication channels for their own sake.

The best form of media assistance is the development of domestic media in a country, based on the involvement of local women and men (tailor-made approach), encouraging links between media institutions and the rest of civil society. Cooperation with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and media actors will help determine media objectives and outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt SDC's general vision of the role of the media for a democratic society to the local conditions and needs in each country. This should be done with and by local partners. Selecting capable local and regional partners should occur at the outset of a media project and is perhaps the most important step in the process of media development. This implies investing in a comprehensive assessment of the media sector, including a political economy evaluation of all actors, as well as baseline studies to measure and understand local consumption habits and needs. The target audience and the purpose of the media intervention will define which types of media to work with and support, including public media, community-based media or private media. These partners should take the lead; the role of the international community is to help enlarge the space in which those media outlets operate.

c. Think long term

The media sector is complex and comprises many different actors. Therefore, supporting a well-functioning media sector with the necessary institutional infrastructure needs time and long-term strategic programming. This requires dedicated commitment in what is basically a prolonged process of institutionalising democracy.

Particular attention should be devoted to supporting independent, sustainable and capable local media. It is important to address financial sustainability, with media business plans linked to economic prospects. In a post-conflict situation or an emerging democracy, media should be gradually weaned from any dependence on donors as national civic and economic mechanisms develop. However, this transition could require a decade or more. Training in managerial skills and revenue generation capacities takes time, and there needs to be progress in building an enabling environment alongside developing the capacities of the local media.

d. Place emphasis on (donor) coordination

Coordination of media assistance among the various actors involved includes not only donors, but also national authorities, regional and multilateral agents, and private actors from the media sector itself.

In most partner countries, the media sector is very small, which means there are few partner organisations to work with. As a result, donor organisations often turn to the same partners time and again. In addition, given the short history of media assistance, many actors have only recently begun to formalise their missions and develop strategies. All of this increases the need for close cooperation with other actors and particularly with donors. This can include sharing of audience surveys, coordination for impact assessment, creation of media development coordination groups and meetings, creation of media basket funds, sharing best practices, forming coalitions, addressing common regional or thematic media development issues, etc. This is especially necessary if donors want to implement the comprehensive approach mentioned earlier.

e. Support systematic research on the effects of media and access to information on democratic governance

In addition to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), research should be part of any media support project, but should also be supported in its own right to advance understanding of the role of the media in governance in different political, economic and social contexts. This includes testing our assumptions about the influence of the media on political participation, public debate, policy and accountability dynamics. Yet one needs to be realistic about what can and cannot be attributed to the media, as evidence is hard to obtain. (See section 9 for more on M&E and the impact of media programmes.)

6.2 Six segments of intervention

The SDC approach to media assistance is oriented towards the six different segments of the media sector, which are all interconnected and influence each other (see Figure 2). Each segment is a potential entry point, and media assistance is most effective when it addresses several segments in combination.

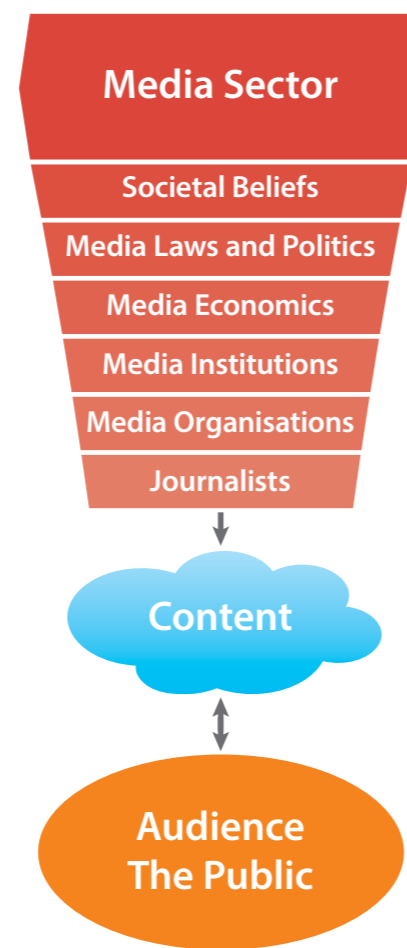


Figure 2 The configuration of the media sector

| Segment of the media sector | Possible interventions |
|---|---|
| Individual journalists | Training on ethics and technical journalism skills Training on thematic issues |
| Media outlets | Training for different types of media: public service broadcasters, community radios, private TV or newspapers Capacity building on management, technical maintenance, income generation, etc. |
| Media institutions | Support to journalism schools Support to media regulation and self-regulation actors |
| Economic and technological factors | Training on business plan and business management Improve overall economic factors for the media sector Training on new technologies and related opportunities |
| Political and legal environment, and safety | Support political will for an enabling media environment Support legal reforms Training on safety and security of journalists and media outlets |
| Societal beliefs and cultural values | Support societal vision of media as the fourth estate Training on media and information literacy programmes in schools and for adults |

Table 1 Overview of the six media sector segments and possible interventions

Any intervention should start with a proper analysis of the media environment and all six segments as well as the social, economic, cultural and political factors that shape the media environment, and the needs, risks and potentials. The choice of the types of intervention depends on the findings of the analysis and programmes already conducted by other donors or media actors. (For a checklist of the media segments' analysis, please refer to Annexe 2.)

read, listen to and view via the media. However, it is important to remember that citizens (audiences at large) are not only the target group but also actors or influencers in the media environment. Their role should be taken into consideration in each segment.

The following section describes in more detail each of the six media segments, providing a short introduction, potential interventions, and issues to keep in mind.

Ultimately, what matters is what people get to

Niambie. © BBC Media Action





Training of journalists in Hpa-An, Myanmar. © Lam Duc Hien, Fondation Hironnelle

6.2.1 Individual journalists

Journalists are the main entry point of media assistance efforts as they are key in the production of media outputs. Their level of performance is contingent upon their individual knowledge, capacity and personality, on the role models they have adopted, and the resources (finances, time) they are given. They have a certain scope of action that is extendable, but restricted by other spheres of influence.

Generally, journalists should have competencies in media ethics, professional skills, knowledge of the subject they cover, and awareness of particular elements in their personal beliefs. In many cases, the level of professional journalistic skills is very low, among novices and working journalists alike. For example, the wide array of different journalism concepts and role models stressing different foci in professional journalism is hardly known to many journalists. Newsroom and media teams remain male-dominated. Though there are new human resources policies and incentives to hire and promote women as journalists and editors, when working with this sector it is important to be aware of the lack of representation of women, and to include them in various approaches to media assistance.

Potential interventions: training of journalists

Potential subjects for training should be based on the needs revealed in the analysis, but are likely to include the following.

- Raising the level of skills in professional journalism

(writing, editing, acquaintance with different formats like news, reports, comments).

- Establishing professional standards and ethics in journalism.
- Specialised knowledge like business and finance, conflict dynamics, politics, environment, HIV/ AIDS or sensitivity to human rights. (Thematic training should be offered only when the basics and fundamentals of journalism have been mastered.)
- Knowledge of legal rights and duties.
- Editorial management.
- Gender (gender-sensitive language, use of non-stereotypical images of women and men in the media).
- Training in multi-media production, with content that is people-driven rather than technology-driven.
- Training in knowing how to better target specific audiences such as youth, or urban or rural populations.
- Training on data and use of ICTs, including data collection, verification and analysis, data visualisation and storytelling, as well as engaging with users and managing interactions with communities.
- Training on safety and security, including psycho-socio trauma protection.

Types of training

These issues can be covered by different types of training: workshops, seminars, long-term courses and study programmes, internships, training of trainers and in-situ training, conducted by different profiles of trainers (international, local or third country experts) and in different locations (in or out of the country).

On-the-job training does not require the same approach and skills as training delivered in schools or academic settings. The curriculum for on-the-job training programmes needs to consider the constraints facing participants – mainly the fact that they still have to produce content and deliver their services while being trained.

A large amount of training is provided for individual journalists, convening them in a special location outside their working environment, and covering specific issues. The benefits of this are as follows.

- It can be easily conducted, has low organisational costs (room, trainer, participants) and can be quickly implemented.
- It can be tailored to the needs of participants in each and every single case.
- The size of the group is usually small (8–12 people), which provides a good learning atmosphere that is conducive to learning new skills and capacities.
- Multiplier effects seem easy to achieve when trained journalists work for different media, sharing new skills with colleagues.

Issues to keep in mind

- The best training for journalists is training that gives them the chance to put their learning into practice. On-site training (where the journalists work) also allows for direct adaptation of and changes to the production chain. Any training programme should be developed based on discussions with potential trainees and their supervisors, to ensure a tailor-made intervention design.
- Individual training seems mostly appropriate for learning on specific themes that journalists write about and report on (e.g. acquiring knowledge in

business, finance, environment, etc.). Yet the overall structure of the media needs to be considered, and in-depth discussions with editors need to take place prior to deciding to train a journalist in a specialist field such as finance or health. Few media have the luxury of employing specialist journalists within their newsroom teams and will, in the long term, optimise the training.

- New actors such as bloggers and communication officers are also often wrongly associated with the work of journalists. Like any citizens that have the opportunity to write and share content on digital media or to create platforms, bloggers and communication officers are not usually journalists. They have not been trained in journalism ethics and do not work for a media organisation based on an editorial line/charter and are not subject to supervision by an editor-in-chief. Like medical doctors and lawyers, journalists are professionals whose skills are validated by a degree or professional media body.
- The outcomes and impacts of individual training are difficult to monitor. It is, however, important to test journalist training approaches by monitoring whether trained journalists apply the new skills in their professional life, and if not, what prevents them doing so. Sustainability is often questioned, as few if any studies have followed the work of trained journalists over a long period (10–15 years).

6.2.2 Media outlets

Media production depends not only on trained journalists but also on media outlets providing the required infrastructure, financial resources and working conditions that allow for professional and independent journalism. Training for reporters might have hardly any impact if they are hindered by their editors or employers in implementing what they have learned. The way single media outlets are institutionally organised largely determines how internal power is distributed, along with which journalism concepts and role models are established. The revenue structure also influences the media's performance. Those with high circulation and considerable income from subscriptions might be more independent editorially than those with high reliance on advertisements. In many developing countries, media are community based or not for profit, and rely mainly on international donors' support. Their business model is thus more hybrid and not based on traditional media business models.

Potential interventions: training at organisational level

Training makes more sense when editors, sub-editors, editors-in-chief and managers (rather than just journalists and reporters) are also involved. This might include:

- an in-situ, one-week training programme for community media (radios)
- exchange programmes between media, within one country or between media from the same sub-region, or 'South-South'
- on-site training in ethics and journalism concepts for editorial teams, including editors-in-chief/owners
- roundtables for ethical issues with media leaders/owners (ensuring that women are represented);
- establishment of adapted professional standards and editorial guidelines
- training on multi-media production, social media positioning and community management
- training on managerial skills and internal governance for middle management, executive and governance body
- training on income generation, including the partnerships for institutional communication campaigns.

Support to single media organisations

Although some caution is needed to avoid getting too close to one partner and/or creating a monopoly, in some specific contexts, only one or two media may be meeting the minimum requirements to receive SDC support. In these cases, supporting single media outlets might be relevant if particular efforts are invested in fostering internal pluralism and inclusiveness in the editorial team's composition and content production (i.e. ensuring appropriate representation of women, people of different ethnic origin and marginalised groups).

Contingent upon the analysis conducted, it might be appropriate to support single media outlets in various ways, as follows.

- Support the creation of a new national media (where the situation is one of a media 'desert' or totally co-opted media landscape).
- Embark on a programme to reform state media into a public service broadcaster (only if there is the political will nationally to do so).
- Support a UN media set-up as part of a peacekeeping mission in a conflict zone or its transition to local ownership at the end of the UN mandate.
- Middle way option: a production studio that broadcasts media content through a network of local media partners.
- Provision of material or financial assistance for infrastructure needed to ensure media independence; assistance for technical capacity (computers, software, transmitters, cameras, printing presses, paying for photo services or news wire subscriptions), and providing access to capital and loans.
- Provision of ICT for editorial offices to strengthen their capacity to gather and analyse data and information.
- Provision of training for the whole staff of the media (not only editorial, but also support staff, management and marketing services).

Issues to keep in mind

- The organisational difference between public broadcasting, community-based media and private media might require differentiated approaches. For example, a special case of supporting single media is transforming former state broadcasters into public service broadcasters (PSBs). This could have considerable impact as PSBs reach a large audience. But there are also political risks, as governments usually lack the political will to cede control of the airwaves to the public sector. As politics still dominate the media, any political change during this transformation might jeopardise the success of the project – e.g. by changing legal conditions or by pressurising the broadcasters' staff.
- On-site training allows for training of staff other than journalists, either in the editorial rooms, or even in support departments (technical, human resources, management, finance, marketing, etc.). This is, in some cases, an alternative to individual training. Training takes place in the workplace and comprises people from all levels of the hierarchy, which can deliver real change in a single media as all levels of the hierarchy are included and (hopefully) convinced to put what they learn into practice. Thus, a positive outcome is much more likely than from individual training. This kind of training is best for learning new reporting styles, ethical guidelines, different journalism concepts, particularly when all decision-makers in editorial and management are involved. Nevertheless, this kind of training is more expensive (as it involves more participants). Follow-up is more difficult, as it eats up time for all staff. Donors and managers should keep in mind that the training is useless if there is rapid staff turnover, thus for some key positions, the rule of '2 people for 1 position' should be strictly applied.
- There are pros and cons in supporting single high-performance local media. Besides being an asset in themselves, they can also serve as a model that sets standards and influences other media to follow their quality guidelines and performance. Good-quality production and recognition might also lead to improved revenues and independence. On the other hand, the multiplier effects beyond this single media are more difficult to achieve (unless the media outlet belongs to or becomes a leading media in the country/ice-breaker effect). This holds the risk of failure as it focuses on very few partners. Usually, a great deal of money is involved (infrastructure plus staff, etc.), which might then be lacking in other places; strong links between one donor and a media outlet also bear the risk of the donor being held responsible for content. But overall, it seems an option that is worthwhile to consider. As audio-visual media play a major role for the public, it is worth the effort to contribute to the establishment of a leading media that realises the quality required in terms of impartiality, balance, diversity and transparency, from which other media organisations can learn.



A reporter for radio Gafsa in Tunisia interviews a resident in a village at 300 km from Tunis, Tunisia in June 2015. © Gwenn Dubourthoumieu, Fondation Hironnelle

6.2.3 Media institutions

Media outlets need to be surrounded by a professional sector composed of media institutions supporting the whole sector with services a single media outlet cannot afford alone. These institutions include education, training and research institutions (universities, institutes); press councils; journalists' unions; press clubs; and watchdog organisations. This institutional structure needs to be sufficiently set up, independent, and up to the task. It is particularly appropriate to work with them when a donor attaches special importance to serving the whole sector without getting close to only one partner. A thorough analysis, however, is needed to determine which kind of institution is necessary and which ones are independent and reliable.

Potential interventions: support to training institutions

In the field of capacity building, some projects choose to institutionalise training by supporting training institutions that serve the whole sector. These include journalism schools, media and communication departments of universities, media houses, etc. This offers some obvious advantages:

- Sharing a common training institute between different media might be an economic alternative to funding training by individual media, or completely by participant fees.
- This training approach is appropriate when a substantial training need has been identified for the

whole sector and exchange opportunities among media people need to be created.

- This approach supports the whole media sector.
- Some of these institutions can be very flexible in training content, schemes and formats to adapt to the changing media environment.
- Networking among journalists takes place almost automatically in such an institution.
- It can also serve as a neutral platform to discuss issues affecting the media community.
- The local media community can develop ownership more easily than with individual courses or on-site training.

Still, sustainability of these training institutions is very difficult to achieve. It requires hybrid financial solutions such as public support, private investments and, at a minimum, a favourable media environment for media owners to invest in journalist training or contribute to the costs.

It is very difficult to assess the performance of these different approaches regarding efficiency and effectiveness. This is due to the low level of M&E still encountered in most media assistance work. Serious evaluation needs to be developed in future projects, particularly looking at how trained journalists and graduates from these media training institutions become integrated into the job market.

| Type of actors per function | Possible interventions |
|--|---|
| Capacity building Journalism schools, university departments (mass communication and journalism), adult training centres, etc. | Introduction of new curricula (ethics, multi-media, new technologies, etc.) Introduction of practical training (in-house production studio, university media, etc.) Institutional training (strategic management, business plan training) |
| Auto-regulation / independent / self-regulatory institutions Media councils, press councils, media houses, media watchdog and monitoring groups, media and communication high authorities, ombudsmen, press complaints commissions, etc. | Development of clear mission and strategies Training of management and staff (strategic management, business plan training) Introduction of media monitoring capacity Development of codes, guidelines, support to the sector |
| Protection and defence of the sector Trade unions, associations of journalists, associations for the safety of journalists and media actors, editors' guilds, broadcasting associations, etc. | Institutional management training, advocacy training, business plan training, coalitions training, communication and national/regional and international networking |
| Measure, study and research for the sector Media audience measures, research institutes, media monitoring institutions, advertising associations | Workshops to define research questions and needs, creation of joint interest groups ('médiamétrie', the audience measure institute, the media and the advertisers), training of management and staff (strategic management, business plan training) |

Table 2 Strengthening other media support institutions

Issues to keep in mind

Supporting self-regulatory institutions, professional associations, media monitoring groups and press clubs has become a widespread activity in media assistance. Establishing this kind of institution means supporting the whole media sector and strengthening local media institutions in their interplay with government and other actors.

These institutions are for the benefit of all media actors and, more broadly, governance and democracy actors. This type of support may provide a good return on investments when calculating the ratio costs/beneficiaries, as these training institutions

provide strong leverage for improving the capacities of the media sector as a whole. However, some of these institutions may not be totally independent from political pressures and may not be able to fulfil their mandates. Their sustainability is difficult to achieve when the media sector is still economically weak. Furthermore, the long-term outcomes and impacts of these institutions are difficult to assess.



During a debate “Women & elections” organised by Fondation Hironnelle in Kinshasa, DRC, in June 2018.
© Justin Makangara, Fondation Hironnelle

6.2.4 Economic and technological factors

It is self-evident that the overall economic and technology conditions of a country are an important factor for the country’s media. Purchasing power of ordinary people will have an influence on newspaper and media’s subscriptions and circulation, which in turn will influence the media’s ability to pay their staff decent wages and thus limit corruption and other negative incentives. Economic conditions largely determine the potential revenue media can expect to raise from advertisements and subscriptions. Besides this, the diversity of media ownership and the degree of media concentration are critical features of a healthy media environment.

In contemporary digital media landscapes, the control of the narratives is increasingly in the hands of a few international private actors (such as the GAFAM and the way they design their algorithms). At the same time, the architecture of the infrastructure of information flows at the national level remains very much in the hands of states that have the capacity to control or cut off internet access in the whole country.

Regarding media content production and broadcasting, recent technology evolutions have drastically cut equipment costs. The digitalisation of production allows journalists to work with relatively cheap recorders or just mobile phones. Internet and mobile communication technologies have expanded the potential reach of media content as never before.

Ultimately, what is most important, and most costly in terms of a media budget, is to have trained and technology-agile staff who are fairly and regularly paid by the media owner. However, the traditional business models of media are jeopardised by the capture of advertising revenues by internet platforms such as the GAFAM and the ‘click economy’. This is why, given the general crisis in media finances, the role and potential of public funding to support the media should be discussed more widely and integrated into donors’ overall strategies.

Potential interventions

- Improve the financial sustainability of the media so that they can pay their staff and be responsible employers (e.g. supporting a minimum wage for journalists, existence of means of productions, etc.) by promoting hybrid financing: revenue generation by commercial advertising and institutional communication campaigns, crowdfunding, facilitating access to different private sector and public funds, support from donors or foundations.
- Develop fundraising capacities within not-for-profit media (private foundations grant-writing, donors procedures, etc.).

- Strengthen general market conditions for media, facilitating yearly market benchmarking for advertising (for instance) or the support for the creation of media coalitions to face the weight and the pressure of advertisers (weakly structured advertising market, notably in fragile contexts).
- Favour anti-monopolistic activities by improving access to and ownership of the means of production, printing and distribution.
- Support better transparency of media ownership.
- Finance general infrastructure for better technical outreach, and improve distribution channels outside urban areas to reach a wider audience (without creating market distortions).
- Raise the level of training in business management skills in media (participants: managers, owners; training content: business management, marketing, advertising, ethical guidelines).

Issues to keep in mind

Economic and technological interventions normally serve the whole media sector. In some cases, they are of high importance as they form the basic conditions for any media development. Donors should be ready to face the vast challenges linked to internet and mobile services on the media economy (including the capture of advertising revenues by internet platforms and the ‘click economy’), and should shoulder the political risks associated with such a programme (e.g. question backdoors agreement between repressive states and internet/phone providers, digital surveillance capacity, condemn illegitimate cutting off of internet access, etc.).

The general economic and technological environment of a country is normally beyond the scope of a single media assistance intervention. However, there are activities in the economic sector as well as in the technology sector that directly determine the media’s performance, such as anti-monopolistic efforts, media management training, or supporting infrastructure for better technical outreach (fibre-cable, satellite coverage, new transmitters, etc.). Even simple measures in this sector can have large positive impacts, and each effort to strengthen the media’s economic viability in the long run decreases dependency on donor funding.

Yet some economic or technological measures may be inclined to produce market distortions. Thorough analysis and planning are needed to avoid such counterproductive effects. There are hardly any ‘purely economic’ activities; thus, some people become empowered, others disempowered. Donors and implementers should be aware of these political side-effects.

6.2.5 Political and legal environment, and safety

The media sector is a reflection of its wider environment and particularly of its political environment. This is why a political and power analysis is so useful to understand the media sector and how the distribution of communication power is allocated within a society. Although the political sphere is outside the media sector, each influences the other. The media sector influences the political sphere, because it: (a) influences the audience (i.e. citizens/voters), which in turn may put pressure on governments; and (b) enables discussion within the political sphere – for example, between political parties.

An enabling legal environment is an essential pillar for free and independent media. It ensures respect for the rule of law, media-specific laws, and institutional structures supporting free and independent media (CIMA 2007: 4). The political and legal environment are distinct but connected, as political actors influence the formulation, implementation or avoidance of laws.

However, attention should not only focus on (high-level) political actors but also more widely on the various officials of the judicial and bureaucratic apparatus that interpret the rules and decide how they should be applied (UNESCO 2018).

Media-specific laws include regulations on information gathering, such as a freedom of information act or access to information act that mandate the national government and other actors to disclose certain data to the general public upon request. They also include content-based regulation and subsequent punishment for perceived abuses such as libel and slander. This regulation will influence the risks of self-censorship in journalism. Media-specific laws also include regulatory measures such as (for instance) licensing for broadcasting, the provision of air frequencies, and the recognition of the profession of journalists (delivery of press cards).

By restructuring the media market or manipulating the distribution of resources in the market, media regulatory interventions can increase or decrease the likelihood of certain viewpoints reaching audiences. These interventions can fall into the category of ‘soft censorship’ or indirect censorship. They increase the political and economic vulnerability of individual players in the media system, and the likelihood of editorial compromises in the interest of securing available resources (Polyák and Meuter 2016). The increasing role of new actors on digital platforms, from the GAFAM to individual bloggers, comes largely into a legal vacuum in emerging and developing countries.

Potential interventions

- Training of CSOs, journalists, lawyers, judges and regulatory bodies and law students on the legal frameworks and remedies for ensuring freedom of the media.
- Support local capacity to advocate for legal reform and promotion of a media freedom agenda.
- Provide support to litigation of media freedom cases at the national and international levels.
- Deploy international observers attending trials of media actors.
- Provide media and information literacy programmes for parliamentarians, elected executive, decision-makers, traditional or religious leaders, etc.
- Provide specific training for members of parliaments (MPs) on the role of media and ways to build constructive relationships with media organisations.
- Organise joint workshops between political parties, media and journalists to foster understanding, respect and trust.

Issues to keep in mind

- Regional bodies, such as the Council of Europe, the African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), have texts and conventions that can serve to improve national legal frameworks.
- The existence and quality of legislation on freedom of expression, mass media, public broadcasting, regulatory bodies, licenses, censorship, libel and slander, copyright, etc. does not guarantee its implementation. Political will of a government to respect the enabling legal media environment must be repetitively affirmed and concretely applied.
- Attention should also be paid to laws that are not specific to media activities but still capable of strongly influencing them. The list cannot be exhaustive but includes customs regulations, copyright, taxation, anti-competition laws, etc.
- Beyond looking at the law *on paper*, it is necessary to look at the law *in practice* – i.e. how authorities implement the law. This includes general questions such as, what degree of independence does the judiciary system have? What are the administrative requirements and costs to operate a media? Do authorities actively investigate and prosecute crimes against journalists?

Pay attention to safety

The issue of safety of journalists and freedom of the media is not limited to authoritarian regimes or fragile contexts. Attacks against journalists take place in developed countries and in societies where the media sector disturbs powerful political and economic actors.

Booming use of new ICTs and social media has fuelled the anxiety of governments and powerful private actors who fear losing control over information flows and narratives. As a result, strategic communication efforts to win the ‘battles for hearts and minds’ have intensified. In this battle, persuasion rather than truth is often the most prized quality (Price 2014). Investments in surveillance technologies have also increased, as well as repressive practices aimed to silence activists and critical reporting. UNESCO states that ‘on average, every five days a journalist is killed for bringing information to the public’. Attacks are not limited to war zones. They are often perpetrated in non-conflict situations by organised crime groups, militia, security personnel, and even local police, making local journalists among the most vulnerable. Several indexes, such as the Freedom House and Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) freedom of the press survey, provide essential annual data on the safety of the media in every country (see Freedom House and RSF websites).

For possible interventions on safety, refer to the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists (UNESCO 2016)

6.2.6 Societal beliefs and cultural values

Common cultural values and societal norms have an immense effect on journalists and other media actors. Conversely, media have a deep influence on the evolution of commonly shared sociocultural values.

Societal and cultural beliefs influence journalists, owners and other media actors and the selection of news as well as the presentation of events and positions in the media. These may either serve to deepen or to challenge existing stereotypes and prejudices – for example, around gender. Working in conflict and divided environments requires particular attention to societal beliefs and cultural values. Deeply rooted beliefs may ‘naturally’ prevent journalists from reporting impartially, as it can be difficult for them either to be aware of this influence or even to overcome it when needed for balanced reporting. Without critical thinking and awareness of the relativity of one’s own common sense values, media and the journalists are unwillingly using their power to de-legitimise and exclude other ways of thinking. These socio-political and cultural factors also affect how society accepts and perceives the media. Is the media the ‘fourth power’ and a necessary watchdog, or a dangerous and manipulative sector? It depends on the role that society attributes to the media – a role that is fast-changing, not only in fragile contexts but also in ‘emerging’ or ‘old’ democracies.

Potential interventions

- Coordinated and regular assessments with other donors and key actors on governance and citizens’ empowerment, on citizens’ expectations about freedom of expression and the media.

- Work with civil society actors to engage as many citizens as possible about their expectations with the media, and support the production of regular opinion polls.
- Specific training for CSOs on the role of the media and ways to build constructive relationships with media organisations.
- Working with the media to produce weekly or monthly updates on how information is created, internal processes, the work of a journalist, etc. and fact-checking productions.
- Encouraging media professionals to critically reflect on their own societal beliefs and stereotyping.
- Development of curricula for primary or secondary schools, universities and other academic institutions on information and media literacy.

Issues to keep in mind

An analysis of the socio-cultural context and public discourses should help to identify the core grievances and tensions that divide society. Are they discussed in an inclusive, balanced and tolerant manner? If not, what are the marginalised groups that need to have a say and what media platforms could help them to better participate? And how can media platforms be strengthened in ways that will allow inclusive, balanced and constructive dialogue between different constituencies to find common ground and solutions?

6.3 Pay attention to the audience and to media literacy

To conclude this section, it is important to remember that the media are meant to serve the people. The 'raison d'être' of the media is to get people reading, listening to or watching content and reacting to it. This means knowing who the media are talking to and offering content that meets audiences' interest and capacity (taking into account local languages, accessibility, media and information literacy). The audience is thus present and active in all six segments:

1. With individual journalists – as beneficiaries of media content, audiences are more and more active and participatory, through inputs during call-in programmes, debates, suggestions to newsrooms, or comments on digital platforms.
2. With media outlets – trust-building and loyalty to media are created with media that are close to people's concerns. The quality of this relationship is assessed through audience surveys measuring listenership, readership, and satisfaction; impact studies measure quantitative and qualitative impact of the media on people.
3. With media institutions – citizens have access to and benefit from accountability mechanisms such as press councils or ombudsmen.
4. With economic and technological factors – citizens value independent media and information as a public good, and are willing to pay for it (subscriptions, paid-for information, taxes or licence fees).
5. With the political and legal environment, and safety of journalists – citizens make use of their right to access information and to freedom of expression; they participate in the legislative process and support measures to protect journalists fighting against impunity.
6. With societal beliefs – the global population benefits from and defends quality media as the 'fourth estate'. Society defends reliable information that helps people to be engaged and informed citizens.

Yet, in many countries, there are low levels of media literacy and a large digital gap – for example, between people in rural and urban areas, rich and poor households, educated and less educated individuals, and younger and older generations.

Media assistance should thus aim to strengthen the capacity of all audiences to play an active and responsible role in information flows. On the one hand, media programmes may remind or make people aware that they have the right to access reliable and independent information; on the other hand,

media and information literacy efforts should raise awareness of the responsibilities of media consumers – such as checking sources of information, identifying possible bias in reporting, being aware of one's own bias, thinking twice before sharing content, calling out misinformation, and valuing quality information and therefore understanding that it has a price.

More and more evidence and research calls for information and media literacy programmes as a necessary and complementary component of support for the media sector.

Potential interventions

- Promoting an enabling environment for citizen engagement with the media – for instance, participation in radio debates, 'op eds' in newspapers, call-ins during talk-shows.
- Working with media to produce weekly or monthly updates on how information is created, internal processes, the work of a journalist, etc. and fact-checking productions.
- Working with NGOs and CSOs to conduct awareness campaigns on the role of the media.
- Developing curricula for primary or secondary schools, universities and other academic institutions.

Issues to keep in mind

- Be careful with using and promoting the concept of 'citizen journalist'. The contributions of citizens are to be encouraged as providers of raw content to journalists and newsrooms, who then verify, source and assess the importance of the information. Journalism is a profession responding to ethics and professional rules. A citizen does not become a journalist because he/she posts a picture or writes an opinion piece.
- Knowledge of the audiences comes from statistical information and studies on media consumption habits. This needs to be cross-checked with data from the media themselves, where such data exists, about audience reach, consumption and feedback.
- Media and Information literacy programmes must be designed according to assessed needs, by media professionals, and then implemented with partner organisations such as schools, adult training centres, public service agencies, NGOs, etc.



A bodaboda, motorbike taxi driver reading paper, Dar es Salaam.
© SDC

7 Media support in authoritarian or conflict-affected contexts or humanitarian crises

Working in the media sector in fragile and protracted crisis contexts – marked by state failure, strong inter-community and intra-community tensions, and a very unfavourable socioeconomic situation – creates a tension between long-term objectives around strengthening media actors, and urgent needs of vital information for the population. Donors are then at the heart of the nexus. Media projects aim to achieve both long-term development objectives (by contributing to strengthening the media sector in a country and building a peaceful society) and address urgent needs in terms of life-saving information. This tension between the urgency of a crisis context, sometimes humanitarian, and the prospect of long-term change is reconcilable with the production of information by relevant partners to meet people's immediate needs, while contributing to systemic and sustainable changes in society.

Independent media are equally important in stable as in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Yet we need to specifically look at these difficult cases, and differentiate challenges stemming from authoritarian governance from those stemming from conflict-affected contexts and from humanitarian crises. Indeed, the approaches and potential actors to engage with in these three situations are different, even if some of the consequences (in terms of access to information and the security of journalists) might be the same.

In these contexts, it is important to include considerations on the position and role of the media in the design of peace process strategies and humanitarian responses, and to bring media actors to the table when identifying needs and designing actions. This requires a holistic analysis looking at the six segments of the media environment and identifying in which segments an action is possible politically and/or security-wise.

As a donor, SDC needs to have realistic expectations, and know that interventions in only one sphere of the media environment will have limited results, and could even be counterproductive (for example, providing equipment to unprofessional media only in polarised or fragile environments without the necessary training in ethics and journalism skills may have a negative boomerang effect). The local media sector is usually the mirror of society. This means that in authoritarian, conflict-affected contexts or in

situations of humanitarian crisis, the media sector is often fragile, divided, economically dependent on fighting powers, and lacking professional capacity. In countries with authoritarian rule and shrinking public space, independent media might not be allowed to exist, and journalists are threatened or even put in jail or killed. Ambitions in such countries should be very limited, and the programme flexible to adapt to rapid changes and high pressure.

Potential interventions

Common to the different contexts:

- Map and monitor dynamics and sources of information and misinformation/disinformation and hate speech online and offline.
- Support the capacity of a core group of the most credible and balanced media and journalists to better recognise and counter misinformation and disinformation online and offline through the production and broadcasting of reliable and factual information, and inclusive and balanced dialogue. This can be promoted with:
 - › training on basic rules of professional and ethical journalism, training on relevant thematic issues in relation to the core grievances of the local populations;
 - › support for the capacity of those media actors, to hold national and local debates promoting inclusive, fair and constructive dialogue between decision-makers and affected populations;
 - › support to technical capacities: access to electricity, production and broadcasting equipment, connectivity, and according to the assessment of information consumption habits of targeted audiences, support the migration of offline media to digital media spaces;
 - › training and protection for journalists and media actors to face the specific risks posed by these contexts. The training could address safety measures to adopt when reporting from crisis zones, digital security, how to deal with psycho-trauma, understanding the legal environment, etc.

- Support media and information literacy programmes. The beneficiaries of such programmes could be decision-makers, CSOs, parties to the conflict, media actors themselves, and the general population.

Specific to fragile and conflict-affected settings:

- Organise joint training workshops between journalists in exile and journalists from the country to build ties, contacts, and trust in the production of content.
- Support regional media initiatives and media in exile. There are many examples of supporting media in exile (for example, Myanmar, Burundi, Iran, Eritrea), offering alternatives when one cannot work from inside the country, provided that they are able to overcome constraints in terms of verification of the facts and information, security, and accessibility to the media by the most marginalised population groups.
- Use the windows of opportunity opened by general legal reforms and the promotion of the rule of law to improve the specific laws and institutions regulating the media sector.
- Support UN media or other regional or internationally backed initiatives promoting information to the population and platforms for dialogue. This approach should be based on a proper assessment of existing local media capacities and, as far as possible, from the perspective of strengthening those existing local media capacities and anchoring this work in the longer term.

Specific to humanitarian crises:

- Support the local production and broadcasting of public service messages in local languages promoting awareness on humanitarian law and human rights and providing information on basic needs, on issues such as food, health, displacement and security.

Issues to keep in mind

- To design sound media strategies in both peace-building and humanitarian interventions, two different approaches should be distinguished:
 - › Journalism: production of reliable, independent and factual contents for all parties; creation of a safe space for public dialogue and exchange of points of views. Some organisations might call this 'peace journalism' or 'conflict-sensitive journalism' (see glossary, Annexe 2). Ultimately, what counts is that the rules of responsible and professional journalism are respected.
 - › Strategic communication: production of rational and/or emotional media content (e.g. through messages, fiction, drama, art) designed as counter-narratives. The goal here is not only to inform but to convince and replace a pre-existing discourse. Even though the approach of strategic communicators might move from top-down to more participatory processes, the ultimate goal is to persuade the audiences of the disseminator's point of view. This approach is not a balanced approach and should therefore not be confounded with independent media development.
- According to the context, the need to promote dialogue might be particularly acute between antagonist groups in fragile and conflict-affected settings; or between policymakers and affected communities in a humanitarian crisis. Nevertheless, the role of the media remains the same: it is to create a space for inclusive and fair dialogue on core grievances and constructive, locally owned solutions.
- The World Humanitarian Summit 2016 in Istanbul called for more two-way communication between humanitarian actors and beneficiaries using (for instance) local media, as well as more accountability towards local populations. The CDAC Network offers a list of specialised actors and guidance for working on communication with affected communities.
- Finally, also in these contexts, it is necessary to measure the effects of programmes. The eight Caux Principles on the impact of the media in conflict zones are relevant here (Arsenault, Himelfarb and Abbott 2011).

8 Risks and mitigations

It needs to be stressed that media assistance is a very delicate task. Every external intervention into a sector that should generally be able to act free from governmental, political and commercial influences needs to be very well justified. Furthermore, media assistance carries various risks (see Table 2).

The limits of media initiatives should be seen realistically: they can hardly change structural factors that hinder effective and inclusive development or conflict transformation. However, all the limiting factors notwithstanding, media assistance can leverage all the efforts in realising Agenda 2030 and encourage positive change in development and transition countries.



Wall of Remembrance Maidan Square, Kyiv, Ukraine. © Gabrielle Kaprielian, Fondation Hirondele

| Nature of the risks and constraints | Mitigation measures |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Lack of professionalism and public interest approach</i> Some media have a tendency to sensationalism, mostly in order to attract more audience or advertisements. Of course, media outlets need a certain level of market and commercial orientation, and should take into consideration that audiences also like to be entertained. However, this should not prevail over the media's responsibility to provide comprehensive, truthful information on relevant issues in a society.</p> | <p>Definition of mission and clear vision for the media; production of ethical and professional codes; publication of media charter; training according to codes and media productions; audience survey to know about people' expectations; work on business plan to diversify funding resources; reinforce media regulations and monitoring bodies; promote media and information literacy among audiences.</p> |
| <p><i>Lack of independence and impartiality</i> Especially in times of violent conflict, the media can have a tendency towards nationalist or partial coverage and/or are expected (sometimes by their audience) to take sides – for example, in a civil war. Therefore, we should not exaggerate our hopes that media may play a de-escalating role in ongoing conflicts. Media are social agents in their societies and might drop below the level of impartiality achieved before violent conflicts started.</p> | <p>Political analysis of the conflicts and the divisions in the society; mapping and analysis of media owners and donors; production of ethical and professional codes; publication of media charter; training according to codes; audience survey to know about people' expectations; work on business plan to diversify funding resources; reinforce media regulations and monitoring bodies; promote media and information literacy.</p> |
| <p><i>Media capture</i> Any support to independent media systems might affect the interests of powerful elites. Some media outlets or organisations are even directly abused by their owners for political or business objectives.</p> | <p>Mapping and analysis of which media or individuals are active and influential and through which communication channels (internet, social media, short wave radios, etc.); mapping of the media owners and funders; work on media law and market reform; production of ethical and professional codes; publication of media charter; training of executive teams and governance bodies of the media according to codes; training of political and financial elites about the benefits of an independent media.</p> |
| <p><i>Security and safety of journalists and media actors</i> In some cases, the level of press freedom might be so low and the government so restrictive that any assistance to the media might only provide legitimacy to the government's propaganda machine or put journalists in danger. This aspect needs serious analysis before a decision is taken.</p> | <p>Political analysis of the divisions and restrictions in society – include 'do no harm' approach; mapping and analysis of media owners and funders; promote UN action plan on safety of journalists; training on physical and psychological training to journalists; training on digital security; elicit lessons learned and best practices from other closed contexts and media in exile.</p> |
| <p><i>Image and sustainability</i> Too much funding for media by donors might be seen as undesirable interference from outside, or might create artificial institutions that will hardly survive or be in the public interest. It might also worsen the viability of non-subsidised media.</p> | <p>Foster coordination among the donors in a given context; plan for holistic approach and long-term programming to better distribute the investments of interested donors; foster social anchoring and support of media; facilitate access to different funds and strengthen own revenue-generation capabilities.</p> |

Table 3 Risks of media assistance and mitigation measures

9 Monitoring and evaluation, and impact

A precondition for proper evaluation is to precisely define the media programme models and Theories of Change. If the expected results of a project – the outputs, outcomes and overall goals – are well identified, and quantitative and qualitative indicators for all levels are specified, then M&E can be conducted in a systematic way that supports future learning.

Some Theories of Change aim to achieve outcomes strictly within the media sector (for example, efforts to improve media regulations for more freedom, or economic viability of media houses, or improving capacity of journalists) as the stability and development of the media sector is an aim in itself. Other Theories of Change aim to influence areas outside the media sector – for example, to contribute to democratisation, civic participation, social cohesion, reduction of tensions between groups in society, etc. However, expectations about what media interventions can and cannot achieve need to be realistic. As stated earlier, the media can contribute to more inclusive, just and peaceful societies, but they cannot do so alone. In order to enable the media to play their role, the different layers of an enabling media environment need to be addressed according to specific Theories of Change for each layer.

Furthermore, Theories of Change should avoid large ‘gaps’ or ‘miracle boxes’, which should be filled or explained to describe how the project intends to go (for instance) from ‘better reception’ to ‘diminishing tensions’, and link those elements in a causal way. This requires a step-by-step narrative on the Theory of Change and related assumptions on the ‘missing middle’.

Monitoring needs to start early and be conducted regularly, with a view to the Theories of Change, which determine the issues to be monitored. It is also a key ingredient informing adaptation and learning. Evaluations are usually conducted at the end of a programme, but need to be prepared by collecting data before the project starts (baseline study). Evaluation design should remain flexible as project activities have to adapt to realities on the ground. Be aware of the context of the evaluation, encourage the participation of the various stakeholders in the evaluation design, but be careful with who participates in the data analysis and the resulting risks of conflict of interests.

The media assistance field still suffers from a lack of independent, long-term and rigorous evaluation. In-

vesting in such evaluation capacities – for example, in collaboration with academics and in coordination with various donors and implementers – would improve understanding of what level of impact can be expected and demonstrated, how, and with what indicators. However, it should be acknowledged that evaluating the impact of media assistance is particularly challenging. As information flows are so fluid and multiple, it is difficult to isolate the effects of one specific media intervention from other factors (the so-called ‘attribution problem’).

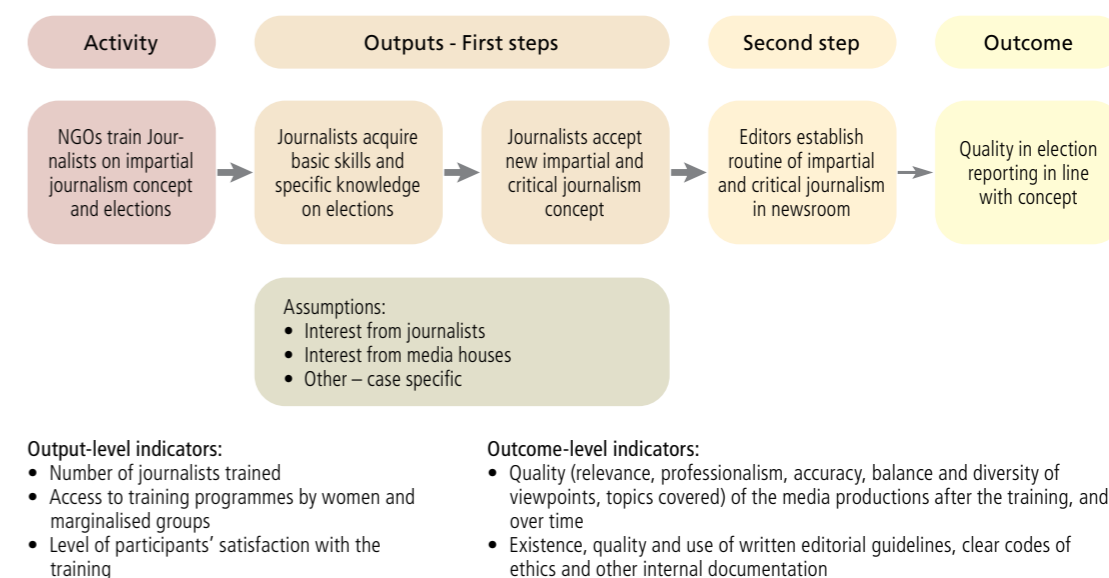
Below are two examples of concrete Theories of Change that give more detail on the causal links between activities, outputs and outcomes, and formulate (various) result chains according to the layers within the media sector.

Example 1: Capacity building of journalists (for example, in elections)

Training of journalists in basic professionalism and/or specific knowledge is one of the most common interventions in media assistance. Let us assume an NGO has opted to train journalists in building basic skills, based on a journalism concept of impartial but critical journalism, and also providing specific knowledge on elections in order to improve reporting dur-

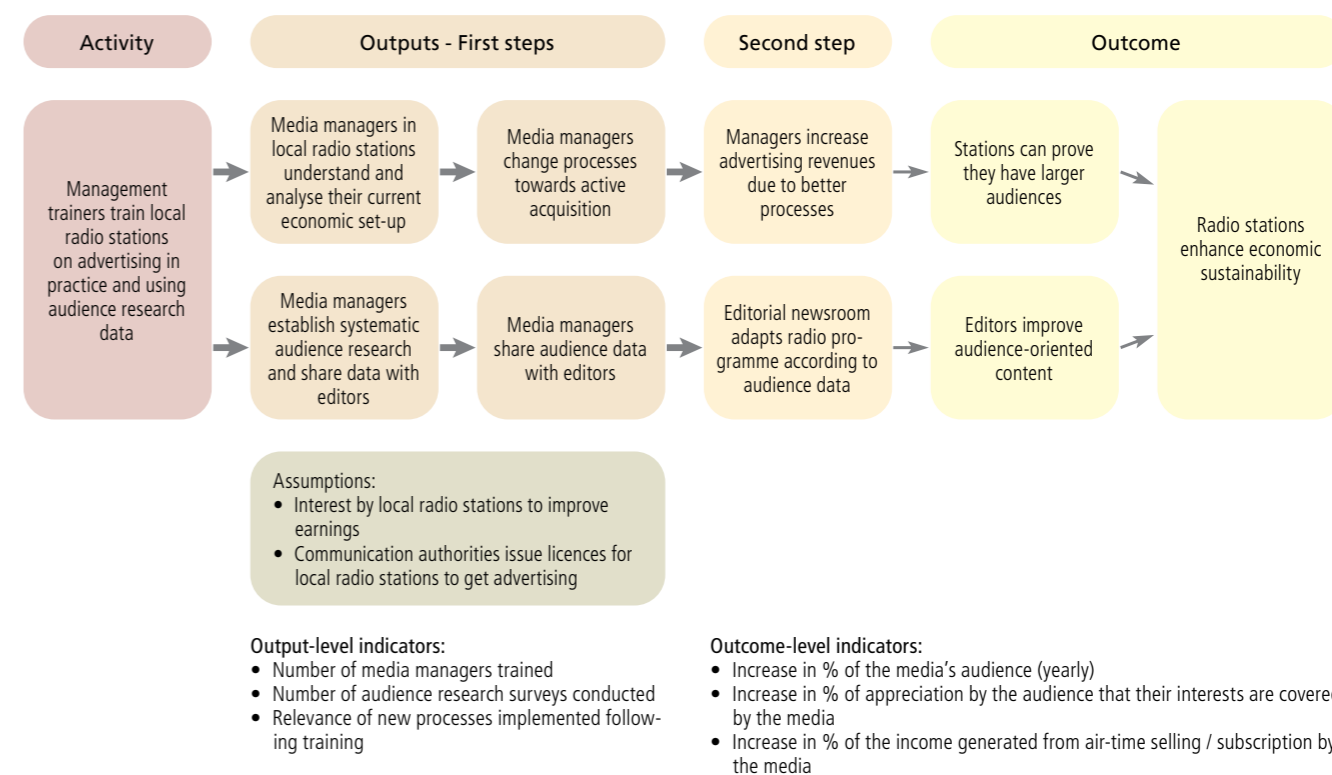
ing the electoral campaign. A specific goal has been set to ensure that candidates are assessed more for their policy ideas and less for their personality traits. Thus, the result chain in the figure below is an option. In practice, and in a specific context, it is feasible and maybe even recommended to add some interim steps, depending on the conditions on the ground.

How training leads to better content



Example 2: How to improve economic sustainability

It should be noted that result chains might not always be strictly linear. This example therefore includes different deviations or branches.



Annex 1

Checklist for analysis of media sector and audience (all six segments)

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Individual journalists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristics of journalists and reporters (number, level of education both general and journalistic, professional skills, access to employment, specialisation, gender, income; social background, ethnic/cultural background, languages, multimedia skills) Existing role models and public figures |
| 2. Media outlets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and character of existing media (newspaper, magazines, TV, private, public service or state, radio stations, websites) <p>Working issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial work-flow, working conditions for women and men, editorial/ethical policy Influence of owner Independence from government Security and safety Autonomy of reporters/editors Infrastructure (technical equipment, IT, electricity, paper) <p>Media output: quality/objectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of opinions published, topics (diversity, priorities) Quality of content (accuracy, impartiality and responsibility in the public interest, level of professionalism, diversity of sources, gender-balanced programming) Journalism concept (appropriateness of concept, use of information sources) Relevance (for elites, for poor people, urban/rural, young/old, for women and men) |
| 3. Media institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and importance of education and training institutions Existence and importance of professional associations, accreditation processes (press cards?) Existence of ombudsmen, press councils Media research institutes and médiamétrie Performance of regulatory bodies |
| 4. Economic and technological factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of technical media infrastructure (outreach) Level of technical internet infrastructure (satellite, fiber, distribution) Level of power and electricity availability Structure of ownership (private/commercial, state/government owned, public, non-profit), media concentration, affiliation Competition/monopolies in printing, distribution, advertising, etc. Sources of revenue: subscription and advertisement markets, hidden advertising, public support, institutional communication opportunities |
| 5. Political and legal environment, and safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and quality of legislation on: freedom of expression, mass media, public broadcasting, regulatory bodies, licenses, censorship, libel and slander, copyright, etc. Legislation on access to information by government or other public bodies Gender balance in all entities that consider media policy Performance of law enforcement, judiciary system Existence and activities of regulating bodies, advisory and complaints councils (accountability, appointment/constitution) Government's attitude towards freedom of expression (pressure, repression) Government's accountability Level of threats and pressure against media and journalists Status of impunity re: crimes against journalists |
| 6. Societal beliefs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of the media in society Identification of taboo themes Readiness for open discussion and public discourse Structure of communication in society |
| Audience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size and profile of readership/audience (TV, radio, newspapers, websites) Number of accounts in social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.) Outreach of different media to the general public and different sub-groups |

Proposed indicators for monitoring and evaluation

| Media segment | Possible indicators (qualitative and quantitative) |
|--|--|
| 1. Individual journalists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of journalists and other media professionals at all levels to upgrade their essential disciplinary knowledge and skills in multi-media production, coverage of specific topics, use of local languages and appropriate technologies Number of media managers accessing appropriate training Access to training programmes by women and marginalised groups Level of participants' satisfaction with the training Quality (relevance, professionalism, accuracy) of the media productions after the training, and over time |
| 2. Media outlets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative and quantitative changes in terms of content production and broadcasting (e.g. balance and diversity of viewpoints, topics covered, multi-media production, use of local languages, etc.) Composition and diversity of the editorial and management staff Existence, quality and use of written editorial guidelines, clear codes of ethics and other internal documentation Transparency and composition of the governance of the media house Transparency and pluralism of revenue sources Engagement with the public and CSOs, consultation and complaints mechanisms, use of audience surveys and listener groups |
| 3. Media institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and activity of independent press council and journalist associations, ombudsmen, etc. Number of public complaints about media conduct and evidence of media responsiveness Existence and activity of media training and research institutions, number of journalists trained Evidence of audience research activity by the media sector CSOs monitoring media content and ownership in the interests of promoting pluralism and diversity CSOs actively monitoring and promoting freedom of expression, right to information, journalism safety |
| 4. Economic and technological factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income level of journalists and other media staff % of advertisement revenues and distribution Level of concentration/pluralism in media ownership Level of access to ICTs and internet penetration within the population, including the most marginalised groups Technical quality of the production and broadcasting facilities Technical quality and presence of cell-phone networks nationally Technical quality and accessibility of internet distribution nationally Level of equipment with appropriate technical facilities to reach marginalised communities in community media Level of public funding for the public service media |
| 5. Political and legal environment, and safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of decision-makers trained on the role and understanding of media Level of government acceptance and proactivity to respond to international reviews and reports on the media sector Legal guarantees on freedom of expression, access to information and freedom of the media, and ratification of relevant international treaties Number of adopted and implemented constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information (SDG indicator 16.10.2) Existence of a state plan for frequencies' allocations (DVB-T, TV, FM) promoting the public interest, the diversity of ownership and content Level of performance of law enforcement, independence of judiciary system Level of knowledge of lawyers, judges and regulatory bodies and law students on the legal frameworks and remedies in ensuring freedom of the media Number of threats and attacks against journalists, numbers of journalists unlawfully detained Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months¹ |
| 6. Societal beliefs and cultural factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular publication of data to assess the role that society attributes to the media Level of trust in the media Belief in the value of dialogue within the population to seek consensual solutions to grievances, level of understanding and tolerance vis-à-vis antagonist groups Level of polarisation within society |

Indicators for activities with audiences

- Level of access to the media, including for the most marginalised groups
- Level of audience participation in talk-back programmes, debates, spaces devoted to readers' comments in newspapers, public engagement with content posted on social media
- Inclusion of media literacy courses in education curricula at various levels
- Number of public requests to the ombudsman
- Level of trust in the media
- Level of fragmentation and polarisation of audiences through analysis of audience surveys and social media network analysis

¹ SDG indicator 16.10.1. For additional safety indicators, see UNESCO's journalists' safety indicators

Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Disinformation | Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country (usually called 'fake news'). |
| Journalism | Production of reliable, independent and factual content for all parties; creation of a safe space for public dialogue and exchange of points of view. |
| Mal-information | Information that is based on reality, but used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organisation or country. |
| Media | Media are social agents or organisations (with all their own personal and institutional interests), not just technical communication channels. If we speak of radio we think of the editorial staff, director, and the radio station owners, a legal entity, an editorial line, its charter and a set of radio productions. |
| Media outlets | Single media enterprises, TV channels, radio stations, weekly printed magazines or websites. |
| Media institutions | The institutions around the media, serving the whole sector – these include training institutes for journalists, media workers' associations, as well as press councils, regulatory bodies, and research institutes. |
| Media channel | The technical side of media and communication. A channel is a technical tool to get messages across from senders to receivers, like FM radio waves, satellite signals, audio and video streaming, and digital video broadcasting – terrestrial (DVB-T). |
| Misinformation | Information that is false but not created with the intention of causing harm. |
| Social media | The collective of online communications channels, websites and mobile phone applications, dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Includes (for example) Facebook, Twitter, Weibo (in China) and VK (in Russia). Messaging apps such as WhatsApp are increasingly used as social media (tools) and for social networking (a way to engage). |
| Strategic communication | Production of rational and/or emotional media content (e.g. through messages, fiction, drama, art) designed to subvert, undermine, overwhelm or replace a pre-existing discourse on a subject significant to the strategic communicator. The goal here is not only to inform but to convince. |

Various forms of journalism

Peace journalism was worked out within the emergent disciplines of conflict analysis and peace studies, pioneered by Johan Galtung. It investigates the communicative possibilities for enhancing understanding and facilitating reconciliation between former opponents and enemies (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005; Lynch and Galtung 2010; see also Cottle 2006). 'Peace journalism' is defined as being peace/conflict-oriented (making conflicts transparent, giving voice to all parties, humanisation of all sides, proactive), truth-oriented (expose untruths on all sides), people-oriented, and solution-oriented. By contrast, 'war journalism' is characterised as war/violence-oriented (focusing on conflict arena and two conflicting parties, bipolar framing, 'us-them journalism', dehumanisation of 'them', reactive), propaganda-oriented (expose 'their' untruths and help 'our' cover-ups/lies through self-censorship), elite- and victory-oriented (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005: 271; Lynch and Galtung 2010; Neverla, Lohner and Banjac 2015).

Conflict-sensitive journalism tends to take an analytical approach to conflict, seeking opportunities to identify parties, goals, needs and interests. It projects a multi-party conflict model rather than a Manichean 'tug-of-war', helping to find room for perspectives from beyond the usual official sources. It also seeks out peace initiatives as well as opportunities to report on them (Lynch 2007).

Constructive journalism is based around reporting solution-focused news, instead of revolving only around negative and conflict-based stories. The idea behind constructive journalism is to give stories more context and make the consumer of the news more intelligent by giving more background and also reporting what is going well, so that people are more able to create a realistic view of the world. Instead of only reporting the issues, with constructive journalism the journalist also addresses what the consumer can do with the information.

Development journalism is one of the most influential and also most controversial global South alternative models of journalism. It states that journalism should play a constructive role in facilitating societal development, and stresses the possibilities of grassroots community involvement in media (Xiaoge 2009; Cottle 2006: 118; Voltmer 2013: 202).

Public journalism demands to reconceptualise journalism not as the expert transmitter of information but as an advocate for public conversation and societal deliberation, working towards engaging citizens and creating public debate (Rosen 2001; Harcup 2013; Cottle 2006: 118).

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In a Rohingyas refugee camp in Bangladesh, a young beneficiary of the humanitarian information programme produced by Fondation Hirondelle.
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