EMPOWERING INDEPENDENT MEDIA

U.S. Efforts to Foster a Free Press and an Open Internet Around the World

SECOND EDITION: 2012

CIMA Center for International Media Assistance

NED National Endowment for Democracy
Supporting freedom around the world

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Cover Photo: A woman experiments with mobile news delivery service CGNet Swara during a training by Knight International Journalism Fellow Shubhranshu Choudhary in Kunkuri, India. *Photo: International Center for Journalists*

About the Center for International Media Assistance

The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) at the National Endowment for Democracy works to strengthen the support, raise the visibility, and improve the effectiveness of independent media development throughout the world. The Center provides information, builds networks, conducts research, and highlights the indispensable role independent media play in the creation and development of sustainable democracies.

CIMA serves as a catalyst to address needs in the media assistance field, bringing together policymakers, practitioners, funders, and academics to reach shared goals. The Center carries out this role by convening working groups, commissioning research reports, and holding events. CIMA maintains a comprehensive bibliographic database of media assistance resources with more than 1,100 items. On its website, CIMA has posted country profiles detailing the status of independent media in countries around the world and comparing media freedom indexes. These and other resources can be accessed on CIMA's website at http://cima.ned.org/. CIMA also gathers articles from numerous news sources on developments in media and distributes them via a Daily Media News mailing and a weekly Digital Media Mash Up. You can sign up for these and other CIMA mailings and follow CIMA on Facebook and Twitter at http://cima.ned.org/about-cima/follow-cima.

These core activities of CIMA complement NED's role as a supporter of grassroots democracy initiatives and address many of the challenges that have been identified in the field of U.S.-sponsored development of independent and sustainable media. To learn more about CIMA, please visit http://cima.ned.org/.

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Message from the President
National Endowment for Democracy

Carl Gershman
President

NED established the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) in 2006 with encouragement from the U.S. Congress, which hoped that such an initiative would create a solid base of knowledge about the growing but not well understood field of media assistance. Two years later, CIMA published a volume entitled *Empowering Independent Media*, which provided a comprehensive look at both the key issues in the field as well as its latest findings and developments. Not surprisingly, the volume's recommendations became essential reading for policy makers, donors, and implementers on how to strengthen all aspects of media assistance.

Assistance to independent media is now a key component of U.S. and international efforts to promote democracy, not simply in terms of the amount of funding devoted to this work, but also in the growing recognition that free and independent media play a vital role in shaping an informed citizenry. Without information that media provide, citizens can neither make the informed choices about who governs them nor hold decision makers accountable for their actions once in power.

Much has been made, and rightly so, about the impact of digital technology in various parts of the world that is transforming the media landscape and fomenting social and political change. How such technology can be harnessed and channeled effectively to help bring about democratic outcomes remains a key question for media developers.

In this second edition of *Empowering Independent Media*, CIMA tackles such important topics as the impact of citizen journalism, the funding of digital media programs, and the need for media assistance to include such critical areas as media literacy and business management. We believe that this updated report will become a valuable resource not only for media assistance practitioners but for all who cherish a free press, which Winston Churchill called "the most dangerous foe of tyranny."

Message from the Senior Director
Center for International Media Assistance

Welcome to volume two of CIMA's overview report, *Empowering Independent Media*. Dramatic changes have occurred since the original edition was published in 2008. The Arab Spring has demonstrated to the world that the new, digital era of media is transforming how people communicate and use information and that leaders ignore this at their peril.

Suddenly, there is a sharply expanded toolkit available to the media development community. Not only are there tweets, Facebook posts, and YouTube videos, but citizen journalists armed with smart phones, mapping software, anti-censoring technology, and more. As Eric Newton of the Knight Foundation put it: "It's like the century after Gutenberg—there's a change in the model of knowledge. We don't understand it because we're in the middle of it." But, Newton added, "in this situation you have to run towards the confusion, not away from it."

Yet the very technologies that have opened communications and propelled citizens to press for democracy have also led to new risks for professional and citizen journalists alike. Online surveillance of citizens, filtering of the Internet, and the jailing of bloggers now join more traditional forms of government control of the media, such as censorship, criminal libel lawsuits, and physical attacks on journalists.

And in many regions of the world there have been rollbacks in press freedom, even in democratic societies. But the good news is that more attention is being paid to media development, and recognition of its importance in fostering good governance is on the rise. The proof is in the money devoted to supporting independent media: U.S. media development funders—public and private—spent about $222 million in 2010, a 56 percent increase over the estimated $142 million spent in 2006.

This expanded edition of *Empowering Independent Media* features new reports on how the digital revolution is transforming media development and how donors are responding to the challenges. There are also highlights and updates of CIMA's work over the past four years,

Marguerite H. Sullivan
Senior Director

researched and written by leading media scholars, prominent journalists, veteran trainers, and development experts. Readers will find chapters on the core areas of media development, including the legal environment, business practices, higher education, media literacy, monitoring and evaluation, and the safety of journalists, as well as detailed looks at the global spread of community radio and investigative journalism.

This report has been a collaborative effort, with work drawn from more than three dozen contributors. We were fortunate to have veteran investigative journalist David E. Kaplan, who edited our first edition, again serve as editor and principal writer. Dave took our ideas, interviews, and nearly 30 CIMA research reports and shaped the material into a coherent document. He also contributed original work on the funding, digital, and investigative journalism chapters. His knowledge and insights into the field—as well as his superb analytical and writing skills—were invaluable.

I also want to single out Don Podesta, CIMA's managing editor. Don oversaw production of this new edition, did final edits, and kept a complicated project on course. His experience in journalism and knowledge of media development have proven essential to this project and production of CIMA reports.

On the CIMA team, Anthony Abate, project

coordinator, was a superb photo and graphics editor, doing in-depth research to pull together documents related to the field. Consultants Robert Thomason and Peter Cary provided invaluable research and reporting, as did Shannon Maguire, program and conference officer; Cathie Glover, project coordinator; and Laura Jenkins, research associate.

We extend a special thanks to the authors of CIMA's research reports—more than 40 in the past three years—whose work informed this edition of *Empowering Independent Media*: Rosemary Armao, John Burgess, Peter Cary, Wally Dean, Douglas Farah, Michelle Foster, Jeff Ghannam, Andrew Green, Deborah Horan, Ellen Hume, Karin Karlekar, Krishna Kumar, Eugene Meyer, Paul Mihailidis, Susan Moeller, Andy Mosher, Laura Mottaz, Mary Myers, Anne Nelson, Peter Noorlander, Bill Orme, Dale Peskin, Sherry Ricchiardi, Bill Ristow, Ivan Sigal, Steven Strasser, and Drew Sullivan. Since the first edition, CIMA has published nearly four dozen reports; they can be found in their entirety at http://cima.ned.org.

We are also grateful to our report reviewers: Enrique Armijo, Patrick Butler, Meg Gaydosik, Ellen Hume, Shanthi Kalathil, Karin Karlekar, Drusilla Menaker, Anne Nelson, Adam C. Powell III, and Marjorie Rouse. Lastly, our thanks goes to the many individuals working for media organizations, colleges and universities, government and nongovernmental organizations, and foundations who have given us their advice and insights over the last four years.

This documents summarizes CIMA's own views and cannot be attributed to any individuals—research report writers and peer reviewers—whose work contributed to this project. We hope that this new edition of *Empowering Independent Media* will continue the conversation about the importance of media development. Let us hear from you.

Abbreviations

AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (acronym in French)
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
CIMA	Center for International Media Assistance
CIR	Center for Investigative Reporting (Berkeley, CA)
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
DCHA	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau, USAID
DFID	The United Kingdom's Department for International Development
DRG	Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, USAID
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DRL	U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
E&E	USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
FOI	Freedom of Information
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
GFMD	Global Forum for Media Development
IAPA	Inter American Press Association
ICFJ	International Center for Journalists
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFEX	International Freedom of Expression Exchange
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
INSI	International News Safety Institute
IPI	International Press Institute
IRE	Investigative Reporters and Editors
IREX	International Research & Exchanges Board
IRI	International Republican Institute
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDLF	Media Development Loan Fund
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
MSI	Media Sustainability Index
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCCRP	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
OSF	Open Society Foundations (formerly Open Society Institute)
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID
PRC	People's Republic of China
RSF	Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontieres)
SIPA	School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOA	Voice of America
VOIP	Voice over Internet protocol
WAN-IFRA	World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers

Executive Summary

International media development is a young field, with its modern roots in the rush of aid to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Since then, media assistance has been widely embraced as a critical component in building accountable and democratic societies, fostering better health care and a cleaner environment, empowering women and minorities, and bolstering economic development.

Media development entails various activities aimed at strengthening the media to be independent, pluralistic, and professional. Largely funded by international donors, it can include training programs in journalism and media management; support to news organizations, professional associations, and journalism schools; development of media laws and regulations; and various initiatives to improve coverage of such key issues as corruption and health care.

The global spread of digital media, expanded funding, and new tech-savvy donors have made recent years exciting ones for the media development community. The dramatic events of the Arab Spring highlighted not only the impact that media can have on democracy and development, but also how quickly the media themselves are changing. The key role played by digital technology has strengthened donor focus on a whole range of issues: Internet freedom, networking and mapping platforms, data journalism, citizen journalism, and more.

Success stories in media development are not hard to find. Around the world, digital tools are being used by citizen and professional journalists alike, forcing greater accountability on those who hide from public scrutiny. There are now thousands of community radio stations across the developing world, bringing news and voice to millions, and their numbers continue to grow. More than 100 nonprofit investigative journalism centers have spread watchdog reporting worldwide. And more than 90 countries now have freedom of information laws on their books. Meanwhile, major development programs in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan have sharply boosted U.S. government budgets for media assistance, pushing spending on the field to its highest level since CIMA began tracking it in 2006.

At the same time, major challenges loom. After two decades of progress, press freedom has declined in nearly every region of the world. According to Freedom House, only 15 percent of the world's population lives in countries that enjoy a free press. Murders of journalists have jumped by more than 30 percent over the past decade, accompanied by a rising trend of imprisonment. Authoritarian regimes are increasingly able to spy on and disrupt those who use digital media, while governments in more than 40 countries now censor the Internet, affecting a half-billion users. And pressure on Western governments to pare spending could result in significant cuts to foreign assistance, including media development funding.

As before, this edition of *Empowering Independent Media* draws on lessons from around the world, but its primary focus, given the mandate of the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), is on U.S. efforts. This new report examines seven central areas of media development—funding, digital media, sustainability, media law, safety, education, and monitoring and evaluation. The report also delves in-depth into four areas deserving of greater attention: citizen journalism, investigative journalism, community radio, and media literacy. In addition, there are briefs on such topics as raising professional standards, bribery among journalists, covering corruption, transparency in government communications, the Pentagon's information operations, China's global media initiative, lessons from Eastern Europe, troubles in Latin America, and the World Journalism Education Census.

Among the report's highlights:

Funding. U.S. spending on international media development—from public and private sources—jumped an estimated 56 percent from 2006 to 2010, due largely to USAID and State Department programs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Spending by U.S. agencies and federally funded nonprofits accounted for $146 million in 2010, nearly two-thirds of all U.S. funding that year. Despite the increase, the amount comprises just 0.4 percent of the nation's foreign assistance. Private funding by U.S.

foundations also grew, to an estimated $76 million in 2010, with two-thirds of that from one source, the Open Society Foundations. Although a tough economy prompted cuts in media grant-making by some foundations, new donors with roots in technology have brought with them an emphasis on digital media and entrepreneurship. Worldwide, nearly a half-billion dollars was spent on international media assistance in 2010, largely by U.S. and EU donors. But those amounts could ebb due to pressure on Western governments to curb spending, combined with a winding down of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Digital Media. By 2012, about 90 percent of the world population had access to cellphones and 30 percent had access to the Internet. The way people use information and communicate is transforming the world's media, and it is changing media development with it. Donors are increasingly focused on funding digital technology projects, including citizen journalism, mobile phone media networks, and tools to defend Internet freedom. But they are not the magic answer; while digital media were key to the Arab Spring, satellite television and traditional media in the region also made critical contributions. Authoritarian regimes, meanwhile, are increasingly able to spy on and disrupt those who use digital media. Journalists working online are now targeted as never before and face prison, exile, kidnapping, and murder.

Citizen Journalism. Citizens armed with digital tools are rapidly turning into a powerful public force able to document government abuses, natural disasters, election fraud, and other critical events. A single smart phone offers the public a journalist's tool box that once cost thousands of dollars and filled a car trunk: a video camera, audio recorder, and still camera, and the means to distribute stories live to millions. But until recently relatively little development funding has targeted those outside traditional media, in part because their disparate nature makes it hard to identify them and support their work. Also, many citizen journalists are activists wedded to a cause, with little awareness of the importance of being fair and accurate purveyors of news or of the risks of reporting.

Sustainability. In much of the world, independent media organizations are more constrained by economic and market conditions than by censorship, yet little development money is spent helping them become competent businesses. Poor business practices foster problems like lack of sustainability, donor dependence, and poorly paid reporters who take bribes. Business skills encompass a range of activities, including advertising, sales, marketing, and audience research. Today, there is no single business model appropriate to the media. Successful enterprises use a variety of advertising, subscriptions, consumer fees, and nearly free models. And while digital media present new opportunities, print remains a vibrantly growing business in the Middle East, China, India, and parts of the Americas.

Media and the Law. The legal environment is a critical factor in the success of independent media. Onerous laws and regulations can stunt the growth of media, and the legal tools available are numerous: criminal defamation, privacy, and "insult" laws; high monetary judgements in lawsuits; sweeping national security statutes; and licensing and broadcast spectrum restrictions. Libel laws tend to be the primary vehicle to clamp down on critical media. Although libel is treated in many democracies as only a civil offense, criminal defamation laws remain on the books in many countries. There is a rising trend of imprisoned journalists, from 81 in 2000 to 179 in 2011, with over half behind bars on national security cases. One success story: More than 90 countries now have freedom of information laws (although many have been poorly implemented).

Safety. Murders of journalists, after staying fairly constant during the 1990s, jumped by more than 30 percent over the past decade. The killings, moreover, are the tip of the iceberg: beatings, kidnappings, imprisonment, and threats against journalists are far more numerous, and can also be effective in silencing them. The problem lacks an easy solution, in part because threats are so diverse, ranging from drug and ethnic violence to poor reporting practices. NGOs have responded with aggressive monitoring and safety training. But while at least five NGOs report on journalist deaths, they use different methodologies and arrive at different totals each year. And few donors support the kind of broad-based training that is most needed—the vast majority of journalists killed are staff members of local media.

Investigative Journalism. Investigative journalism has played a frontline role in fostering accountability, battling corruption, and raising media standards, but it receives relatively little support—about 2 percent of media development funding by major donors. The practice faces numerous obstacles in developing countries, including a lack of skills, resources, competent trainers, access to information, supportive owners, and protective laws. Despite this, there has been impressive progress in spreading the practice internationally. Investigative journalism networks have linked together thousands of reporters worldwide to collaborate on stories, sources, tools, and techniques. Key to this growth has been the spread of nonprofit investigative journalism organizations, which now number more than 110 in 40 countries.

Education. U.S. journalism education programs play an important role in media development. Almost every program receives international visitors, educates international students and professionals, conducts international research, and consults with implementers. The schools host scores of programs, largely focused on journalism training, faculty and curriculum development, new media platforms, and research, but there appears to be little coordination. Worldwide, meanwhile, scholars have identified more than 2,300 journalism education programs, with rapid growth in places such as China and India. But reforming many of them poses tough challenges: an overabundance of applicants combined with a lack of funding, practical training, quality faculty, electrical power, affordable textbooks, and up-to-date curricula.

Media Literacy. Programs in media literacy help audiences identify news and distinguish it from "infotainment" or propaganda, and they can play an important role in educating citizens to value a free press and the need for accountable government. Digital literacy—understanding social media, smart phones, and online networks—is also critical for the new generation of citizen journalists and communicators. Media literacy has been taken more seriously by scholars in the past decade and it is being used in school curricula. But the field faces tough challenges: Programs take time to produce results, their benefits are not easily quantifiable, and the field suffers from a lack of funding and research.

Community Radio. Low-budget, locally-run community radio stations have been around for decades, but since the 1990s, they have boomed across the developing world, growing faster than either state or commercial radio. In poorer regions of the world, radio is still the mass-medium of choice, and community stations have proven adept at informing and empowering local populations on education, public health, and economic development. Community radio stations are also making greater use of digital technology, integrating broadcasts with mobile phones and the Internet. But community radio also faces major challenges: sustainability beyond donor support, repression by suspicious governments, commercial competitors, and coping with new technology.

Monitoring and Evaluation. Each year, at least three organizations produce widely cited indexes on the state of media around the world—Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index, IREX's Media Sustainability Index, and RSF's Press Freedom Index. The studies are broadly seen as a crucial, credible and useful way to track media freedom, and their findings are relied upon by governments, scholars, donors, NGOs, and the media. Each index has its critics, however, who variously point to the possibility of Western bias, lack of transparency, and focus on traditional media and who raise questions about individual methodologies employed. Measuring and evaluating media development at the program level also presents challenges, including a lack of shared metrics, reluctance to share best practices, lack of funding, and inconsistent use of terminology.

Recommendations

Expand Funding. U.S. public and private funding for media development jumped by more than 50 percent from 2006 to 2010, as donors increasingly acknowledged the role that media play in building and sustaining democracy around the world. But more needs to be done to expand and diversify the donor base, including further outreach to potential funders with roots in the high-tech industry and other new players. Even with the increases, the amount of money going to media development remains tiny compared with overall U.S. foreign assistance. This should be rectified.

Take the Long View. Too often media development support falls into the "flavor of the month" trap, with donors and implementers rushing to whatever region is in the news (the Middle East and North Africa in 2011) and neglecting or pulling out too soon from parts of the world (Central and Eastern Europe after the '90s) where the job is not yet done or where press freedoms are being rolled back. Sustaining independent media requires a long-term, global approach spanning years, not months.

Coordinate and Cooperate. Duplication wastes money. Projects need to be coordinated at all levels—at the donor level, such as through pooled resources or frequent discussion of who is funding what, and at the implementer level, so that activities add value and don't duplicate other programs.

Embrace Digital Media. The digital world needs to be integrated into *all* aspects of media development, including media law programs, professional training, and business management. But while a crucial toolkit, digital media should not be seen as a panacea; new media needs to be supported by proven independent media programs as well as engagement at the legal and policy level.

Build Citizen Journalist Capacity. The tools of journalism are now available to everyone, but most don't know the basics of finding and verifying information, balancing sources, and producing a news report. Training in media literacy is crucial and should be integrated into academic curricula.

Teach Business Skills. Understanding the business side of journalism is crucial to sustaining independent media. Media development programs need exit strategies so that local media organizations do not collapse when financial support from outside donors ends. Donors should consider greater support of audience measurement, including uniform metrics across platforms and media.

Emphasize Legal Issues. There cannot be independent news media without a strong legal-enabling environment. More work is needed to decriminalize libel and insult laws and to ensure that broadcast regulations are transparent and fair. Development projects should go beyond lobbying for laws and regulations and should follow up so that information access laws are implemented. Internet access and freedom of expression online should be protected through internationally recognized laws and regulations.

Support Investigative Journalism. Despite its frontline role in fostering public accountability, battling crime and corruption, and raising media standards, investigative reporting receives relatively little in media assistance. Investigative journalism nonprofit centers, in particular, have proven themselves dynamic agents of change; they should be supported and encouraged to develop sustainability plans.

End Impunity for Journalist Attacks. Donor support for organizations that track killings, physical attacks, and jailing of journalists around the world should increase. Likewise, groups dedicated to training journalists in safety techniques should be supported. Data on attacks could be better coordinated among the organizations that monitor journalist safety.

Modernize Journalism Education. U.S. universities can make a significant contribution to educating a new generation of journalists worldwide, and they should play an increasing role as content and technology innovators. Today's students need to learn how to report the news through a variety of digital platforms,

and they need a core curriculum not in communications theory but in the craft of journalism—reporting, writing, and editing and the standards of balance, fairness, and pluralism in sourcing.

Invest in Community Radio. Donors should continue investing in community radio in support of freedom of expression and democratic participation. Further work should be done in prodding governments to enact pro-community radio legislation. Community stations should be encouraged to embrace digital technology and to develop business and sustainability plans.

Embed Evaluation into All Projects. There is a movement toward including funds explicitly for monitoring and evaluation in project budgets from the outset, and this trend should be encouraged. Better techniques for measuring the results of media development projects should be explored. And donors should resist using media freedom index rankings to gauge the success of individual projects.

What is Media Development?

Each year, international donors spend as much as a half-billion dollars to improve the state of news media in developing and democratizing countries. The field encompasses hundreds of trainers, facilitators, and managers; dozens of NGOs; and scores of programs ranging from community radio stations in war-torn Afghanistan to digital crowdsourcing projects in East Africa.

Because the media comprise such a broad area, definitions of media development can vary. But its key elements are widely agreed upon. International media development entails various activities aimed at strengthening the media to be independent and pluralistic, with high standards of fairness and accuracy. Largely funded by donors in North America and Western Europe, it can include training programs in best practices in journalism and media management; support to news organizations, professional associations, and journalism schools; improving the legal-enabling environment; and various initiatives to improve coverage of such key issues as corruption, health care, the environment, women, and minorities.[1]

Daniel Kaufmann, a development expert at the Brookings Institution, expands the definition to include an emphasis on freedom of expression and democratization. Kaufmann describes the field as "empowering a multitude of media institutions and actors to operate independently and professionally, without undue constraints by the state or elites, promoting freedom of expression and democratic accountability."[2]

Programs to strengthen media often overlap with other initiatives, such as efforts to ensure open access to the Internet or reform of laws affecting the media and open government. New digital technology has also blurred the lines between the professional press and citizen journalism, prompting donors and NGOs to expand their reach beyond journalists to bloggers, technologists, and activists.

Within the field, a distinction is sometimes made between "media development" and "media for development." Media development is focused largely on building an independent, professional media, whereas media for development (also known as "communication for development") uses the media to educate and change behavior on specific issues, such as health care, poverty reduction, good governance, and environmental protection. Much of the funding available for media development is, in fact, for issue-specific, media for development programs. But there is considerable common ground between the two approaches, with both incorporating professional training and best practices. Done smartly, say veteran trainers, media for development programs can pour needed resources into helping professionalize an indigenous press corps.

Why Media Development Matters

For many who labor in both the news media and development fields, there is an instinctive sense that an independent press matters—that free and robust media have a positive and obvious effect on economic development, political accountability, and social welfare. Media trainers and development experts can cite case after case of successful programs that have helped battle infectious disease, aided in disaster relief, and even pushed corrupt rulers out of office. The catalyzing effect of social media and satellite television on the Arab Spring, they say, clearly demonstrates the vital role that the media can play in development and democratization.

Such examples, however, tend to be anecdotal. And despite significant attention to media assistance in recent years, international indexes of press freedom show little improvement over the past decade. What evidence is there, then, that media development actually makes a difference?

Scholars and development experts have been asking that same question, and they have arrived at answers that should be encouraging to the media development community. "Substantive empirical research literature" shows that "media freedom is associated with corruption control, higher incomes and investments, and political stability," according to Kaufmann, who conducted a review of the available research.[3] Kaufmann served previously as a director at the World Bank Institute, where he led its work on governance and anti-corruption.

Among the studies:

- France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, in a 2002 paper, found that an increase in media freedom was associated with a statistically significant decrease on corruption.[4]
- A London School of Economics (LSE) scholar, in a 2009 study, found that the number of newspapers had "a robust negative association with both corruption and inequality."[5]
- Another LSE study, from 2002, concluded that newspaper circulation had a positive and statistically significant effect on government food distribution in India.[6]
- Researchers at Ghana's Ashesi University College, in a 2010 study, found that increases in press freedom were tied to statistically significant increases in political stability in sub-Saharan Africa.[7]
- Expansion of a country's level of media freedom prompted increases of some 25 percent in media freedom in neighboring countries, according to a study by U.S. scholars at the University of Wisconsin, West Virginia University, and the World Bank Institute.[8]
- Kaufmann's own analysis found that media freedom, when combined with improvements in the rule of law, is particularly effective at curbing corruption.[9]

Kaufmann and other scholars caution that the data and methodologies used in the various studies present various challenges but that overall the field is on strong ground. There is, he says, a "preponderance of evidence" that media development matters.

HIGHLIGHTS

- U.S. spending on international media development jumped an estimated 56 percent from 2006 to 2010, to $222 million, due largely to USAID and State Department programs in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Despite the increases, the amounts devoted to media development were just 0.4 percent of overall U.S. foreign assistance.
- Nearly a half-billion dollars was spent worldwide on international media assistance in 2010, largely by U.S. and EU donors. The United States remains the largest national source of funding.
- Media development funding by private U.S. foundations grew from an estimated $60 million in 2006 to $76 million in 2010. At $45 million to $50 million annually, the Open Society Foundations remain by far the largest single private donor.
- Although a tough economy has cut media grant-making by some traditional foundations, their ranks have been invigorated by donors with roots in technology, who have brought new approaches and funding to the field.
- Pressure on Western governments to curb spending, combined with a winding down of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, could force sustained cuts in media assistance.
- The Arab Spring has sharpened already growing donor interest in funding digital media and Internet freedom.

FUNDING: INVESTING IN INDEPENDENT MEDIA

The field of international media assistance has its roots in the battered landscape of post-World War II Europe, and the realization that reinventing the news media was a critical component of reconstruction. U.S. government agencies were joined by private funds like the Ford Foundation. The machinery of fascist propaganda was dismantled, and new broadcast media were instructed in independent news production. Newspapers were created with mixed editorial boards, free of party control. These efforts were especially effective in Germany, where a vibrant and politically diverse media culture flowered within a decade of the Nazis' defeat.

Sudan In Focus host John Tanza (right) facilitates a training session for journalists in Sudan. The radio show was launched in September 2010 and airs Monday through Friday for 30 minutes each day, offering news about the country, region, and continent. *Photo: Voice of America*

In 1989, the end of Soviet communist rule led to a dramatic expansion in media assistance. Funding from U.S. and Western European governments and private foundations streamed into the formerly communist countries, supporting workshops in everything from investigative reporting to advertising management. In 1993, financier George Soros founded the Open Society Institute (now the Open Society Foundations, or OSF) to manage his foundations, which were then largely in Eastern Europe, as a way to contribute to a transition from communism to free-market democracies. The OSF soon extended its programs in media development to a growing roster of developing countries, some just emerging from their own conflicts, and many with populations living in extreme poverty.

Today, media assistance is an established, if still relatively young, field of international development. Measuring the amount of funds devoted to media assistance is challenging at best. Media development projects are often embedded in broader civil society and international aid projects and are hard for agencies and donors to break out. For example, the U.S. government funding numbers for media development discussed in this chapter do not include expenditures for public diplomacy. There are also overlapping categories of media training, digital technology, freedom of expression, communications infrastructure, and accountability and governance. Some programs, such as those that focus on the Internet, may have more to do with establishing basic freedoms and an environment in which independent media can survive.

As with its 2008 report, CIMA relies on spending data from three major sources: private foundations based in the United States; and programs categorized under "Media Freedom and Freedom of Information" by the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Not included is the State Department's spending for public diplomacy nor spending by other U.S. agencies, such as "information operations" by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Despite these caveats, some interesting trends can be gleaned, including a clear increase in support. Data

collected by CIMA show that U.S. media development funders—public and private—spent about $222 million in 2010. That compares to about $142 million spent in 2006—a 56 percent increase.

Some other notable trends:

- Nearly a half-billion dollars ($487 million) was spent worldwide on international media assistance in 2010, according to a CIMA estimate, largely by donors in the United States and the European Union. Some 84 percent of the total comes from government agencies in the United States and the EU.
- The United States is by far the largest national source of funding, at 46 percent of the total. The leading government contributors in 2011 were the U.S. Agency for International Development ($63 million) and the State Department ($44 million). The New York-based Open Society Foundations ($45 million–$50 million) remained by far the largest private donor.
- U.S. government funding has increased sharply over the past five years, driven largely by aid programs in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan. Spending on media freedom and freedom of information by USAID and the State Department jumped 67 percent from 2007 to 2011.
- Nearly two-thirds (66 percent) of U.S. media development funding in 2010 came from government agencies and two federally funded nonprofits, the National Endowment for Democracy and the United States Institute of Peace, totalling $146 million. This compares to a 58 percent government share that CIMA found in 2006.
- Funding by private U.S. foundations grew from about $60 million in 2006 to $76 million in 2010, a 27 percent increase. Although a tough economy has downsized the portfolios and grant-making of many traditional foundations, their ranks have been invigorated by donors with roots in technology, who have brought entrepreneurial approaches and new funding to the field.
- Pressure on Western governments to curb spending, combined with a winding down of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, could force sustained cuts in media assistance. This, in turn, could put further pressure on private donors.
- Digital technology is rapidly transforming the media environment, and with it, the media development community. The use of digital media in the Arab Spring and other social movements has strengthened donor focus on the Internet, networking and mapping platforms, cellphones, and other new media tools.

U.S. media development funders—public and private—spent about $222 million in 2010. That compares to about $142 million spent in 2006—a 56 percent increase.

The major implementers—nonprofit organizations that are focused on media development—have seen significant growth in recent years. For the original edition of *Empowering Independent Media*, CIMA assembled figures from the big three U.S. nonprofits, the International Center for Journalists, Internews, and IREX, to gain a general idea of how funding was being spent. To this, the survey added annual spending on media development by the National Endowment for Democracy. The amounts, again, are at best rough estimates, as categories such as training overlap with other activities. But there is some consistency with CIMA's previous survey in 2006, and the data are instructive. In 2006, these groups' combined total spending equaled $60 million. For 2011, their total had reached $100 million—a 67 percent increase.

Where did the money go? According to managers at the four groups, training remained the largest single activity, although its share dropped from 44 percent to 29 percent over those six years. Amounts devoted to the second largest activity, direct assistance, stayed about the same (at 28 percent in 2011), as did the percentage spent on economic sustainability and professional associations. There were modest increases in the share devoted to media literacy and university programs, while there were drops in the percentage spent on the legal environment, communication for development, and safety of journalists. *(See charts, pages 17 and 19.)*

The influx of new funding, new donors, and new technology has made media development a far more diverse field. Coordinating international projects, a longtime challenge for media implementers and donors, remains problematic. Progress has been made, with partnerships

COORDINATION: MAKING AID MORE EFFECTIVE

Cooperation and coordination in international media development are increasing, albeit unevenly. Efforts to improve collaboration are playing out in a landscape that has grown increasingly complex in the past decade.

Media development is becoming more diverse with an influx of new funders and a broadening of the aid marketplace. The wealth amassed from technology has produced an innovative group of funders, with major players such as the Gates Foundation and Google, while funding based on legacy media companies has declined. New technologies also mean that virtually anyone can now participate in the development of media, if not directly in media development, by sharing, contributing, advising, or supporting recipient country media or causes. Individual contributions can be easily aggregated into funding pools. The Red Cross, for example, received $25 million for Haiti relief from mobile phone pledges in just days after the earthquake.

Another key development is geography: Aid programs once defined by borders are increasingly global. Health, environment, agriculture, and literacy have been declared international priorities, with cross-border "coalitions" created to address specific problems such as AIDS. Nongovernmental donors such as the Gates Foundation are targeting broad issues, such as rural development and health in Africa.

Efforts are underway to improve the effectiveness and coordination of international aid. A series of international agreements—including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Accord, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation—call for greater transparency, information sharing, and coordination, but it's unclear how these will affect media development, a relatively tiny slice of foreign aid whose programs are often buried in other projects.

Against this backdrop, coordination and cooperation in media development is evolving:

+ Pooled funding by major donors appears to be on the rise. In 2011, for example, Google, Omidyar Network, the Knight Foundation, Germany's Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and the U.S. State Department jointly pledged $1 million to the African News Innovation Challenge to fund digital experiments that could strengthen the African news media.[10] By its very nature, this kind of arrangement entails more and better coordination and communication.
+ Collaboration at the regional and country level varies widely and can depend on factors that range from geography to the level of international interest. International Media Support (IMS), a Denmark-based NGO, has been instrumental in organizing meetings among donors and implementers to identify best practices and partnership approaches.
+ Collaboration is most needed when time is of the essence, as in emergencies such as the earthquake in Haiti.

NGO implementers cite a host of challenges. Grant proposals, for example, rarely treat coordination beyond a mention, and since it is not a designated outcome, it's unlikely to be assessed or evaluated. Donors may need to add a line item for cooperation and coordination, much as they are being urged to do so for evaluation. Collaborating can also require significant time, effort, and expense. Country directors say that anywhere from 25 to 75 percent of their time is devoted to issues involving collaboration and, in times of crisis, even more. And while media development managers informally share information on cooperation and coordination, there is little expertise and no organized constituency on the subject. The field would also benefit from more research.

Another challenge is that funders and implementers may see cooperation and coordination in contradictory ways. For funders, the process tends to be about accountability, a way to produce more impact. Implementers, on the other hand, tend to see collaboration in terms of expediency, a tool to accomplish a task or solve a problem at hand. When people talk about the need for more cooperation and coordination, what they may actually be saying is that better decisions are needed. Coordination and cooperation, however, can only set the table for that.

Pakistani TV journalist Madiha Javed Qureshi reports from World Press Freedom Day events in Washington, DC, in May 2011. *Photo: Sadaf Baig/ICFJ*

and pooled funding presenting opportunities to better coordinate scarce resources. But there remains much to do. "We haven't improved sufficiently enough," said Gordana Jankovic, director of OSF's London-based Network Media Program. "Without coordination, the repetitions have grown tremendously. There is a significant need for reengagement on this." *(See sidebar on previous page)*

Official U.S. Assistance

Since 2007, the U.S. government has spent more than a half billion dollars to support international media development. While the figure seems impressive, and much has been accomplished, the amount seems almost a rounding error when compared to U.S. foreign aid generally. In FY 2011, of the $39 billion in U.S. bilateral assistance—which includes development aid—media development amounted to less than 0.4 percent.[11]

"It is not a state secret that 99.9 percent of aid in the world is NOT media aid," observed Eric Newton, senior adviser to the president at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. "That means media development would need to be 1,000 times more important than it is now to be as important as other kinds of aid."

This lopsided ratio was painfully apparent to democracy protesters in Egypt, where the U.S. government devoted an average of $24 million a year to support democracy and civil society (including independent media)—less than 2 percent of the annual $1.3 billion for military assistance over the last decade of the Mubarak regime.[12]

Nonetheless, the U.S. government remains the world's largest single supporter of media development. And while the amount appears tiny compared to other international development efforts, investment in the sector has markedly increased, growing by two-thirds between 2007 and 2011. Media development experts welcome this as a growing recognition of the role of independent media in foreign assistance. At the same time, they caution that much of the increase was due to heavy funding by Washington of aid projects in two war zones, Iraq and Afghanistan. In FY 2008, for example, State Department media funding jumped five-fold—from $16 million to $79 million—due largely to a multi-million dollar project to support the advancement of democracy and good governance in Iraq.[13] The amounts dropped the following

year and averaged about $44 million through FY 2011.

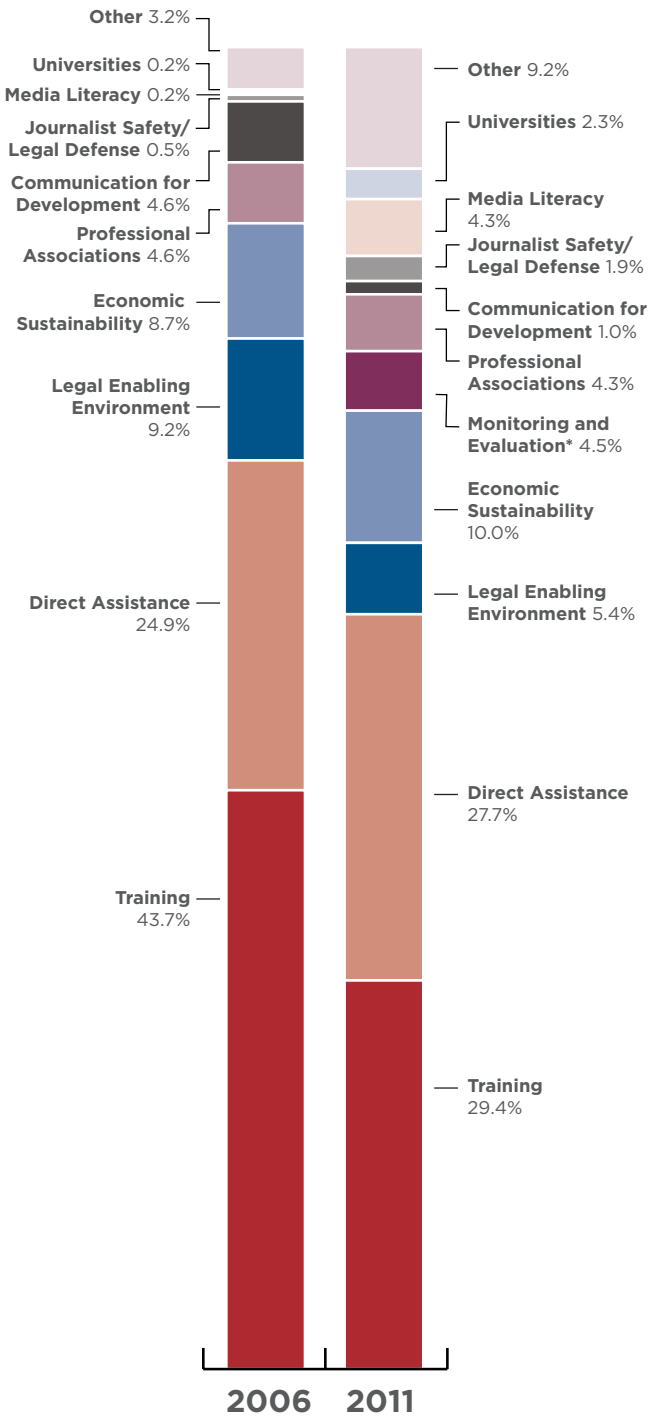
The Iraqi and Afghan projects have ranged from setting up an ill-fated television network in Iraq to helping establish a national wire service and a network of 47 community radio stations in Afghanistan.[14] Buoyed by the conflict-driven spending, U.S. government funding for media freedom and freedom of information—the two categories under which the State Department calculates media assistance spending by the department and USAID—reached $127 million in FY 2010, its highest level since CIMA began tracking funding trends in 2006. The amount dropped by $20 million in FY 2011—a response to a reduced U.S. footprint in Iraq—and may drop further due to pressure to cut spending in the federal budget.

Official U.S. media assistance tends to follow the pattern of U.S. foreign aid generally—it moves in tandem with Washington's foreign policy priorities. This "flavor of the month" phenomenon can make it difficult to maintain consistent funding levels, critics say. Billions in media development funding, for example, went to former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries at the end of the Cold War. Now less is available, despite renewed media freedom problems in the region. Africa has become a popular destination; official media assistance, primarily from USAID, jumped from a modest $1 million in FY 2007 to nearly $16 million in FY 2011. The next wave appears to be the Middle East and North Africa. As events unfolded in Egypt and Tunisia in the winter of 2010–11, media activists began fielding calls from Western donors wanting updates, offering support, and requesting project proposals.

Although funding for media development in Europe and Eurasia has decreased in recent years, it remains an important region for U.S. government media development efforts, with $23 million budgeted in FY 2011. In recent years the State Department has supported media development projects in Georgia, Ukraine, Kosovo, Russia, and Moldova. USAID has been active in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine.

U.S. government-funded media development projects are rare in the East Asia and Pacific region and the Western Hemisphere. In recent years, the State Department has funded only a few programs in the East Asia and Pacific region—in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Malaysia. And, of the 47 countries in which USAID has an active

COMPARISON OF U.S. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FUNDING BY ACTIVITY IN 2006 AND 2011



*Monitoring and evalution was not included in the 2006 breakdown.

media development project, only three—Colombia, Haiti, and Venezuela—are in the Western Hemisphere. Most U.S. government funding for media development goes to countries where media might help minimize threats to the United States.

In addition to shifting regional priorities, the nature of government media development initiatives is also in flux, due largely to the global embrace of digital technology, from cellphones to social media. The dramatic use of digital tools in popular uprisings has brought added attention—and funding—to new media and Internet freedom programs. One result is a move away from traditional journalism training, long a core component of media development. One USAID media expert estimated that in the 1990s, about 80 to 90 percent of media development funding was spent on journalism and media business training. Today, he estimates that training makes up only about 50 percent of media development projects.

Other government agencies also have a significant impact on the media development field, among them the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees such media outlets as the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. Another notable and at times controversial

MAJOR DONORS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

International media assistance is alive and well outside the United States. A CIMA examination of non-U.S. funding estimated that the European Commission and various EU national governments spent $265 million to help independent media and freedom of expression in FY 2010, compared with the $210 million estimated spent by U.S. public and private donors.[15]

These figures are not precise, however. The EU amounts come from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose data may include funding for large infrastructure projects such as telecommunications towers. But clearly there is a lot of activity. A 2010 European Union-commissioned study[16] identified 236 ongoing media projects in Africa alone—with a combined budget of $217 million supplied by EU member states, EU institutions, UN bodies, and private foundations and NGOs within the EU.

Despite challenging economic times, the larger European donors are thought to have maintained funding levels of media assistance in recent years. That may change, depending how well governments there cope with budget shortfalls and pressure to cut spending.

The big players outside the United States: the European Commission (the EU's executive body) and other EU institutions (about $80 million); the United Kingdom ($45 million); the Netherlands ($40 million); Switzerland ($35 million); UNESCO ($33 million); and Sweden ($26 million). France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Canada are also thought to contribute millions of dollars annually.

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, supported by the European Commission, backs such media support projects as NGOs defending freedom of speech, investigative journalism, and freedom of information legislation. The EIDHR's budget was slated to grow 39%, from $37 million in 2011 to $52 million in 2012.

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) funds dozens of media projects, ranging from capacity-building for Iraqi journalists to a soccer-based TV soap opera around gender-based violence. DFID's budget for media assistance reached an estimated $45 million on some 46 projects in FY 2010. Among the UK implementers are the BBC World Service Trust (renamed BBC Media Action in 2012), the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Panos London, and Journalists for Human Rights.

Denmark's International Media Support, a media development NGO, had an annual budget of $15 million in 2010, with two-thirds of that coming from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and much of the rest from the Norwegian and Swedish foreign ministries and aid agencies. IMS is active in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Asia, and West Africa.

In Germany, players include the German Development Ministry, two foundations funded through the parliament—the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and the Deutsche Welle Akademie, run by state-funded international broadcaster Deutsche Welle.[17]

The Netherlands has active media assistance programs, including the five-year, €22 million Press Freedom 2.0, supported by the Dutch Foreign Ministry with a consortium

player is the Department of Defense, which spends millions of dollars each year on strategic communications and information operations. *(See sidebar on page 21)* U.S. intelligence operations may also include media components overseas.

Several other federally funded organizations play important roles, as well. The National Endowment for Democracy spends millions of dollars annually to support independent media around the world, and significant funding comes from the Millennium Challenge Corporation and U.S. Institute of Peace.

Public Sector Funding

U.S. Agency for International Development.

USAID, Washington's principal vehicle for foreign assistance, is also the largest single U.S. funder of independent media abroad. Its 2011 spending on international media assistance is estimated at $63 million. The agency's 2010 funding peaked at $74 million—one third of all U.S. funding, public or private, identified by CIMA for that year.

The agency is divided into nine functional and geographic bureaus, of which only two—the Europe and Eurasia

of five NGOs, targeting 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union.

Other significant donors include Switzerland, which through its Swiss Development Corporation supports access to information programs budgeted at nearly $35 million in 2011;[18] Sweden's Sida, which boasts a strong track record on media support, with more than $22 million committed in 2010[19]; the Belgian government, which has supported media projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Belarus, and Burundi;[20] and the Australian Agency for International Development, which has funded media projects in the southwest Pacific and Southeast Asia, including a five-year, $10 million program by the Australia Broadcasting Corp. and the Papua New Guinea National Broadcasting Corp.

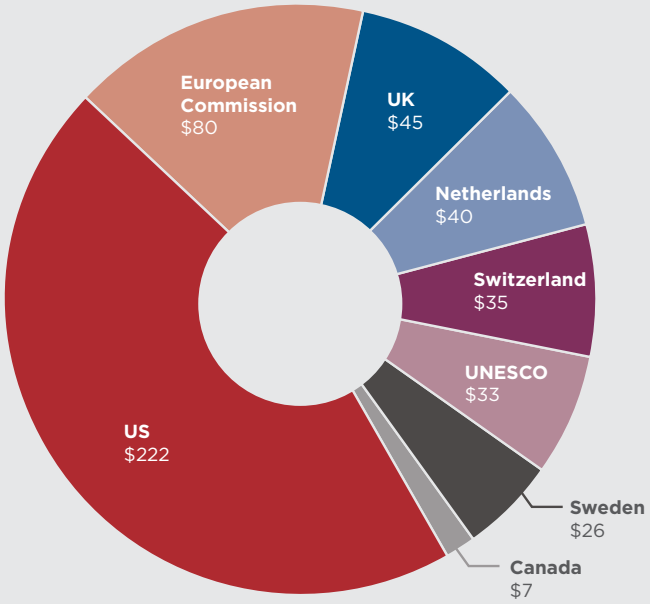
Various UN agencies are active, as well. In addition to UNESCO, the UN Development Program and UN Democracy Fund have funded media assistance projects.

Media development is also attracting funds from a growing number of private donors in Europe. The list includes the Netherlands-based Adessium Foundation, the Switzerland-based Oak and Aga Khan foundations, and the UK-based Sigrid Rausing and Indigo trusts and Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

China has embarked on an ambitious program of media assistance *(see p. 62)*, but its goals have more to do with political influence, commercial self-interest, and propaganda. Despite Japan's sizable foreign aid, there appears little evidence of media support.

Finally, little funding comes out of the Arab states, with one notable exception: the Qatar government's subsidy of al-Jazeera. The al-Jazeera Media Training and Development Centre has trained thousands since its founding in 2004.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FY 2010 (IN MILLIONS OF US$)



Note: These figures were compiled by the Center for International Media Assistance from official reports, donor websites, and correspondence with donor representatives. They are rough estimates.

Bureau (E&E) and the Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau (DCHA)—have staff positions dedicated to international media development. In other bureaus, officers in charge of overall democracy efforts include media as part of their funding considerations.

As part of its work on civil society development, the agency's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) provides assistance for media development encompassing everything from professional standards of journalists to financial sustainability of the media. The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which provides fast, short-term assistance targeted at key political transitions and stabilization needs in crisis countries, also does media development work. OTI's media work focuses on supporting independent media outlets in challenging environments, such as Afghanistan.

Much of USAID's media assistance work traditionally has been determined by missions in the field rather than staff in Washington, in keeping with the agency's decentralized decision-making structure. Media experts from DRG and OTI often work closely with their counterparts abroad to give advice on media projects and provide technical assistance to USAID missions.

In recent years, USAID has made notable increases to certain program areas: the legal-enabling environment, support institutions such as professional journalism organizations and universities, and media outlets and infrastructure.

Agency-funded projects are broad and numerous. Among its activities: helping establish broadcasting networks in Afghanistan and Iraq; strengthening TV and radio broadcasting in South Sudan, before and after independence; increasing media professionalism and sustainability in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo; bolstering investigative reporting using journalism centers in 14 Eurasian countries; and training Egyptian media managers on business practices.

U.S. Department of State. Although the State Department and USAID coordinate their international media development efforts, each agency's allocation of funds and priorities differs based on its unique goals. The mission of the former is U.S. foreign policy; the mission of the latter is development. As a result, State Department programs tend to be shorter term and country focused, although there is considerable overlap between USAID's programs and those of the State Department's prime supporter of media development, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL).

The State Department spent $53 million in 2010 on international media development—nearly a quarter of all U.S. funding identified by CIMA for that year—and was slated to spend $44 million in 2011. This figure does not include spending by State on public diplomacy, whose programs—such as fellowships and professional exchanges—often serve the cause of media development. These include grants under the Fulbright Program, the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, and various international visitor programs.

DRL is the lead State Department bureau for coordinating efforts to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights globally, and it held a $20 million budget for media development initiatives in FY 2011. DRL mainly funds media development initiatives in the form of grants, via the Human Rights and Democracy Fund. Recently, DRL has also begun supporting online freedom of expression programs through its new Internet Freedom Program, which manages the State Department's online censorship and circumvention initiatives.

Because DRL's priorities change yearly based on input from embassies and USAID experts, as well as Congressional earmarks, the State Department's media development initiatives have tended to be shorter-term projects (although in recent years the bureau has funded more multi-year projects).

Individual U.S. embassies also support media development programs through discretionary grants, but funding amounts are typically small. the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) funds media development projects in post-communist states, while the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) funds programs in the Middle East and North Africa that include work with civil society.

The State Department's media development projects are wide-ranging. Among them: a $1 million award to train professional and citizen journalists in Egypt, curriculum development at the Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management, a media law program in Azerbaijan, a media pool to cover the Afghan parliament, and a two-year project to strengthen independent media in Nepal.

Broadcasting Board of Governors. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) oversees such federally-funded media outlets as the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, and Alhurra, the Arabic-language satellite television broadcaster. Through its

THE PENTAGON AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States soon found itself in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and facing a radical Islamist enemy that also showed itself to be quite adept in the new media environment. As part of its strategy, the Department of Defense (DOD) launched a multi-front information war, both to support its troops on the ground and to counter the propaganda of an enemy intent on adding to its global ranks. By 2009 the budget for the Pentagon's information war had reached $526 million.[21]

The DOD's global public relations war, however, fostered criticism that the department had over-reached into territory once reserved for the State Department—that is, the mission known as public diplomacy—meaning the promotion of the national interest through informing and influencing foreign publics. Meanwhile, several fiascoes involving government-hired information contractors brought sharp criticism from the press and from Congress. And various reports, including one by CIMA in late 2010, characterized the information war effort as being disorganized, spread across too many commands, and susceptible to contractor abuse. Shortly after the CIMA report, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates designated one official as a single point of accountability for all DOD information operations efforts.[22] Gates had also said previously that the State Department needed to engage more in public diplomacy.

In December 2011, and coincident with the drawdown of U.S. military efforts in Iraq, Congress reduced the DOD's 2012 budget and slashed the budget line for information operations to $176.5 million. Explaining the cuts, a congressional report cited concerns that the Pentagon's information war was still duplicating or working at cross-purposes with the State Department, and that many information operations activities did not represent traditional or appropriate military responsibilities.[23]

Still, with a budget more than ten times that of the State Department, it is clear that the Pentagon is not backing down from the global information war—now referred to in the DOD as Military Information Support Operations, or MISO. Those operations include such activities as setting up small FM radio stations in Afghanistan; paying Afghan media outlets to run ads and messaging; encouraging soldiers to blog to counter foreign criticism; and creating regional foreign language news and information websites aimed at audiences in Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and southeastern Europe.

With one glaring exception—the massive $200 million effort to reconstruct a national media operation in Iraq—little of the DOD's work can be said to fall into the category of classic "media development" of the type practiced by USAID and various NGOs. Instead, its work has been designed to influence opinion, to shape the security environment, and to counter anti-American messages.

For these reasons, most fledgling media in Afghanistan view American and NATO media efforts warily. On the one hand, the struggling radio and TV stations need, and in some cases have come to depend on, payments from foreign military organizations for running their ads and messages. On the other hand, media managers know that running these messages compromises their independence and in some case puts their personnel in danger. This dilemma is coming into sharper focus with the planned withdrawal of nearly all U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2014.

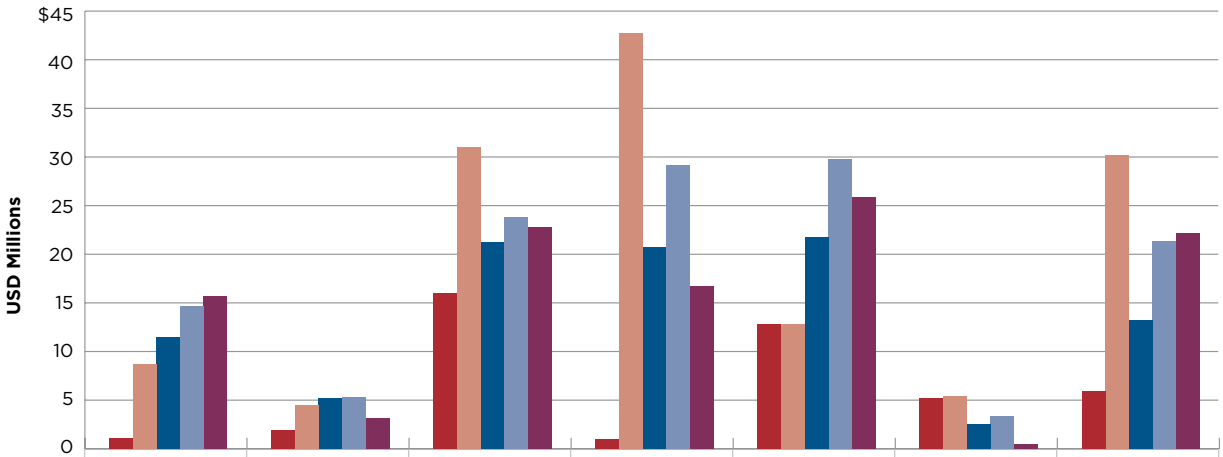
That said, one lesson already learned was highlighted in a conference of Afghanistan experts convened by the United States Institute of Peace in 2010. The group, which included military officers, took a hard look at information warfare. Participants agreed that "extremist propaganda cannot be effectively dealt with through counter-propaganda." The answer to countering extremism, they said, was a robust and credible media for sharing ideas and solutions.[24]

broadcasts, training, and other activities, the BBG hopes to serve "as a catalyst in the global promotion of democracy, civil society, transparent institutions, and partnerships around the world." An estimated $5.4 million in FY 2011 was devoted to media development and Internet freedom programs (of which $1.5 million came from the State Department).[25] Since 1983, the Voice of America/BBG has provided training to nearly 12,000 communicators and technicians from more than 135 countries. The BBG's International Media Training Center runs dozens of media training projects every year, and the agency has run workshops on such areas as professional news standards (Serbia), television journalism (Kosovo and Albania), children's television (Jordan), health reporting (Nigeria), and citizen journalism (Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa).

Millennium Challenge Corporation. The MCC, founded in 2004, is a government-funded entity tasked with assisting some of the world's poorest countries. Dollar amounts are tied to countries' progress on several key indicators, including improved press freedom. MCC spends nearly $1 million annually on media development, and has incorporated it into programs in Malawi, Moldova, Niger, Tanzania, Rwanda, Timor-Leste, and Ukraine. In Rwanda, the program includes support of community radio stations and journalist training. And in Moldova and Timor-Leste, the focus is on the media's role in fighting corruption.

U.S. GOVERNMENT SPENDING MEDIA FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

FY 2007 - FY 2011
State Department and USAID



	Africa	East Asia Pacific	Europe and Eurasia	Near East	South and Central Asia	Western Hemisphere	Centrally-managed programs
FY 2007 Total	$1,108,000	$1,852,465	$15,986,980	$1,000,000	$12,763,285	$5,190,000	$5,960,000
FY 2008 Total	$8,706,750	$4,468,124	$30,992,763	$42,690,126	$12,777,566	$5,442,780	$30,200,000
FY 2009 Total	$11,416,152	$5,230,073	$21,194,184	$20,745,000	$21,710,859	$2,500,000	$13,242,000
FY 2010 Total	$14,628,914	$5,261,490	$23,808,954	$29,098,175	$29,807,100	$3,341,000	$21,295,000
FY 2011 Estimate	$15,664,000	$3,132,774	$22,788,659	$16,750,000	$25,906,515	$500,000	$22,200,000

Government-Supported Nonprofit Organizations

National Endowment for Democracy. The National Endowment for Democracy directs a substantial amount of money each year to independent media, focused on countries where there is a struggle to build democracy. Congressionally funded and based in Washington, DC, NED in FY 2011 spent just under $15 million on international media assistance, spread over a dozen programs that emphasized, foremost, freedom of information, human rights, and accountability.

Grants are typically given in amounts under $50,000 and go to such areas as improving election coverage and human rights reporting, training women journalists, defending the press, and building the capacity of journalism unions and related groups. Among the funded projects: training journalists at a Zimbabwean community radio station; the Bosnian Center for Investigative Reporting to look at abuses of public financing; citizen journalism in China, conflict reporting in Pakistan, digital training for Central Asian journalists, and human rights publications on Burma and North Korea.[26]

FUNDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In early 2011, CIMA and the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) launched a research project to explore shifts in funding patterns for international freedom of expression activity. The field is a broad one, with much shared ground with media development—it encompasses advocacy for free expression, anti-censorship activities, and promotion of information access laws, an independent press, and Internet freedom.

Twenty-one major donors responded to a survey, including government agencies and private foundations. Data from many donors were not available, but the amounts that were reported by those responding were nonetheless considerable. The survey found, at the upper ranges, nearly $228 million in freedom of expression funding among the 21 donors.

One surprise from the research: A previous survey in 2009 by IFEX revealed that its members found it increasingly difficult to acquire core funding for general operations, as opposed to funding for specific projects. That survey also reported a widespread perception that the field of donors who supported free expression work was shrinking.

In contrast, the 2011 survey of donors suggested that the overall amount of support for free expression funding had actually increased in recent years, but three factors had escalated competition for these funds: a marked expansion of the number of organizations working on freedom of expression; significant funding being directed to newer, non-traditional areas (especially relating to Internet freedom); and internal reorganization at several key donors.

The universe of major donors in the field of freedom of expression is not large. When each IFEX member organization was asked to identify its top three funding sources for 2009, ten institutions made the list (in order of citations):

1. Open Society Foundations
2. National Endowment for Democracy
3. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. UNESCO
5. European Union
6. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
7. Ford Foundation
8. Free Voice (Netherlands)
9. United Kingdom Department for International Development
10. John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The updated research by CIMA and IFEX also found that the field of freedom of expression has been broadening, with the addition of emerging Internet freedom organizations. The entry of new groups focused on technology and human rights has invigorated the field, but also has raised issues of mission overlap with more established freedom of expression groups.

U.S. Institute of Peace. The U.S. Institute of Peace "provides the analysis, training and tools that prevent and end conflicts, promotes stability and professionalizes the field of peacebuilding."[27] The nonprofit organization, funded by the U.S. Congress, includes a Center for Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding, which allocated $2 million to media development in 2010. Among its major media projects: Iraqi youth media programs; training to reduce Iraqi media use of inflammatory terms; training Afghan journalists to report on war crimes and human rights violations; leadership training for Middle East bloggers; and identifying best practices in evaluation and blogging in conflict environments. USIP's training and education programs also include citizen journalism efforts that focus on the institute's conflict resolution work.

Private Sector Funding

Innovation, quality content, and flexibility have been the hallmarks of the private sector's long involvement with funding international media development. In the early 1990s, as the modern era of media assistance took off, American foundations played leading roles in helping set the agenda and find effective partners. Although their portfolios have been rocked by challenging economic times, private U.S. donors remain vital to media development, and their ranks are now being strengthened by foundations with roots in the technology industry.

Most EU-based funding comes from government aid agencies or state-funded organizations. In contrast, more than a third of U.S. funding comes from private sources. The prominent role of foundations in media development, as in other philanthropy in America, is due in no small measure to incentives in U.S. tax laws that have helped create a foundation sector with assets worth $618 billion in 2010.

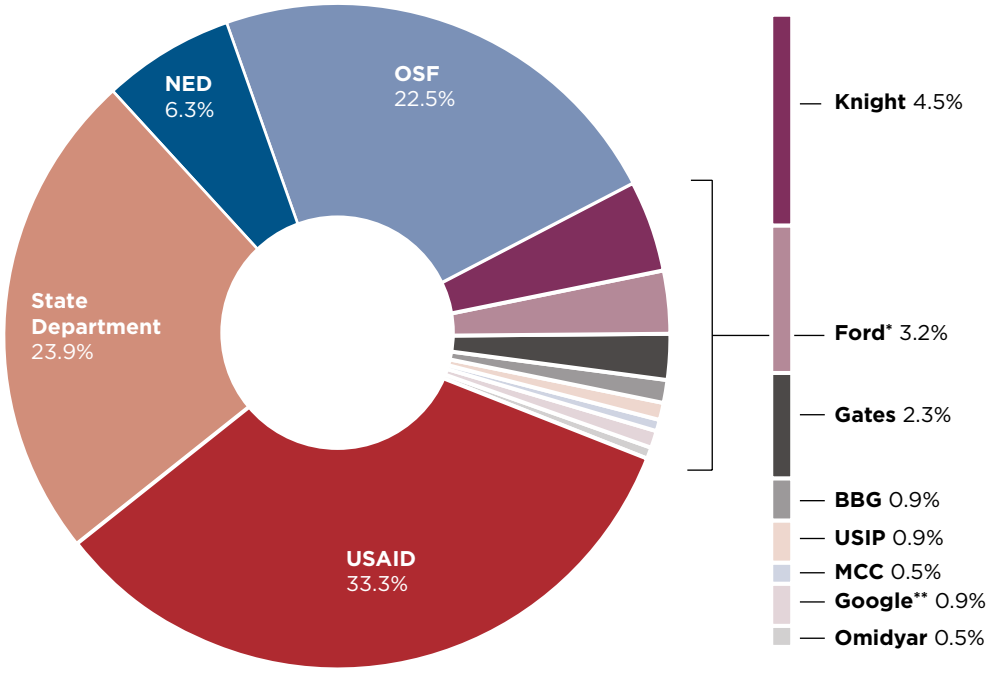
Tracking media development spending by private foundations, as with the federal government, is fraught with difficulty. It is rare for a foundation to have a budget line for international media activities, which can be fragmented and scattered among dozens of portfolios. Foundations also lack a common definition of "international media projects." Nonetheless, some rough estimates can be made. A CIMA survey of 2010 funding identified an estimated $76 million spent by major

U.S. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FUNDING BY DONOR (2010)

Source: Center for International Media Assistance, U.S. Department of State

*Please note that after 2006 there was an overhaul of portfolio structures. The 2008 figure is for Ford's 2009 funding. This and the 2010 figure were drawn from Ford's new grants database, filtered for international media funding.

**Google's 2010 partner grant to the Knight Foundation was applied to both U.S. and international components of projects.



foundations on media development. That represented a jump of 27 percent since 2006, when an earlier survey found contributions of more than $60 million. Despite the increase, the proportion of private to public money has dropped, from 42 percent in 2006 to 34 percent in 2010 (due largely to spikes in U.S. aid projects in Iraq and Afghanistan).

The pioneering OSF has continued to support a broad array of innovative media projects on an impressive scale. OSF remains by far the largest single private funder of independent media, spending an estimated $45 million to $50 million annually in recent years—and nearly 58 percent of all foundation funding identified by CIMA in 2010. The amount was five times larger than the next biggest funder, the Knight Foundation, and nearly equal to that spent by the U.S. State Department.

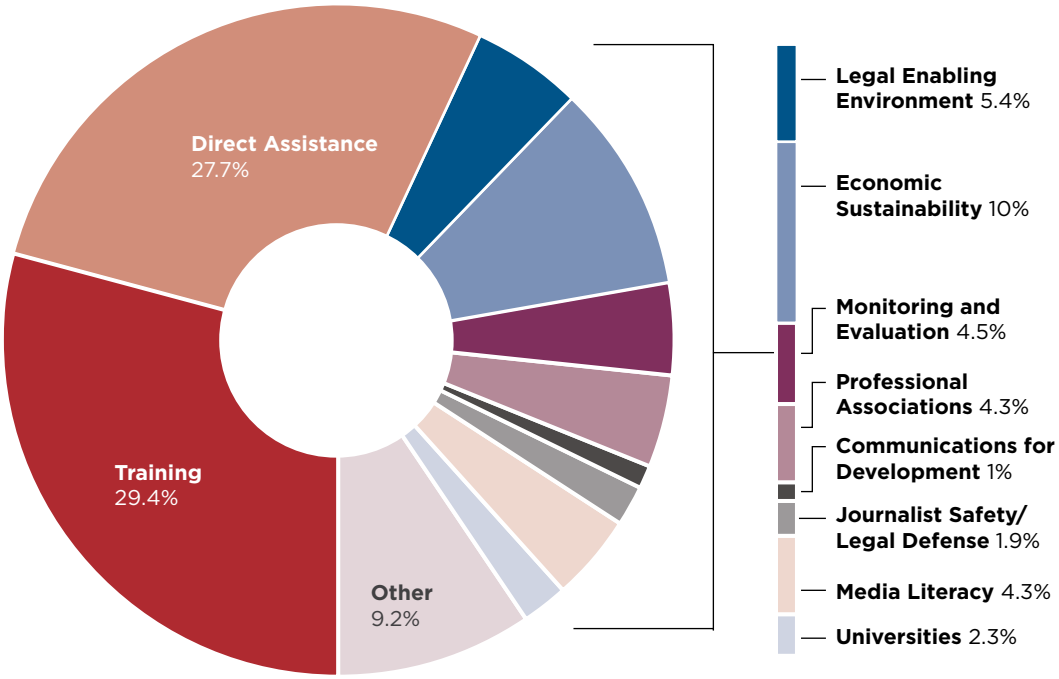
With the exception of OSF, the expenditures of foundations on media (often measured in the thousands) have been dwarfed by those of large government aid agencies (usually measured in the millions). Modern media development has been greatly shaped by USAID, the State Department, and European aid agencies. At the same time, the private foundations have unique qualities that often transcend the dollar value of their expenditures. Private entities can be more nimble and politically independent than their government counterparts. Many have benefited from the participation of journalists and media executives, who bring valuable relationships and experience to the work. A notable example is the Knight International Journalism Fellowship program, which places experienced journalists around the world to manage development projects in print, broadcast, and new media.

Tough Times, New Donors

Recent years have not been easy for the foundation community. The 2008 recession sharply reduced the portfolios of most traditional foundations and media philanthropies, many of them by 20 to 30 percent. They were still recovering when the aftershock of 2011 struck. These institutions, many of them based on the East Coast, had formerly played a leading role in funding international media development activities, with an emphasis on journalism training and support for freedom of expression. Now they are in a period of

U.S. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FUNDING BY ACTIVITY (2011)

This breakdown represents nearly $100 million of total U.S. media funding, based on data provided to CIMA by ICFJ, Internews, IREX, and NED. If 2011 funding for media development remained at 2010 levels, this would amount to about 45 percent of all U.S. media development funding.



retrenchment, struggling to maintain existing commitments and with few resources to pursue new initiatives.

The foundations tied to newspaper companies were among those hardest hit. The New York Times Company Foundation, which had contributed to international press freedom initiatives, was an extreme case, ceasing its grant-making activities on April 23, 2009.[28] The McCormick Foundation, which had been a major funder of media assistance in Latin America, found itself in a similar position. "Both papers in Chicago are essentially bankrupt," Clark Bell, McCormick's journalism program director, pointed out in a 2009 interview. The foundation cut its ties to the *Chicago Tribune*, but as of 2012, its international grant-making was non-existent.

Potentially worsening matters is the impact of the long economic crisis on government funding. Pressure to cut federal spending could result in sustained reductions in U.S. foreign aid, with far-reaching effects on levels of media assistance.[29] Although large European donors appear to have kept media assistance flowing through 2011, tough budget constraints facing many EU states could result in substantial cuts there, too. If those cutbacks do reach into the media sphere, they will place added pressure on the already stressed private foundation community to maintain assistance levels.

There is good news in the funding community, however. As foundations built upon legacy media have struggled, a new group of donors, many of them springing from the powerhouses of digital media technology, has appeared, and it is making its mark in the fields of media and development. Vast fortunes have been made in digital technology over the past decade, and some of its leading entrepreneurs are creating new models of philanthropy. Leading the group is the extraordinarily well endowed Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, built with Microsoft money. Joining Gates are foundations launched by founders of eBay (Omidyar Network and the Skoll Foundation), as well as Google's philanthropies, all of which have begun to fund international media projects.

The culture of these new foundations is rooted in the tech community of the West Coast. New York may be the traditional media capital of America (home to leading print and broadcast institutions of "gatekeeper" media), but Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area are the bases for the digital media revolution that is reshaping global culture. The new foundations are making an impact. "The West Coast foundations understand the power of media; they get it," noted Susan King, who until 2011 served as vice president for external affairs at Carnegie Corporation of New York. "The East Coast is more stuck in the past, funding research."

The new donors are "expanding the view of what media development is," according to Stacy Donohue, who oversees Omidyar Network's funding of transparency projects in the United States and Latin America. "There's a role for the media development sector to play in helping navigate the transition to a digital world." Some of the growing trends include experiments using a venture capital model, including social impact investment and the acquisition of equity in media projects, and support for citizen journalism projects. Technology companies are also showing increasing interest in offering direct services on a pro bono basis, such as Google's "Person Finder" (an online platform to locate individuals displaced by catastrophes such as the 2011 earthquake in Japan) and Skype's "Social Good" partnerships with international relief agencies and NGOs.

In other cases, there is a growing appreciation of the value of more traditional media development techniques. Early on, the Gates Foundation declared an ambitious list of public health goals, including massive vaccination programs against infectious disease in Africa. At the time, media was not a significant concern, until it became apparent that Western medicine was widely misunderstood in areas where the foundation sought to work. The foundation found, in the words of one staffer, "We couldn't get vaccine in the arm unless we could get information in their heads." Out of that discovery came funding to the International Center for Journalists to expand its Knight fellowships across sub-Saharan Africa to work on health issues.

Innovation vs. Content

A major trend in recent years is the funding of cutting-edge digital media tools and techniques. The Knight Foundation has been a leader in this, spending millions of dollars at home and abroad in support of applications to handle data and documents, virtual newsrooms, and experiments in online marketing, sustainability, and journalism. With newspapers and other legacy media struggling, and new, more sustainable models still unclear, the impulse to experiment has been widely embraced. The entry of foundations with roots in the

tech industry has only strengthened this approach.

Some worry, however, that there is too little attention paid to the roots of independent media—strong content. As one newspaper editor joked, "Foundations are funding a new fleet of high-tech delivery trucks while the newsrooms are on fire." OSF's Jankovic shares this concern. If foundations get too caught up in promoting experiments, she warned, it may be at the cost of helping existing independent media survive this rough passage. "There are so many experiments," she said. "Some are providing good arguments but are getting generalized too much." Jankovic points out that in many developing countries, traditional media with established editorial processes perform a critical watchdog function that is essential to political and economic progress. Indeed, a 2011 World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers survey showed that newspapers were flourishing in many regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[30]

Knight's Newton maintains that the foundations' focus should be the new universe of possibility. "You can now skip over hundreds of years of inequities—with cellphones where no landlines have been put in place," he argued. "There's slightly more money in media development than there was 20 years ago, but nothing compared to the opportunities of the new age we're in. The gap between the potential and what's being done is even greater."

The bottom line for Mark Whitehouse, vice president for media at IREX: the pressing need for good, quality journalism that affects people's lives."What happens now in Egypt?" he asks. "How are people there going to get information about what the new parliament is doing, or about the new president, the economy, education, health care—that's a long-term development issue."

LOSING GROUND ON MEDIA FREEDOM

We are headed backwards. That, at least, is the conclusion of the three major indexes of media freedom in the world.

Each year, three organizations release widely cited surveys of media freedom—Freedom House's Freedom of the Press report, IREX's Media Sustainability Index, and Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index. Their reports make for a sobering read.

"After two decades of progress, press freedom is now in decline in almost every part of the world," concluded *Freedom of the Press 2011*. "Only 15 percent of the world's citizens live in countries that enjoy a free press."[31] The survey ranked 196 countries and territories as free, partly free, or not free, based on 23 questions on the legal, political and economic environment. For the five years from 2006 through 2010, the number of countries falling from free to partly free went from 73 to 69, the study found. One bit of good news: "not free" countries declined from 67 to 63.

The Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (known by its French initials, RSF) similarly publishes an annual Press Freedom Index, and it, too, showed disturbing declines.[32] Over the five years from 2007 through 2011, fully 100 countries scored worse on RSF's index, which is drawn from some 40 indicators such as journalist killings and detentions, censorship, economic and legal pressure, and filtering of the Internet. Of those 100 countries, 72 had significantly worse scores.

The Washington-based IREX, through its annual Media Sustainability Index, found similar drops in press freedom. The 2011 MSI for Europe and Eurasia, which covers 21 countries, examined such areas as media law, journalism standards, media business practices, and support institutions. The index showed an overall drop from 2006 to 2011, with declines in most areas. Through its 10-year history, the report noted, the MSI "has documented a mixed history of encouraging improvements, frustrating stagnation, and disappointing regression throughout the region."[33]

Despite all this, there were hopeful signs. Many of the declines found by the various surveys were modest. IREX's MSI—with the notable exception of Belarus, Russia, and Uzbekistan—found that the media sector in countries since 2001 had either improved or held its own. Finally, the research was completed before the Arab Spring forced open once closed regimes and sent a clear message that clamping down on freedom of expression will be harder than ever.

Major Foundations

By far the largest private funder is the **Open Society Foundations**, a family of more than 30 foundations created by Soros. Active in 70 countries, OSF has made support of independent media a cornerstone of its mission to promote democracy around the world. In 2010, the foundation allocated $50 million to development of independent media abroad, comprising 22 percent of all U.S. funding identified by CIMA that year, and nearly 58 percent of all private sector funds.

"We have made tough choices" on where to allocate that funding, said Jankovic, director of OSF's London-based Network Media Program. "Our priorities are supporting the creation of quality content and mobilizing communities of civil society to act upon them." There is less emphasis, she added, on developing institutions. "We are trying to mobilize communities over this quality content by bringing together various segments in that society—the person in the street, young people, law enforcement, the policy maker—and have them reexamine the way forward."

Jankovic ticks off a list of related priorities: projects to help redefine media law and protection of journalists in the new digital environment; better storytelling through multimedia formats, so that citizens are more effectively engaged; broadening the debate on media development and freedom, especially between those in the global South and the developed world; and building more effective networks among quality content groups, such as investigative reporters.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which originated as a newspaper family foundation, devoted $10 million in 2010 to media development. It also funds many U.S. university journalism programs. The Miami-based foundation has become both an innovator and a convener for media funding and distribution strategies in the digital age. This sense of mission sets Knight apart. The foundation sponsors its flagship "Knight News Challenge," to stimulate ideas for expanding and building journalistic enterprises using digital, open source technology. *(See next chapter.)* Knight also maintains a longstanding commitment to the Knight International Fellowships at ICFJ, which since 1994 has sponsored fellows in more than 90 countries to work on building journalism associations, news services, investigative teams, citizen journalism programs, and more.

The Ford Foundation has been a longtime supporter of media development and spent more than $7 million on related projects in 2010. Ford has gone through a large-scale restructuring, creating eight program areas and administering them through regional offices. International media development funding is spread out among a host of initiatives, including public service media, government transparency, immigration, freedom of expression, and minority rights. Recent grants have gone to the Brazilian News Agency for Children's Rights, the Centre for Media and Alternative Communication in South Asia, and the Indonesian Association for Media Development.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, another longtime supporter of media assistance, had an $8.5 million media portfolio in 2009, although much of that went to U.S. organizations. Few of its international projects engage with traditional journalism, but they do address a broad range of public information needs. The foundation has funded a number of projects involving citizen journalism run by Global Voices, the crowdsourced mapping platform Ushahidi, and Internews, while its interest in global cybersecurity is reflected in its ongoing support for the Berkman Center's Open Net Initiative.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is now described as the "largest foundation in the world." Its 2010 assets topped $37 billion—more than those of Ford, MacArthur, Hewlett, Rockefeller, Knight, and Carnegie combined.[34] In 2010 the foundation spent $5 million on international media development. Although modest by Gates' standards, its funding has brought to the media development community an increased emphasis on public health and poverty reduction in Africa. In recent years grants from Gates have accounted for a significant portion of ICFJ's $9 million budget, led by a three-year $1.7 million grant to send reporters to 11 countries in Africa to work on health and development journalism projects. Three are engaged in pan-African projects on covering development, seeding digital innovation, and improving media management.[35]

Omidyar Network is exploring new frontiers in media development. The network was created by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife, Pam, in 2004, and describes itself as "a philanthropic investment firm" with an interest in two fields: access to capital; and media, markets, and transparency.[36] In 2011, Omidyar Network announced multiyear grants totaling nearly $5 million to

four organizations working to support journalism in the developing world, including two African initiatives and the Media Development Loan Fund.

Google was launched in 1996. According to the *Financial Times*, Google.org, one of its philanthropic arms, granted more than $100 million in 2010, part of $184 million the company donated that year.[37] Like its core business, Google's philanthropic efforts make a practice of experimentation. This has included traditional grant-making, staff volunteer projects, and the creation of online platforms for worthy causes. In 2010, Google pledged $5 million in media funding—$2 million in grants to the Knight Foundation, largely for domestic funding, and $2.7 million to the Vienna-based International Press Institute to offer grants to media technology innovations in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The Skoll Foundation stresses social entrepreneurship and has not yet developed an explicit media program, but it is funding training in digital media, such as the Change through Digital Inclusion program, active in 13 countries. Chairman Jeffrey Skoll, an eBay founder, has also been exploring avenues of direct investment, such as his experiments in producing films with a social mission through Participant Media. (One project was the 2011 feature film *Contagion*, created in consultation with the Council on Foreign Relations, to alert the public to the dangers of pandemics.)

Other funders include **The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation** and the **Carnegie Corporation of New York**, which have supported international film and television projects, and the **Howard G. Buffett Foundation**, which funds agricultural and environmental causes, and the **Rockefeller Brothers Fund**, which has made small media grants in Indonesia, South Africa, and the Balkans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Even with increases in recent years, the amounts devoted to international media development remain miniscule compared to overall U.S. foreign assistance. The media development community should continue to advocate that a greater share of U.S. foreign assistance go to independent media and cover a wider geographical area.
- The media development community should continue to develop new sources of funding, particularly from companies and foundations with roots in the high-tech industry.
- Implementers and donors should remain open to new approaches to media development, including venture capital-style investments and direct service contributions.
- Fostering independent media that produce quality, trusted content remains at the heart of media development. Increased funding of digital media experiments, while essential, should not come at the expense of investing in a professional watchdog news media.
- Donors should invest for the long term in areas that are not the "flavor of the month," so that media assistance does not end up in repeated cycles of funding "surges" and "droughts" in various regions.
- New players and technology have posed new challenges to coordinating international projects. Better efforts should be made through consultations, partnerships, and pooled funding to ensure that scarce resources are not wasted.
- The media development community should do a better job of building bridges to other sectors.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Digital technology is having a transformative effect on the world's media, from news gathering and distribution to advertising and consumption. Distinctions between "legacy" and "new" media are fast disappearing.
- By 2012, more than 90 percent of the world's population had access to cellphones, and 30 percent had access to the Internet.
- While digital media played an important role in the Arab Spring, satellite television and traditional media also made critical contributions. The combination created a "perfect storm" of media coverage in the region.
- A cyber "arms race" is underway, with regimes increasingly capable of spying on and disrupting those who use digital media. Governments in more than 40 countries now censor the Internet, affecting a half-billion users.
- Journalists working online are now targeted as never before, and face prison, exile, kidnapping, and murder.
- Donors have increasingly focused on funding digital technology projects, including citizen journalism, mobile phone media networks, and tools to combat online censoring and denial-of-service attacks.
- Tech industry foundations are increasingly funding digital media development, but most support still comes from the State Department and USAID.

DIGITAL MEDIA: CHANGING THE GAME

To ENTHUSIASTIC BLOGGERS, they were the Twitter and Facebook Revolutions—uprisings in the Arab world fueled by a heady combination of digital technology, social networking, and satellite television. Starting in December 2010, the Middle East and North Africa seemed to catch fire, with popular revolts challenging one long-standing autocrat after another—Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Moammar Gaddafi in Libya, and Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

Customers use computers at an Internet cafe in Changzhi, Shanxi province. Access to Twitter and e-mail service Hotmail was blocked across mainland China two days before the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. *Photo: Reuters*

The aging rulers drew on time-tested techniques for maintaining control: a pervasive security apparatus, brutal crackdowns, censorship of local media, and tough restrictions on foreign correspondents. In the end it wasn't enough, because activists, journalists, and others in those countries now had powerful tools of their own to deploy: mobile phones, digital cameras, laptop computers, Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, and YouTube videos. Satellite news networks that scarcely existed a decade earlier beamed live action from the streets into people's homes. Young tech-savvy activists organized mass protests through Facebook and issued alerts through Twitter. By February 2011, the unthinkable had happened: both Ben Ali and Mubarak were gone, and the now famous "Arab Spring" was fast-rewriting the region's political geography.

There were, to be sure, more fundamental reasons besides smart phones and tweets behind the toppling of Arab strongmen. Decades of repression, abject misrule, and economic stagnation had led to broad frustration in those societies. Critics point out that revolutions have long occurred without the help of Facebook and Twitter, and that the technology of the day has always offered tools to dissidents, whether mimeograph machines and clandestine transmitters in Nazi-occupied Europe or VCRs and fax machines in the fall of the Soviet Union. "Barely anyone in East Germany in the 1980s had a *phone*—and they ended up with hundreds of thousands of people in central Leipzig and brought down a regime that we all thought would last another hundred years," argued author Malcolm Gladwell in *The New Yorker*. "People with a grievance will always find ways to communicate with each other."[38] Veteran journalist Mona Eltahawy, paying homage to years of groundwork laid by Arab human rights activists, put it more bluntly. "Facebook and Twitter," she said, "did not invent courage."[39]

And yet, it was hard to deny that something extraordinary was happening in the powerful embrace of digital media by citizens across the Arab world.

The numbers tell much of the story, in the explosive growth of social media in the region. Spurred by Facebook's addition of an Arabic interface in 2009, the social

media site's user base jumped across the Middle East and North Africa, led by Egypt. In the eight months leading to January 2011, the number of Egyptian Facebook users soared nearly 50 percent to 5 million.[40] Tunisian Facebook users jumped from less than 30,000 in 2008 to nearly 2 million by the time Ben Ali fled in early 2011—about one of every five Tunisians.[41] By then the number of Facebook users across the Arab world had reached 17 million, surpassing the 14 million copies of newspapers sold in the region.[42]

In the streets of the Arab Spring, an army of citizen journalists documented each step of the unfolding revolutions. And alongside the citizen journalist came the "mojos," or the mobile journalists: media pros equipped with compact digital gear and able to quickly report, edit, and transmit stories—print, audio, and video—from almost anywhere.

Grisly footage of massacre victims, acts of police brutality, and rousing protests all became steady fare on Facebook and YouTube.[43] The bloody police murder of Khaled Said, a young computer programmer, at an Alexandria cybercafe became a virtual rallying point for Egyptians. Wael Ghonim, a Google executive, set up a Facebook page—We Are All Khaled Said—featuring cellphone photos of Said's battered corpse. The site became a lightning rod for protests and eventually drew nearly a half-million followers.

The use of social media, text messaging, and smart phones equipped with video cameras added an immediacy and connectivity that were striking. The new media cracked "the psychological barrier of fear," as Ghonim put it. "Here comes the Internet, technology, BlackBerry, SMS. It's helping all of us to connect," he explained shortly after the revolution. "Platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, were helping us a lot, because it was basically giving us the impression that, wow, I'm not alone. There are lots of people who are frustrated. There are lots of people who actually share the same dream. There are lots of people who care about their freedom."[44]

In the streets of the Arab Spring, an army of citizen journalists documented each step of the unfolding revolutions. And alongside the citizen journalist came the "mojos," or the mobile journalists: media pros equipped with compact digital gear and able to quickly report, edit, and transmit stories—print, audio, and video—from almost anywhere.

Adding to the potent mix of digital media was an array of Arab-language satellite TV channels. By 2010, more than 500 satellite TV channels offered news, entertainment, religion, sports, documentaries, children's programming, and music videos in Arabic. Led by al-Jazeera, the Qatar-based network founded in 1996, dozens of channels with newscasts were available to millions of homes with satellite dishes, from the Saudi-based al-Arabiya and UAE-based Abu Dhabi Satellite TV to Hezbollah's al-Manar and the U.S.-funded Alhurra.[45]

In the years leading to the Arab Spring, the transnational news channels made a mockery of local controls, airing contentious views, breaking social taboos, and giving voice to political dissidents. They introduced real-time news coverage of major news events to Arab audiences, long accustomed to disinformation or silence from their national media. And while local media remained under a heavy thumb in many countries, the satellite channels became key sources for online sites. A survey by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society found that the most common links on 35,000 Arab blogs (after YouTube and Wikipedia) were to al-Jazeera, BBC Arabic Television, and al-Arabiya.[46] This, moreover, appeared to be a new phenomenon. In a study by the University of Washington's Project on Information Technology and Political Islam, researchers found that before the revolution, none of the political blogs they mapped had linked to regional news sources such as the satellite networks.[47]

The information flowed two ways: The international news media seized on the stream of digital reports, photos, and videos flowing from activists across the region. At the height of the Egyptian uprising, the Mubarak regime shuttered al-Jazeera's Cairo bureau, detained its employees, and seized equipment. In response, the network asked local activists to supply it directly with

news from the streets—and hundreds responded with tips and video clips.[48]

Another key factor was the handful of independent media organizations in the region—gutsy newspapers, radio stations, and other traditional outlets—that had long pushed against local censorship. Among them: Egypt's largest independent newspaper, *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, long a target of the Mubarak regime's ire. The paper's bold coverage of the protests pushed circulation, it boasted, to 500,000, making it one of the nation's largest papers.[49]

The new media tools, blanket satellite coverage, and reporting from citizen and professional journalists alike created a perfect storm of news and information—one unlike any the region had seen before. The combination of "crusading journalists and digitally armed activists" proved "lethal" to the old regimes, observed Lawrence Pintak, former director of the Center for Journalism Training and Research at the American University in Cairo. "It is no longer possible for a country of 80 million people to go off the grid."

Liberation Technology

The potential of the new digital tools was already on display in 2007, when the protests of Burmese monks were carried to the world through images from clandestine mobile phones. But the Arab Spring placed the issues of Internet freedom and new media front and center in strategies to strengthen democracy and support independent media. Enthusiastic boosters of new media called the impact transformational and heralded the advent of a global "liberation technology" movement. Larry Diamond, director of Stanford University's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law and founding co-editor of the *Journal of Democracy*, defined the term as "a striking ability of the Internet … to empower individuals, facilitate independent communication and mobilization, and strengthen an emergent civil society."[50]

The embrace of digital media as a tool kit for democratization has drawn backing from across the political spectrum, including senior Obama Administration officials. Even before the Arab Spring, in a January 2010 speech on Internet freedom, Secretary of State Hillary

A supporter of Mir Hossein Mousavi, the main challenger in Iran's 2009 election, stands next to a poster of him and whistles as she uses her mobile phone to shoot video at an election rally at the Heidarnia stadium in Tehran. *Photo: Ben Curtis/AP*

Clinton hailed "viral videos and blog posts" as "the samizdat of our day"—referring to Soviet bloc underground publishers during the Cold War.[51] "There are more ways to spread more ideas to more people than at any moment in history," she declared. Assistant Secretary of State Michael H. Posner called Internet freedom "one of the game-changing human rights issues of our time" and said it is now "a key diplomatic priority" for the State Department.[52]

The enthusiasm is not hard to understand. Again, the numbers help tell the story. By 2012, the Internet's extraordinary growth had brought it to nearly every corner of the globe. More than 2 billion people were estimated to be online—about 30 percent of the world population. Those users could visit some 255 million websites and 178 million blogs. They sent an estimated 1 billion tweets each week, and uploaded 60 hours of video every minute to YouTube.[53] China became home to more Internet users than the entire population of the United States.

Meanwhile, the rapid spread of mobile phones has offered a cheap way to bring the Internet to even the poorest reaches of the world. By the end of 2011, an estimated 6 billion subscriptions were paid for mobile phone service[54]—and the numbers continue to climb rapidly. More than 90 percent of the global population now has access, from the Amazon interior to remote areas of Tibet. Growth, moreover, is concentrated where connectivity can make an extraordinary difference:

MAJOR U.S. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Most professional development work in U.S. overseas media assistance is implemented by a relatively small number of organizations, much of it by the big three nonprofit groups in media development: the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), IREX, and Internews.

Freedom House, based in Washington, DC, and New York, NY, supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights around the world. Founded in 1941, the organization's media-focused activities include the annual Freedom of the Press index and promotion of media freedom and freedom of expression.

ICFJ, based in Washington, DC, has worked with more than 70,000 participants from 180 countries. Founded in 1984, ICFJ administers media development programs around the world, including mobile news services, investigative reporting networks, journalism exchanges, and university journalism education. It also runs the International Journalists Network (IJNet), a multilingual source of news on training and media development.

IREX, also based in Washington, DC, focuses on strengthening independent media, civil society, and education in more than 100 countries. Founded in 1968, IREX programs span virtually every aspect of media development. Its annual Media Sustainability Index is a key barometer of independent media conditions in Africa, Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East.

Internews, based in Washington, DC, and Arcata, CA, focuses solely on fostering independent media and access to information around the world. Founded in 1982, the organization has worked in more than 70 countries and maintains 28 offices worldwide. Its focus areas include training, infrastructure development, media law and policy, and production.

Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), based at the University of Missouri, is the world's oldest and largest association of investigative journalists, with more than 4,000 members in 30 countries. IRE trains hundreds of journalists each year and has helped start or inspire investigative reporting centers in half a dozen countries. It accepts no government funding.

The Poynter Institute trains journalists online and on site at its St. Petersburg, FL, campus. Some two dozen faculty members offer classes in reporting, editing, visual journalism, management, and multimedia journalism. Poynter's "News University," a Knight Foundation-funded "e-learning" program, has more than 27,000 registered members outside the United States.

The four institutes affiliated with the National Endowment for Democracy—the **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs** (NDI), the **International Republican Institute** (IRI), the **American Center for International Labor Solidarity**, and the **Center for International Private Enter-**

Developing countries account for about three-quarters of mobile phones in use, according to the International Telecommunications Union.[55]

The implications for independent media, development, and good governance indeed seem game-changing. The rapid, global sweep of digital technology—with the ability to shoot video, record audio, and publish or broadcast in real time—holds the promise to make the world a more accountable place. Within the span of a few years, it suddenly seemed as if war crimes, police beatings, and other unacceptable acts would forever be harder to cover up.

The reality, however, has proved more complicated.

Government Backlash

To scholar Evgeny Morozov, those who champion liberation technology are making a worrisome mistake. In his influential 2011 book, *The Net Delusion*, Morozov brands boosters of technology-fueled democratization as "cyber-utopians," which he defines as having "a naïve belief in the emancipator nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside."[56]

Morozov warns that while young, reform-minded users of digital media may have gotten the jump on autocratic governments, those governments' security agencies are fast catching up. The idea that digital

prise (CIPE)—each conduct media development programs, typically focused on their areas of expertise ranging from political party and election work to labor and business.

More than a dozen other U.S.-based groups do significant amounts of training. The **International Women's Media Foundation** has built a global network of women journalists and has run leadership and training seminars in 22 countries. The **Journalism Development Network** runs projects in Europe, Eurasia, and North Africa, including its flagship project, the Sarajevo-based Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. The **Media Development Loan Fund** integrates training with its financial support of media outlets. The **U.S. Institute of Peace** and **Search for Common Ground** do media training tied to their focus on conflict prevention and resolution. The **Committee to Protect Journalists**, the **Dart Center for Journalists & Trauma**, and **Global Journalist Security** have done workshops in journalist safety. **Developing Radio Partners** concentrates on community radio stations in the developing world. And two UK-based NGOs have set up U.S. offices: **BBC Media Action** (formerly BBC World Service Trust) and the **Institute for War and Peace Reporting**.

Some organizations concentrate on digital media: The Washington, DC, think tank **New America Foundation** runs the Open Technology Initiative, which works on circumvention technology. Harvard University's **Berkman Center for Internet & Society** consults on a wide range of internet issues, including privacy and content control. New York-based **MobileActive.org** uses mobile phone technology to connect and empower citizen journalists. **Ushahidi** develops open source software for collecting, visualizing, and mapping data. And **Global Voices**, a worldwide community of bloggers, editors, and translators, works to fight online censorship.

In addition, a number of U.S. journalism schools have international programs or faculty who consult overseas, including **Columbia**, **Missouri**, **Northwestern**, and **Florida International** universities, the **University of California at Berkeley**, **University of Maryland at College Park**, **University of Texas at Austin**, **University of Southern California**, and the **University of Pennsylvania**. Finally, the **Asia Foundation** and **Eurasia Foundation**, which receive USAID funding, also fund media training projects in their respective regions.

For-profit companies also do media development work, usually as part of much larger civil society building programs. Some of this is subgranted or subcontracted to for-profit contractors or nonprofit organizations mentioned above.

technology alone would, by its decentralized nature, spur democratic change and fuel independent media faces a worrisome and growing array of state-sponsored responses: online surveillance and sabotage, sophisticated Internet censorship, heavy propaganda, and more. Like other technologies, digital media are a two-edged sword—they empower everyone, not just reformers and journalists, but also autocrats and security agents. Indeed, digital surveillance is far cheaper and faster than the old "analog" techniques of wiretapping and bugging one's home and office. Breaking into the account of just one activist or journalist could quickly lead to entire networks of friends and associates, compromising the security of dozens of people.

Governments in more than 40 countries now "substantially filter"—or censor—the Internet, affecting some 562 million online users, according to a 2011 report by the Harvard University-based Berkman Center for Internet and Society.[57] Internet companies like Google and Twitter have come under pressure to allow governments to monitor and censor their users. Twitter caused a stir in early 2012 by announcing that it would allow countries to censor tweets that governments claimed broke local laws.

But the measures extend far beyond mere censorship. Over the last four years, regimes have moved from filtering to launching denial-of-service attacks, site hijacking and defacement, and theft of passwords to online accounts.[58] Iranian officials boast of identifying protesters by crowd-sourcing photos and videos published on pro-government news sites. Iranian agents have scoured Facebook profiles, searching for personal details and contacts, and sent threatening messages to émigrés that their relatives back home could be hurt. Saudi officials use public tips that report some 1,200 "offensive" sites each day. In Tunisia, authorities used the government-run Internet service provider to pilfer passwords to activists' Gmail and Facebook accounts.[59] Under the Gaddafi regime, the Libyan Interior Ministry ran an Internet monitoring center that recruited Chinese and East European hackers to block sites, steal Facebook passwords, and spread viruses.[60] And amid the Assad regime's bloody crackdown, activists say, officials created what they called the Syrian Electronic Army, forcing hackers to monitor and attack online dissidents. "I know people have been tortured to death because their Facebook accounts have been hacked," says Rami Nakhle, a Syrian cyber-activist now in exile in the United States. Stung by mobile phone photos of its brutality, the government reportedly even banned iPhones in the country.

In Russia, for years home to a free-wheeling Internet, there are troubling signs of a crackdown. Charges of rigged elections in late 2011 sparked mass protests fueled by social media and YouTube videos, alarming Russian officials. Attacks on websites critical of the Putin government rendered many inaccessible prior to and during the elections, including independent media, election monitoring groups, and opposition political groups.[61] Meanwhile, Russia has joined China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in pushing the United Nations to adopt a "code of conduct" constricting Internet freedoms.

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No country has done more to control and censor cyberspace than China, which boasts the world's largest online population—more than 500 million people. Beijing not only runs a vast censorship apparatus but also reportedly pays thousands of pro-government bloggers and online commentators.[62] Tough rules issued in 2011 have criminalized the news media for reporting unverified stories from the Internet or mobile phones, while the Communist Party's Central Committee has called for an "Internet management system" to crack down on freewheeling social networking and instant-messaging systems.[63]

At the same time, journalists working online are now targeted as never before. Among the most serious consequences: assassination, kidnapping, prison, and exile. A legal assault has descended upon online writers and editors, who are being increasingly hit with onerous laws on defamation, libel, and national security. As a result, more Internet journalists than those from any other medium are in prison today. In a 2011 census of imprisoned journalists by the Committee to Protect

Journalists, 86 of those in jail—nearly half the total—were bloggers, Web-based reporters, and online editors.[64] A 2011 Berkman Center survey of politically and internationally oriented bloggers from 18 countries found that 74 percent of respondents believed they were at risk of detention, arrest, or criminal investigation by posting material critical of their governments. Moreover, 59 percent believed they were at risk of violence directed at themselves or their families.[65]

A report by Freedom House in 2011 suggested that the trend in many developing countries was headed in a worrisome direction. According to Freedom on the Net, 9 of the 15 countries the group monitored had registered declines in Internet freedom over the past two years. The Freedom House survey, now expanded to 37 countries, also found that several nations once largely free from online controls were starting to engage in politicized censorship and violations of user rights, particularly before or during elections.[66]

A Digital Arms Race

The counterattack by heavy-handed governments has led to a kind of digital arms race between repressive regimes and advocates of democracy and a free Internet. "We come up with a new idea or a new tool and then we have a government which has figured out how to thwart that," observed Troy Etulain, a former senior advisor for media development at USAID. "We have to understand that governments are using these tools, too."

"Four years ago, we were reasonably sure that the developers of circumvention tools were winning the match against government censors," wrote researchers at the Berkman Center in 2011. "Now ... the entire playing field has changed, and new technologies of control are far harder to defend against ... While new tools have emerged to help users evade censorship, there's little hope that a technical 'fix' will solve problems like domain name hijacking or DDOS."[67] (DDOS is distributed denial of service, a cyber-attack which typically directs so many requests to a targeted computer or network that it is overwhelmed and cannot respond to legitimate traffic.)

One measure of the progress by repressive regimes can be seen in a 2011 evaluation of circumvention tools by the Berkman Center. Researchers tested them through servers in China, South Korea, Vietnam, and the United Arab Emirates. The results were sobering. In 2007 a similar evaluation found that virtually all tools tested were able to access blocked sites. But in 2011, only two of the 19 tools were successful in all the countries tested, a fact researchers suggested was due to increasing efforts by governments to block their use.[68]

An anti-government demonstrator flashes the victory sign as others shoot video on their cellular phones in Tahrir Square in Cairo.
Photo: John Moore/Getty Images

The response by the U.S. and allied governments, Internet freedom groups, and media development NGOs has been to fund and promote an array of new digital tools and training. The measures are diverse: circumvention techniques that jump firewalls and evade censors, anonymity software that protects users' identities, secure hosting to ward off cyberattacks, and more traditional forms of political pressure to help those targeted for arrest and detention. The stakes are high, particularly for those on the front lines. "It's a dangerous business out there," observed one implementer. Some programs are so sensitive that they remain unannounced and unpublicized.

The escalating battle over Internet freedom suggests that there is, indeed, no digital silver bullet that will

Protestors recharge their computers at a charging station in Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo. *Photo: Kim Badawi/Getty Images*

transform societies. As Morozov puts it, ultimately it will take more than "gadgets, connectivity, and foreign funding" to dislodge dictators and reform repressive governments. In the end, all the smart phones and online apps are tools that still require an emboldened citizenry and a capacity for change.

At the same time, however, it is clear that the media game has changed, and that the explosion of digital technology has thrown repressive governments on the defensive. Attempts to shut down the Internet or cellphone service entirely—tried in Egypt and elsewhere—have proved unworkable for more than brief periods. Similarly, long-term attempts to disrupt satellite TV signals are not practical for technical reasons.[69] That leaves an array of outside channels beaming down from the skies, with stories to be picked up by an army of bloggers, tweeters, and Facebook fans.

And those posting online are a nettlesome bunch. Governments still find it easier to shut down a newspaper office or television station than to corral dozens of bloggers who can change sites and user names at will. "Because of the comparative safety of some of the citizen media tools," noted Etulain, citizen journalists "can do a lot to talk about issues which a newspaper could never cover, for instance. The physical characteristics of a website or an SMS distribution news platform—run by citizen journalists—can do a lot to combat corruption through exposure."

Even in China, which has likely invested the most in controlling online space, its formidable censorship apparatus is routinely overwhelmed or circumvented, as seen following the crash of a high-speed train in 2011. The deadly accident sparked an online campaign to demand accountability and greater transparency, full of accusations about failed safety standards and government cover-ups—a public response hard to imagine 20 years ago.[70] In the end, despite all the controls and firewalls, an aroused citizenry armed with digital tools may be harder than ever to hold back. "In the Egyptian revolution, the Revolution 2.0, everyone had contributed something," observed Ghonim, the Google executive. "Small or big, they had contributed something."[71]

Investing in Digital Media

Donors have long been interested in the potential of information and communications technology to affect development. By the time of the Arab Spring, interest in using the latest digital tools in media development was already deep and growing. Both the State Department and USAID in recent years had begun investing more in digital and online freedom of expression initiatives, as had major foundations such as Knight, Omidyar, Google, and OSF. From 2008 through 2011, the State Department and USAID have spent $76 million on Internet freedom programs.[72]

Many of these digital initiatives do not fall neatly into what is traditionally seen as media development. Indeed, in some respects, the varied programs on Internet freedom lie a step before media development, involving basic issues of freedom of speech and human rights. As in aspects of media law and more general "rule of law" issues, programs on Internet freedom involve creating an enabling environment in which independent media can exist. But the fields overlap, particularly with the spread of citizen journalism and the rapid embrace of new media by journalists worldwide. In repressive countries, tools to circumvent online censorship and thwart attacks on websites are as essential to independent journalists as they are to human rights activists and political reformers.

Today nearly every U.S. media development grant encourages—and often requires—the incorporation of digital components. Moreover, distinctions between so-called "legacy" media and "new" or "digital" media are fast disappearing. In developed countries—and increasingly worldwide—journalists from mainstream news outlets routinely engage in blogging, have active Twitter followings, and use Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media in their daily work. Weekly and monthly news publishers are now daily operations, with regular online updates, blogs, and social media sites. Even in regions where broadband penetration is low, newspapers maintain active websites and community radio stations expand their reach by using mobile phone networks for reporting and distributing news.

The impact on the media development community has been dramatic. "The field has never been more exciting," said Jeanne Bourgault, president of Internews. "The opportunities, the impact, the acceptance of the field in so many new sectors … this is due to the digital transformation." Joyce Barnathan, president of the International Center for Journalists, agrees. "The digital revolution is remaking the landscape and changing the field of media development because the profession is being redefined," she said. "You constantly have to be reinventing who you are, because the field is reinventing itself."

NGO implementers have long integrated digital aspects into media training. In some respects, digital programs are simply expanding already proven approaches by traditional media developers, with trainings aimed at improving use of the best available tools and technology. Computer-assisted reporting, for example, has been an integral part of investigative journalism workshops for more than 15 years, with hundreds of journalists around the world trained in using spreadsheets, data analysis, advanced Web searching, and data mining.

Stewart Chisholm, the OSF Media Program's senior program manager, sees many of the old press freedom issues resurfacing in digital garb. "There are still huge needs to address: journalists under threat, defamation laws, legal defense. These issues are getting worse in many countries, and you need to look into the whole enabling environment. There's been attention to filtering and DDOS attacks … but the other things are still going on, and the largest number of those put in jail for criminal defamation are from online outlets. Online media doesn't have the same support mechanisms." Chisholm noted that it is virtually unknown for an online outlet to have an in-house legal counsel, and few online writers have access to training and education in media law.[73]

Digital media development programs vary widely. They include basic training in such areas as social networking, website design, and digital security—what one State Department official dubbed "cyber self-defense" or "digital hygiene." Other programs focus on sophisticated development of circumvention technologies. Officials say some software development backed by the State Department and USAID is being done in tandem with the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which is credited with inventing the Internet.

The NGOs working to implement these programs are also a varied lot. They include the leading three U.S. media development groups—ICFJ, Internews, and IREX—as well as other media support groups, such as Freedom House, all of whom have fielded initiatives

Haitians use satellite phones provided by Telecoms Sans Frontieres to ask relatives for help and money three weeks after flooding in the town of Gonaives.
Photo: Eduardo Muñoz/Reuters

involving digital media. ICFJ ran 14-week workshops for three dozen bloggers in Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Saratov, and Vladivostok, and in another effort trained 70 citizen journalists in Egypt before the Arab Spring. Internews brought together technologists, Web producers, community activists, and journalists for "innovation labs" in Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Pakistan, and Afghanistan; did trainings in the Amazon on online mapping to improve coverage of environmental issues; and ran citizen journalism workshops for 50 young reporters from the West Bank and Gaza. IREX is implementing ambitious digital programs with youth-focused NGOs across the Middle East and in restrictive Azerbaijan. And there are newer actors, such as the New America Foundation and its so-called Internet in a Suitcase initiative and MobileActive.org, whose Knight Foundation-backed Mobile Media Toolkit offers citizen journalists and others the tools and resources to master digital technology on the go.

"You have so many new tools to work with," said ICFJ's Barnathan. "You have the added component of citizen journalists and how they feed into mobile delivery systems." The challenge, she added, is finding the right mix. "How do we stay on top of the digital trends—which ones are significant, which ones are fly by night, which ones have the potential to change the profession."

Barnathan's colleagues agree. "What's the best mix of tools to bring to bear—that's what we're spending a lot of our time on at Internews,"said Bourgault. "You're trying to expose people to technologies and ways of doing things that are not fully tested in a lot of ways," added Mark Whitehouse, vice president for media at IREX. "How do you create a multimedia journalist? It's still a work in progress." Indeed, debate is keen on what tools and what approaches are the smartest ways forward. Should so much money be thrown at circumvention technology? Can citizen journalism live up to its promise? Is there too much focus on gadgetry and not enough on content?

Here's a look at the major donors, with summaries of their key programs and some of their most innovative projects:

The State Department. In FY 2008, the State Department established the Internet Freedom Program to manage online censorship and digital media initiatives. The program, which is overseen by its Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Bureau (DRL) and the Economic Bureau, is the only one at the State Department focusing solely on online censorship. In 2010, the program awarded a $5 million grant on Promoting Freedom of Expression and the Free Flow of Information through Technology and Access. While the Internet Freedom Program has a global focus, countries of particular interest to the program include China, Burma, Iran, Vietnam, Tunisia, and Egypt. Officials say the program will do more work in Africa as connectivity in the region increases.

The initiative has supported a dozen different circumvention technologies to make independent news available and assist those online in repressive lands. Among those programs is a $2 million technology development project that insiders call Commotion Wireless, but has been dubbed "Internet in a Suitcase" by the press. The program is designed to allow users to quickly set up online networks in remote or repressed regions. There is actually no suitcase, confides one staffer—"it's just a metaphor." But the technology under development comprises an impressive toolkit, with software, transmitters, receivers, and interface equipment that can create an

intranet among users of cellphones, laptop computers, and other digital devices. The closed network could operate independently of government control, so in the event of a government shutdown of digital networks, users could still communicate. "It's not a James Bond approach, it's a techie-without-borders approach," explained a senior State Department official. "It's being the roadside assistance on the info superhighway in a place where there are a lot of threats." The project is run by the Open Technology Initiative of the New America Foundation, a Washington, DC, think tank.[74]

Other programs include a "panic button" app for mobile phones that deletes the contacts in one's address book and sends out an alert, and a "slingshot" program that shoots back censored content over a country's firewall.

Various training initiatives have also been supported, including efforts to help keep activists online and thwart surveillance.[75] The State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is also backing a $1.5 million IREX program to train Arab youth in citizen journalism, digital documentary technologies, and mobile applications.

USAID. In war-torn Afghanistan, USAID has integrated digital media into its major media initiative there, the Afghanistan Media Development and Empowerment Project (AMDEP). The $22 million grant to Internews aims to establish a professional and sustainable Afghan media system, and includes the establishment of 11 multimedia production centers that will provide training, production, and distribution platforms for citizens and civil-society organizations.[76]

USAID is also launching an Information Security Coalition program, focusing on digital security issues. The program will utilize mentors who can provide long-term assistance to improve information security among bloggers, activists, and others in the field.

Other major USAID initiatives include a three-year, $4 million program, Promoting New Media and Media Convergence in Russia, and a $4 million Azerbaijan New Media project aimed at furthering citizen journalism and use of new media. The program is being implemented by IREX in partnership with Transitions Online, Kiwanja Foundation, and Save the Children. And in Kazakhstan, the agency is backing an Internews program featuring a popular 30-minute weekly television show on the Internet and digital media, which has developed a strong online following.

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Broadcasting Board of Governors. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) supervises such federally-funded media outlets as the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, and Alhurra. Its budget for programs related to Internet freedom is estimated at about $5.4 million in FY 2011, with $1.5 million of that coming from the State Department.[77] Activities range from large-scale efforts at circumvention of online censorship to targeted trainings on citizen journalism.

BBG and its affiliates have done work on circumvention technology for a decade, although most efforts tend to focus on getting information out to people in repressive lands. They have, for example, set up proxy websites in China and Iran to get blocked broadcasts past firewalls and, until recently, ran multi-user Skype chats—which China did not censor—to plug people into the messages of Radio Free Asia.

One Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty program is "Blogistan" a blogging platform formed in response to Kazakh government blockage of Internet sites. Hosted at a radio station, the platform offers "cyber refugees digital asylum" and has attracted two dozen regular bloggers and a vibrant new online community. Radio Free Asia distributes to its audience a "Getting Around Internet Blockage" primer, with links to proxy servers and other anti-censorship tools. VOA has done citizen journalism training in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa, and partnered with Global Citizen on "a cloud-based multimedia platform" that joins VOA reporting with crowd sourcing, social media, and citizen journalism. Its first project: Congo Story, on the epidemic of sexual violence in the war-torn DRC.[78]

Other U.S. Government-Funded Programs. The National Endowment for Democracy gives out about a dozen grants per year supporting digital media, focusing on such challenging countries as Belarus, China, Cuba, Moldova, North Korea, and various Central Asian republics. NED grants were funding citizen journalism and youth new media projects prior to the Arab Spring in the Middle East. Among the projects in 2011: support of media watchdog Telekritika in Ukraine, to expand access to new media tools; connecting 15 accountability initiatives using new technologies in six Balkan countries and Egypt; training bloggers and citizen journalists in Georgia; and conducting workshops for 100 Egyptian young people to expand civic and political participation through use of new media and art.

Most grants are for sums of about $30,000 each, but nearly $470,000 went to the Princeton China Initiative's China Digital Network program to help create online tools for use by Chinese citizens, journalists, and social activists for citizen journalism and "civic-oriented, open communication."

The congressionally funded U.S. Institute of Peace focuses on media projects that promote stability and peace-building. Of the institute's $2 million spent on media development in 2010, several programs focused on digital tools and training, including an intensive training session on mapping conflict, entitled Universities for Ushahidi, and its ongoing "Blogs and Bullets" forum on the effects of digital media on conflict, conciliation, and peace. Earlier programs have focused on online mapping of war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina and conflict resolution software programs in Rwandan schools.[79]

Major Foundations. The Knight Foundation's News Challenge has granted $27 million for 76 digital media projects over the past five years. The contest has attracted more than 12,000 applications from around the world and provided seed money for many innovative projects with direct impact on media development. Among them: the crowdsourced mapping platform Ushahidi; the document publisher and database DocumentCloud; the editorial and crowdsourced database Poderpedia, which visualizes relationships among political, civic, and business leaders in Chile; software for community radio in India; the Zimbabwe-based Freedom Fone, which allows mobile phone users to access news from independent radio stations and contribute questions and content; and social networking and user-generated-content tools for Sochi, a small Russian town that will host the winter Olympics. The foundation also funds the Knight International Journalism Fellowships, managed by ICFJ, whose fellows often engage in digital projects overseas.

Omidyar Network, created by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, is another recent entry into the media development field. "We come at it from the perspective of government transparency," said Stacy Donohue, director of investments at Omidyar. The fund supports technology platforms that amplify the impact of transparency, and "media is key to that." In 2009, the foundation donated $1.4 million to the innovative Ushahidi project, whose free, open source mapping software brings together crowdsourced information. Another $1.2 million in 2010 went to Global Voices, a worldwide community of bloggers, editors, and translators who work together to aggregate citizen media not usually seen in mainstream media. Also in 2010, the group gave $350,000 to expand access to FrontlineSMS, a free, open source software widely used by NGOs to create low-cost group communication. Other projects include anti-corruption initiatives that utilize crowdsourcing techniques in India, Kenya, and Nigeria, including a $3 million grant in 2010 to expand across India the online civic engagement platform iJanaagraha and a companion bribery reporting website, "I Paid a Bribe."[80] In late 2011, Omdiyar put up $500,000 for the African News Innovation Challenge, which was quickly matched by other donors.

The Open Society Foundations have funded a wide range of digital media projects. Among them: Ushahidi and FrontlineSMS, for outreach and fostering a user community; parliamentary monitoring tools in Chile and Poland; the Investigative Dashboard, an initiative by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, which provides a portal to public data on companies in more than 100 countries; Universal Subtitles, an online collaborative editing network; EngageMedia, which makes new video distribution technologies available to social justice groups; and the South Africa-based Women'sNet, which helps citizen and digital journalists tell stories of marginalized people who might otherwise not have access to the media. OSF is also supporting Mapping Digital Media, a major project researching the prospects for transition from traditional to digital media in 60 countries.[81]

Internet giant Google entered the field in a major

way during 2011, when it pledged $5 million in grants to fund groups working to develop new approaches to journalism. The company donated $1 million to the Knight News Challenge and $2.7 million more to fund the IPI News Innovation Contest, a similar competition for digital news projects in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The latter grant was given to the International Press Institute, based in Vienna, Austria. And in December 2011, Google joined with Omidyar, Knight, Gates, WAN-IFRA, Germany's Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and the U.S. Department of State in pledging $1 million to the African News Innovation Challenge, a sister competition "to encourage experimentation in digital technologies and support the best innovations that strengthen African news organizations."[82]

The Ford Foundation has also been active. Its grants in 2011 and 2010 have supported digital projects in South Asia to promote opportunities for women in new and alternative media, and to provide Internet access and social media training to villagers in rural India; development of an online database on media policy in Brazil; training and technical assistance to help civil society groups in the Middle East use social media safely; and to help an Indonesian youth media network produce multimedia digital content and conduct online media campaigns.[83]

Other foundations have shown interest in the field. The MacArthur Foundation gave a two-year $350,000 grant in 2011 to Ushahidi for general support. The Thiel Foundation (founded by PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel), has supported the Committee to Protect Journalists and brought together technologists, investors, and thinkers from Silicon Valley with leading bloggers and journalists from authoritarian countries. And the Mozilla Grants program, whose parent Mozilla Project created the Firefox browser, has funded Ushahidi and projects that support an open Internet.

While exciting, the field remains chaotic, leaving media development donors and implementers alike unsure about the smartest steps forward. Many of these experiments may not work; some, however, may prove to be game changers. What is clear is that applying the new digital tools—and gauging their impact—will continue to be a work in progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The potential for digital technology to contribute to an informed citizenry is enormous, and donors should continue to invest in new tools and techniques.
- U.S. donors and implementers need to think "outside the box" about how to develop media in regions where hand-held, wireless technology is leapfrogging telephone landlines.
- Distinctions between so-called "legacy" and "new" media are fast disappearing. Digital media should be integrated into every development project.
- Digital media are not the magic answer. They will need to be supported by independent media programs in broadcasting, professional standards, and business management, as well as engagement at the legal and policy level.
- The media development community should recognize that digital media are increasingly vulnerable to spying and disruption by authoritarian governments.
- To keep pace with crackdowns by authoritarian governments, Internet freedom donors should invest in circumvention tools and better responses to denial-of-service attacks, while engaging the help of technology firms with far greater resources and expertise.
- Tech solutions will not always be appropriate. Combating Internet controls will also require tactics long used by press freedom groups: international pressure and publicity, censorship indexes, and campaigns to protect imprisoned journalists and bloggers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Citizens armed with digital tools are rapidly turning what was once a pool of occasional eyewitnesses into a powerful public force able to document government abuses, natural disasters, election fraud, and other critical events.
- A single smart phone offers the public a journalist's tool box that once cost thousands of dollars and filled a car trunk: a video camera, audio recorder, and still camera, and the means to distribute stories live to millions.
- Media development efforts arose during an era of traditional press outlets. Implementers are still developing programs and practices designed for citizen journalists.
- Many citizen journalists are activists wedded to a cause, with little awareness of the importance of being fair and accurate purveyors of news.
- The actions of citizen journalists can leave them open to harsh reprisals from home governments.

CITIZEN JOURNALISM: MORE VOICES, MORE NEWS

Amid the tumult of the Arab Spring in 2011, eyewitnesses to protests across the Middle East and North Africa sent news to the world via tweets, text-messaging, and postings on Facebook and YouTube, with dramatic consequences.

In Iran, the world similarly learned from a flood of tweets and YouTube posts of the brutal government crackdown following the disputed election of June 2009.

In Sierra Leone, citizen journalists used cellphones in 2007 to text reports to radio stations and helped ensure that a country wracked by nearly a dozen years of civil warfare had two close, hard-fought national elections in which the populace at large accepted the results immediately.[84]

A girl takes pictures with a mobile phone during prayers at Tahrir Square in Cairo in February 2011. *Photo: Peter Andrews/Reuters*

Citizen journalists may become one of the 21st century's most potent forces for building open and democratic societies. In environments where poor infrastructure, minimal access to technology, and small-scale economies impede the development of mainstream independent media, and in countries where repressive governments limit the ability of professional journalists to operate freely, citizen journalists are helping to fill the gaps.

The advent of citizen journalism is not limited to the developing world—media outlets large and small have now embraced the idea of an interactive relationship with their readers and viewers, using them as sources, correspondents, investigators, and analysts. "There's still a lot of skepticism in other parts of the world," noted Patrick Butler, vice president for programs at ICFJ. "But we saw in our Egypt programs that our traditional media partners suddenly saw, 'Oh my gosh, we're suddenly getting all sorts of information we didn't get before.'"

Citizens have become both consumers and producers of news. The 24/7 appetite for information is fed in part by cellphone photos, YouTube videos, and micro-messaging tweets of everyday citizens. A single smart phone today offers the public a journalist's tool box that just a few years ago cost thousands of dollars and filled a car trunk: a digital video camera, audio recorder, and still camera, and technology to distribute stories live so that millions can see what is happening on the ground.

In societies struggling with economic development and authoritarian government, where the stakes are highest, citizen journalists can make a particularly vital contribution—exposing corruption, fostering accountability, and documenting abuses of power.

But the challenges are considerable, and for those in media development—itself a young field—finding what works will take time. Citizen journalists typically have no formal journalism training or knowledge of the essential roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent government. Many are activists wedded to a cause, with little awareness of the importance of being fair and accurate purveyors of news. Their lack of experience can leave them open to harsh reprisals from

Citizen journalists often have no formal journalistic training, nor do they typically have training in the essential roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent government.

their home governments, and their disparate nature can make it hard to identify them and support their work.

Even defining the phenomenon can be problematic.

What Is "Citizen Journalism?"

"Citizen journalism" means different things to different people. Some take it to mean news and information not originating from a legacy or traditional media organization, such as a newspaper, radio, or television network. Others consider it to be an interactivity toolkit for news outlets of all kinds to "harness the power of an audience."[85] Still others understand the term to refer to journalism conducted by individuals with an activist agenda.

Other phrases in use include "community media," "participatory journalism," "civic journalism," and "user-generated content." Additional terms, such as "new media," "digital journalism," "crowdsourcing," and "social networking" are sometimes used interchangeably with "citizen journalism," although they may refer primarily to the technology underlying the means of delivery.

The term citizen journalism "doesn't mean very much," contends Ivan Sigal, executive director of Global Voices, which combines staff and unpaid volunteers to produce a website that is both aggregator and originator of content. "There are a lot of sloppy definitions and a lot of assumptions on where people are coming from, or whether or not citizen journalism is a good thing, and a lot of anecdotal sorting without much data-driven or cluster analytics together."

"I suppose it is any kind of information, publication, and diffusion of information done by people not trained as professionals, who haven't worked in established media," said Knight fellow James Breiner, founder of the Digital Journalism Center in Guadalajara, Mexico.

And when do social media become outlets for citizen journalists? "I don't consider Facebook a news medium," said Breiner, "but it's certainly a communications medium. More and more, you are seeing Facebook being used as an outlet for news media and a way for non-traditional voices to be heard."

There is also this overriding question: Are citizen journalists, even in the best of circumstances, real journalists? David Simon, former *Baltimore Sun* journalist and writer and producer of *The Wire* and other successful television shows, thinks not. "You do not (in my city) run into bloggers or so-called 'citizen journalists' at City Hall, or in the court house hallways, or at the bars where police officers gather," he told a U.S. Senate hearing on the future of journalism. "You don't see them consistently nurturing and then pressing sources. You don't see them holding institutions accountable on a daily basis. Why? Because high-end journalism is a profession. It requires daily full-time commitment by trained men and women who return to the same beats day in and day out."[86]

In developing and transitioning societies, however, such neat distinctions can be hard to make. In many countries, journalism barely exists as a profession, journalists and political figures make deals about what can and cannot be published, and those in power often control TV and radio stations and major newspapers.

But citizen journalists often have no formal journalistic training, nor do they typically have training in the essential roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent government. "What happens if they post pictures they haven't verified as the real thing?" asks Joyce Barnathan, ICFJ president. "Do they understand the repercussions of that? What does it mean to check the facts and your quotes? It's one thing to put your opinion out there without having done all the checking that journalists traditionally do, but what about other news and information?"

Training Citizen Reporters

Until recently, relatively little media development funding has directly targeted journalists outside the traditional media landscape, in part because economies of scale to reach citizen journalists—for such tasks as skills and business-management training—are difficult to achieve. It is also in part because citizen journalists are not clustered in a geographic location—a "Fleet Street"—making it more difficult to gather them together for a traditional training workshop.

Citizen journalism is not only growing rapidly, but outlets that use new media are often able to circumvent traditional economic, legal, and regulatory impediments to journalism independence and sustainability.

Five years ago, media development organizations saw their purview as limited to the traditional media sector. As Mark Whitehouse, vice president for media at IREX, noted, "Attention was focused on professionalizing the media, on sustaining journalism businesses, and on improving legal and regulatory environments."

New media have now joined the traditional training model. There is a desperate need for "programs that we call Internet literacy for journalists," said Mark Koenig, senior media advisor at USAID—programs that train both traditional and citizen journalists to "go on the Internet, find sources of information, but also be skeptical about the credibility of the Internet sources."

Training programs for citizen journalists, including basic journalism skills and media literacy, can educate

USHAHIDI: MAPPING THE NEWS

Citizens often lead the way in starting their own projects to gather information that they consider important, without specific training in journalism. The violence that followed the late December 2007 elections in Kenya prompted a group of Kenyan citizen journalists to launch the Ushahidi website to track what was happening in the country. The local population desperately needed to know what parts of cities and surrounding areas were safe for travel, but police accounts and traditional media did not appear to be reporting all that was happening in a timely manner.

Ushahidi is a "mashup"—a joining together of two or more technologies: in this case Google maps and text messaging. Local citizens can use e-mail, the website, or their mobile phones to send messages to the site reporting a murder, a rape, a protest march, or various other notable events in their communities, and the site's mapping engine adds that incident to the map. Visitors to the site can then navigate through a detailed, street-by-street map to see where crimes have been committed, where there is unrest or, alternately, where humanitarian aid is being delivered.

Volunteers work on an open-source engine to expand the Kenyan tools worldwide for anyone to map reports of crises, such as violence, or non-violence using mobile phones, e-mail, or the Web. The developers, representing Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Malawi, Ghana, the Netherlands, and the United States, say the engine is built "on the premise that gathering crisis information from the general public provides new insights into events happening in near real-time."

Allowing citizens to contribute information using mobile phones is especially important on a continent where people are about five times as likely to have a cellphone as an Internet connection.

Ushahidi's success is being repeated around the world. In Egypt, participants, eye witnesses, and bloggers used the Ushahidi platform to chronicle the transformative political events of early 2011.[87] Ushahidi had been useful in monitoring the parliamentary elections of the previous November and December, so developers and citizen journalists alike were prepared to exploit its ability to show the "hotspots" of protest activity in the Arab Spring.[88] Ushahidi has also been deployed by digital journalists and sources in natural disaster coverage and relief efforts;[89] maps have been established to describe, among other tragedies, earthquake devastation in Japan and Haiti and wildfires in Russia.[90]

While Ushahidi is considered a pioneer in the field of crowdsourced mapping, other platforms and organizations have gained traction. Among them: Open Street Map (http://www.openstreetmap.org), Google Map Maker (http://www.google.com/mapmaker), Development Seed (Developmentseed.org), Map-in-a-Box, and MapAction.

Turkmenistan citizens operate a video camera. *Photo: IREX*

about standards, ethics, and the role of media. Citizen journalists can learn how to manage and evaluate information; understand the roles that independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent governments; and serve as a counter to radio and blogs becoming conduits for hate speech in conflict-prone communities. Training programs can also sharply expand access to information by giving citizen reporters better tools and techniques to bring outside information into closed or restricted environments.

"If the new citizen journalism groups embrace the best practices of professional journalism, they will get traction," said ICFJ's Joyce Barnathan. "Quality matters. As we embrace a lot of the new tools and new platforms, we have to make sure the news is reliable, trustworthy, contextual, and that's getting more challenging in this environment where there are so many new voices." IREX's Whitehouse agrees. "It's still about professional content, it's not about the platform," he said. "Good reporting is good reporting, and the technology doesn't make you a good reporter.

ICFJ has created an online blogger's guide that focuses on helping citizen journalists improve the quality of what they put online.[91] And UNESCO has collaborated with the Thomson Foundation and Commonwealth Broadcasting Association on a handbook that not only tells citizen journalists "where and how to get the information one needs, but also how to evaluate and verify the information gathered."

These twenty-first century citizen bloggers are, of course, merely the latest manifestation of a tradition that predates the digital age. "I like to compare the bloggers here and elsewhere to the underground writers and partisan reporters of France during World War II," wrote Stephen Franklin, a Knight International Journalism Fellow in Egypt, in praise of Egyptian blogger Wael Abbas, recipient of the 2007 Knight International Journalism Award and the first blogger to be so honored. "They were hardly perfect or well-trained. They were not observers but activists, because they rightly felt that their lives and their futures were on the line. They wrote snippets of truth, not whole truths, and hoped that alone would help ..."[92]

Since then, we have seen samizdat journalists under

Soviet rule publish with carbon paper or photocopy machines and Islamic dissidents use cassette tapes and fax machines. Community radio *(see chapter on page 116)*, which now boasts thousands of stations in the developing world, is largely built on untrained, volunteer staff—staff who are, in effect, citizen journalists.

Today, thanks to the digital revolution, there is the opportunity to reach far more people far more quickly, despite governmental efforts at suppression.

Professional, Community, and Citizen Journalists

Digital media are changing how citizens can connect to each other and to their governments and other institutions. "Citizens themselves have the tools to communicate, to become reporters-broadcasters-editorialists," IREX's Whitehouse said. The access to the new digital tools is tremendously empowering: Citizens can use them to produce their own news reports as well as to retrieve information they can act upon in ways that they think will improve their lives.

In places like Africa, the potential is enormous. Despite an average Internet penetration of 11.5 percent in 2011, Africa has more than 433 million mobile phones—about one phone for every two-and-a-half people. Cellphones and call minutes are relatively inexpensive, allowing urban-based radio and print news outlets to interact with their audiences and tap citizen journalists as never before.

"People are coordinated by mobile phones as never before," noted Troy Etulain, former senior advisor for media development at USAID. "What we care about ... is actual democratic change, actual democratic engagement in societies. Why do we focus on mobile phones? Because more than half the globe has access to mobile phones ... and in two years, there will be one billion more, say 60 percent of the world will be reachable by mobile phones ... Citizen media [via mobile phones] create new connections and new layers of social connections."

During elections in Liberia in 2011, IREX worked with its media partners to engage professional and citizen journalists equipped with mobile telephones in systematic reporting from remote points around the infrastructure-poor country. An elections reporting website, run through the Liberia Media Center, posted vote count results submitted via SMS from approximately 60 percent of the country's 4,457 polling stations. The site had more than 3 million hits in the days following the election. Because the site's vote tally matched that of the National Election Commission, it also helped to improve the credibility of the election commission in the minds of the public.

Digital media are changing how citizens can connect to each other and to their governments and other institutions. "Citizens themselves have the tools to communicate, to become reporters-broadcasters-editorialists," IREX's Whitehouse said.

It is these kinds of experiences that are weaving "citizen media into countries' democratic fabric," noted James Deane, head of policy development at BBC Media Action.

Those in media development need to consider how to build the relationship between citizen journalists and their audiences, especially in programs targeted at teaching citizen journalists investigative skills.

"We're identifying people to work with us to be eyes and ears—purveyors of certain types of factual information that they can send as journalists [through] cellphone technology to the city," Barnathan said. Because those citizen reporters may not be professional, part of the training is to explain reliability, fact-checking, and learning the standards and values of professional journalists, she said.

Media development groups are busy implementing a wide range of trainings for budding citizen journalists around the world. Among the activities:

+ The International Center for Journalists had major impact from a series of trainings it began in Egypt in 2010, including sessions targeted at women and youth as well as professional journalists. Graduates of the citizen journalism trainings played significant roles during the Arab Spring, shooting videos and writing blogs that were widely picked up by social media, independent newspapers, and satellite networks. One

Young journalists learn how to create video reports at the Caucasus Institute Foundation. *Photo: NED*

participant went on to build a nationwide network of citizen journalists for the newspaper *Youm Sabie*. The program has been extended to 2013.[93]

+ The National Endowment for Democracy also supported citizen journalism in the Middle East. NED grants went as well to a "participatory online civil society social networking platform" in Cameroon (www.thebridgeafrica.net); online tools geared to citizen journalism and social activists in China, under the Princeton China Initiative's China Digital Network; technology training and secure websites for Burmese activists and journalists; use of Electby.org, a Belarusian version of Ushahidi, to monitor election fraud during fall 2012 parliamentary elections; and online platforms to engage youth and citizens on political participation in Mexico and Nicaragua.
+ In Russia, IREX is running a four-year, USAID-backed program, "Promoting New Media and Media Convergence," that trains Russian media professionals, citizen journalists, and others in new media technology, and fosters joint projects between citizen and professional journalists. Among the projects: multimedia scholarships, Internet broadcasting training, newsroom internships for citizen bloggers, creation of an informal network of Internet freedom advocates, and incubator funds for new media in regional areas.[94]
+ Citizen journalists used mobile phones and social media to cover the November 2011 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, under a Voice of America project called "100 Citoyens Journalistes." The USAID-backed project featured citizen journalists posting spot reports from around the huge, undeveloped country to Facebook and Twitter as well as the French-language VOA site. The project also integrated content into YouTube and crowdmap.com.[95]
+ Citizens of Tajikistan commented on news and helped generate content in a newspaper innovation project run by Internews. For the first time, the papers attracted bloggers and activists from local organizations to publish news and information on their websites. Newspaper partners included *Varzish Sport, Asia Plus, Press,* and *Muhhabat ba Ojla.*[96]

The programs are not without risk. "The projects that are happening in digital media with professional

journalists and directly with citizen media are often happening in the countries with the [strongest] repression of traditional media," said one implementer. "But we don't read about them because there are security issues from local partners—people have agreements with their funders not to publicize [the projects]."

In closed or repressive societies, donors are quietly supporting distance-learning classes for journalists interested in business reporting, which is often one of the few journalistic spaces open in such environments. Within such societies, funders also are carefully supporting training efforts specifically aimed at bloggers and citizen journalists who are serving as alternative voices to government-controlled media.

As one implementer noted, such bloggers and citizen journalists "understand the limitations of what the official press can do, and then they put themselves often times at risk for publishing things that other people won't publish. There's an awareness by them of what news is out there and why it's deficient because often times that's why they're in the game."

There are other dangers in the explosion of media. Along with their potential for good, digital tools can be used to spread hate speech, misinformation, propaganda, and anti-democratic views. Ensuring that citizen journalists with democratic values can counter such attitudes will be a challenge.

Many in the media development community grew up in another era. Its impetus was to support—and at times to even create—quality local media that would in turn take on the role of educating their communities to value a free, fair, and open society. Today, funders and traditional media development organizations are still struggling to work within local environments, but they now have the additional challenge of assisting media outlets to understand how digital technology has changed news.

Next Steps

To realize the potential of citizen journalism, more than skills and management training in mainstream news outlets will be needed. The media development sector must train a different cohort of news providers, who have become part of the information web, in the standards and values of the profession that the earlier generation of journalists learned in the classroom or newsrooms.

Another top priority is promotion of training for citizen journalists, especially in emerging democracies and, to the extent possible, where authoritarian regimes rule. In conflict areas, support of citizen journalists can also make a real difference, and more needs to be done in this area.

More work is also needed on the metrics of citizen journalism. How do we gauge success? What are the metrics, platform by platform? "We are so intent on finding and celebrating successful citizen media projects that we might be blinding ourselves to the lessons we can learn from failures," observed Sigal of Global Voices.[97]

Finally, training in media literacy is needed, for citizen journalists of every sort. Understanding the basics of a free and fair press and a democratic society will form a sound basis for journalists everywhere, whether citizens or professionals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The media development sector should embrace and commit to training citizen journalists–who have become part of the global information web, especially in emerging democracies and, to the extent possible, where authoritarian regimes rule.
- Citizen journalists should be exposed to the best standards and values of the journalism profession, including ethics, fairness, and accuracy.
- More work should be done on the metrics of citizen journalism, so its impact can be better measured platform by platform.
- Training in media literacy should be integrated into citizen journalism programs, so that the basics of a free and fair press and a democratic society undergird journalists everywhere, whether citizens or professionals.

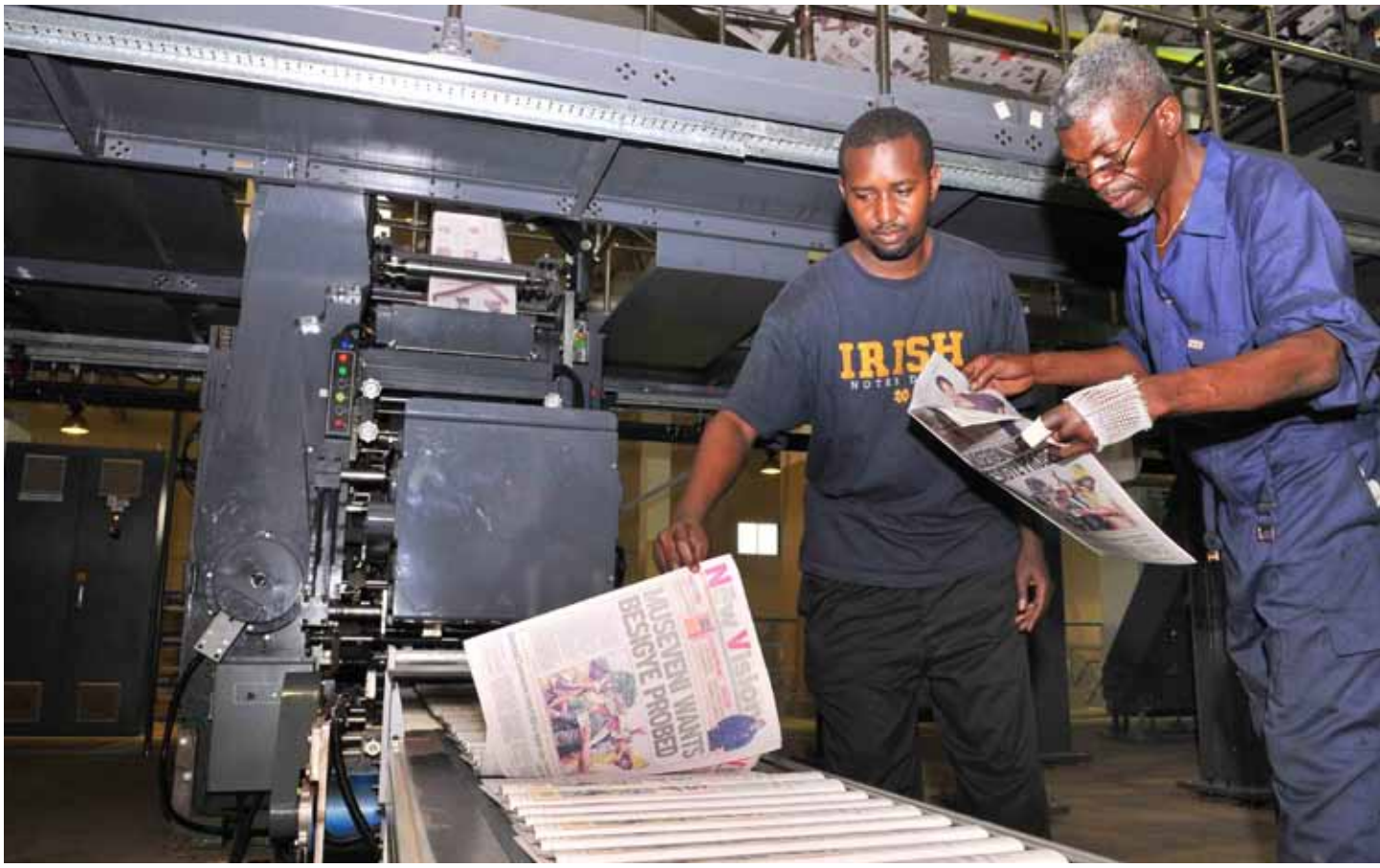
HIGHLIGHTS

- In much of the world, independent media organizations are more constrained by the economic climate and market conditions than by censorship.
- Many media managers and editors in developing countries find they are unable to take full advantage of new freedoms because they lack basic skills in business management.
- Poor business practices create serious problems, including lack of sustainability, donor dependence, and poorly paid reporters who take bribes.
- Although some reports suggest spending on business skills and sustainability is minimal, U.S.-based NGOs devoted $10 million in 2011 to the area.
- Business skills encompass a range of activities, including advertising, sales, marketing, and audience research.
- While digital media present new opportunities, print remains a vibrantly growing business in the Middle East, China, India, and parts of the Americas, and legacy media often supply the content that flows through online channels.
- Today, there is no single business model appropriate to the media. Successful enterprises use a variety of advertising, subscriptions, consumer fees, and nearly free models.

SUSTAINABILITY: THE BUSINESS OF INDEPENDENT NEWS

News media are not dying; they are changing.

Around the world, news media and distribution channels are growing at significant rates as economies emerge and expand. Print is a vibrantly growing business in the Middle East, China, India, and parts of the Americas, and legacy media often supply the content that flows through online channels.[98] Mobile distribution of news is changing the playing field in Africa, India, the Middle East, and elsewhere. The online audiences for news content are expanding rapidly and typically exceed the local market footprint of the organizations that produce them.



Copies of the Ugandan newspaper *New Vision* come off the press.
Photo: IREX

In the United States, virtually all newspapers and broadcast news media now use multiple distribution channels and product lines, with new expertise in a wide range of marketing techniques.

Google Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt observes that these changes, some of them traumatizing, are actually an affirmation that the news business is still vital and necessary. News media "don't have a demand problem," he has said, "they have a business model problem."[99]

Failure to solve these business model problems, however, threatens the sustainability of media, especially the independent media that often operate under business constraints, such as restrictive licensing requirements or libel suits. A significant risk to being able to solve those problems is the lack of management and business skills among media owners. Without business acumen, it is almost impossible for media operators to shape, adapt, or create new practices.

Today the only "right" business model is one that works within local market conditions, and any media development program that seeks to provide meaningful support must be tailored to that reality. "No model is automatically better or worse than any other," said Eric Newton, senior adviser to the president at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. "You need to match the model to the place."

Where's the Money?

In much of the world, independent media organizations are currently more constrained by economic factors than censorship. A survey conducted by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) in conjunction with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency in 2011 concluded that "regardless of the level of market development and political freedoms, the majority of newspapers around the world consider the economic climate and market conditions to be the major challenges to editorial independence and the business advancement of their media outlets."[100] The survey also found that while numerous countries have expanded press freedoms, "many media managers and

editors in developing countries find that they are unable to take full advantage of their new freedoms because they lack basic skills in business management."

That finding is echoed by media executives who have worked closely with independent media in developing and emerging countries. In terms of revenue, media owners often do not know how to find it, bill it, make it, keep it, or replace it. This is because many media owners have little knowledge of the field of marketing communications, or the businesses that use it, and thus their ability to understand and respond to their advertising customers' needs is impaired.

When media operations lack adequate business sense or a sustainable path to long-term funding, their journalistic missions are undermined.

One reason for this is that many independent media outlets are operated by owners with strong news or activist orientations, not business skills. But when media operations lack adequate business sense or a sustainable path to long-term funding, their journalistic missions are undermined. Reporters are not compensated fairly, making them vulnerable to payment for stories. This can also result in inflexible models and out-of-date practices for creating, distributing, and monetizing journalism.

Poor management also furthers donor dependency. Few funders are interested, long-term, in supplying the operating budgets for media companies. Yet when media managers lack the acumen to develop effective business strategies, seeking outside funding must seem easier than building a viable enterprise.

And yet, according to some reports, the amount of money spent on helping independent media become competent businesses is minimal. "In recent years, international aid and assistance resources have been overwhelmingly concentrated on the development of journalism skills, with an emphasis on the hot topics of the day (currently, social media and convergence technologies)," according to WAN-IFRA's 2011 report, *Financially Viable Media in Emerging and Developing Markets*. "There is only an occasional nod toward educating media professionals in the business skills and market forces that are fundamental to sustaining their news organizations." U.S.-based implementers disagree, and data collected by CIMA suggest that the amounts spent on "economic sustainability" are in fact considerable—about 10 percent of the $100 million in media assistance funding in 2011 reported by ICFJ, Internews, IREX, and the NED.

Legacy Versus Digital: Is There a New Model?

Many have heralded the advent of digital media and see it sweeping out all forms of traditional news media. But a more nuanced understanding of this is emerging: a media landscape where trained reporters and editors, using new technologies, and in conjunction with citizen journalists and social media, can expand the coverage and reach of news media. "A move to a totally digital platform, or only training on digital platforms, would be incredibly naïve in many places," observed veteran journalism trainer Chuck Rice.

In this changing environment, the traditional streams of revenue for media will not disappear, especially in areas of the world where emerging middle classes are creating a rapid expansion of consumer markets. Advertising and advertising sales will likely be growth businesses. However, the number of tools that businesses will be able to use to reach those consumers will also expand, challenging news media to invent new ways to be effective marketing channels. Just as emerging countries are bypassing land lines and moving directly to mobile telephony, businesses are also able to bypass traditional media advertising and reach customers directly through a variety of Internet and mobile advertising media.

"In the countries where we're working, the point where legacy media isn't viable is not yet visible," said Harlan Mandel, CEO of the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF), which provides capital and expertise to independent media outlets. "You can't see yet how much time is left. It varies in terms of the country and the economy, and the market niche within that country, and even by the type of media."

In the past, many media companies worldwide, particularly print, successfully operated under some version of the "80/20 rule," where 80 percent of the

A vendor sells newspapers on the streets of Kigali, Rwanda. *Photo: IREX*

revenue came from advertising and 20 percent from subscription or consumer fees; and 80 percent of the ad revenue came from a narrow base of about 20 percent of potential advertisers. Today, there is no single model, and no 80/20 rule.

Successful models range from regional media organizations that are expanding audiences and revenue sources to nearly free models using unpaid citizen journalists.

Countries such as India, emerging from decades of entrenched poverty, are experiencing the rapid expansion of both legacy and digital media. In Africa, exploding access to mobile technology is leap-frogging traditional media. "There are wide swaths of people who get their information from their telephones," said Joyce Barnathan, president of the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). "The business model isn't clear yet, but we know that we can reach people without investments in expensive infrastructure."

Media in these places are generating revenue by a variety of means. Some earn revenue from advertising and subscription sales. Others rely on access to investment capital. Donors contribute to media independence in countries where government and market constraints hinder media's ability to earn revenue.

The process of figuring out the best model for any business has never followed a straight line. "This is what real revolutions are like," observed media guru Clay Shirky. "The old stuff gets broken faster than the new stuff is put in its place."[101] No one business model can be expected to work across the vast spectrum of cultures, countries, and companies. In even the smallest, poorest, and most marginalized areas, the ability to think through new business models and create revenue streams—some of which will certainly still be based on advertising and subscriptions—is vital to the success of independent news media.

Thus, effective media development programs should spend time up front analyzing the business environment for media before offering assistance. In some cases, the assistance received by media in emerging and developing markets has been better suited for more advanced economies.

The independent newspaper *Akhali Gazeti* is distributed throughout Georgia. *Photo: NED*

Among the key factors for an appropriate media business model:

- Laws supporting independent media businesses
- A country's or market's level of economic development and prosperity
- Business access to capital and finance
- The presence or absence of or proximity to conflict or trauma
- A sense of community, whether defined by geography, nationality, ethnicity, demographics, or other characteristics
- The presence or absence of a consumer economy
- An advertising industry and its infrastructure, including laws that support rather than constrain it, and third-party audience verification
- The presence or absence of state-owned media
- Government influence over the advertising market
- The level of technological and communications infrastructure
- Access by the public to digital, mobile, broadcast, print, or cable media
- Cultural norms
- Literacy rates

Examples from the Media Marketplace

In a variety of ways, market forces have helped shape independent media business models, and innovative media leaders have created solutions. They include media that are self-sustaining; investigative journalism centers funded by donors; online media with outside investment and debt financing; and experimental cellphone-based reporting seeking new models for monetization. Among the notable examples:

The MDLF: Investing in Media and People

One business barrier to the success of independent media is lack of access to capital.

"In many places," said the MDLF's Mandel, "lack of access to capital is a purely commercial constraint in the sense that it's not the government forcing the banks to not make loans. Banks just will not loan money to media. In many developing countries the banking system is not designed to support small or medium-sized businesses. If it is available to small and midsize businesses, it is very short term; it is very high interest."

Media businesses are very different from other companies. They lack assets and have unpredictable revenue streams and inconsistent seasonal revenue. They can be cyclical, tied to elections or other major events that inflate revenues one year, but deflate them in off-cycle years. "It takes a sophisticated banking organization to understand the argument and agree to take a risk against an uncertain future of advertising revenue streams—which is one of the few assets that a media company would offer as security," Mandel said.

Enter the MDLF, founded in 1995 to provide low-cost capital and technical skills—including business skills—to independent news outlets in countries with a history of media oppression. It invests in independent media by purchasing shares of those companies. In addition to investment financing, it provides short-term loans designed to help media businesses survive cash-flow problems. Since its inception, with funding from philanthropist George Soros, the group has provided more than $106 million in financing to 77 independent news businesses, which reach more than 35 million people in 26 countries.[102]

The MDLF has developed a strong methodology, reflected in the fact that since its inception it has only

written off 2 percent of the total it has lent or invested.[103] It will only operate in places that have some level of rule of law, some form of a consumer economy that can support advertising, moderate economic development, and a financial infrastructure with transparent banking and verifiable accounting practices.

The first step towards seeking investment from the MDLF is for the news organization to meet key criteria, such as whether it is producing quality journalism and is truly independent. The MDLF conducts deep legal due diligence of ultimate ownership to establish the organization's independence. The second step is developing a business plan, done in conjunction with the MDLF investment committee. The MDLF brings to bear considerable in-house and outside expertise to help develop those plans, including identifying capital needs and the business competencies that must be built.

While the outcome is a business plan with goals, benchmarks, and time frames, the process also allows the investment committee to work closely with the news organization's management team. "The relationship we're forming with the client is critical," Mandel said. "Typically we will be together for five to ten years ... we know there will be ups and downs that we have to go through together."[104]

Once that relationship is formed, the MDLF supports its clients with ongoing mentoring, coaching, training, and peer-learning experiences.

The MDLF has helped set up smaller programs in Russia and Southeast Asia. One partner is KBR68H, an Indonesian radio network that serves about 650 stations throughout Indonesia, where they are often the only news source.[105] The small loan network, called the Affiliates Fund, has helped about 40 news organizations. Although the amounts invested are small—perhaps $3,000 to $4,000—they are significant in that environment and make it possible to buy a transmitter or needed computers.

"The local impact is huge," said Mandel. "When Radio KBR68H announced at a reception the businesses that were going to get the loans, people broke down in tears."

In Tanzania: Doing What We Do, Better

In Tanzania, the *Guardian* newspaper created *Kilimo Kwanza* (Agriculture First), the country's first newspaper supplement on agriculture and rural development. Published in Kiswahili and English, the supplement has carried stories directly affecting policy and taxation. As a Knight journalism fellow, Ugandan journalist Joachim Buwembo helped shape its content and develop its business plan. Previously, Buwembo had played a pivotal role in helping make his home newspaper, the *Sunday Vision*, his nation's top-seller.

To develop the business and content plan, Buwembo stressed the importance of first understanding local market conditions and assessing its needs.[106] Using donor funding, Buwembo brought in an ad sales expert who identified potential advertisers, organized advertising within the publication, designed sales materials, and hired and trained local sales representatives.

Advertisers valued the credibility of the supplement and responded favorably once better ad sales processes were in place. The section has increased publishing frequency from biweekly to weekly, and *Kilimo Kwanza* is covering its costs. The Guardian group has now launched two radio and one TV programs based on *Kilimo Kwanza*.

"The local impact is huge," said Mandel. "When Radio KBR68H announced at a reception the businesses that were going to get the loans, people broke down in tears."

In Colombia: Building Out a Media Brand

Colombia has a long and volatile tradition of newspaper publishing that parallels its turbulent history. In recent years—with greater internal stability, a broader middle class, a developing advertising industry, and a rebounding economy (4.3 percent GDP growth in 2010)—newspapers have been able to develop stronger readership and revenues.

Gerardo Araújo, publisher of *El Universal*, a publication of Editora del Mar, S.A. (a multi-media company based in Cartagena), says his company has leveraged the improved market conditions to refine its product and targeting strategies. Those changes, when combined with affordable pricing, strategic distribution, and strong advertising segmentation, have led to an independent news company that has increased its market share, top

line revenues, profits, and audience.

Revenue from its flagship *El Universal* has gone from accounting for virtually all of Editora del Mar's proceeds to a more balanced 68 percent. This reflects the company's success in creating a family of high-quality news products targeted to well-defined audiences, which in turn create compelling advertising environments for businesses that were not traditionally the company's advertisers.

What role has international media assistance played in the company's success?

Araújo credits the International Center for Journalists for sending a business expert—Knight fellow M. Teresa Calkins—to Colombia. Calkins worked closely with *El Universal* and other newspapers throughout Colombia to create clearer advertising and audience targets and develop sound business management practices such as marketing, advertising, and circulation.

If NGOs are involved in assisting media companies, providing further business training is essential Araújo contended. "We don't want outright gifts or money," he said. "Exposure to best practices, supported by coaching, will help companies like Editora del Mar sustain its media independence."

An Eastern Europe NGO Consortium

Not every market can support independent media without external assistance. Even in countries with supposedly free media environments, many factors can contribute to undermine an independent news organization's ability to be self-supporting. In places such as El Salvador, Malaysia, and the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, government and political interference in advertising markets have limited independent media's access to advertising revenue.

"At the base level of existence, regimes use licensing requirements and frequency restrictions," Mandel said. The advertising market can be governed by state and para-state entities that direct ad spending away from independent media and enrich pro-party or state-owned media.

"There are many ways to constrain independent media," Mandel said. "You can have boycotts by commercial entities. There can be pressure from libel suits or tax audits. One of our clients in Russia was just closed down based on fire-code violations that were resolved in one hour, and yet they were closed for 90 days."

In these types of markets, hybrid funding sources are required.

In Sarajevo, Drew Sullivan is advising editor of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a network of 11 regional investigative journalism centers funded by USAID and the Open Society Foundations.[107] Media in Bosnia-Herzegovina get "bought out too easily by organized crime and oligarchs," said Sullivan. "The independent media, started by journalists, have shaken out. Many have consolidated and are now owned by the political elite."

Placing ads in the large commercial media can be a legal but opaque way of sending money to the powerful individuals who own them. These media companies are often diversified and typically own affiliated advertising agencies, which hold exclusive agreements with major outlets. Few advertising dollars are left on the table for independent media.

To provide independent reporting, OCCRP coordinates investigative journalism projects in the region and helps package and distribute them to larger audiences. Once a story is finished, OCCRP edits and fact-checks it and ensures it meets international standards.

Each center runs independently and is funded by different international donors. OCCRP is the capacity-builder, helping reporters find independent funding and develop business plans so they can be less dependent on donors. OCCRP has also helped by providing centralized services, such as group contracts for LexisNexis and insurance, which has cut costs.

But OCCRP is not designed to last forever; it is intended to help the regional centers get to a level that can be self-sustaining. To do so, Sullivan said, one avenue for generating revenue is to develop compelling regional news reports that are accurate, factual, and internationally relevant.

"In the future we will need to add other sources of money; there's not just one revenue path that will support investigative journalism," said Sullivan. "We will need to do it all: raise money, run ads, raise money for specific reports or stories, build an endowment, sell repackaged news products. All these fit in, but no one has come up with the perfect model. We are working towards it."

In India: Building New Business and Media Models in Low-Income Areas

There are areas so poor and news-deprived, so outside the consumer economy, and that have such unusual constraints on media, that new models of generating both content and revenue must be invented.

Knight fellow Shubhranshu Choudhary, a former BBC South Asia producer, worked with partners at MIT and Microsoft Research India to create a system that allows citizen journalists to use cellphones and record audio reports that are sent to a server. Their stories are told in regional languages not widely understood in other parts of India; this language barrier has previously made them invisible to mainstream media. Illiteracy and the fact that news radio—banned except on the government-owned All India Radio—also made a voice system the ideal means of providing news to this population.

The network, named CGnet Swara (Voices of Chhattisgarh), has enlisted both professional journalists and trained volunteer moderators who listen to the calls, check facts, and then translate the calls for mainstream broadcast. The news is then posted on a server; local listeners can call in and hear the broadcast in their local language; and mainstream media can have ready access to local reporting about the area.

CGnet Swara receives more than 200 listen-in calls per day. They are not "subscribers" who pay CGnet Swara to have access. However, they are paying to get the news because cellphone usage is not inexpensive. They pay to place the call and get the local news. The citizen journalists (CJs), too, pay the phone charges to call in stories and information.

At this point, that money is retained by the cellphone companies, not CGnet Swara. But Choudhary said this model of largely unpaid news-gatherers can be sustainable. "We compensate the CJs by training them," he said. "Sometimes we create competitions so that the best stories get a small remuneration. But the best compensation is that their stories are told and heard. There is increasing interest among volunteer citizen journalists in participating."

Choudhary offers four ideas about ways to generate revenue: including paid public service messages and announcements placed by NGOs; increasing reporting from these under-reported areas and selling it to traditional media; experimenting with pay models, such as free access to certain number of messages, and then charging above that; and experimenting with commercials.

At the same time, he is looking at ways to reduce costs, such as changing the law to allow people to get Internet calls (VOIP) on their mobile phones. "If we can get technology companies to help develop out this concept—and our network—the costs to users will come down, and it will create a platform that supports democracy ... through a voice of the people, for the people, and by the people."

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The media development community should make long-term management training and mentoring of independent news media a priority.
- Media support NGOs should ensure they can draw on a cadre of independent media managers and strive for multi-year development programs for them that include coaching, mentoring, and participation in industry conferences.
- A robust curriculum to improve understanding of the field of advertising and how businesses use it and other marketing communications should be developed.
- Donors should consider greater support of audience measurement, including uniform metrics across platforms and media.
- A market assessment model that analyzes the market, government, legal, banking/finance, and demographic factors affecting independent media's ability to operate as a business should be created, and media support NGOs should conduct such assessments prior to investing in major journalism development initiatives.
- Media support groups should develop a model of best practices for media to market themselves to small businesses in their communities, focusing on business practices that spur local economic development.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The legal environment is a critical factor in the success of independent media. Laws and regulations can stunt or enable the growth of media and certain kinds of content.
- Legal tools to use against independent media are numerous: criminal defamation, privacy, and "insult" laws, high monetary judgements in lawsuits, sweeping national security statutes, and licensing and broadcast spectrum restrictions.
- In most countries, libel laws are the primary vehicle to clamp down on a critical press. Although libel is treated in many democracies as only a civil offense, criminal defamation laws remain in use in many countries.
- There is a rising trend of imprisoned journalists, from 81 in 2000 to 179 in 2011, with over half behind bars on national security charges. Among the top jailers: China, Iran, Vietnam, and Burma.
- More than 90 countries have freedom of information laws on their books, most of them passed in the last decade, but many have been poorly implemented.
- Digital media face a host of laws targeting legacy media, as well as laws targeting online publishing, such as liability for content posted by users and "libel tourism."

MEDIA AND THE LAW: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The legal environment in which a media outlet operates is a crucial and often overlooked factor in its success. Rules and regulations can hinder or enable the growth of media and restrict or promote particular kinds of content. A liberal and empowering legal regime will allow media to publish hard-hitting investigative reports and fulfill their function as watchdog of democratic society without fear of legal sanction, thus helping to make governments more accountable. This is a public good lost to citizens of countries with restrictive legal regimes.

Chinese security personnel try to stop pictures from being taken at Beijing's Tiananmen Square on the 20th anniversary of the June 4, 1989, crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. *Photo: Reinhard Krause/Reuters*

Like everyone else in society, media and journalists, including bloggers and citizen journalists, are subject to the laws and regulations that exist in every country. This includes laws on content—such as libel laws—as well as corporate and tax laws. While the former arguably affect the media more than others in society, nevertheless, they are general laws that apply to all. Those with power to stifle the press have a wide arsenal of legal weapons from which to choose.

Libel, Insult, and Privacy Laws

The mind-set of government ministers and other powerful figures in many countries remains to clamp down on criticism of them rather than to tolerate it, and in most countries the law of libel remains their primary vehicle. Libel laws tend to be worded in fairly broad terms, allowing courts considerable leeway in their interpretation of what is "libelous."

An example from Zimbabwe shows how effective criminal libel laws can be in suppressing criticism and dissent. In 2010, the weekly *Standard* published a report alleging that police were recruiting war veterans loyal to the political party of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe to occupy senior positions and direct operations in the run-up to elections expected in 2011. The reporter, Nqobani Ndlovu, was immediately charged with defamation and spent nine days in prison.[108]

Ndlovu's case is not an isolated one: The Committee to Protect Journalists' prison census reported 10 journalists incarcerated for defamation in 2010,[109] and three jailed in 2011. Article 19, the freedom of expression group, reported 42 countries as having imprisoned journalists for libel in 2005 through 2007.[110] As of 2010, criminal defamation laws of one sort or other were in use in most countries in the world.[111] (In many democracies, libel is treated only as a civil offense.)

One reason that defamation laws are so commonly abused as a means to restrict criticism is that it is relatively easy to bring a claim but very hard to defend one. Under most defamation laws, all that a claimant needs to do is allege that a particular report is factually incorrect

and that it concerns his or her reputation. The burden then shifts to the journalist to prove, often to a very high standard, that what he or she wrote was true.

Convictions for criminal libel and defamation do not always result in imprisonment, but they still produce a serious chilling effect. In many countries, courts routinely award high damages against media outlets, sometimes resulting in bankruptcy. In Kazakhstan, for example, a story on the rising price of grain by reporter Almas Kusherbaev resulted in a $200,000 libel award against him and the bankruptcy of the newspaper that published the story. Kusherbaev had implicated a powerful member of parliament whose company controlled a large part of the country's grain market.[112]

Large libel awards are commonplace around the world. Consider the following, randomly picked, examples:

- In 2004, a Russian newspaper, *Kommersant*, was ordered to pay $11 million to the Russian Alfa-Bank. The paper's complaint against the award remains pending at the European Court of Human Rights.[113]
- In Thailand, a supermarket chain, Tesco Lotus, pursued a three-year case against three individual journalists for a total of $36 million in damages. Two of the journalists were forced to apologize; only one of them managed to win his case.[114]

CHINA'S GLOBAL MEDIA MOVE

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is using various components of soft power not only to shape its image, but also to influence the media in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

China's primary purposes appear to be to present China as a reliable friend and partner, as well as to make sure that China's image in the developing world is positive. It is all part of a $6.6 billion global strategy to challenge the agenda-setting power of such giants as the BBC, the VOA, and CNN. But as part of China's efforts to do this, it is seeking to fundamentally reshape some of the world's media in its own image, away from a government-watchdog stance toward one that considers the government's interests paramount in deciding what to disseminate.[118] The Chinese efforts may result in helping authoritarian governments expand control of their local media.

A great deal of emphasis is placed on forming alliances that are anti-Western and on promoting media models and content more friendly to China's own agenda. A secondary but important purpose in China's new emphasis on media outreach is to demonstrate the benefits of a relationship with the PRC to those nations that still have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The diplomatic isolation of Taiwan remains a high priority for the PRC, and the bulk of the countries that recognize Taiwan are in Latin America and Africa.

China's efforts are also clearly aimed at expanding Chinese influence in regions where it is greatly stepping up its economic and political presence and military sales. As part of its expansion into significant commodity acquisitions (oil, copper, bauxite, tin, and many others) in Africa and Latin America and its search for business acumen, technology, and markets in Southeast Asia, China has made media aid and the expansion of Chinese media influence a high priority. This comes as Western news outlets have cut their overseas staffs and fewer U.S. and European government resources are allocated for training and other media support in Latin America and other regions.

China is carrying out these efforts through:

- Direct Chinese government aid to state-run media in the form of radio transmitters and financing for national satellites.
- The provision of content and technology to allies and potential allies that are often cash strapped.
- Memoranda of understanding on the sharing of news, particularly across Southeast Asia.
- Training programs and expense-paid trips to China for journalists.
- A significant multi-billion dollar expansion of the PRC's own media on the world stage, primarily through the Xinhua news agency, satellite and Internet TV channels controlled by Xinhua, and state-run television services.

In Southeast Asia the PRC seems to have been particularly successful in reaching agreements to provide Chinese government content for numerous regional outlets and has a

+ In May 2011, an Indonesian court awarded Tommy Suharto, son of the country's former president, $1.5 million in defamation damages for an article that referred to him as a "convicted murderer." In 2002, Suharto had been convicted of ordering the killing of a supreme court judge, but the South Jakarta District Court held that he had "served his sentence and … has fully regained his rights as a citizen and [the right] for his past to not be mentioned." [115]

From time to time libel laws are used to suppress criticism abroad as well: The government of Bahrain instructed a London law firm in June 2011 to sue the daily *Independent* for its critical coverage of the killing of protesters,[116] and the *Guardian*'s Andrew Meldrum, based in Zimbabwe, was sued there for "publishing falsehoods" in the UK, where the *Guardian* is based.[117] While foreign media outlets can usually weather relatively small libel cases such as these, fighting larger cases is more difficult and can be a significant drain on their resources.

So-called "insult" laws are a close relative to libel laws but with an even broader sweep. Where libel laws ostensibly protect individuals from comments that might lower them in public esteem—an objective test in theory at least—insult laws protect from any words that the recipient might feel are "insulting." This is ultimately

significant footprint in the emerging digital TV and Internet-based TV markets. By signing memoranda of understanding with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as well as individual members of the alliance, China has made significant advances in integrating its view of the world into nightly broadcasts and morning newspapers throughout the region.

In Latin America the Chinese assistance is closely but not exclusively aligned with the left-leaning populist states of the Bolivarian alliance (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua), led by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Venezuela purchased a communications satellite from China, in part to be able to project the government's message more broadly, and has signed an agreement to purchase a second Chinese-made satellite. Bolivia's Chinese-manufactured satellite is scheduled to be launched in 2013 or 2014. China does appear to have significantly beefed up its own media presence in the region and is also a leading content provider for many news outlets.

In Africa, where China has made significant media infrastructure investments, primarily in radio transmitters, there also have been agreements on content sharing and a targeted emphasis on providing Africa-relevant content to resource-starved media outlets.

Chinese news media, far less independent than Western news organizations, form the basis for China's media assistance, emphasizing cooperation with governments—many of them undemocratic—and rejecting the Western media's role as watchdogs holding governments accountable.

China's efforts to shape the world's media is part of a larger influence and messaging program that includes buying air time in such places as Australia, the South Pacific, Nairobi, New York, and even Galveston, TX, and by expanding the reach and output of its Xinhua News Agency.[119]

Russia is engaging in a similar full-court media press. Its RT network (previously known as Russia Today), with three global news channels and 22 satellites, claims to reach 430 million people in more than 100 countries—including 50 million through English and Spanish broadcasts in the United States. Its special projects, its website says, "are specifically tailored to accustom [sic] the international audience with the Russian perspective."[120]

In September 2011, Russia joined with China, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan in introducing a UN resolution proposing a code of conduct that would regulate Internet—and, by extension, state—security. Adherence would be voluntary, but signatories would agree to curb "the dissemination of information that incites terrorism, secessionism, or extremism or that undermines other countries' political, economic and social stability."[121] The idea met strong disapproval from the United States and the UK at a conference two months later in London, where Vice President Joe Biden referred to it as a "repressive global code."[122]

a far more subjective test—some people are thick-skinned, others are not—and as a result, insult laws are easily abused to restrict tough criticism. Examples include the cases of an Austrian politician who won a case against a journalist who had referred to him as an "idiot;"[123] and a founding member of the Association of Iranian Journalists, Issa Saharkhiz, imprisoned for having insulted Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in a critical comment.[124]

Over the last decade, media freedom NGOs have put significant effort into reforming libel and insult laws. While some success has been achieved, particularly in regard to decriminalization of defamation,[125] there is little evidence that the use of libel laws overall has gone down.

Privacy laws—whether civil or criminal—are a close corollary to libel and insult laws. Where the latter purport to protect reputational interests, privacy laws can be used to restrict any reporting that concerns a person's private or family life. Courts around the world have defined "private and family life" loosely to include extramarital affairs involving top officials and politicians.[126] They are therefore similarly easily abused to restrict public criticism.

National Security, Anti-Terror, and Public Order Laws

Every country has laws on its books that aim to protect national security and public order. However, while there is no doubt that countries may restrict certain publications that genuinely endanger national security (for example, in times of war the military will restrict publication of troop movements), national security laws

LESSONS FROM EASTERN EUROPE

After the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, Western aid poured into the region to help create independent media. In this, Americans mobilized some $600 million worth of philanthropic support during the 1990s. But today, journalists there are struggling to hold on to the gains they made in the past two decades. Momentum has shifted as more autocratic leaders find ways to manage or discredit the independent news media. Ethical journalists in this region face a triple threat: a backsliding against the 1990s democratic reforms (Hungary's restrictive media law, which took effect in 2011, is a prime example of this), a global Internet-driven erosion of the media business model, and a continuing world economic crisis that is exposing the fragility of democratic institutions.

To be sure, the media are pluralistic in Central and Eastern Europe, a major improvement from the lockstep pre-1989 propaganda of the Communist regimes. And the Internet is creating more opportunities for diverse, democratic, and horizontal flows of information. But there are important lessons to learn from attempts to create a vital independent media sector in the region.

First, news organizations were among the first institutions to be privatized, and many ended up in the hands of politically-connected or money-minded private owners without an independent journalism mission.

Second, owners and journalists failed to distinguish their watchdog work from partisanship and tabloid entertainment. With a few notable exceptions like *Gazeta Wyborcza* in Poland, they failed to create a new, independent media identity. Civic and media literacy were not added to the educational curriculum. Thus they failed to win the loyalty of the public as a social good, but were seen—often correctly so—as the tools of the new oligarchs and political power elites.

Sometimes the new owners were simply the old Communist powers in new capitalist suits. "What we are facing in Poland is the same as Hungary and other places," journalist Igor Janke said. "Those people who had money in Poland, many of them had roots in the former [Communist] regime."

Media developers worked on many aspects of these problems, advancing commercial independent media policy and legislation, where many successes can be found. They worked with journalists to give them professional training, with mixed success since too often they failed to accommodate or overcome local cultures and realities, and through no fault of their own, failed to get owner and manager buy-in. Simply training journalists—without winning the hearts and minds of their managers, owners, political leaders, and the public—was never going to be enough.

In a related problem, media developers often tried to sell a U.S. "liberal" model of journalism—based on impartial-

are easily abused by governments to restrict publications and even imprison journalists. Following the ouster of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, Egypt's ruling military council repeatedly arrested bloggers on such charges as inciting violence against the military, insulting the armed forces, and disturbing public security.[127] Even in relatively developed democracies, judges have a strong tendency to defer to the authorities when national security interests are asserted, and in less developed democracies there is hardly any judicial inquiry when national security-related charges are brought. It is telling that of the 143 journalists imprisoned at the end of 2010, more than half were jailed on national security charges, particularly in Burma, China, and Iran.[128]

There are, however, examples where a concerted effort by civil society has thwarted the use of national security laws against journalists. For example, controversial Malaysian journalist Raja Petra Kamarudin was able to fend off various criminal charges against him, including charges brought under the country's notorious Internal Security Act, when a consortium of media freedom and human rights organizations—including the International Bar Association and the Media Legal Defence Initiative—intervened and sent trial observers to ensure the fairness of the proceedings against him.[129] Such cases demonstrate that in countries where there is some judicial independence, or where international opinion counts, bogus national security charges can be defeated. Still, considering the long and concerted effort put into challenging these by media freedom groups, it is also clear that this kind of pressure cannot be brought to bear in every case.

ity and facts—that went against the European traditions of commentary and partisanship, and which is increasingly disregarded even in the United States today. The U.S. emphasis on objectivity was not well-received in Poland, for example, because according to scholar Karol Jakubowicz, many journalists "still think that it is their duty to take sides in the many divisions within Polish society and promote the cause they support."

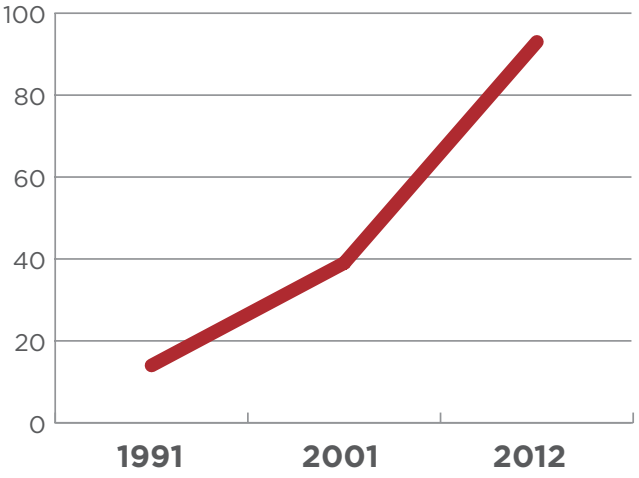
Media developers often did not know enough about their target communities and tended to underestimate the professional pride of their local colleagues. The Czech Republic had a lively free press between the two world wars. In Poland, there was a rich tradition of opposition journalism that continued throughout the Communist years, but "Western journalists decided to be good to us, assuming that we are people coming from the bush and it is necessary to enlighten us," complained journalist Wojciech Maziarski.[130]

Media developers who came to help build the business side of the media sector faced a sustainability dilemma: Many markets were too small. Funders were "playing God" by deciding which of the too many new media efforts they would finance and which would be allowed to die, since the newly capitalist countries' advertising sectors could not support them all. The marketplace never adequately replaced the government's sponsorship for most media operations. Sometimes the media outlet they helped simply turned around and sold itself to a big foreign media chain.[131] And the journalism trainers' premise that quality news would provide a strong market position failed to come true.

"Regionally it is a downward slope in Eastern Europe. People are realizing we left too quickly," said a U.S. official engaged with media development. These countries were left floundering with corrupt ownership transfers, underdeveloped markets, and hangovers from Communist culture and practice. Media development donors now tend to be "opportunistic and go for the day's sexy topic," said director Ioana Avadani of the Romanian Center for Independent Journalism. Training journalists to cover Roma or environmental issues is better than nothing, but it is less effective than a more comprehensive approach, she said.

Elisa Tinsley, director of the Knight International Journalism Fellowships, told the story of how in 2009, two newspaper journalists from Poland asked for a Knight fellow to be sent from the United States to teach Poles skills in independent reporting and media management. Tinsley explained that ICFJ wouldn't be sending a fellow to Poland because "you graduated, you don't need us." The Polish journalists, she said, "laughed heartily."

COUNTRIES WITH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS



Source for 1991 and 2001 data: Roger Vleugels "Overview of all FOI Laws," Fringe Special, October 9, 2011. http://freedominfo.org/documents/Fringe%20Special%20-%20Overview%20FOIA%20-%20oct%202011.pdf

Source for 2012 data: "Constitutional Provisions, Laws and Regulations," Right2info.org, http://right2info.org/laws.

Other Laws: A plethora of other laws can also be abused to clamp down on media. A random sample of legal actions against journalists and independent media outlets in 2010-2011 includes:

- Fire regulations: An administrative court case against the Russian newspaper *Krestyanin* over alleged breaches of fire regulations. *Krestyanin* was faced with temporary closure as a result.
- Drug charges: A criminal case was filed against Azeri journalist Eynullah Fatullayev for alleged possession of heroin.
- Contempt of court: British journalist Alan Shadrake was imprisoned for contempt of court in Singapore in 2011.
- Pornography: A Venezuelan court, invoking anti-pornography laws, banned graphic images of violence in the run up to legislative elections in 2010.
- False news: In January 2009, Cameroonian journalist Lewis Medjo was sentenced to three years in prison for publishing "false news."
- Blasphemy laws: In Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan, blasphemy laws have been used to silence critical reporting in the media.
- Tax investigations: Latin American media outlets have been closed down after government inspectors have found minor discrepancies in their financial records.

Enabling Laws: Freedom of Information

Freedom of information (FOI) laws allow the media—along with everyone else—to obtain access to information held by public bodies and hold them to scrutiny. While the libel, national security, and other laws reviewed in the preceding sections restrict media freedom, FOI laws aim to empower the media. Along with constitutional provisions recognizing the right to freedom of expression, they are among the handful of laws to do so.

Freedom of information statutes—sometimes called right to information laws—have seen expansive international growth over the last decade. By 2012, some 93 countries had specific freedom of information laws, the vast majority of them passed in the last decade.[132]

Unfortunately, many of the recently enacted FOI laws have been poorly implemented. In some cases, government agencies have apparently remained blissfully unaware that they are under any legal obligation to disclose information, and in others it has taken civil society organizations to push governments into implementing laws. In a test of Indonesia's 2010 law by freedom of information groups, nearly 70 percent of the 347 requests made were either denied or ignored.[133] Maltese journalists recently called on their government to implement the Freedom of Information Act 2008,[134] while media in Uganda struggle to gain access to more than the most mundane information under legislation enacted in 2005.[135] Even in developed democracies, journalists are frustrated that the stock response to many FOI requests appears to be "no."

Laws Aimed at the Media

It is notable that most established democracies do not have a law that imposes specific regulatory measures on the print media. This is due to a deliberate policy to prevent unnecessary regulation. Those countries that do have laws aimed at regulating print media are generally found in the middle and lower reaches of the annual press freedom rankings, and media freedom watchdogs have long regarded such laws with suspicion. This is

Supporters of Tuncay Ozkan, a leading investigative journalist and former owner of Kanal Turk television, demonstrate outside the prison in Silivri, near Istanbul, where he was jailed. *Photo: Ibrahim Usta/AP*

particularly true where media laws require journalists to register or obtain licenses before they are allowed to work. In at least 25 countries the government has a direct hand in licensing journalists. That is an overt interference with journalists' right to freedom of expression, the legitimacy of which under international human rights law is extremely questionable at best.[136]

A large number of countries still have laws that require media outlets to either register or obtain a license before they can operate. In some, government agencies have effective control over who is allowed to publish; others merely require a media outlet to register its contact details with a central agency. Examples of the former can be found in Rwanda and Uzbekistan, where media laws are used to exercise strict control over who is allowed to publish. These practices have been challenged at international tribunals, and media freedom watchdogs have called for their abolition.[137]

In addition to imposing registration or licensing requirements, specific laws aimed at the print media often put various administrative requirements on the media that can be onerous. For example, Rwanda's media law imposes a minimum capital requirement on media outlets.

Broadcasting Laws

Virtually every country has a broadcasting law. Broadcasting regulation has long been accepted as being necessary for technical reasons: There is room for only a limited number of frequencies on the broadcasting spectrum, and it is in the common interest that the spectrum be regulated to avoid different radio and TV stations broadcasting on the same frequency. In the age of analog broadcasting, this meant that in a given geographic area, there was typically room for only a handful of broadcasters on the airwaves.

The main media freedom issues with regard to analog broadcasting are (1) who is in charge of the licensing process; and (2) on the basis of what criteria are licenses awarded? In many countries, the licensing process has traditionally been in the hands of a government agency. This has led to suspicions of government interference in the allocation of licenses in such places as Armenia, Bulgaria, and Zimbabwe.[138]

With the arrival of digital broadcasting, a new regulatory environment has opened up. While there still needs to be some regulation, the digital spectrum can accommodate a far greater number of broadcasters while using less of the spectrum. This has two important consequences for media freedom. First, it is harder to justify

denying a license on grounds of scarcity of spectrum.[139] Second, how this newly freed up spectrum—the so-called "digital dividend"—is distributed has important implications for the future. Instead of reserving portions of the spectrum for public interest broadcasting, it is tempting for governments to simply auction it all off. The money at stake can be impressive: In 2010, it was estimated that the value of electronic communications reliant on the spectrum in Europe alone exceeded $360 billion. But if this happens, public interest media will lose out—they cannot compete with commercial interests—and they argue that spectrum must be set aside that will serve the broader community.[140]

Laws That Promote Media Freedom

Rarely do governments legislate with the specific intent of promoting media freedom. But one promising example is the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative (IMMI), a legislative proposal meant to make the country a haven for media freedom. The project has the support of all the political parties, and a resolution initiating it was passed unanimously in June 2010.[141] The IMMI project is made up of a number of complementary elements:

+ A Freedom of Information Act, described as "ultra modern" by its promoters
+ Strong protection for whistleblowers as well as for journalistic sources
+ Limits on prior restraint

A STEP BACKWARD IN LATIN AMERICA

Freedom of expression and of the press in much of Latin America are under sustained attack by numerous authoritarian governments in the region, as well as non-state armed actors such as drug trafficking organizations and paramilitary groups. These attacks have made Latin America one of the most dangerous places in the world in which to be a journalist. Overall, the region, with the exception of the Caribbean, has suffered an almost uninterrupted deterioration of press freedoms over the past five years, reaching its lowest point since the military dictatorships of the 1980s.[142]

Venezuela, along with Cuba, Mexico, and Honduras, ranks among the least free and transparent countries in the hemisphere, particularly in regard to freedom for the media, according to Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press Survey 2011* and other measures of democracy and transparency. Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Argentina, and Colombia are all ranked as only partly free. The scores of all of these countries except Colombia have dropped over the past five years as the region's autocratic governments have clamped down on freedom of information and the media. Public attacks by senior officials on the media as agents of foreign interests are now routine in many countries.

What is qualitatively different in several countries, primarily the members of the self-proclaimed "Bolivarian Revolution" (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua), is the sustained official, state-sponsored verbal and physical assaults on the independent media, coupled with the systematic implementation of laws to curb freedom of the press, media ownership, and access to public information. Across the Bolivarian states there is a remarkably similar pattern and methodology of attacking the media, one that is often reflected in Argentina as well. These methods include, among others:

+ Criminalizing, through vaguely worded laws, the dissemination of certain types of information, such as news or images that "disturb" or "scare" the population, and reports that foment "racism" or "denigrate" government officials.
+ Greatly expanding government media with multi-million dollar investments in official news outlets that publish no dissenting views, while forcing broadcast media to simultaneously air hundreds of hours of presidential speeches, regardless of the newsworthiness of the content.
+ The creation of oversight boards that have broad and undefined authority to regulate and shut down media.
+ A constant demonization of the media by presidents and senior government officials, specifically identifying the media as enemies, traitors to the people, and part of the "oligarchy."

- Strong protection for intermediaries such as Internet service providers
- Protection from "libel tourism," or the practice of shopping around for friendly venues in which to sue for libel
- The enactment of a realistic statute of limitations for Internet publications, making it clear that not every click constitutes a new instance of publication
- Ensuring that legal processes are not abused to restrict free speech
- Allowing the creation of virtual limited liability companies

The process to edit, draft, and pass the 13 separate pieces of legislation that will be needed to finalize it was underway in early 2012.[142]

Attempts to Legislate the Internet

In principle, all of the content restrictions discussed above—the laws on libel, protecting national security, etc.—apply to online media just as they do to traditional media. But the Internet has several characteristics that need to be taken into account: its transnational nature (material that is uploaded in one place is accessible worldwide); the role played by Internet service providers and others who provide a platform for publishing; and the nature of the material published. Sometimes, for example, content uploaded to a chat room is more akin to what is said in conversation than to printed comment.

In many countries, courts have taken the approach that what can be downloaded onto their computers

- A consistent refusal to investigate any of the hundreds of incidents of violence against the media, granting impunity to those carrying out the actions, despite repeated international denunciations.
- The punishment of the non-official media by withholding government advertising, often the main source of revenue, as well as raising taxes on their business inputs such as newsprint.

These forms of significantly reducing media freedoms through quasi-legal means and harassment in some countries stands in contrast to the physical elimination of journalists by non-state actors, including drug traffickers, primarily seen in Mexico and Honduras, and to a lesser degree in Guatemala. In 2010, 12 journalists were killed in Mexico and 10 in Honduras, behind only Pakistan, according to the International Press Institute. In 2011, those killed included another 10 in Mexico and 6 in Honduras.

The constant verbal attacks on the media by senior officials, violence and threats against journalists, and the closing of dozens of independent media outlets has led to an increase in self-censorship. State censorship has also grown. This includes, primarily in Venezuela, restricting access to the Internet. A new round of restrictive laws passed since 2010 in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela grant the governments even more power to shutter media deemed unfriendly to the government. This series of government and government-sanctioned assaults has drawn sharp criticism from not only traditional press freedom watchdogs and human rights groups, but also from the Organization of American States, UNESCO, and a broad spectrum of international bodies.

There are some bright spots in an overall bleak situation. Colombia, with the inauguration of President Juan Manuel Santos in August 2010, has marked a notable improvement in the relations between the media and the government. The abuses of the past, including widespread wiretapping campaigns and intimidation by security forces, have been reined in, and the public assaults on the media and individual reporters have stopped.

Across the region there is developing a network of important online sites to carry out serious investigative journalism in order to bring more transparency to the governments. There has been some significant movement in several countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador, and Colombia to codify access to public information. But overall, the ability of the media to carry out its functions of accountability, investigation, and the dissemination of a broad range of ideas has been significantly curtailed in recent years.

A journalist from an opposition television station is detained and roughed up by police while covering an opposition protest in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Minutes after this picture was taken, the photographer who took this photo was also arrested and beaten by police. *Photo: John Bompengo/AP*

should be subject to the laws of their nation. As a result, judges increasingly claim jurisdiction over material that has been published in another country, and sometimes even for another audience. This has led to complaints of forum shopping and, more recently, "libel tourism," the phenomenon by which claimants in libel cases bring their claim in a country where they believe they can get a favorable result. Publishers have difficulty defending such cases, both because they are usually not familiar with the laws of the country in which they are being sued and for reasons of cost. London has been targeted in particular. Notorious examples of libel tourism include Ukrainian oligarch Rinat Akhmetov, who sued website *Obozrevatel* for publishing articles about him in London in the Ukrainian language; and Icelandic investment bank Kaupthing, which sued the Danish newspaper *Ekstra Bladet* over the translated version of two articles on its website.[144]

More recently, however, London judges have been increasingly reticent to accept jurisdiction and have demanded at least a link between the claimant and the country. In a case brought against the *Kiev Post* late in 2010, the judge refused to accept that the claimant—a Ukrainian businessman—had sufficient links with London to be allowed to bring a libel claim there.[145] This is partly the result of civil society protest,[146] and partly the result of the United States introducing legislation restricting the enforcement of foreign libel judgments in response to a series of cases in which U.S. publishers had been sued in the UK.[147]

But forum shopping has hardly disappeared, and cases continue to be brought elsewhere in Europe (Paris and Berlin are favored destinations for the speed with which a judgment can be obtained) as well as in Singapore, for example.

Another problem comes in the form of what is known as "intermediary liability." In a number of countries, service providers, hosts of Web platforms, content aggregators and other "intermediaries" may be held liable for material that is posted on websites owned or run by them. This is not just a problem in the developing world. The law in many countries regards online sites as "publishers" and renders them liable for any content that may be libelous, breaches privacy, or is otherwise deemed illegal. This places such outlets in the very difficult position of being forced to defend material which, in reality, they did not "publish"' (in the common-sense meaning of the word) and the truth or falsity of which they know nothing about. Examples include Google being convicted of breaching privacy by an Italian court for a video uploaded onto YouTube (owned by Google);[148] and a Thai news and current affairs website, *Prachatai*, whose managing director is currently on trial facing criminal charges of insulting the monarchy for comments left on the site by users.[149]

Future Trends

The foregoing may look like a complex, confusing—and to some, dispiriting—picture of the use of laws to repress media freedom, with the odd rays of hope represented by the legislative initiative in Iceland and the increasing adoption of freedom of information laws around the world. However, several trends are identifiable, and there is room for significant civil society action.

In a world of converging media—for example, news content increasingly being delivered via cellphones—regulatory environments are starting to shift. Media organizations accustomed to dealing with information ministries or agencies regulating broadcast licenses and spectrum allocation will also now have to deal with telecommunications regulators.

Statistics on the number of journalists in prison

indicate that at the end of 2011, there were more journalists behind bars than at any other time in the decade.[150] There has been a steady rise in the number of imprisoned journalists, from 81 in 2000 to 179 in 2011. While this is troubling, it must be noted that the problem of imprisonment of journalists is concentrated in a relatively small number of countries. Almost two-thirds of the cases are in Iran (42), China (27), Eritrea (28), and Burma (12). Together with Cuba, which was a consistent jailer of journalists until 2009, these countries have been responsible for 66 percent of all journalists' incarcerations since 2006. Other countries that have consistently jailed journalists in 2006–2011, though in lower numbers, are Uzbekistan, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Russia.

There is a slight move away from criminal defamation laws, largely as a result of many years' sustained effort of the media freedom community. Even some large Western countries have responded to pressure to decriminalize, and the UK finally abolished its criminal libel laws in 2010. Despite these moves, the appetite of the rich and powerful to suppress criticism appears undiminished. In Armenia, for example, defamation was decriminalized in 2010, but recent reports suggest that the country's civil libel laws are now abused to suppress critical voices.[151] There may be a need for research into the extent to which abolishing criminal libel laws has led to activity merely being displaced to other areas of the law, so as to inform future civil society action.

National security laws are also widely abused. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, it is the type of law most commonly used to imprison journalists: Of the 179 journalists in jail as of 2011, more than half were on charges of national security or acts to undermine the state. Of these, more than half were in countries with poor records of respect for human rights and judicial independence, such as China, Iran, Vietnam, and Burma. This points to a root cause that lies deeper than simply intolerance of criticism.

Against the repressive use of laws, civil society action can be effective. In the UK, a libel law reform campaign resulted, first, in decriminalization of libel, and second, in a governmental commitment to reform the country's libel laws. This will undoubtedly have an impact in other common law countries. In Malaysia, Gambia, and Sri Lanka, all countries with much weaker traditions of democracy than the UK, journalists have defeated criminal trials against them supported by civil society efforts, and the explosive growth in freedom of information laws is in no small part due to sustained campaigning on the issue by NGOs.

The NGOs have been effective at defending individual cases, bringing strategic lawsuits to defend media rights, and campaigning for the legal right to freedom of expression. The London-based Media Legal Defence Initiative, founded in 2008, has played a particularly noteworthy role in making legal resources available to media, working with groups from Russia to Uganda. But the scale of the challenges facing such groups should not be underestimated. Greater efforts and better coordination will be needed if they are to score more than the occasional victory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Donors should prioritize funding to enhance the legal-enabling environment for the news media. Sustained campaigns by NGOs on media law issues, greater media law resources, and the pool of pro bono media lawyers should all be expanded.
- Campaigns against impunity of those who assault and intimidate journalists should be prioritized, intensified, and better funded.
- The growing trend toward freedom of information laws should be supported, with renewed attention to implementation of the laws.
- Work should be done to ensure that broadcast licensing is done fairly and in the public interest, with spectrum set aside that serves the broader community.
- Libel and insult laws should be decriminalized, and more research should be done to see if civil libel laws are being abused instead.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Murders of journalists, after staying fairly constant during the 1990s, have jumped by more than 30 percent over the past decade.
- Killings are the tip of the iceberg. Beatings, kidnappings, imprisonment, and threats against journalists are far more numerous, and can be just as effective at silencing them.
- The deadliest countries for journalists over the past decade: Iraq, the Philippines, Colombia, Pakistan, and Mexico.
- The vast majority of journalists killed have been staff members of local media.
- At least five organizations report on journalist deaths worldwide, using different methodology. For 2011 they reported four different totals, from a low of 64 to a high of 124.
- The problem of journalist safety lacks an easy solution, in part because the threats are so diverse, ranging from drug and ethnic violence to poor reporting practices.
- NGOs have responded through aggressive public advocacy and monitoring and by offering journalists better training and preparation.
- After 9/11, major media organizations stepped up safety efforts for their own staffs, but few donors support the kind of broad-based training that is most needed.

SAFETY: JOURNALISTS UNDER ATTACK

Journalists everywhere complain about the challenges they face: deadlines that won't flex, sources who won't talk, editors who won't listen, bosses who won't pay a living wage.

But year in and year out, in scores of countries—and with a grim consistency in certain troubled lands—some journalists must add these to their list of challenges: Knives. Bullets. Bombs. Mortar shells. Land mines. Metal rods. Onrushing vehicles. Murderous bare hands.

During 2011, there were 104 journalists and media staff killed because they were doing their jobs, according to the tally of one respected group, the

Journalists carry crosses wrapped in newspaper to the attorney general's office in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, in protest of the unresolved murders of their colleagues. *Photo: Jose Luis Gonzalez/ Reuters*

Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI). An untabulated, certainly much larger number suffered violent assaults. Yet for all the numerous reports and tough-sounding international resolutions, it is also a problem without an easy solution.

In fact, the problem appears to be growing worse. Data from both IPI and another group, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), indicate that killings have jumped by more than 30 percent over the past decade, driven by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and attacks in Mexico and the Philippines.

"It is a special war—a peacetime war on journalism," said Miklos Haraszti, who until 2010 served as representative on freedom of the media for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).[152]

Threats come from many directions: from drug cartels or rebel groups; autocratic governments or ethnic enemies; stray bullets or terrorist bombs. Indeed, it may be the widely disparate nature of the threats that makes a "one size fits all" solution so elusive. Half a dozen professional organizations are actively engaged in the problem, as are representatives of major multilateral organizations, among them the United Nations and the OSCE.

Despite the attention, there is not even agreement about the number of journalists who have been killed, much less about truly effective ways to reduce the violence.

The Numbers

While attacks on journalists are generally seen as a pressing issue, there are broad differences in how researchers measure the problem and major inconsistencies and holes in the data. The only regularly maintained, international statistics focus solely on deaths, not attacks or kidnappings. And even those reports differ widely. At least five major organizations publish annual reports on journalist deaths worldwide—along with IPI and CPJ, there are the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), London-based International News Safety Institute (INSI), and Paris-based World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). For 2011 they reported four different totals, from a low of 64 to a high of 124.

Much of the disparity results from definitions and methodology. The Committee to Protect Journalists, which in 2011 reported 86 deaths, uses narrower parameters than IPI, which reported 104. Of those 86 cited by CPJ, 46 are listed as "motive confirmed," meaning its research demonstrates that the journalist "was murdered in direct reprisal for his or her work; was killed in crossfire during combat situations; or was killed while carrying out a dangerous assignment such as coverage of a street protest."[153]

Considering the uncertain conditions in most countries where these deaths occur, that can be a demanding standard. It rules out, for instance, a journalist killed while at home, unless there is solid confirmation of the motive—which is often missing, since so many of these cases go unsolved. CPJ also keeps a separate list of deaths it deems suspicious, pending further investigation. Nearly all of those "motive unconfirmed" deaths appear on the lists from other organizations, which use broader standards.

Likewise, methodology accounts for at least some of the disparity at the high end. The two other groups that report annually on the deaths of journalists—the IFJ and INSI—both include vehicle drivers and other "media workers" on their lists, which increases the numbers, and INSI also includes "accidental or health-related" causes of death.[154]

Yet another issue is problematic monitoring. In countries such as Mexico and Brazil, a lack of reporting is believed to hide a full view of attacks on the media.[155]

Databases on violence against journalists yield some notable figures:

Growing violence. Figures for journalist killings have been recorded for 20 years, and during the 1990s the average level of violence stayed fairly consistent, with no apparent trend of increasing or decreasing violence worldwide. But that has changed over the past decade. CPJ's 10-year moving average for journalists killed with motive confirmed was 37 in 2002; that figure reached 50 in 2011—a 36 percent increase. IPI, which began its tally in 1997, showed a 10-year moving average in 2006 of 64; in 2010 that figure was 83—a 31 percent increase. In part, the numbers were boosted by the horrendous killing of 30 journalists in the Philippines in November 2009, part of a massacre of 57 people in an apparent political attack. But even with the Philippine attack excluded, the data still show an upward trend (with CPJ at 47 and IPI at 80).[156]

Violence close to home. For all the publicity generated when a Daniel Pearl is brutally assassinated, the journalists targeted are overwhelmingly local reporters—working in their home countries, for local media houses. Local journalists account for 87 percent of those on CPJ's "motive confirmed" list since it began in 1992,[157] and they account for 93 percent of cases listed in INSI data.

For whom they worked. The great majority of journalists—85 percent—who died doing their jobs over the 20 years of CPJ's survey were staff members, not freelance. CPJ reports that twice as many worked for print organizations (56 percent) as television (28 percent), with radio journalists accounting for 20 percent of the victims and Internet journalists, less than 3 percent. (The total is more than 100 percent because some worked for several types of media.)

How they died. About 71 percent of the deaths were murder, according to CPJ, with the largest number killed by handguns or rifles. Another grisly accounting comes from an analysis of INSI data: Out of 1,667 deaths tallied, 843 were shot, 164 were blown up, 12 were tortured, 9 strangled, and 7 decapitated. Only 16 died in crossfire, according to the INSI data; CPJ counts 17 percent—still fewer than one in five deaths—in a broader category, "crossfire/combat-related" deaths.

Suspected perpetrators. This is a difficult category, since so many of the murders of journalists are officially unsolved. According to CPJ data from 1992 through 2011, political groups rank at the top of suspected perpetrators in murder cases, at 29 percent. Government officials are next at 24 percent, followed by "unknown fire" at 19 percent, criminal groups (13 percent), paramilitaries (7 percent), military officials (5 percent), local residents (2 percent), and "mob violence" (2 percent). (The numbers, again, total above 100 percent due to overlapping categories.) An analysis of INSI data, from 1996 to 2011, puts the number of "unknown" perpetrators at 63 percent of the murders.

While murders are especially dramatic, experts on the issue agree that beatings and other attacks (or credible threats of violence) are far more numerous and not tabulated by any group. Indeed, Ricardo Trotti, press freedom director of the Inter American Press Association (IAPA), wonders whether the murder statistics are really

MAJOR JOURNALISM SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS

This is a brief guide to the major international press freedom advocacy groups that concern themselves, in some fashion, with the issue of violent attacks on journalists:

Article 19. Based in London. Article 19 monitors, researches, publishes, lobbies, campaigns, sets standards and litigates on behalf of freedom of expression wherever it is threatened. Its work includes campaigns to protect journalists from threats to their lives, families and livelihoods. http://www.article19.org

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Based in New York. Founded in 1981 by U.S. foreign correspondents concerned about "the often brutal way" local journalists were being treated in other countries. Managed by a board of directors made up of professional journalists, CPJ produces annual country reports, conducts international missions, and maintains its Impunity Index, among many other aggressive activities. http://www.cpj.org

Global Journalist Security. Founded in 2011, it is a Washington-based consulting firm that offers security training and advice to media workers, citizen journalists, human rights activists, and NGO staff. The group also trains security forces in developed nations as well as in emerging democracies that aspire "to meet international press freedom and human rights standards how to safely interact with the press." http://www.journalistsecurity.net

Inter American Press Association (IAPA). Based in Miami, FL. Founded in the late 1940s; now includes 1,400 member publications from Canada to Chile. It monitors and advocates for press freedom throughout the hemisphere; special programs include a Rapid Response Unit deployed when a journalist is killed, twice-yearly reports on press freedom issues in each country, and publication of a "Risk Map" to guide journalists working in the most dangerous countries. IAPA also operates its own separate "Impunity Project," with detailed information on journalist murders throughout the region. http://www.sipiapa.com

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Based in Brussels. Launched, in its modern form, in 1952, IFJ describes itself as the world's largest association of journalists. It monitors press freedom issues and advocates for journalists' safety and was a founder of the International News Safety Institute. http://www.ifj.org/en

International Freedom of Information Exchange (IFEX). Perhaps the most visible role of this Toronto-based organization is as a source of information; it operates what it calls "the world's most comprehensive free expression information service," with a weekly e-mail newsletter, a regular digest of articles related to press freedom, and "action alerts" from members around the globe. It has more than 90 member organizations in more than 50 countries. In 2011 it established November 23 as International Day to End Impunity. http://www.ifex.org

International News Safety Institute (INSI). Based in Brussels. Created in 2003 as a result of an initiative by the IFJ and IPI, it describes itself as "a unique coalition of news organizations, journalist support groups and individuals exclusively dedicated to the safety of news media staff working in dangerous environments." It conducts training, issues safety tips and manuals, and monitors journalists' casualties of all kinds, whether violent attacks or accidents. http://www.newssafety.org

International Press Institute (IPI). Created in 1950, the Vienna-based IPI calls itself "a global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists." A founder of INSI, it monitors press freedom with an annual World Press Freedom Review, conducts regular missions to countries where it is at risk, and tracks attacks on journalists. http://www.freemedia.at

Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières, or RSF). Founded in 1985 and based in Paris, RSF gathers information on press freedom violations and sponsors international missions as needed. Among other activities it provides financial assistance to journalists or news organizations to help defend themselves, and to the families of imprisoned journalists, and works to improve the safety of journalists, especially in war zones. http://www.rsf.org/-Anglais-.html

World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). Founded in 1948 and based in Paris, WAN represents more than 18,000 publications on five continents. In addition to providing support and information on basic industry issues, WAN has a special focus on press freedom, monitoring attacks on journalists, and "conducts long-term campaigns and targeted events with the aim to raise public awareness about critical press freedom matters." http://www.wan-ifra.org

Russian journalist Gadzhimurat Kamalov (shown at an opposition protest in 2008) was shot to death in December 2011. He was the founder of the newspaper *Chernovik*, which investigated government corruption in the North Caucasus. *Photo: Lekai Dmitri/Reuters*

what people should be talking about.

"Those figures are so misleading because they show only obvious and tangible violence, like an iceberg whose huge mass hides under the surface," Trotti wrote in IAPA's *Risk Map for Journalists*. "Today, there is another kind of violence, equally perverse, less obvious, and despicable. It is a subtle violence of creative threats … just as effective or more so than the murder of journalists."[158]

There are other forms of intimidation, as well. Journalists may be kidnapped, or simply disappear, as happens particularly in Latin America. Or they may be imprisoned.

Reporting on the issue should get a boost from the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act, signed into law in May 2010. The law requires the State Department to include information on press freedom in its annual country-by-country human rights reports. This includes identifying countries where there were physical attacks against journalists, whether governments participated in or condoned the attacks, and what was done to ensure prosecution of those responsible.

THE DEADLIEST COUNTRIES

Nations that have appeared on the International Press Institute's "Death Watch" list at least seven times from 2002 to 2011.

Country	Times on List	Deaths
Iraq	8	186
Philippines	10	97
Colombia	8	40
Mexico	10	57
Pakistan	9	52
Russia	10	33
Somalia	7	28
Afghanistan	7	16
India	8	22
Brazil	10	19
Nepal	8	18

Source: International Press Institute

The Causes

Solving the problem of journalists' safety is vexing, in part, simply because the types of threats are so diverse—and a different solution may be in order for each type. Journalists can be in danger as a result of efforts to prevent coverage (or seek retribution for it), whether by government agents or private parties. Other threats include ethnic rivalries, inherently dangerous situations such as war or a violence-torn society, or sometimes even journalists' own biases or lapses.

In Colombia, for example, a journalist may be targeted because of reporting on the drug business. In Guatemala, on the other hand, "journalists aren't just targets because they're journalists, but because everyone is a target," observed Sarah Grainger, who covers the country for Reuters.

Yet another cause of violence: journalists' own practices. "Many of these [murdered] journalists practiced unsafe journalism," argued Drew Sullivan, advising editor for the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project in Sarajevo. "If they had a good editor who edited their copy and held them to strict newsroom safety practices, some, maybe most, would be alive today."

Gonzalo Marroquín, former editor of *Prensa Libre* in Guatemala City, agrees. "At times, reporters—and their editors—work negligently, carelessly, and without taking

the necessary safety precautions to lessen the risks and still produce good quality," said Marroquín, chair of the Freedom of the Press Committee for IAPA.[159]

Hotspots of Violence

IPI's "Death Watch" list includes no fewer than 84 countries in which at least one journalist has died in the ten-year period from 2002 through 2011. The most dangerous country by far for a journalist in those years has been Iraq. Through the end of 2010, 151 journalists had died there by CPJ's count, 186 by IPI's.

Likewise, other regional conflicts have claimed large numbers of victims. IPI, for example, reported 20 deaths in Serbia in a single year, 1999. The eight deaths in Afghanistan in the post-9/11 fighting in 2001 constitute another example of a conflict-driven spike in numbers.

While wartime spikes are unsurprising, it is instructive to look at the numbers in a different way—focusing on countries where violent death is a year-in, year-out fact of life for journalists. Consider the countries that have appeared on IPI's "Death Watch" for at least seven of the 10 years from 2001 through 2010, with at least 15 total deaths in that time:

Both CPJ and IPI show Iraq, the Philippines, Colombia, Pakistan, and Mexico ranked as the deadliest countries for journalists during the decade. Both also include Russia, India, and Afghanistan on their lists as highly dangerous places to report.

What is life like for journalists in one of those hotspot countries?

"We've had cases of police chiefs in the province making publishers and editors eat an issue of their newspaper because the police chief did not like what it reported," noted Rowena Paraan, a director of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines. "We've had congressmen and the defense chief publicly saying it's okay to kill journalists since they are corrupt anyway. These actions and statements send the signal that if you don't like what a journalist has written, go ahead, threaten him, harass him—or even kill him."[160]

Along with geography, gender can be a major factor. The safety of women correspondents has received increased attention since high profile attacks during the Arab Spring, among them on TV journalist Lara Logan in Cairo. In May 2010, INSI published the results of a poll noting that most women correspondents responding said they experienced sexual harassment and many faced sexual aggression while on assignment.[161]

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Why Should the Public Care?

In a world in which thousands die every day from ethnic or criminal violence, disease or poverty, what does it matter if 40 to 60 journalists are killed each year? Why should individual citizens, much less busy governments or multilateral organizations, care about these particular deaths?

Haraszti framed the issue sharply at a conference of journalists in Moscow. Haraszti argued that these murders and other acts of violence have a profound ripple effect, choking off exactly the sorts of probing, challenging coverage that free societies need. "Violence becomes censorship far beyond the context of the actual controversy," Haraszti said. "It will impede the press in performing its most important task in defense of democracy, because it is journalists covering human rights abuses and corruption scandals that are most punished with violence."

Ironically, it was a dead man who published perhaps the most eloquent case for why journalists must keep doing their work. In January 2009, Lasantha Wickrematunge, longtime editor of the *Sunday Leader* in Sri Lanka known for his critical reporting about the government and assaulted twice before, was stabbed to death.

Wickrematunge left behind an article to be printed in the event of his violent death.

"No other profession calls on its practitioners to lay down their lives for their art save the armed forces and, in Sri Lanka, journalism," began the letter, published three days after his murder.[162] "In the course of the past few years ... countless journalists have been harassed, threatened and killed. It has been my honour to belong to all those categories and now especially the last."

He asked himself whether it had been worth it, particularly as "a husband, and the father of three wonderful children." He wrote of friends who had urged him to return to practicing law; about diplomats who had offered him safe passage to escape the country; about political leaders who had offered him high office.

His response: "There is a calling that is yet above high office, fame, lucre and security. It is the call of conscience."

But for every Lasantha Wickrematunge who holds to his coverage in the face of violent assault, there are many more journalists who succumb. After years of narco-violence, self-censorship is now practiced widely by the Mexican news media, a reaction to grenade attacks, drive-by shootings, kidnappings, and murders. The steps taken include withholding bylines, altering stories, or halting coverage on the drug wars entirely.

Impunity: Making a Bad Problem Worse

What happens after a journalist is killed raises some of the most serious alarm for advocacy groups. More intimidating than the physical attacks, say media watchdogs, is when governments tolerate the violence and harassment.

A 2007 INSI report, *Killing the Messenger*, found that in some 63 percent of cases, "the perpetrator of deliberate killings of media workers remains unknown." Out of 657 deliberate murders INSI studied, "only 27 have resulted in the identification and conviction of the perpetrators, little more than 4 percent of the cases." Even if the perpetrator is known, that often seems not to matter.

These figures, the organization concluded, "show it is virtually risk free to kill a journalist ... and the more the killers get away with it the more the spiral of death is forced upwards."[163]

Press advocacy groups have mounted various campaigns on the issue:

- IAPA has the longest track record, launching its Impunity Project in 1995, focusing on murders throughout Latin America.[164]
- CPJ has its Global Campaign Against Impunity, inspired by IAPA's efforts. CPJ also publishes an annual Impunity Index ranking the countries with the worst records.[165]
- IFJ has its Campaign Against Impunity in Crimes Against Journalists.[166]
- IPI has a Justice Denied Campaign, focusing on journalists who have been murdered or imprisoned.[167]
- Reporters Without Borders maintains a Predators list, with a gallery of mug shots of leaders it deems particularly responsible for impunity.[168]
- The International Freedom of Expression Exchange and its members declared November 23, 2011, the first International Day to End Impunity. The date was chosen because it is the anniversary of the single deadliest attack on journalists in recent history: the 2009 massacre in the Philippines.

Finding Solutions

There are two main schools of thought about responding to the problem of violence against journalists. One involves aggressive advocacy and monitoring, in an attempt to bring international pressure to bear to reduce the level of attacks. The other focuses on mitigation: training and preparation aimed to keep journalists safer as they do their jobs.

A half-dozen international organizations have placed the safety of journalists at or near the top of their agenda, and their work has made an important difference. Still, some have asked whether there are too many voices, suggesting that better coordination might result in more impact. "I don't think there's been much of a coming together," admits INSI's director, Rodney Pinder. "There are still strong rivalries ... We can't even settle on a uniform method of counting casualties!"

What happens after a journalist is killed raises some of the most serious alarm for advocacy groups. More intimidating than the physical attacks, say media watchdogs, is when governments tolerate the violence and harassment.

Some argue that a variety of groups acting independently can be effective. CPJ, IPI, and RSF all sent separate missions to Russia in a relatively short period of time,

putting pressure on the government. And there are signs of coordination, most notably the 2003 founding by press freedom groups of the International News Safety Institute, whose sole purpose is improving the safety of journalists in dangerous situations. Since then, INSI has helped put the topic of safety training and awareness in a prominent position for many large media companies.

The journalism community also now recognizes that better training of journalists for dangerous coverage can markedly reduce the scale of the casualties. For various reasons—a macho attitude of invincibility, a competitive zeal to get the story, a disdain for training, or tight budgets—journalists traditionally have plunged in with little preparation for the consequences. That began to change 15 years ago, as journalists enrolled in so-called "hostile environment training" classes that cover everything from off-road driving techniques and chemical weapon response to post-traumatic stress. By early 2001, in part

A WEEK UNDER FIRE

Each week, the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) publishes an online digest of attacks on freedom of information. Drawn from 90 organizations worldwide, the list makes for a sobering read. Here are events from the week of January 23-29, 2012.

Africa

Cameroon: Writer detained, faces up to 50 years in prison
Central African Republic: Editor sentenced to 10 months in jail on libel charge
Ethiopia: Death penalty for blogger, prison for journalists
Nigeria: Reporter murdered while covering bombings
Senegal: Two journalists given suspended prison terms
Uganda: Photojournalist shot at from police van; Radio journalist attacked at gunpoint in front of his family

Americas

Chile: Government scraps plan to force journalists to inform police
Colombia: Criminal gangs intimidate, silence Córdoba journalists
Dominican Republic: Journalist receives six-month sentence and harsh fine in defamation case
Ecuador: Journalism groups denounce government's authoritarian turn
Honduras: Women journalists terrorized in Aguán
Peru: Journalist receives death threat after reporting on local administration
Venezuela: Journalist briefly detained after covering oil spill

Asia and Pacific

China: Press freedom suffered significant setbacks in 2011, says IFJ report
Sri Lanka: IFJ joins "Black January" campaign against attacks on journalists

Europe and Central Asia

Kazakhstan: Independent editor detained, newsrooms raided
Russia: Independent newspaper suspends publication in response to pressure
Turkey: Three journalists released pending trial, 11 others still imprisoned
Uzbekistan: Editor in prison sentenced to additional five-year jail term

Middle East and North Africa

Algeria: New media law said to stifle free expression
Egypt: Blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad freed after jailed for 10 months; Popular television program censored
Iran: Journalists, bloggers arrested ahead of elections
Iraq: Journalist illegally detained, while another is attacked
Tunisia: Journalists assaulted

Hong Kong residents take flowers to Google's offices there after the company said it might leave China rather than be forced to acquiesce to self-censorship.
Photo: Kin Cheung/AP

honoring the wish of the family of a photojournalist killed in Sierra Leone, major news agencies in the United Kingdom adopted "common safety policies."

After 9/11, with its urgent message about just *how* hostile the coverage environments were becoming, major media organizations stepped up their efforts on journalist safety. But it is mostly large TV networks, news services, and major papers that provide such training for their journalists. Safety experts think more companies should be stepping up.

INSI may be the most visible in advocating for and providing safety training for journalists, but other journalism organizations offer training manuals and resources. The Paris-based RSF publishes a practical guide for reporting in war zones and works with the French Red Cross to provide training. CPJ recommends hostile-environment training tailored for journalists by several security companies, as part of a thorough guide to safety precautions.[169] UNESCO has also sponsored safety training, including a 2009 training course in Cairo for 35 media professionals from 20 Gaza news outlets.

There is also growing awareness that safety training must range beyond wartime situations. In recognition of the need to train local reporters, not just foreign correspondents, INSI has worked with partners to provide free training in high-risk countries not in traditional war situations. Among them: Haiti, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, and Colombia.[170] Journalist organizations have also responded to the issue of women's safety by publishing practical advice and incorporating techniques in training curricula.[171] And digital safety—protecting a journalist's online movements, as well as those of his or her network of contacts—is increasingly important.

Physical safety training can be expensive: fees can range from $2,000 to $4,000 per person. INSI's Pinder laments that few donors are willing to support the kind of effort that would help more broadly protect journalists in harm's way.

In 2008, INSI took a proposed program, "Towards a Global Culture of Safety in Media," to an international donor conference. It laid out a plan costing €15 million over five years—an ambitious attempt to double the estimated $20 million spent on safety and related training by four big news organizations (CNN, BBC, Reuters, and

the Associated Press). "We stressed that most endangered news people fell outside the safety nets provided by the big guys," Pinder said.

The response: The only support came from Norway—a relatively small grant to support a news safety index.

Joel Simon, director of CPJ, understands INSI's frustration on this point. "Press freedom and safety are part of the media development package—or they should be," he said. But far too often, he said, trainers go into a country and teach journalists to do aggressive coverage that challenges their governments—and then leave without preparing them for the consequences.

Asked for signs of progress in combating violence against journalists, David Dadge, former IPI director paused and sighed. "It is very difficult," he said. There are so many causes of these attacks, so many different issues.

"I started off with an attitude that my God, this is so obvious," Pinder said. "One of the great disappointments is that despite the amount of progress we have made—the amount of progress we have not made."

Still, that has not stopped Pinder and others in the field. Most remain convinced that, with more coordination and good will, broader and better training, and, in some cases, simply better journalism, the world can indeed become a safer place for media workers everywhere.

After 9/11, with its urgent message about just *how* hostile the coverage environments were becoming, major media organizations stepped up their efforts on journalist safety. But it is mostly large TV networks, news services, and major papers that provide such training for their journalists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Data on attacks could be better coordinated. Also, with five organizations producing five different counts, variations in tallies and methodologies should be clearly explained.
- Media organizations should coordinate and pressure "impunity countries" with international campaigns that highlight their failures. These organizations could work together to focus attention on egregious cases through independent reporting. International investigative reporting organizations or press freedom groups could identify key cases to investigate and establish working teams of local and foreign reporters.
- Training should be broader and better funded. After being focused on war situations, particularly for foreign correspondents, safety training is properly evolving to focus more on training local journalists, many of them freelancers, to more safely cover purely local news that happens to be extremely dangerous. Funding is in short supply.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Investigative reporters have helped bring down corrupt leaders, documented human rights violations, and exposed systematic abuses in the developing world.
- Despite its frontline role in fostering accountability, battling corruption, and raising media standards, investigative reporting receives relatively little support—about 2 percent of media development funding by major donors.
- The practice faces numerous obstacles in developing countries, including a lack of skills, resources, competent trainers, access to information, supportive owners, protective laws, and uncorrupt officials.
- Investigative journalism networks have linked together thousands of reporters worldwide to collaborate on stories, sources, tools, and techniques.
- Nonprofit investigative journalism centers—now numbering over 110 in 42 countries—have proven to be instrumental in spreading the practice worldwide during the past decade.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY

In the Brazilian state of Paraná, home to 10 million people, the *Gazeta do Povo* newspaper and RPC TV spent two years building a database to reveal how the legislative assembly systematically pilfered as much as $400 million in public funds. In 2010, a series of stories based on the findings sparked anti-corruption protests by 30,000 people and resulted in more than 20 criminal investigations.[172]

In 2007, the Bosnian Center for Investigative Reporting used public records to expose how Prime Minister Nedžad Branković received a nearly free apartment through a dubious government privatization deal.

Azhar Kalamujic, an editor for the Center for Investigative Reporting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, works with investigative journalists Aladin Abdagic (left) and Berina Pekmezovic (right). *Photo: CIN*

The investigation led to public protests, an indictment of Branković, and ultimately his resignation.[173]

In 2003, the Georgian TV channel Rustavi-2 was heralded as the voice of that nation's peaceful "Rose Revolution," helping overturn a rigged election and force the resignation of President Eduard Shevardnadze. Rustavi-2's staff, trained by Western journalists, had built much of its credibility through investigative reporting on government corruption and organized crime.[174]

In 2000, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism ran an eight-month investigation into the hidden assets of Philippine President Joseph Estrada, detailing how Estrada had amassed luxury homes and held secret stakes in a dozen companies. The series goaded the Philippine media into action, helped form key charges in an impeachment trial, and led to Estrada's downfall months later.[175]

What these cases have in common is that they were the result of determined, in-depth investigations by journalists in developing and democratizing countries. Supporting dedicated teams and individual reporters to do in-depth investigations has always been a struggle, even in Western countries where the practice is well established. It is risky, expensive, and often controversial. But investigative reporting has earned a unique and honored place in the profession. Investigative reporters are, in a sense, the "special forces" of journalism. They tend to be better trained, go after tougher targets, and have greater impact than beat and daily news reporters.

Muckraking Goes Global

The modern era of investigative journalism dates back a century, to American "muckrakers" such as Ida Tarbell and her *History of the Standard Oil Company* and Lincoln Steffens and his *Shame of the Cities*. These crusading journalists helped set a standard for tough reporting in the public interest, taking on corrupt politicians, organized crime, consumer fraud, and corporate abuse. The practice got a major boost in the Watergate era, during which two young *Washington Post* reporters helped bring down the most powerful man in the world, President Richard Nixon. The scandal made investigative journalists into heroes and enshrined into the American psyche

the image of the intrepid reporter ignoring personal danger to right a terrible wrong.

With a tradition of focusing on accountability and social justice, investigative reporting has proved an obvious tool for media development donors and implementers. The attraction is understandable: It stems, in part, from the irresistible lure of supporting courageous journalism that can oust a prime minister or drive out corruption. And part of this is more pragmatic: trying to find cost effective ways to make real, sustainable change.

Western governments, private foundations, and other institutions have spent millions of dollars to help spread investigative journalism worldwide. The impact has been impressive. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the practice of investigative journalism has grown dramatically.

Starting in the early 1990s, Western governments, private foundations, and other institutions have spent millions of dollars to help spread investigative journalism worldwide. The impact has been impressive. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the practice of investigative journalism has grown dramatically. Enterprising newspapers and magazines in Brazil, China, Egypt, and India now field investigative teams. The number of nonprofit investigative reporting groups has jumped from only three in the late 1980s to more than 110 today, with vibrant centers in such diverse places as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Philippines, Jordan, and South Africa. Seven global conferences on investigative journalism since 2001 have attracted some 3,500 journalists from more than 100 countries.

This global expansion owes much to international aid agencies (particularly from the United States and Northern Europe), a handful of private foundations (led by the Open Society Foundations), and professional journalism associations and NGOs, which have run trainings and spread expertise around the world. They have been aided strongly by the forces of globalization—by growing cellphone use, Internet access, and open borders—allowing journalists to network and collaborate internationally as never before.

A Critical Contribution

The contribution of investigative journalism to accountability, development, and democracy is now widely recognized. Donors have added investigative reporting components into programs to strengthen local media, fight corruption, and promote accountability. Over the years, tenders have increasingly mentioned investigative reporting in both USAID and European Union grants.

"Investigative journalism can have a significant impact on improving governance at the national level," said Daniel Kaufmann of the Brookings Institution, who has studied how media development and transparency can combat corruption. "In countries where the executive and judiciary have essentially failed in their accountability duties, investigative journalism helps fill such a void. And where they function but weakly so, it helps strengthen them. It's a crucial pillar for fighting corruption."

"Investigative journalism crucially contributes to freedom of expression and freedom of information," wrote Janis Karklins, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information. "The role media can play as a watchdog is indispensable for democracy."[176] Its importance prompted UNESCO to publish an 89-page guidebook on investigative journalism in 2009, which has been translated into five languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and Russian.

The African Peer Review Mechanism, a donor-backed program in which 31 African governments[177] have engaged in self-criticism, has also taken note of the key role of investigative journalism. The APRM's reports—on Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda, among others—have repeatedly identified the need for more investigative reporting in fighting corruption and fostering accountability.[178]

"IR [investigative reporting] usually directly contributes to promoting a number of reforms necessary for democratization such as anticorruption, transparency, accountability, rule of law," noted Ivana Howard, senior program officer at the National Endowment for Democracy. "So you get more than just free media by supporting IR."

Despite such endorsements, funding for investigative

journalism amounts to but a fraction of that spent on overall media development. Investigative reporting programs are believed to account for about 2 percent of the estimated $500 million spent on international media assistance annually.[179] In 2007, a report by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) identified investigative journalism as one of seven key gaps in media development funding; few in the field believe that has changed.[180]

The growing attention to social media by donors, moreover, threatens to diminish what funding exists, warn advocates of investigative journalism. Building movements for reform and social change takes more than tweets and YouTube videos, they say; an essential step is the systematic documentation of corruption, human rights abuses, injustice, and lack of accountability—work that investigators from the media and NGOs need to do. Many of the items circulated on social media during the Arab Spring, for example, had their roots in more substantive reports first revealed by al-Jazeera and other "mainstream" media.

"Technology is an extremely attractive tool for people to become engaged, to express their opinions and grievances," argued Gordana Jankovic, director of the Media Program at OSF. "But it is not necessarily the best tool to encourage better understanding of the issues. The

DEFINING THE CRAFT

While definitions of investigative reporting vary, among professional journalism groups there is broad agreement of its major components: systematic, in-depth, and original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets. Others note that its practice often involves heavy use of public records and computer-assisted reporting, and a focus on social justice and accountability.

Story-Based Inquiry, an investigative journalism handbook published by UNESCO, defines it thus: "Investigative journalism involves exposing to the public matters that are concealed—either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding. It requires using both secret and open sources and documents."[181] The Dutch investigative reporters group VVOJ defines investigative reporting simply as "critical and thorough journalism."[182]

Some journalists, in fact, claim that all "good" journalism is investigative reporting. There is some truth to this—investigative techniques are used widely by beat journalists on deadline as well as by I-team members with weeks to work on a story. But investigative journalism is broader than this—it is a set of methodologies that are a craft, and it can take years to master. A look at stories that win top awards for investigative journalism attest to the high standards of research and reporting that the profession aspires to: in-depth inquiries that painstakingly track looted public funds, abuse of power, environmental degradation, health scandals, and more.

Sometimes called enterprise, in-depth, or project reporting, investigative journalism should not be confused with what has been dubbed "leak journalism"—quick-hit scoops gained by the leaking of documents or tips, typically by those in political power. Indeed, in emerging democracies, the definition can be rather vague, and stories are often labeled investigative reporting simply if they are critical or involve leaked records. Stories that focus on crime or corruption, analysis, or even outright opinion pieces may similarly be mislabeled as investigative reporting.

Veteran trainers note that the best investigative journalism employs a careful methodology, with heavy reliance on primary sources, forming and testing a hypothesis, and rigorous fact-checking. The dictionary definition of "investigation" is "systematic inquiry," which cannot be done in a day or even three days; a long-term and thorough inquiry requires time.

Others point to the field's key role in pioneering new techniques, as in its embrace of computers in the 1990s for data analysis. "Investigative reporting has … always been the R&D—the research and development—of journalism," observed Brant Houston, the Knight Chair of Journalism at the University of Illinois, who served for years as executive director of Investigative Reporters and Editors. "It is important because it teaches new techniques, new ways of doing things, and those blend down into everyday reporting. So you're raising the bar for the entire profession."

depth and context are missing, the understanding of the full picture is missing."

Jankovic's program has been instrumental in launching investigative journalism initiatives around the world, and she is convinced that such work remains essential. "We're forgetting that somebody needs to develop enormous amounts of original reporting and content," she said. "For that, you need reporters who can find the linkages and correlations between events. You need the resources to find and expose what is purposely hidden."

Meg Gaydosik, senior media advisor for USAID in Washington, agrees. "Investigative journalism is one component of media development, but an increasingly important one," she said. "While the tools may have changed, accurate, documented investigative reporting is still one of the most important functions of the media."

A Host of Challenges

Investigative journalism in its most advanced and robust form is still largely unknown in much of the world. Vast regions in Central Asia, Africa, and Asia have only the most basic kinds of reporting. Skill levels in even relatively advanced countries still tend to fall short of the possibilities, particularly in a field that is changing rapidly with technology.

A host of challenges have so far limited the success of developing investigative reporting. These include poor financial support, a lack of investigative professionals working in the development community, worrisome safety and legal issues, high costs, and a cultural gap between practitioners of investigative reporting and media development specialists.

Adding to the problem is confusion over the very definition of investigative journalism. Media trainers note that implementers or local NGOs often ask them to conduct trainings on investigative reporting, only to find that they are expected to talk about interviewing politicians at press conferences or teach journalists to have more tolerance toward ethnic communities. While these trainings offer important skills, they are not investigative reporting. "It is pretty clear that some people in the development world have a limited understanding of what investigative reporting is," said Rosemary Armao, an editor at the Sarajevo-based Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and a journalism professor at the State University of New York in Albany. "You can't design an effective strategy if you yourself are unclear about what is involved."

"What happens is it's often very ill-thought out, and the organization running it might actually be a human rights or civil society organization, whose expertise isn't in journalism," explained Simon Derry, a regional director for the BBC Media Action. "Their idea of doing a seminar is … to get a trainer hopefully from a Western European or American newspaper with a not-very well selected group of people and hopefully that will then inculcate with the idea of investigative reporting. That's not going to happen."

Another common problem with many investigative journalism programs, say veteran trainers, is that those running them often lack expertise in investigative reporting. "If you ask any journalist, they will all say they do investigative reporting," said Armao. "Maybe they have in their career a few times. But there is a difference between an investigative editor and a daily journalist. To teach this, you need an investigative editor."

Investigative editors, however, are in short supply, even in American newsrooms, and it is hard to find qualified people to do the kind of complex training that investigative journalism demands.

"It is often the editor that makes a good project great," added Drew Sullivan, advising editor for the OCCRP. "An editor is like a conductor to an orchestra—it is their vision on the final product." Despite this, there has been almost no training of investigative editors in the development world.

Adding to the problem is that the pool of potential trainers is further limited by the profession itself. Concerned over potential conflicts of interest, U.S. investigative journalists are generally wary of being sponsored by government-funded groups, and in many cases they are precluded from taking fees from a government entity. Leading nonprofits such as Investigative Reporters and Editors will not accept government funding.

Even when there are good trainers and clarity of mission, the problems in the host country can be daunting. Among them:

+ no tradition of investigative reporting, which sometimes clashes with local media standards
+ a dearth of some basic and many advanced investigative skills
+ a lack of resources to spend the time necessary to

produce a detailed and accurate story
+ limited access to tools and techniques that could simplify newsgathering and analysis
+ a shortage of investigative teams, investigative editors and other experts to call upon for support
+ a lack of reliable access to information
+ unsupportive owners, often with political or criminal connections
+ a politicized media, whose leading journalists see themselves as political insiders, not public watchdogs
+ an absence of independent media
+ a lack of independence in the advertising sector
+ aggressive governments who punish journalists or news organizations for intrepid reporting
+ onerous media laws
+ poor safety and legal protections
+ a lack of integrity among the judiciary, police, and prosecutors

RAISING THE PROFESSION'S STANDARDS

Investigative journalism is but one aspect of a range of professional development programs undertaken by NGOs and donors. Although the focus in recent years has shifted to digital media, the need for training and investment in the basic building blocks of good journalism has not changed. The fundamentals are still in heavy demand—clear writing, multiple sourcing, fairness, accuracy, and strong ethics. Such core skills are needed before journalists can graduate to more advanced work running investigations, reporting across borders, and doing data journalism or crisis reporting.

The tools for professional development are plentiful: long-term training in which veteran journalists teach at universities, are embedded in newsrooms, or act as regular mentors and advisers; short-term intensive workshops; fellowships and exchanges that bring foreign journalists to U.S. shores or Americans overseas; funding media centers and professional associations; commissioning guidebooks and other training materials; and distance learning, through online courses.

Veteran trainers say the lessons are clear from 20 years of work in the field:

+ Invest in long-term professional development. Lasting change in newsroom culture will not happen in a few months.
+ Keep training as practical and as hands-on as possible. Bringing the newsroom into the classroom and working one-on-one with reporters can yield impressive results.
+ Ensure that news managers and owners are supportive. It does little good to train reporters who return to their newsroom only to find zero interest by their bosses in doing watchdog journalism.
+ Routinely incorporate an ethics component into training, with an emphasis on issues of corruption and conflicts of interest within the profession.
+ Tailor the training to the country and culture. Workshops on covering corruption and human rights will have trouble being effective in oppressive countries, but basic reporting seminars on business, health, and women's issues can lay important groundwork.
+ Train the trainers. Create a cadre of mentors who can teach their colleagues and establish a tradition of professional reporting.
+ Insist on international standards, including multiple sourcing, accurate reporting, getting both sides of an issue, and correcting errors.

Some long-time trainers would also welcome a discussion on the characteristics of good journalism. "I'm always told by [implementers] that this or that newspaper is great," said Rosemary Armao, a Journalism Development Network trainer who teaches at the State University of New York in Albany. "If you look deep enough, you'll invariably find that the one they like has good politics." Being supportive of media that are moderate, oppositional, or non-nationalistic may be understandable, but if their reporters are biased and reckless with facts, that ultimately does little to build independent journalism. In developing a credible, professional news media, what matters most will be not a paper's politics, but its standards of fairness, accuracy, context, and clarity.

Approaches in the Field

Implementers have used five major approaches to develop investigative reporting: classroom training, mentoring, funding grant-making organizations, funding investigative projects, and supporting investigative reporting centers, teams, or infrastructure. Other related issues certainly have an impact on investigative journalism—improving media laws, access to information, and safety, for example—but they will not be covered here.

Each of the above approaches has been used successfully, but veteran trainers say their success depends on how and when they are implemented.

Training. Early media development programs focused heavily on training. An informal survey of investigative journalism trainers suggests that such workshops have been done hundreds of times over the past decade in upwards of 100 countries.

Classroom training techniques have changed over the years. Typically, they first involved college professors from the United States. These were gradually replaced with working journalists from the United States and Europe, and those trainers have been increasingly replaced with regional and local journalists. Classroom theory is giving way to practical exercises, and many now include working on stories.

There is a growing understanding that such trainings can be overused, particularly by "parachute professors" who drop in with few specialized skills and scant knowledge of local conditions and language. Another problem is lack of buy-in from newsroom managers and owners. Too often after trainings reporters return to the newsroom and are quickly told that investigating corruption and powerful people is not on the agenda.

Trainings must also be tailored to a particular country and culture. "I don't think you can say that investigative reporting should be recommended for all countries in the developing world," said Sheila Coronel,[183] the director of the Stabile Center at Columbia University's Journalism School and a founder of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. "There are some countries that just really aren't ready for this kind of investigative reporting," agreed Patrick Butler, vice president for the

COVERING CORRUPTION: A TOUGH BEAT

Media in developing countries, like the societies they cover, face overwhelming challenges in combating endemic corruption. Among them: limited resources and skills, hostile legal environments, an apathetic public, and sometimes grave physical danger. In much of the world, covering corruption is as dangerous as being a war correspondent.[184]

Yet a number of news organizations and journalists have openly challenged corruption in the most difficult of locales and won. The formula for this is a careful combination of well-honed skills and smart approaches, according to interviews with investigative reporters and NGO representatives in the United States, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Uganda, Bangladesh, and Mexico. By adopting internationally recognized standards of accuracy, fairness, ethics, and reporting used elsewhere in the world, by networking with colleagues from throughout the region and the West, and by adjusting expectations for success, reporters in these countries are making small, steady gains against corruption. This is happening even in the absence of fully functioning press, police, and prosecutorial systems, and amid poverty and the wrenching changes of economic and political transition.

Journalists in these places face some of the toughest reporting conditions in the world, yet they have brought about the downfall of a corrupt Bosnian prime minister and a Philippine president, for example, and stopped the sale of a virgin rainforest to sugarcane dealers in Uganda. They have shown readers that corruption is of direct interest to them and that they have the power to do something about it. They have found that compelling writing about real people battling with the consequences of corruption overcomes the fatigue that arises from reading consistently bad news. Instead, citizens get outraged.

These corruption reporters are building international and regional networks. Such alliances offer greater security for them and wider context and data for stories that challenge the powerful. They also are increasingly teaming with NGOs

International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). "They just don't have the resources, or the political constraints are too daunting." Coronel says that one-off trainings, in fact, may be most suitable to countries with no tradition of investigative journalism.

Mentoring. A complementary approach to classroom training is to directly fund investigative reporting using an experienced team of editors or reporters working with the local journalists being trained. This can be done over a short period of time, such as a week, or as part of a longer-term relationship. An editor, typically an experienced hand who understands international standards, leads or advises a team of reporters working on stories.

This approach has been used extensively by the Journalism Development Network, first through the Bosnian Center for Investigative Reporting, and later with the OCCRP. The ICFJ has used this, as well, in a two-year training of reporters on trafficking issues in 2004. In Cambodia, Internews ran a three-year investigative program on corruption issues, while IRE and the Fund for Investigative Journalism manage mentoring programs that have reached hundreds of journalists in the field.

A complementary approach to classroom training is to directly fund investigative reporting using an experienced team of editors or reporters working with the local journalists being trained.

Some organizations use fellowships to develop investigative capacity. ICFJ, which manages the Knight International Journalism Fellowships, has included investigative components in its fellows' work with journalists in developing and transitioning countries. One recent fellow has worked with ICFJ and Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism to form investigative teams in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and the West Bank.[185] Other U.S.-based programs bring foreign journalists to the United States, such as Harvard's Nieman, Stanford's

and activist groups over the Internet for increased impact. Stories that once might have been censored or killed now are reaching wide audiences and sparking citizen action.

Reporters writing about corruption have prompted police, prosecutors, and courts to perform their jobs better, moving their countries closer to full democracies. They also have promoted the work of official anti-corruption agencies, providing them cover against powerful enemies who want to avoid scrutiny. Even their persistence in checking records and asking questions helps keep leaders in check.

Much of these achievements do not show up in measurements taken of corruption.

Journalists on the corruption beat in the developing world agree on many steps that could help them do their job better. Among them:

+ Instead of short-term, generalized reporting skills workshops, put advanced reporters into intensive classes on finding, tracking, and documenting organized crime and corruption.
+ Fund independent centers where reporters can work for extended periods under experienced editors with high professional standards.
+ Follow established safety protocols when dealing with dangerous figures.
+ Make use of technology to help expose corruption, and network with colleagues regionally and globally for support, sources, and strategies.

Ultimately, it will be smart, courageous journalists, working with honest cops, prosecutors, political reformers, and others, who will pull back the blanket of corruption on so many societies. And the first step is exposing the problem. As the late Rob Eure, a Virginia investigative reporter who became a much-traveled journalism trainer, used to preach, "You can't change what you don't know about."

Knight, Maryland's Humphrey, and the Alfred Friendly fellowship programs. While none of these focus specifically on investigative journalism, their fellows often do work on in-depth projects and have backgrounds as investigative reporters.

The Nonprofit Model. The other approaches—funding stories and supporting nonprofit centers and grant-making organizations—have emerged as part of the extraordinary growth of investigative journalism NGOs around the world.

Ironically, as the practice of investigative journalism expands overseas, it is facing a crisis in the United States. Growing Internet use and a stubborn recession have caused a dramatic loss in advertising revenue in the U.S. media, and the losses have hit investigative reporters and projects teams particularly hard, with widespread layoffs, shorter deadlines, and a shift away from serious news. But amid an avid search for new models, one alternative has stood out: the nonprofit investigative center. These

CASH FOR COVERAGE: JOURNALISTS AND BRIBERY

In Ghana, a reporter goes to a press conference, and inside her press packet, there's a brown envelope containing the equivalent of a $20 bill. Not surprised, she slips it into her purse before heading back to the office to write up the event.

In Russia, a public relations agency sends out a bogus press release about a fictitious company. Thirteen publications swallow the bait and agree to run the release just like a story, but only after demanding payment ranging from $125 to nearly $2,000.

In Cambodia, a newspaper publishes a special edition devoted to the birthday of a prominent politician, complete with congratulatory advertisements from businessmen and lower-ranking officials. Then the paper sends out a bill for the ads—even though many of the "advertisers" didn't know the ads were being used. They pay up anyway, rather than risk seeming not to want to honor the politician.

Cash for news coverage: It's what Rosental Alves, director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas, calls "the dark part of journalism"—and it happens every day somewhere in the world. It hurts the credibility of news media, hampering their ability to engage citizens in public affairs.[186]

Not only do journalists accept bribes and media houses accept paid material disguised as news stories, but all too often, reporters and editors are the perpetrators, extorting money either for publishing favorable stories—or for not publishing damaging ones.

A 2007 survey of 93 journalists from 35 countries, plus 310 public relations practitioners from 56 countries, found an epidemic of pay-offs.[187] The survey, conducted by Katerina Tsetsura of the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma, included participation by the Independent Public Relations Alliance, Institute for Public Relations, Global Alliance, International Federation of Journalists, and International Press Institute. Forty-nine percent of respondents agreed that "it is considered OK to accept payments by national media in my country." When asked how frequently "a news release that is not newsworthy appears in a publication in exchange for a paid advertisement," 26 percent of respondents answered "often or always" about national daily newspapers, while 21 percent said the same thing about national TV stations.

With all the organized efforts to defend press freedom around the world, remarkably little has been done to reduce the problem of corrupt journalism—and the most thorough work comes from a source that might surprise journalists: public relations professionals. Their international associations have sponsored the most comprehensive research on the problem, and in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, PR professionals have tried to work with their journalist counterparts to clean up the business of news.

Some press-freedom experts believe that advocates for journalists are facing attacks from so many sides that they are uncomfortable criticizing any aspect of the media themselves, however well-deserved that criticism may be. Alves, though, is one of those who believes that you can defend press freedom and also demand high standards.

organizations—ranging from large professional associations to regional networks and small reporting agencies—have proved instrumental in spreading investigative journalism worldwide during the past decade. "The move to investigative reporting by nonprofits is one the most promising trends in a tough media environment," said Brant Houston, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Chair in Investigative and Enterprise Reporting at the University of Illinois. "Whether this becomes the primary way investigative reporting will be done or is a bridge to the next for-profit business model remains to be seen, but it has become critical to maintaining quality public service journalism."

The trend began in the 1970s and '80s, with a handful of US-based nonprofits devoted to advancing investigative journalism. Joined by centers in Scandinavia and the Philippines, the model caught on after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. New centers in Armenia, Romania, and Bosnia-Herzegovina began in the early 2000s, offering a home for reporters to write hard-hitting

Based on interviews with people who have grappled with the thorny challenges of corruption, these are recommendations for actions that could make a difference in reducing this stain on the profession of journalism.

International journalism organizations should:

- Take the initiative to support a summit on the topic of cash for news coverage, to include representatives of the public-relations industry and experts on how corporations deal with bribery.
- Issue regular reports documenting instances in which journalists have received—or extorted—payment for news as a clear sign of acknowledging this "dark side" of the profession.
- Take the lead in documenting—and publicizing—the pay levels of journalists around the world, which, particularly on the lowest end, undoubtedly have an impact on journalistic ethics.

Media-development organizations should:

- Sharpen their focus on ethics training, recognizing it as the foundation of good journalism's success in the changing media environment, with specific training on why and how to avoid taking cash for news coverage.
- Support the creation and nurture of media accountability systems such as ombudsmen and other mechanisms to heighten transparency in how journalists do their work.

News media owners, managers, and editors should:

- Adopt, publicize, and then stick to a firm policy of zero tolerance for any form of cash for news coverage—from simple "facilitation" payments to reporters to paid ads masquerading as objective news.
- Review pay policies, acknowledging that pay can have an impact on ethics, and work to remove that rationale as an excuse for journalists.
- Take the initiative in creating accountability systems on their own, such as appointing an ombudsman, to establish a more transparent relationship with their audiences.

Public relations professionals and their organizations should:

- Push for a summit on the issue, drawing on research they have sponsored and the work of their members around the world.
- Encourage their members to practice zero tolerance, declining the sometimes too-easy path of paying in hopes of getting the best spin on their clients' stories, and helping them with strategies to do so without hurting their business.

NGOs and corporations should:

- Just say no. Experts say that it is surprisingly easy to buck the trend of paying all those bribes, small and large—if you follow a strict game plan: adopt a firm rule against paying, put it in writing and make it public, and stick to it in all cases.

Alexenia Dimitrova of Bulgaria, a reporter for *24 Hours* in Sofia and a member of OCCRP, informs Mohamed Sakara, a homeless Tanzanian immigrant, that she found his family in Tanzania. Sakara had been searching for his family for years.
Photo: Andrey Belokonsky/24 Hours

stories that major media in those countries would not carry. At the same time, similar groups were formed in Brazil, the Netherlands, and South Africa. A series of international conferences and workshops has helped spread the model worldwide, while in the United States, veteran journalists have built dozens of regional centers focusing on local and state issues.

When CIMA surveyed nonprofit investigative journalism centers in 2007, it found 39 in 26 countries, with more than half of those appearing since 2000. A follow-up 2012 survey shows that this rapid growth has continued, with 112 nonprofits and NGOs in 42 countries. The U.S.-based Investigative News Network, founded in 2009, counts "60 nonprofit, non-partisan news organizations conducting investigative reporting" among its members in the United States and Canada. The 2012 survey by CIMA has identified at least 52 others outside the United States: 21 in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; 12 in Western Europe; 8 in Latin America and the Carribean; 5 in Africa; 4 in Asia and the Pacific; and 2 in the Middle East and North Africa.

The media development community has embraced this trend. "Formal or informal nonprofit organizations that function as professional 'collectives' appear to be evolving into one of the best ways to increase production of good investigative content," noted USAID's Gaydosik. Most centers outside North America and Western Europe have received international assistance, with OSF, USAID, and Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs among the most significant supporters. Groups in Latin America, such as ABRAJI in Brazil and CIPER in Chile, have successfully developed local sources of private funding, much like their U.S. counterparts.

These investigative nonprofits incorporate three basic models—professional associations, grant-making organizations, and reporting agencies. Some combine characteristics of all three models. Here's an overview:

Reporting Organizations. Starting with the Berkeley, CA-based Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) in 1977, nonprofit, in-depth reporting groups have flourished over the past decade. Among the pioneering groups outside the United States were the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Bosnian Center for Investigative Reporting, and the now-defunct Centro de

Periodistas de Investigacion in Mexico. OSF, both locally and in London, has been instrumental in providing seed grants for many of these groups, including startups in the Baltics, Hungary, Macedonia, and South Africa.

Several regional networks have also formed:

- The Forum for African Investigative Reporters, headquartered in Johannesburg, began in 2003 and includes members across sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to running its own investigations, FAIR holds conferences and gives out grants and awards.
- The Amman-based Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism, formed in 2005, similarly conducts its own projects while acting as an association for journalists in the region. Its annual conference draws about 300 journalists from Morocco to Iraq.
- The Sarajevo-based OCCRP, formed in 2006, is an umbrella group of centers in Eastern Europe and former Soviet states. Backed by a three-year, $3 million USAID grant, its 14 member centers collaborate on stories and get access to libel insurance, databases, and other resources.

Some U.S.-based nonprofits also work internationally. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, a program of the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, DC, is a reporting network with nearly 160 journalists in 60 countries. CIR and the New York-based ProPublica also do international projects, as do university-based investigative journalism programs at American (Investigative Reporting Workshop), Brandeis (Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism), Columbia (Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism), and UC Berkeley (Investigative Reporting Program).

Professional Associations and Networks.

At the international level, the Global Investigative Journalism Network provides a loose-knit, umbrella organization for more than 50 nonprofits and NGOs that support investigative journalism. The GIJN, founded in 2003, grew out of the biennial Global Conference on Investigative Journalism, which has been instrumental in bringing reporters together from all over the world. Seven of these training and networking conferences since 2001—in cities ranging from Toronto to Copenhagen to Kiev—have hosted a total of some 3,500 journalists from more than 100 countries. In addition, a listserv includes more than 600 journalists who actively share tips, sources, and contacts. While the organization is currently an informal network, a secretariat is in the works, which should make it a more prominent player in media development.[188]

The reporting networks described above also play important roles in connecting investigative journalists to one another, as does Scoop (discussed under Grant-Making Groups, below). At the national level, as well, there are professional associations in nearly a dozen countries, most prominent among them the U.S.-based Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE).

With more than 4,000 members and workshops across the United States and overseas, IRE is one of the world's largest trainers of journalists.

In the wake of the Watergate scandal, U.S. investigative journalists felt the need for a professional association that would support the craft and protect its members. Thus was born Investigative Reporters and Editors, the world's largest and oldest association of investigative journalists, which is funded by membership fees, grants, and donations. From its base at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, IRE has pioneered data journalism, gives out coveted awards, and holds annual conferences that draw up to a thousand journalists from around the world. With more than 4,000 members and workshops across the United States and overseas, IRE is one of the world's largest trainers of journalists. Because it does not accept government funding, its work tends to be less known within the development community.[189]

Among those groups successfully building on the IRE model is ABRAJI, Brazil's association of investigative journalists. Formed in 2002, ABRAJI now boasts 2,000 members and has trained more than 4,000 people through its courses, seminars, and workshops. Professional groups are also active in various northern European countries, among them FUJ (Denmark), Gravande Journalister (Sweden), Netzwerk Recherche (Germany), SKUP (Norway), and VVOJ (Netherlands). In addition to training at home, a number of their members conduct

workshops overseas. Groups in developing countries include Morocco's L'Association Marocaine pour le Journalisme d'Investigation and Nigeria's Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism.

Also of note is the U.S.-based Investigative News Network, formed in 2010. INN offers its 60 nonprofit members help on sustainability models, technology, collaboration, and back office support. Its membership includes many of the small American centers formed in the past few years.[190]

Grant-Making Organizations. A third nonprofit model employs a kind of small-scale grant making, in which NGOs dispense relatively small amounts ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars for journalists to do investigative projects. This approach has won important backing from donors, who find it an effective way to overcome the first major hurdle facing investigative journalists: giving them enough time and money to do reporting. Such a model "gives enthusiastic journalists a chance to follow their own ideas—even if the media they work for are financially weak," said Brigitte Alfter of the Denmark-based Scoop fund, who says the group was founded after Ukrainian journalists became frustrated with training programs. Relatively small grants can break free journalists, particularly in developing countries, long enough to do in-depth stories, giving them invaluable time to learn and practice their craft. Among the groups relying on this model:

+ The first investigative nonprofit, the Washington, DC-based Fund for Investigative Journalism, founded in 1969, has long relied on this model. A young freelance journalist named Seymour Hersh received one of FIJ's earliest grants—$250 to investigate an alleged massacre at a Vietnamese village named My Lai. A second grant of $2,000 helped him finish the story, which helped change the course of U.S. history (and won Hersh a Pulitzer Prize).[191] Over three decades FIJ has dispensed more than $1.5 million to freelance reporters, authors, and small publications, helping enable some 700 stories and 50 books.
+ Scoop makes small grants to investigative projects in 12 countries in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Founded in 2003, Scoop is managed by the Danish Association of Investigative Journalism (FUJ) and is run in cooperation with International Media Support, a Danish NGO.[192] In 2010, Scoop grants went to more than 100 investigative reports. Much of its funding comes from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. IMS is also supporting a similar project in West Africa, the Program for African Investigative Reporting (PAIR).[193]
+ The European Fund for Investigative Journalism, founded in 2008, gives grants to investigative projects in Europe. In late 2011, OSF gave a two-year €324,000 grant to the European Fund and its sister projects. The fund is a program of the Pascal Decroos Fund, which makes similar grants to journalists in Flanders.[194]

Given the rapid growth of these centers, donors have raised the obvious question of how sustainable they are. While many of the groups are relatively inexpensive to operate, in most countries there is a lack of local philanthropic traditions and economic incentives to donate. This means that to survive the centers will likely need to find ways to generate revenue along with grants and donations. A number of money-making ventures are underway among the various groups, including earning fees from reporting for commercial media, membership dues, newsletter subscriptions, database vending, and training and teaching. Some groups have found it helpful to affiliate with a university, where they can teach and get access to subsidized rent and student labor.

A Look Forward

Even in the best of times and the freest of societies, investigative journalism can be risky, expensive, and controversial. Expanding its practice to developing and democratizing countries brings it face to face with even more formidable challenges: repressive regimes and criminal libel laws, corrupt media owners, and a sometimes striking lack of professional standards, financial resources, and access to information.

As with much of media development, funding for investigative reporting is in short supply. Despite its potential for far-reaching change, investigative journalism receives but a small fraction of overall media development funding. New and larger sources of funding need to be found, and new models need to be explored to sustain the expansion of investigative nonprofits and NGOs. More practical, story-based training is needed, tailored to a country's needs and capacity, and

mentoring local investigative editors should be a priority. The media development community also needs to bridge the gap between professional investigative journalists and the development world. Ways should be found to tap the expertise of the small supply of proven investigative editors in the Western media, who are generally wary of development NGOs and governmental donors.

Despite all this, the ranks of courageous journalists eager to learn new skills, plunge into months-long investigations, and take on powerful and unaccountable forces continue to grow. Indeed, the global spread of investigative journalism is a success story that the media development community should embrace with pride. Investigative teams and enterprise journalism now exist in places scarcely imaginable just 10 years ago, and they are having major impact on issues of corruption, accountability, and democratization. Global networks of like-minded investigative reporters are sharing tips and techniques in increasingly sophisticated ways. With smart investments in a handful of key areas, donors can expect the methodology of muckraking and watchdog journalism to spread even further over the coming decade.

Working with Internews staff, a journalist for an independent TV channel in Isfara, Tajikistan, interviews a woman in the countryside. *Photo: USAID*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Despite its frontline role in fostering public accountability, battling crime and corruption, and raising media standards, investigative reporting receives relatively little in development aid. Given its demonstrated impact, investigative journalism should become a higher priority in the media development community.
- Investigative journalism NGOs have proved themselves dynamic agents of change and form an increasingly vital link in world journalism. These centers should be supported and encouraged to develop sustainability plans.
- Funding for digital media programs should not come at the expense of investigative and in-depth projects, which help lay the groundwork for reform and social change.
- Media development plans featuring investigative journalism should be vetted by journalists with investigative reporting experience.
- Trainings and programs in investigative reporting should be led by a proven investigative editor or at least by a veteran investigative reporter.
- Media development NGOs should form closer ties to the professional investigative journalism community, whose members tend to be wary of government support.
- The Global Investigative Journalism Network should be supported to become a true secretariat and global hub for the growing array of investigative reporting organizations.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Almost every U.S. journalism program receives international visitors, educates international students and professionals, conducts international research, and consults with media development implementers.
- U.S. university-based media development is scattered across scores of institutions and departments, but there appears to be little coordination and no formal program in international media development.
- There are more than 2,300 journalism education programs worldwide, with rapid growth in places such as China and India.
- U.S. universities are involved in four general areas: basic journalism training, development of faculty and curriculum, promotion of digital media platforms, and research.
- Reforming journalism education in developing countries poses tough challenges: funding, lack of practical training, hiring and retaining quality faculty, electrical power and connectivity, affordable textbooks, up-to-date curriculum, and too many applicants.
- Journalism schools are becoming more cross-disciplinary, playing a growing role as content and technology innovators, and increasingly serving as news providers.

EDUCATION: TRAINING A NEW GENERATION

"It's not a question of journalism schools versus non-journalism schools," notes Eric Newton, senior adviser to the president of the Knight Foundation. "It's innovators versus non-innovators."

That, indeed, seems to be the case as U.S. university programs adapt to the fast-shifting world of media development in the digital era. Almost every American journalism program receives international visitors, educates international students and professionals, conducts international research, and consults with international media development implementers. But those that have adopted innovative approaches are helping set the agenda in both media development and journalism education.

Roxana Saberi, an Iranian-American journalist imprisoned in Iran for more than 100 days, discusses media freedom during a lecture hosted by Northwestern University in Qatar. *Photo: Osama Faisal/AP*

This growing world of U.S. university-based media development is scattered across scores of institutions and departments, with new projects and partnerships springing up all the time. It is noteworthy that none of the dozens of U.S. universities surveyed appears to have a formal program in international media development.[195] Academics have little notion of what is being done in the field at other institutions, and it is rare to see much coordination between departments within the same university.

This fragmentation makes it infeasible to catalogue all the existing programs among the nearly 7,000 accredited U.S. colleges and universities, but it is possible to chart some trends in the field and describe notable projects in each category.

Current U.S. university involvement in media development falls into four principal categories:

- Training in skills and content production for journalism students and working journalists.
- Faculty and curriculum development for journalism education.
- The promotion of new media platforms for advocacy, research, and information campaigns, especially related to public health and human rights.
- Research that leverages other modes of media development.

The reach of the U.S. academy extends not only to budding journalists overseas but here at home. The number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities hit a record 723,277 in 2011, led by sharp increases in those from China.[196] Many U.S. journalism schools now host large numbers of foreign students.

At the same time, the number of journalism programs overseas has grown. Today an estimated 2,336 journalism education programs exist around the world, according to the World Journalism Education Census done by the University of Oklahoma *(see sidebar on page 100)*, with rapid growth in places like China and India.[197] Investments in these programs could prove to be among the most far-reaching in media development. "In hindsight, in the former Soviet space, if we'd known then what we know now, 20 years out, I think we probably would have

engaged universities much earlier on," observed Marjorie Rouse, senior vice president for programs at Internews.

The challenges in reforming journalism education in developing countries are daunting, however. Joe Foote, dean of Oklahoma's journalism school and co-chair of the World Journalism Education Council, has a top ten list of problems cited by his fellow "j-school" deans around the world:

1. Money
2. Ethics vs. practice—the culture of bribery and the disconnect between the classroom and the newsroom
3. Staffing—faculty hiring and retention in the face of low salaries
4. Government issues—freedom of press, censorship, licensing
5. Electrical power and connectivity
6. Shortage of affordable textbooks
7. The specificity (segregation) of journalism as a separate discipline
8. Changes in curriculum to absorb digital communications and information technology
9. Not enough faculty diversity, especially in gender
10. Too many applicants

Training and Content Production

For decades, journalism training has been the classic form of media assistance, a natural outgrowth to the admission of international students at U.S. journalism schools. The University of Missouri and Columbia University, the oldest journalism programs in the United States, both had international students since those programs began.

A watershed media development program was conducted by Columbia in post-Communist Czechoslovakia. This country, like others in the former Soviet bloc, featured a highly literate population with decent access to newspapers and broadcasters, but a dearth of journalistic skills and critical thinking.

In the early 1990s, teams of Columbia journalism professors rotated through the lofty halls of Prague's Charles University, teaching variants of journalism school courses in English to Czech students. There were many bumps along the way. The first class started off with 43 students, but fell to 10 by the end of the semester. Czech students were not used to written assignments, and those who completed the course found that few of its teachings could be applied in Czech newsrooms at the time.

The Columbia School of Journalism still maintains an international presence, offering joint degrees with Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg and the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris, and maintaining partnerships with universities in Germany, Argentina, India, and Spain.[198] According to journalism school dean Nick Lemann, Columbia President Lee Bollinger has publicly suggested that the university may open a future Global Center dedicated to press issues.

But Lemann does not regard international media development as central to his school's program. Regarding the Charles University project, he asked, "You mean the old imperialist model? ... We've gotten out of what they used to call 'train the trainers'... It just seems presumptuous to tell people abroad that this is how to teach." Although international students account for about a third of Columbia's 300 journalism students, up from about 15 percent a decade ago, the largest number are from the UK and Canada—countries that fall outside the realm of media assistance.

Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism has moved emphatically in the opposite direction. In 2008 it opened a degree program in journalism and communication in Education City, on the outskirts of Doha, the capital of Qatar.[199] The Qatar program is directed by Medill professor Richard Roth, who called it "a risk-free opportunity to walk the talk of globalizing our undergraduate program." With the bill footed by the Qatar Foundation, the university is using "Northwestern curriculum, with Northwestern faculty and Northwestern standards."

About a third of the students are Qatari nationals, and a number of others have grown up in Qatar in the expatriate community. The first year of the program enrolled 38 students with 16 nationalities, who paid the same tuition in Qatar as they would in Evanston.

Qatar falls into its own intriguing category in terms of media development—the oil-rich Persian Gulf state is hardly "economically underdeveloped," with a per capita income of more than $120,000, which places it second in the world.[200] Yet its journalism culture is young, untempered, and vibrant. Doha is the home of satellite broadcaster al-Jazeera, which has transformed the Arab media environment (and provides guest speakers for the

Knight International Journalism Fellow Hena Cuevas (right) teaches stand-up video techniques to a journalist from Peruvian television station Red TV while he covers mayoral elections in Lima. *Photo: ICFJ*

Qatar journalism classes).[201]

There are few well-established centers to train the burgeoning Arab media, and the architects of the Qatar partnership want to position their program as a magnet for neighboring countries.

Northwestern is not the only university experimenting with overseas joint ventures. Schools are seeking wealthy international students and foreign campuses to diversify revenue streams, building on a U.S. educational system with a far longer and more robust history of teaching journalism than universities in any other country.

But these ventures are not without risk. One cautionary tale comes from David Dynak, dean of the College of Arts and Media at the University of Colorado in Denver. Several years ago, the university was approached by an individual representing the Pakistani government.[202] "The idea was to create the Islamabad Media University as a joint program with UC Boulder, which has a school of journalism and mass communications, and UC Denver—we're digital design, film and animation," said Dynak. On visiting Islamabad, Dynak found it "really sad," he recalled, "and I grew in admiration for [then-president Pervez] Musharraf. We got to meet with his prime minister, [Shaukat] Aziz ... Aziz told us, 'We've nationalized the media and that's supposed to make us despotic. But what's worse—a nationalized media or an incompetent free media?'"

As the Colorado team was pondering this question, other problems arose. "The Denver faculty were enthusiastic, but the Boulder faculty were ... bringing up things like human rights violations," Dynak recalled. "While we were there the Red Mosque exploded [in a terrorist incident]." Security and insurance issues became concerns, and then outright obstacles. A memorandum of understanding was signed, but the program stalled.

The University of Colorado experience highlights some of the risks common to international partnerships: unstable and authoritarian regimes, the threats of corruption, and political violence. Musharraf is no longer running the country, but no one pretends that the problems have been solved.

Private foundation funding supported the Africa Agricultural Reporting Project at the University of California at Berkeley. It was first funded by the Gates Foundation with a two-year grant of $768,800. That grant,

which ran out in spring 2011, brought four African students to Berkeley over two years to participate in a specially-designed curriculum, developed in concert with Berkeley's agricultural economists and Martha Saavedra, associate director of the African Studies Center. The program sought to improve coverage of African agriculture, women, and food. For the 2011-2012 school year, the project was funded with two Ford Foundation grants totaling more than $450,000, and it shifted its focus into public health in Africa. Again, the project supported two African fellows. It is now called the "Africa Media Training in Public Health Issues" project.[203]

"We'd like to do more on the continent," said Neil Henry, who was dean of Berkeley's journalism school at the time of the Gates award, and has now returned to teaching.

Unlike some of his counterparts, Henry said that as dean he had no plans to apply for government grants. "It's not in our culture to look for government funding ... USAID money is like taking money from the State Department—it's the issue of church and state."

Faculty and Curriculum Development

Curriculum development is another key issue. Deans of major journalism programs regularly receive a stream of international colleagues seeking advice about what and how to teach. This is particularly true over the past two decades, when skills-based journalism education has moved from its status as a virtual U.S. monopoly to an international phenomenon.

In parts of the developing world, the dichotomy between teaching communications theory and practical journalism skills training remains pronounced. And many schools in developing countries simply lack the resources to do adequate training.

It is commonplace for U.S. journalism professors to participate in international lectures, workshops, and short courses. But for the vast majority of new degree programs outside the United States, the idea of importing U.S. journalism professors to lead their faculty simply doesn't arise, for reasons of both cost and culture.

A CENSUS ON WORLD JOURNALISM EDUCATION

Trying to make sense of the world's journalism education programs can be an exercise in frustration. After years of work, the World Journalism Education Census—a Knight Foundation-backed effort at the University of Oklahoma—has identified 2,336 programs.[204]

But the survey may have missed as much as 40 percent of the programs out there, while cutting hundreds of others that were duplicates and training programs not run by universities, said Oklahoma's Charles Self, who runs the census program.

About 24 percent of the programs were based in North America, according to the survey. A large percentage of these programs appear to be new; a previous (although less comprehensive) survey by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in 1995 recorded a mere 221 programs outside the United States. "The list is still very incomplete," Self said, citing rapid growth in places such as China and India.

In China, for example, a government website lists more than 600 university journalism programs in the country, but the OU census can identify only 120. "We still have a lot of work to do," says Self. "Where we run into trouble is the underdeveloped world." For example, there are journalism programs where the schools "have computers, but they have no power."

The programs faced formidable challenges, including government influence, equipment shortages, and professors with heavy biases and little practical experience. But worldwide, journalism education has become so important that most countries now say they have journalism programs at the university level. "In most countries it is valued—even in dictatorships," Self said. Journalism skills education is growing, even in schools that concentrate on theory, and schools are increasingly getting access to needed equipment. The bottom line, said Self: Journalism education worldwide is spreading.

At the same time, many of their administrators are eager to draw on the strengths of the U.S. method. The Indian Institute of Journalism and New Media in Bangalore, for example, developed its curriculum in association with the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism when it was founded in 2001.[205] This was also the case with earlier partner programs in Barcelona and Buenos Aires.

Many new programs feature a form of "soft development" that would not show up on any budget, but has an impact nonetheless. These are courses that are led by non-U.S. graduates or former faculty members from U.S. journalism programs. The transplants remain in touch with their U.S. schools, replicating aspects of their curricula. One example is Ying Chan, who has revolutionized Chinese journalism education from her base at the Journalism and Media Studies Center at the University of Hong Kong and through media partnerships across China. Ying Chan was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, taught at Columbia, and is a board member of the Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University—all of which informs her school's curricula.

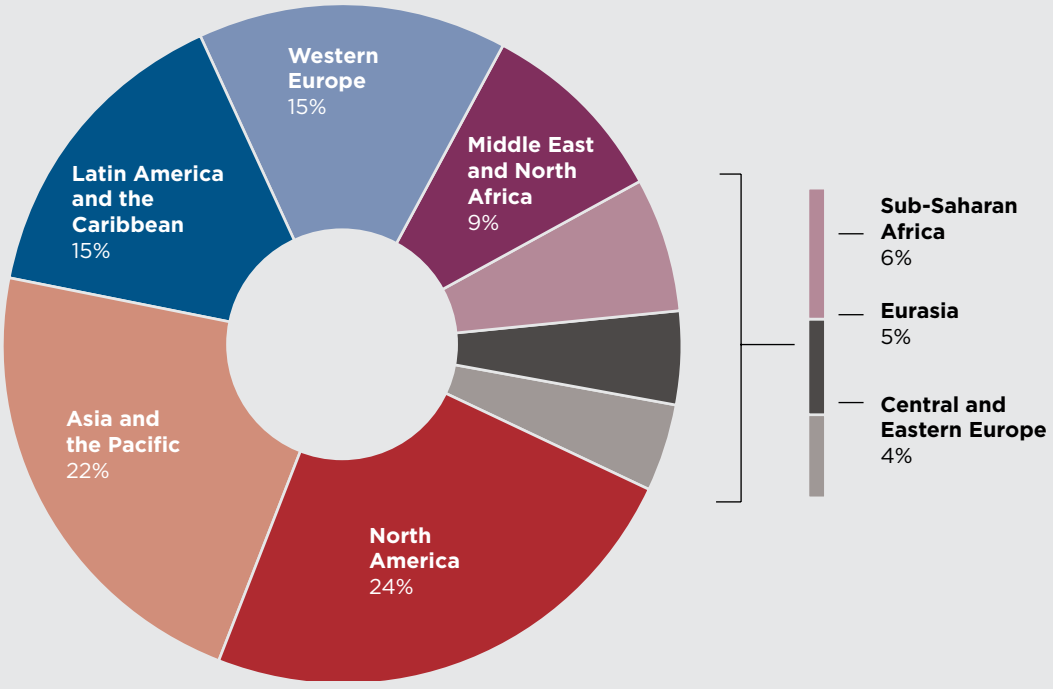
In some areas of curriculum development, the focus is driven by foreign policy concerns. In the aftermath of the Cold War and the onset of the post 9/11 conflicts, attention turned from the former Soviet Bloc to Arab and Muslim countries. One effort was the Promoting Transparency through Journalism Education Partnerships program spearheaded by IREX and funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the State Department.[206] Its U.S. university partners included journalism programs at Emory University in Atlanta, Kent State in Ohio, and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.[207] The program cited several successes, including continuing collaboration and partnerships between American and Arab universities, even though the project has ended.

USAID has funded several related projects. Its Higher Education in Development partnership awarded the University of Kentucky at Bowling Green a $200,000 two-year grant in 2004 to create "a sustainable core curriculum in journalism focusing on international and democratic media" in Tunisia.[208] USAID also supported

DISTRIBUTION OF JOURNALISM EDUCATION PROGRAMS WORLDWIDE

Census Results as of February 9, 2012

Source: World Journalism Education Census, University of Oklahoma, http://wjec.ou.edu/census2.php.



an IREX project called the Jordan Media Strengthening Program, which included curriculum development in partnership with the University of Tennessee and the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.[209] The five-year project ended in late 2011. Among its spinoffs was a study released in February 2011 by the Amman Human Rights Center that examined the fairness and equitability of news coverage during the November 2010, elections in Jordan.[210]

There is a growing sense that some aspects of U.S. journalism education make presumptions that are not universally applicable. U.S. investigative reporting techniques, applied in repressive countries, for example, can risk sending their practitioners to jail.

There is a growing sense, however, that some aspects of U.S. journalism education make presumptions that are not universally applicable. U.S. investigative reporting techniques, applied in repressive countries, for example, can risk sending their practitioners to jail. Students who use advanced technology in the classroom may find that it's unavailable in the workplace—or that technology used in the workplace is not available on campus. Moreover, a 2007 CIMA report by Ellen Hume, *University Journalism Education: A Global Challenge*,[211] found that some foreign universities were more interested in teaching public relations than instilling the ethics of independent journalism. "The receptiveness of any particular university for enhanced journalism training is contingent on local conditions that vary widely from region to region," she reported. That same year, UNESCO published *Model Curricula for Journalism Education*,[212] notable for its modern approach to the field and for its panel of experts being overwhelmingly non-American. The curricula have been fully or partially adapted by 63 journalism schools in 51 developing countries, and by 2011 was available in eight languages. In October 2011, UNESCO launched its Open Educational Resources Platform to be used by J-schools to share curricula, resources, course modules, and other teaching and learning materials.[213]

To the extent that the United States maintains an active role in curriculum development, the function may be shifting from universities to NGOs. ICFJ, Internews, and IREX have been working successfully in the area of media curriculum development, sometimes in consultation with U.S. universities. These organizations often can respond more nimbly and with greater local knowledge than their university counterparts. Their internal policies present fewer obstacles to accepting U.S. government funding, and they benefit from the presence of trained, dedicated staff to carry out the often taxing requirements of proposal-writing and reporting.

For instance, in Afghanistan, NAI, an Afghan NGO established by Internews, was given a USAID subgrant of $2.7 million in 2011 to expand its training facilities from sites in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Mazar-I Sharif to Khandahar and Herat.[214] NAI refocused to become a more effective trainer by making students more accountable for their learning and by offering increased mentoring and hands-on activities.

New Media Platforms

If U.S. universities' influence in journalism education is wavering, their roles are growing more robust in the realm of media for development, which uses media to promote social goals such as public health, education, election monitoring, and government transparency. These initiatives are rarely based in journalism programs.

Projects are often spurred by the interests of major funders, including USAID, the State Department, the Open Society Foundations, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Their funding is sometimes supplemented by grants from a host of United Nations and European government aid agencies.

One prominent figure in the media for development sector is the director of information and communications technology (ICT) for Columbia University's Millennium Villages project, Matt Berg—named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world for 2010.[215] His project is based at Columbia's Earth Institute, headed by economist Jeffrey Sachs. The project sends teams of faculty, experts, and students to work with clusters of villages (most of them in sub-Saharan Africa) to promote Millennium Development Goals in

DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

On-site training is not always possible in media development. Online courses—sometimes called distance learning—offer a convenient, flexibile, and cost-efficient alternative. Distance learning can be especially empowering to women, who may have childcare and household duties, leaving no time to take on-site training programs.

The programs also provide an effective way to identify quality journalists who can go on to participate in on-site training programs. According to Sharon Moshavi, vice president for new initiatives at the International Center for Journalists, participants in online courses who know they may be selected for on-site training programs have a lower dropout rate and tend to produce better stories.

Distance learning can be particularly effective where local journalism training is inadequate. Journalism schools in authoritarian countries are often controlled by the state and may teach curricula that serve as propaganda for the regimes. Women in gender-repressed countries may choose distance learning as a safe and comfortable means to education. Online courses are also offered in a multitude of languages. Indeed, when designing online courses, implementers not only consider language, but localize courses by using case studies and topics relevant to the area, according to Marjorie Rouse, senior vice president for programs at Internews.

Online webinars and presentations ranging from a simple Skype call to a completely virtual course have become a popular means to teach journalists across the globe, but technology—and connectivity—still lags in many countries. While implementers would like to see greater use of virtual conferencing, for example, this isn't always feasible or affordable. Fewer distance learning programs are conducted in Africa because of low bandwidth or a lack of Internet infrastructure.

There are other obstacles. In self-directed online courses, the trainees get no face-to-face contact with expert instructors who can assign and critique exercises, and they miss out on group discussions among the participants and instructors. "We need to overcome challenges in everything from classroom design to curriculum," said Anne Nelson, who teaches new media and development communication at Columbia University's School for International and Public Affairs. "There is still insufficient research on what modes of online learning are most effective."

While many organizations and universities conduct distance learning programs for journalists, these are some of the major players:

Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas: The Knight Center, based at the University of Texas at Austin, has trained more than 5,000 journalists from Latin America and the Caribbean since 2003. Courses cover such topics as investigative reporting, ethics, digital journalism, election reporting, armed conflicts, and computer-assisted reporting. Multimedia courses are offered in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and feature video lectures, discussion forums, audio slideshows, and more.

International Center for Journalists: ICFJ increasingly uses a blended model—combining online and on-site training. Its distance learning program, ICFJ Anywhere, covers such topics as digital journalism, investigative reporting, labor, religion, and business. Courses are both instructor-led and self-directed and are offered in various languages, including English, Arabic, Persian, Spanish, French, and Urdu. ICFJ partners on courses include al-Jazeera, the Poynter Institute, and the University of Guadalajara.

Internews: Internews chose Russia in 2005 for its first large-scale effort at distance learning, working in a country that spans nine time zones and shares a common language. Internews courses provide basic training in journalism, management, editing, and camera work. Promising candidates are then selected for face-to-face training. Internews has also created a course on covering climate change as part of the Earth Journalism Network, in partnership with the Poynter Institute's News University.

Poynter Institute: The Poynter Institute trains journalists online and at its St. Petersburg, FL, campus, and has partnered with ICFJ and Internews, among others. The institute offers courses in reporting, editing, visual journalism, management, and multimedia journalism, including classes like "Elements of Design" and "Mobile Content." Poynter's "News University," an e-learning program, has more than 195,000 registered users from more than 200 countries and offers more than 250 free and low-cost courses.

McGill believes that the field of media development is evolving faster than universities' planning processes. "You've got these little innovators and incubators all over, and university administrators don't even know they're happening."

a real-world setting. In 2006, the project received a $50 million donation from George Soros.[216]

Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) offers another example of media development coming in through an unfamiliar door—in this case, through the Workshop in Applied Development Practice. Director Eugenia McGill, who formerly worked for the Asian Development Bank, oversees fieldwork that has ranged from using the Ushahidi platform to map political violence in Iraq to a Gates-funded pilot project to use cellphones to track female genital mutilation. Her workshop sends graduate students out as teams of pro bono consultants to assist in the planning, implementation, and assessment of new projects. Some of SIPA's fieldwork is carried out in conjunction with the school's International Media, Advocacy and Communications specialization, which offers related coursework.

McGill believes that the field of media development is evolving faster than universities' planning processes. "You've got these little innovators and incubators all over, and university administrators don't even know they're happening."

Another hub for media innovation is the Berkeley Human Rights Center. Since 2009 it has held two conferences focusing on ways new media could serve the cause of human rights around the world.[217] Eric Stover, a Berkeley law professor and faculty director of the Human Rights Center, has been trying to build bridges between the center's work and international journalism education. The center's interests illustrate the blurred lines between development goals. Although its media starting point consisted of narrower human rights concerns, now "we're looking at short educational videos that can be played on cellphones about tuberculosis, maternal health, and other global health issues," noted Camille Crittenden, the center's executive director.

Berkeley's Human Rights Center illustrates one of the most striking characteristics of the new university model for media and development, which is how often it blossoms "off the grid." Freestanding centers often benefit from fewer bureaucratic constraints and more flexibility in funding than traditional schools and departments. They are often interdisciplinary by definition, which is a major advantage in addressing the freewheeling field of new media. The best example of these benefits is Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, which was founded at Harvard Law School in 1996 but quickly became an intersection for a broader community. Its budget reportedly runs between $4 million and $5 million annually.[218] Also worthy of note: MIT's Center for Civic Media, a joint project of the MIT Media Lab and the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program. The center creates and deploys digital tools that serve the information needs of local communities.

These days, much of the innovation is generated by graduate students. This generation often arrives on campus with professional experience in the tech sector and may also bring field experience in developing countries. They supplement their formal coursework with informal initiatives that quickly disseminate ideas across campuses and continents. The boundaries between universities blur, as do the distinctions between students and non-students, and between development workers and clientele.

The dissemination of the crisis-mapping platform Ushahidi is a good illustration. It was created in the aftermath of the 2007–08 election crisis in Kenya by a group of software developers with Kenyan roots, as a means to track political violence. Following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Patrick Meier, then a Ph.D candidate at Tufts University, launched an implementation of Ushahidi for Haitian disaster relief, enlisting teams of Tufts volunteers. On February 27, another earthquake rocked Chile—coinciding with a student-organized conference at Columbia where Meier was scheduled to speak. By the time he left New York, Meier had stirred the Columbia students to take up the challenge of organizing an Ushahidi effort on behalf of the earthquake victims in Chile, which they did.[219] The effort has now become an ongoing student volunteer task force, ready to be deployed when future disasters hit.

Broadcast studio at Herat University, Afghanistan. *Photo: USAID*

By mid-2010, Ushahidi could count on three core situation rooms, in New York, London, and Geneva, with rapidly evolving clusters of volunteers on several continents—many of them students. In 2011, Ushahidi was used for the earthquakes in New Zealand (February 22), Japan (March 10), and Turkey (October 23 and November 9) to collect and disseminate information on people's needs; food, water, shelter, and medical facilities; and crisis work.

This is a case of a media development project going viral around campuses with little sign of administrative involvement.

A parallel effort arose from a classroom project at MIT, where students were encouraged to develop online tools to help with Haiti's reconstruction. They came up with the concept of Konbit, a hybrid platform that promotes the local labor market and the flow of information, resources, and translation services between Haiti and partners within the diaspora and international NGOs.[220]

Leveraging Media Development

The research powerhouse in the field is undeniably the Berkman Center at Harvard, which boasts a full-time staff of about 30, an interdisciplinary culture, a handsome endowment, and a rotating roster of research fellows.

Berkman's generous budget supports faculty, conferences, projects, one-year fellowships, short-term internships, and ongoing social networking. This flexibility allows it to harvest the talents of scholars from other institutions and create a hub for Boston's vibrant community of new media innovators.

The director of Berkman's Internet and Democracy Project is Bruce Etling, who previously worked on the ProMedia I program at IREX. The project has its roots in research, but these have led to more concrete activities in media development. "The Internet and Democracy Project started with an international focus, looking at bloggers and online activists," Etling said. "We did a series of case studies on how the Internet has had an impact on the political process, looking at South Korea's *OhMyNews,* the Iranian blogosphere, and six or seven other countries."

Etling said that the Iranian blogosphere accounted

for much of the quantitative work so far, but they are now engaged in a project on the Russian blogosphere. The center's involvement in media development marries theoretical interests with a strong curiosity regarding practical applications. One of Berkman's key creations is Global Voices, a prominent international blogging platform. Berkman fellows Ethan Zuckerman and Rebecca MacKinnon organized the project at a Berkman conference in 2004, and it has now evolved into a largely independent entity. It includes a project called Rising Voices, which trains bloggers in marginalized communities around the world and links them to the Global Voices community. "It's learning by doing—it's organic," Etling explained. "It's a question of getting the right people in a room and identifying the problems—not going in with a huge framework and a $2 million budget."

Although the Berkman Center holds many advantages in terms of size and budget, innovation can be found across the academic community. Among the notable programs:

- Rosental Alves, chair of the communications department at the University of Texas, has put his institution on the map through his tireless efforts in Latin America. He has played an important role in bringing Latin American journalism online, promoting professional associations, investigative reporting, and freedom of expression in the region.
- Susan Moeller, director of International Center for Media and the Public Agenda at the University of Maryland, has spearheaded research, training, and curriculum in the field of international media literacy.
- Northwestern's Media Management Center offers a targeted three-week training session for media business managers from the Middle East in partnership with IREX, supported by the State Department's MEPI program.
- Tufts University has an imaginative interdisciplinary program in media studies and citizenship, and its graduate program has produced outstanding innovators in the field.
- The University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism has had a partnership with the American University of Dubai since 2008. The program focuses on media policy and communications technology.

Amid all the innovation, the old models have not disappeared. In 2011, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul awarded a million-dollar grant to San Jose State University to create a partnership with the journalism program at Herat University in Afghanistan. Many of the goals are familiar: curriculum development, faculty exchanges, and support for adopting new technologies. But the challenges are greater than ever: The university will be responsible for installing Internet service, overseeing extensive security, and creating distance learning programs for students with limited English.

New Models

In July 2010, the second World Journalism Education Council gathered more than 400 journalism educators from about 50 countries for the World Journalism Education Congress in South Africa. There was broad recognition of several factors: first, that social media have become a major force in the field that cannot be marginalized, and second, that Africa has become a world-class incubator for media innovation.[221]

A month later, at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Knight's Newton carried these ideas a step farther, laying out the "four transformations" for U.S. journalism programs.[222]

Journalism schools, Newton said, are:

- becoming better connected to other university disciplines and departments, expanding the definition of what it means to be a journalist.
- playing an increasing role as content and technology innovators.
- emerging as promoters of collaborative, open approaches and models.
- becoming news providers that understand the ecosystem of their communities. In the digital age, journalism schools are trying to engage more deeply with the people we used to call the audience.

A year later, Newton observed in a Nieman Journalism Lab report that students at journalism schools were now practicing "innovative real-world digital newsgathering," bringing news and information to locales that never were served by newspapers, or where the local papers had collapsed.[223]

The message for the media development community: In the future, media development projects will originate in an ever-widening pool of university departments. These will include law, public health, library science, computer science, international relations, visual design, and even architecture and urban planning, where striking advances in mapping applications are taking place.

Nonetheless, programs that specialize in data will also require skills from the traditional journalism toolkit: verification, story-telling ability, and contextualization. Academia could be an ideal setting for this exchange of ideas, a meeting place between core values and technological innovation.

Universities could also provide a space for frank discussion about the limitations of technology and the means to discern when new technologies offer concrete benefits to the user and when they constitute a distraction.[224] These questions are even more critical in resource-poor societies in the developing world.

To achieve these ends, more coordination is needed, both within and among universities, to serve as a critical bridge—between North and South, between technologists and humanists, between social media and traditional journalism.

New centers for media research and development will need to be interdisciplinary, not trapped within the walls of former departments.

American universities that would like to participate in this new world will need to replicate some of the spirit of the new culture, say those at helm of the most innovative programs. New centers for media research and development will need to be interdisciplinary, not trapped within the walls of former departments. And they will need to be open—not just to new knowledge, but to new collaborative forms of knowledge creation, in order to become full and valued partners in this age of media transformation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Journalism schools should become better connected to other university disciplines and departments, expanding the definition of what it means to be a journalist. New centers for media research and development should be interdisciplinary from the start, not trapped within the walls of former departments.
- Journalism schools should play an increasing role as content and technology innovators and as promoters of collaborative, open approaches and models.
- Teaching should emphasize journalism skills and not only communications theory.
- Journalism schools should become news providers that engage more deeply with their communities and those they used to call the audience.
- Universities should provide a place for frank discussion about the limits and benefits of technology, with a special focus on resource-poor societies in the developing world.
- More coordination is needed, both within and among universities, to serve as a critical bridge—between North and South (and South-South), between technologists and humanists, and between social media and traditional journalism.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Media literacy is poorly recognized in the development community, but it could play an important role in educating citizens and others to value the need for a free press and accountable government.
- Programs in media literacy help audiences identify news and distinguish it from "infotainment" or propaganda, and can help motivate journalists to do a better job.
- In the past decade, media literacy has been taken more seriously as an academic discipline, and in some cases it is a mandatory part of a school's curriculum.
- The importance of media literacy is growing in an age of citizen journalists, community radio, and digital media.
- Digital literacy—understanding social media, smart phones, and online networks—is critical for the new generation of journalists and communicators.
- Media literacy programs face tough challenges: They take time to produce results, their benefits are not easily quantifiable, and the field suffers from a lack of funding and research.

MEDIA LITERACY: TOWARD AN INFORMED CITIZENRY

In Bhutan, the Center for Media and Democracy has made media literacy a priority. Through the creation of after-school media literacy clubs at secondary schools and two universities, it has provided a space for students to discuss the media they use, the media content they create, and their voice in Bhutan's government.[225]

Five thousand miles away, in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, the UK's Department for International Development has funded a $13 million media project to promote democracy and accountability.

A television crew from *telejúnior*, a program broadcast by STV-SOICO in Mozambique, interviews other children at Fortress Maputo. *Photo: Jorge Toma/IREX*

At its core is journalist training that not only covers the basics of writing stories or producing radio broadcasts but is also about ethics, limits, local elections, and how journalists fit into civil society.[226]

In these countries and others around the world, educators, organizations, and agencies are developing new ways to teach the public—young and old—about the role of media in society. The term increasingly common for such initiatives is "media literacy."

Defining Media Literacy

Literacy—of all kinds—enables communication. It permits the dissemination of ideas across distances. It allows rights and regulations to be learned, understood, assessed, and debated.

Media literacy is also about access to information: enabling citizens to use their rights of free expression, to defend their access to information, to secure their participation in the process of governing, and to help all voices be heard.

At its most basic level, media literacy is about teaching consumers of information how to separate fact from opinion. Media literate individuals know how to:

- **identify** what "news" is and how media, as well as other actors, decide what matters
- **monitor and analyze** media coverage of people and events
- **understand** media's role in shaping global issues

Media literacy also is about teaching individuals how media can help them exercise their right to freedom of expression. Those who are media literate:

- **defend** media in their oversight of good government, corporate accountability, and economic development (the watchdog role of media)
- **promote** civil society by becoming a responsible part of the communication chain
- **motivate** media professionals to cover news better by communicating to media organizations their expectations for accuracy, fairness, and transparency

People who are media literate understand how crucial

news and information are to creating pluralistic and accountable societies. Media literacy means understanding the value of news and information, the power of media messages, and the role that the public can—and should—play in setting the public agenda. Media literacy programs teach the skills of critical thinking and analysis. They do not direct their audiences how to engage with a topic; rather they prepare them for active and inclusive roles in information societies. Tom Bettag, the former long-time executive producer for *Nightline*, now on the advisory board of the State University of New York, Stony Brook's School of Journalism, notes: "It comes down to critical thinking about who is giving this [information] to me, why are they giving it to me, and what backup are they giving to me to help me understand that this is believable."

Media literacy increases the demand for news, not just for information or "infotainment." News is especially critical in a democracy, as Bettag explains, because it is "information that is subject to the rules of journalistic verification." William Orme, senior advisor for the United Nations Development Program, noted that it is much easier to teach media literacy to groups in the developing world than to try to manage the ever-exploding supply of information and propaganda targeted at them. "It's more useful and practical," he said, "to try and educate the citizenry to be on guard against hate speech and rumor-mongering or whatever, and have them report it."

For the past decade, media literacy has been gaining favor as an academic discipline in Europe, Asia, and the Americas, so much so that many governments and schools are discussing media literacy as essential for students and in some cases are mandating media literacy courses at all educational levels.

PROMOTING OPEN GOVERNMENT

Years of training in media assistance have focused on developing a professional press corps, so that journalists ask the right questions, produce clear and accurate stories, and contribute to democracy and development. But increasingly media development advocates acknowledge that the field needs to target government communicators, as well, and to more effectively foster transparency and accountability on the part of government agencies. Building the communication skills of government officials—not on what to say, but on the importance of working honestly with media—can pay off handsomely.

Too often in developing countries, the impulse within government agencies is to shut the door when the media come knocking. But the case for more transparency in government is a powerful one, say communication experts. By working with the media and getting out information on what they are doing, officials can "curtail arbitrary use of government power, increase accountability of public officials, and help citizens formulate their own opinion on issues affecting their lives," according to Bart W. Edes, who worked as a government communication advisor to public officials in Eastern Europe. "Great openness of the administration can contribute to democratic legitimacy and to societal support for democratic institutions."[228]

Journalists in transition countries frequently complain that they are shut off from basic information that is taken for granted as being public in the West, such as government budgets and financial data, court rulings, health reports, and official contracts and procurement records. In some cases information officers may act as censors, but often the problem is not a deep-rooted culture of secrecy but rather that there is simply no system in place to get out the information. While it is essential to help the press corps become more effective watchdogs, it may be equally important to train government communicators, whose mindset can take even longer to change.

The challenges are all too familiar to journalists around the world:

+ When a journalist writes a critical story or asks an unwanted question at a press conference, the official, rather than knowing how to deal with it truthfully and adroitly, lashes out at the press and tries to kill the story.

How should those in development define "media literacy?" To be media literate, a citizen must possess the skills of critical thinking and analysis but must also comprehend the critical importance of free expression and a free press.

Creating an Informed Citizenry

The development sector increasingly understands that free and independent media are an important index of not only political but economic well-being. Development economists used to contend that elections were sufficient to guarantee not only government accountability but responsible economic development. But as Oxford economist Paul Collier argues in his book, *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, the West has over-relied on elections as instruments of accountability.

In much of the world, journalists are censored or intimidated. Media ownership may be monopolized. In such situations, Collier observes, elections do not automatically bring good governance, corporate accountability, and economic development, because citizens are uninformed. "Governments have realized that they can evade accountability while still having elections as long as they muzzle the press or buy the press ... Elections only work if we complement them with an informed society."[227]

David Hoffman, CEO and co-founder of Internews, adds: "Media is a direct part of democracy. You know you can't have multiparty elections unless you have multi-channels of communication. Who can have democracy without a free media?"

Collier's observations are shared by others involved in media development. "If we are building media as a fourth power then the audience should be a fifth power

- Officials regard the media as a means of only getting *their* messages out. Consequently, they do not understand that the media have a right and obligation to ask questions outside the scope of what the government wants discussed.
- Officials and their information officers may see their role not as helping journalists but blocking them. They avoid reporters, leave their queries unanswered, don't work within their deadlines, and don't give out information in a format they can easily use (such as providing executive summaries).

What is needed, say experts, is to wean government communicators away from a system based on propaganda to one based on a modern information "machine"—with transparency and accountability at its core. How to set up and operate such a system is often embedded in projects that are part of broader development and democracy promotion initiatives, ranging from strengthening political parties, promoting transparency within judicial reform, fostering conflict resolution, managing crisis situations, and building capacities within government institutions. Developing better, more open communicators within governments is very much in keeping with the goals of democratization, which include more transparent and accountable governance.

Professional public information specialists say a number of measures could have a significant impact:[229]

- As programs are devised to enhance journalists' skills, strategic communications training programs for government officials should also be included.
- Programs should focus on helping government officials understand the importance and benefits of effective media relations and transparent, professional, and proactive communication.
- Government communicators should have adequate authority and responsibility within their agencies to effectively manage external and internal communications.
- Training topics should include how to set up and effectively operate a government communications office; how to coordinate policies and messages across government ministries; and how to manage strategic and crisis communications using press releases, engaging in social media, and working within freedom of information laws.
- Public information officers' associations should be supported to increase professionalism. These can be a source of training programs and literature on best practices, and they can elevate the respect for the profession within government and media circles. They can also be key to developing and adopting common standards of professional conduct and codes of ethics.
- Programs that bring together journalists and government spokespersons should be encouraged to increase each group's understanding of the other's role in a democracy.

that puts checks and balances on the media," said Algirdas Lipstas, deputy director of OSF's Network Media Program. "To do that they need to be media literate—to understand what media is doing and what media can do."[230]

Media literacy is increasingly presented as a tool the development sector can use to educate citizens and other stakeholders to pressure government to be accountable and root out corruption. "Anything any foundation wants to do is going to be less effective in countries with disabled or stressed or repressed information systems and will be easier to accomplish in healthy news and information ecosystems," said Eric Newton, senior adviser to the president of the Knight Foundation. "News literacy is the way we help to improve that news and information ecosystem."

In the development sector generally, the concept of "media literacy" is not widely recognized. Media literacy as a term, noted media consultant Mary Myers, is used "almost not at all."

But in media development, government and foundation officers tend to have an instinctive grasp of its value. Indeed, foundation program officers in media and journalism see media literacy as a core competency. "Media literacy is a basic skill set, almost akin to being able to read. If you have this media literacy capacity, then you can do all sorts of other critical thinking," said Calvin Sims, a program officer at the Ford Foundation. Consider what Telekritika, a media watchdog in Ukraine, did by taking a media literacy campaign directly to the public. The group, supported by NED and USAID through Internews, used lightboards in four Kyiv subway stations to expose approximately one million passengers daily to simple messages about what good media should be.

"I've always been sort of worried we didn't have media literacy, but when I think about it we sort of do, but we just don't call it that," said Mark Koenig, senior media advisor at USAID. "That's how a majority of media literacy happens—without our even noticing it … Community

TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY

To realize the potential for media literacy, one must turn to the schools and young people. At all levels of education, initiatives in media literacy are premised on teaching youth and young adults to consume media critically—from how media shape political messages to the increasing pervasiveness of advertising. But while media literacy projects are growing globally, the field's relative lack of a unified framework and approach has kept its progress on the margins of education in both developed and developing communities. "Educators around the world have been championing media education and media literacy for well over two decades," wrote UN Alliance of Civilizations Director Marc Scheuer in a UNESCO report, "but in most countries policy-makers shaping national education programmes have just recently become aware of the need for media literacy."[231]

Media literacy can also be approached from the content-creation side. Students can learn what good media should look like during the course of producing news articles or broadcast reports.

Successful media literacy initiatives in the United States and Europe have been developed with little collaboration. Newer media literacy efforts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East must deal with issues in their education systems around access, civic voice, freedom of expression, and information as a basic human right. Here's a quick tour of projects around the world:

+ At Makerere University in Uganda, the Department of Mass Communication has begun to integrate media literacy across all levels of education in Uganda. Funded with a Ford Foundation grant, the team has remodeled syllabuses of their capstone courses to incorporate media literacy frameworks. Meanwhile, UNESCO's 2010–2011 Nairobi office action plan has made it a priority to promote media literacy in African teacher training institutions.[232]
+ The Argentine Ministry of Education has made media education an official part of the curriculum, with teacher training, student activities, and community projects—all

radio, youth media, and internet training for journalists would be three examples of that phenomenon."

"Community media—which often refers to environments where there are many little radio stations in a rural area—are almost exclusively run by citizens who are not professional journalists," noted Bettina Peters, director of the Global Forum for Media Development. There is a need for more media literacy training "because you're involving people who are not professionals in journalism. They need to get a better understanding of how journalism works," she said.

Koenig confirmed media literacy "on an extremely wide scale" is needed in community journalism. "If you're going into a rural community, and you're helping that rural community reinforce or start up a new community radio station, you have to [teach] the people how to use the equipment, help them understand what is radio, what are the ethics of radio reporting," he said. "Because community radio is so interactive—people call in on their cellphones or just walk in—and because often illiterate populations are being introduced to their very first mass media, the teaching of media literacy/radio literacy is so intrinsic [in assistance to] community media."

Digital Literacy

The need for media literacy extends now to the digital world. Indeed, "digital literacy" is today a term in vogue. As Knight's Newton said: "People who are digitally literate understand how they can use the new digital tools to engage with the news and information ecosystem, to become part of it." This means understanding the fast-shifting world of citizen journalism, crowd sourcing, rapid-fire delivery, and viral news.

"In this new digital age ... anybody and everybody can put up a media product," observed Sims of the Ford Foundation. "On one hand, that's terrific that such great diversity of voices can participate. On the other hand,

of which continue to grow.[233] At the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA) in Buenos Aires, a team of faculty and students have created a media literacy agenda whose courses are now required for the four-year journalism program. Students have studied such subjects as how the media deal with terrorism and climate change, as well as Walter Lippman's concepts of the formation of public opinion.[234]

+ UNESCO has developed a freedom of expression toolkit for secondary school students in developing countries. The idea was not to generate interest in media careers, UNESCO officials said, but to develop understanding of the role that media plays as an institution in free and open societies.[235]
+ At the annual Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change, 50 students and a dozen faculty members from 15 universities worldwide have created a curriculum on global media literacy that is continually updated and enhanced.[236] The academy lesson plans are available worldwide and can be downloaded at no cost.
+ In Abuja, Nigeria, the African Center for Media Literacy worked with the Nigeria Union of Teachers to integrate media literacy curricula and projects into secondary schools and higher education. The center conducted two training sessions for students and teachers in basic media literacy classroom strategies, but progress has since slowed due to lack of funding. A "newspapers in education" project has been developed to formalize the relationship between the center and the teachers' union, but it has yet to be launched.[237]
+ The UN Alliance of Civilizations has launched an ambitious Media Literacy and Information Clearinghouse that, among other initiatives, hosts a network of universities to use media literacy initiatives to combat cultural stereotypes. A recent project is titled "Uncovering Media Bias: The Mosque at Ground Zero Case Study."[238]
+ The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), based in Paris, has worked with K-12 schools on six continents through its Newspapers in Education (NIE) program.[239] NIE's mission is to use media literacy instruction with newspapers as a means to improve citizenship. WAN-IFRA is also concerned about the importance and fragility of press freedom in relation to global media literacy work, and the dangers many journalists face just trying to do their jobs.
+ A group of media organizations, based in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, and the United States, have launched an online International Media Literacy Research Forum. Members can publish and share research on media literacy and actively share their own experiences in working with students.[240]

you've got a public that is not necessarily well equipped to gauge which products are journalistic, which products are entertainment, which products are partisan."

"Because of the fast-changing technological picture," noted Newton, "the teaching of news literacy/media literacy is both more important than it's ever been and more difficult than it's ever been. It's more important and more difficult because the rapid changes in technology make it easy to become a news illiterate."

Training journalists to be better at their craft will not ensure that their audiences will be able to better evaluate media stories, IREX's Whitehouse said. Nor do they understand why a diversity of media to capture a variety of opinions is important. "That is why there's been a growing realization that in many ways media development has to be more consumer focused," he said.

Societies in Conflict and Transition

Accurate news and information is always needed, but nowhere more than in conflict states. The hate speech that Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines spewed in 1993 and 1994 before and during the genocide in Rwanda, and the ethnically divisive speech on the air in Kenya following the 2007 elections dramatically showed how the public needs skills to evaluate and monitor the media.

In transitioning states, the temptation has often been to censor or regulate media to prohibit or at least deter divisive speech. But draconian measures by the state to restrict hate speech also have been used to restrict other kinds of news, often information that runs counter to the authorities' opinions. Media literacy is often a better alternative than heavy-handed content controls by state or by quasi-independent broadcasting authorities—such as the imposition of libel and insult laws, which can

RADIO B92: GIVING CITIZENS A MEDIA LITERACY LESSON

In the midst of the Bosnian War in the early 1990s, when opposition Belgrade radio station B92 began sounding like an arm of Slobodan Milosevic's government, it was not because the independent producers and reporters had been replaced. Nor was the shift in the broadcasts a poor April Fool's joke. Instead, the surprise programming change was the radio station's way of forcing listeners to think carefully and critically about the news they heard. In effect, B92 was telling its listeners: "Don't trust anyone, not even us."

Sasa Vucinic, who served as B92's editor in chief from 1990-1993, recalls the experiment his staff constructed:

> We decided to do a one-day complete change and broadcast as if the government was making the program … We replaced all the usual music and voices on the radio, and the news that we wrote was totally pro-government. But if you were listening carefully, it was absolutely detectable that the news was fake. So for example, we had the leader of the opposition write the most disgusting commentary of his own political party, and we had someone else read it on air.
>
> The reaction was really stunning. Phones in the studio did not stop ringing … we taped all the calls … what was coming out of them was literally this incredible violence: 'We will come over there. We will level the radio station. You stole our only hope.'
>
> We had taken pride in the fact that our listeners were the most educated in the country—you know, academics, intellectuals, and everything. If they only had listened a little more carefully to what the news was. If they had just been listening carefully, if they would literally have just listened to the facts of the messages that were in the broadcasts, they would have understood that the program was fake, but actually nobody did.[241]

Vucinic likens this distinction between media and media literacy to grocery shopping: "You have to educate the people who are buying the food to understand what they are buying, the characteristics of each type of food … It is ultimately the responsibility of all types of serious media outlets to develop their own users and their own listeners to be critical judges of what they are receiving—not just sheep that go left and right wherever the outlet sends them."

be used as powerful tools to silence dissent. "There is often in communications law a tendency or a desire of some people to censor what they don't like on the basis that so-and-so can't handle that information," Charles Firestone, executive director of the Aspen Institute's Communications and Society Program, observed.

Yet in an age of mobile phones, satellite TV, and the Internet, "no matter how much you may want to censor, with everything coming from all over the world now, you're not going to be able to censor," Firestone said.

One appeal of media literacy is that its supporters can argue that censorship can be replaced by education. "What media literacy does is push the responsibility to the receiving end, rather than the production end," said Firestone.

Impediments to Media Literacy

However important, even essential, media literacy may be, it has been a struggle for it to gain traction. The benefits of media literacy are not easily quantifiable, and it is hard to compete against projects on health, child survival, and primary school education. Media literacy projects also take time. As one government official put it: "Congress likes immediate results, and most media programs don't produce immediate results."

Media literacy projects also often fall between bureaucratic cracks or get lost in other, larger projects. "Tracking how much money we commit to news literacy is a hard question now," noted Knight's Newton. "We've done a lot of it, but we actually don't know how much we've done."

Another problem is a lack of basic research on the level of media literacy in most developing countries. Understanding how a country's population has access to, understands, and uses media—including new social networking media—would assist donors in the fields of media development and communication for development to target their funds better and measure results. While substantially more attention is being paid to assessing the benefits of media literacy by scholars, attention remains minimal.[242]

Proponents of an expanded role for media literacy programs make several recommendations. Creating a funders' consortium of those interested in the area would help raise its profile and help deploy scarce development funds more strategically. Tracking the delivery of media literacy programs in larger projects would help to better evaluate their costs and outcomes. Media literacy should be better measured, by, for example, adding it as a new criterion on a media development metric such as the IREX Media Sustainability Index. More research in general would be useful—by scholars and development experts.

Expanding the pool of funders would help. There are not, as yet, sufficiently powerful constituencies making that case for media literacy—a situation that means that there are clear growth opportunities in identifying and educating individuals, companies, and foundations. Corporations and independent philanthropists could be a particularly important source of additional funding. Nokia, the cellphone corporation, for example, has come to see itself as invested not only in delivering technology but in defending the value of a media-literate public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Donors should create a consortium to better support media literacy, raise its profile, and make the case to groups only tangentially involved in the sector, such as telecommunications and technology corporations and individual philanthropists.
- Media literacy programs, often obscured within larger projects, should be better tracked so their costs and outcomes can be evaluated.
- The level of media literacy should be added to indexes that seek to measure the state of the media in developing countries, such as IREX's Media Sustainability Index.
- More research should be done on the field, both quantitative and qualitative, to better understand how a country's population has access to, understands, and uses media.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Since the 1990s, low-budget, locally-run community radio stations have boomed across the developing world, growing faster than either state or commercial radio.
- In poorer regions of the world, radio is still the mass-medium of choice; in Africa, it remains so for 70 to 90 percent of the population.
- International aid agencies are showing increasing interest in community media's ability to inform and empower local populations on education, public health, and economic development.
- Community radio faces major challenges: sustainability beyond donor support, repression by suspicious governments, commercial competitors, and coping with new technology.
- Community radio stations are making greater use of digital technology, integrating their broadcasts with online activities, and using mobile telephony for content and engaging audiences.

COMMUNITY RADIO: VOICES FROM THE VILLAGE

In a small provincial town in Malawi, based out of four tiny rooms in a rented building with a leaky roof, is the Dzimwe Community Radio Station. Dzimwe broadcasts on a relatively low-power FM signal (250 watts), with a staff made up of local residents, many of whom are volunteers. It broadcasts largely in the local language, is governed by a diverse, local board, and its programming reflects the concerns of the community that supports it: subsistence farming, fishing, youth unemployment, women's rights, environmental issues.[243] The station works with 28 radio listening clubs—groups of villagers who come together to listen to programs and record their own stories and comments for broadcast.

A reporter from Mayardit FM, one of five radio stations managed by Internews in South Sudan, interviews a woman who has fled the border region of Abyei south to Turalei to escape conflict. *Photo: Sammy Muraya/Internews*

Dzimwe is typical of an extraordinary trend that has reached across the global South: the growth of low-budget, locally-run community radio stations. Definitions vary, but media development experts generally define community radio as radio by and for the community, be it a physical community or a community of interest, with an emphasis on community ownership and management on a not-for-profit basis.[244]

Since the 1990s, community radio has mushroomed throughout the developing world, growing faster than either state or commercial radio. Across Africa, community radio grew, on average, by a striking 1,386 percent between 2000 and 2006. Asia and Latin America have also seen booms. This has been due mainly to the widespread liberalization of the airwaves, falling technology costs, and a thirst for alternatives to government-controlled and commercial media to meet the need for local news and information.

The advantages of these stations-on-a-shoestring are obvious. A small operation like Dzimwe, with basic editing and transmission facilities, typically costs less than $10,000 to set up and reaches a radius of about 150 kilometers.[245] In poorer regions of the world, radio is still the mass-medium of choice; in Africa, it remains so for 70 to 90 percent of the population. This is because radio sets are inexpensive, do not rely on central power, are portable, and do not require literacy. "There remains a good chunk of the world population that has limited access to media," noted Marjorie Rouse of Internews, "and radio remains a critical platform for reaching them."

International aid agencies are showing increasing interest in community media's ability to inform and empower. More governments are acknowledging their contribution to education, public health, and economic development and are creating policy and legal frameworks to enable their expansion. Community radio is now widely recognized as a crucial "third tier" of broadcasting, along with state and commercial broadcasting. It has become a fixture, too, in conflict and disaster zones, where NGOs have set up stations to aid communities like Darfuri refugees in Chad.[246]

Nevertheless, the challenges for community radio

are considerable: sustainability beyond donor support, repression by autocratic governments, commercial competitors, coping with new technology, and suspicion that stations run by minorities and special-interest groups pose threats to national unity and security.

Community radio advocates say it is the locally-based participation that differentiates it from commercial competitors and, importantly, from ethnically-based stations used for propaganda and hate messages. For example, Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, the notorious Rwandan station that incited genocide in 1994, was *not* a community station. It was a nationwide commercial station controlled by a private consortium made up of Hutu politicians and businessmen. Likewise, the radio stations in Kenya accused of fomenting post-election violence in January 2008 were not community based, but commercial FM stations that were responsible for much of the hate speech and ethnic prejudice that emerged onto the airwaves.

Across the Global South

The first community radio station in the developing world is widely acknowledged to have been Radio Sutatenza, established in Colombia in 1947. This was the first model of community broadcasting in which the emphasis was on rural development and literacy. Sutatenza was followed by stations run by tin miners in Bolivia in 1949, which presented a radical alternative to the government and were attacked by the military.[247]

Since then, community radio has thrived in Latin America, where it has arguably fulfilled more of a public service function than state broadcasters, which have been notorious for their lack of independence. Colombia, Bolivia, Mexico, and Argentina have particularly favorable pro-community broadcasting policies. Some estimates put the number of community stations in Latin America at around 10,000, with the most in Peru followed by Ecuador, Bolivia, and Brazil.[248] If unlicensed stations are also taken into account, the numbers are much higher. Surveys by UNESCO, for example, have shown there are more than 10,000 community stations waiting for licenses in Brazil alone.

Community radio is perhaps at its most diverse in Africa, from pastoralist stations in remote deserts to youth music stations in urban slums.[249] Some countries such as Eritrea have banned community radio completely, while more liberal governments such as those in Mali and South Africa have embraced it. In the Democratic Republic of Congo the number of community radio stations has jumped from 10 in 2000 to some 250 today.[250]

Community radio has been slower to take off in Asia. Nepal is a success story; around 70 percent of its population is now within reach of a community station.[251] Thailand leads Southeast Asia with about 5,000 community stations—most of them operating without licenses. And populous Indonesia now hosts hundreds of stations. But India introduced pro-community radio legislation only in 2006, and Bangladesh in 2008. Regimes in Laos, Burma, Malaysia, and Vietnam suppress the stations in varying degrees.

Community Values

At its best, community radio is a powerful democratizing force. Participatory programs can take the form of talk shows, round-table discussions, and reading listener letters or texts on the air. Citing an example from Ghana, Bruce Girard, an authority on radio in development, says, "especially in rural areas where people are isolated from each other ... the radio is the only medium that brings them together and contributes a sense of community ... programmes are often recorded in open village meetings and the effect of hearing one's own and one's neighbours' voices on the airwaves has been profoundly empowering."

Partly because it operates in local languages, community radio can be especially important for women listeners, who, particularly in Africa, tend to speak their mother tongues over colonial languages.

In some cases, community radio stations fail to live up to their professed values. Staffed by predominantly young, low-paid, and untrained presenters and journalists, some stations have had problems with charges of spreading factual errors, myths, and unsubstantiated rumors. A reliance on volunteers has led at times to petty thefts at the station, unreliable scheduling, or having the station hijacked by a particular interest group. A station's music offering—usually its dominant programming—can also work against it, when young DJs playing favorite tunes end up excluding an older audience.

In countries where community media are not officially recognized, or where legislation is still evolving, there are

A journalist for Enfomasyon Nou Dwe Konnen (News You Can Use) in Haiti interviews a young man about how he makes a living. *Photo: Internews*

various hybrid models. In Mozambique, a third of the 60 community stations are owned by the state and managed by state employees but still provide community-oriented programming.[252] In Zimbabwe, where community stations are banned, an ingenious alternative was developed by Radio Dialogue in Bulawayo, which does "road-casting" by recording news and music on cassette and CD and disseminating them through taxi and bus drivers.[253]

Development Impact

The fundamental value of community radio—when properly done—lies in its "community-ness": its capacity to speak to and for a group of people to express and enrich their identity. This was neatly described in one evaluation of community radio among the Maasai in Tanzania, in which a Maasai elder is quoted: "Most significant change? That we have our own radio, are updated in our own language and can communicate. You can say that it has given our identity back! Nothing less. And that changes all the rest!!!"[254]

The potential for impact prompted a $1.8 million grant by the Gates Foundation to the Panos Institute of West Africa in November 2010. The three-year grant aims to improve community radio programming on key development topics through content and resource-sharing networks in sub-Saharan Africa.[255]

Community radio can often be a catalyst or a rallying point for the community for development. For example, in Budikote, India, broken pipes for the village water supply were promptly mended by the local authorities when Namma Dhwani Community Media Center radio-aired the complaints of local women.[256] In Colombia, one station located in Belén de los Andaquies has helped to reinforce local commitment to planting crops other than coca. At Radio Fanaka Fana in Mali, a campaign to use compost to improve agriculture proved so popular that people in neighboring villages erected a homemade antenna to listen to the broadcasts.[257] At Mega FM in Uganda, campaigns on HIV/AIDS boost attendance at clinics to such an extent that the local health authority often runs short of testing kits.

The stations have also been effective on human rights issues. In Nepal in 2005, fundamental civil rights were suspended during the 15-month regime of King Gyanendra. To circumvent a ban on news broadcasts, Nepali community stations broadcast educational programs about basic rights enshrined in the constitution, and in some cases sang the news instead of speaking it.

Other recent examples of rights work by community stations include campaigning for gay and lesbian rights

by community stations in South Africa; educating and mobilizing villagers to protect their forestry resources from logging companies in Mali; campaigning against female circumcision and forced marriage in Maasai land in Tanzania;[258] and mobilizing local people to protest police inaction against violent crime in Peru.

Finally, community radio has played an important role in peace-building. Stations in Colombia have daily programs for hostages being held by insurgents;[259] Radio Maendeleo in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) provides information about local fighting, troop movements, and road blocks for the troubled area of South Kivu;[260] and Radio DXUP in the Philippines has helped build peace among Christians and Muslims in Mindanao.[261]

Governments and Community Radio

Unlike other types of broadcasts, community radio can be suppressed or outlawed in otherwise liberal media environment—largely because of its real or perceived connections with minority interests, such as tribal, religious, or political groups that can potentially foment violence. This is the case in both Nigeria and Pakistan.[262] Community stations can also be a thorn in the side of governments, voicing dissent and minority views that challenge state power and the interests of ruling elites. Authorities sometimes try to buy off the stations, as in the DRC, where provincial governors are known to give a regular subsidy to local radio in exchange for positive coverage. In Peru, officials shut down La Voz de Bagua station after it reported on violent clashes between indigenous protesters opposing development in the Amazon and security forces.[263]

Many countries do not recognize the unique role of community stations, categorizing them with larger commercial stations and obliging them to pay the same taxes and license fees, without recognizing how punitive such fees can be. For example, Radio Simli, a community station in Ghana, was shut down and its equipment confiscated due to its inability to pay steep license fees—a $100 application fee, a $2,000 frequency fee, and an $800 annual fee.

In order to have "community" status, stations can have special requirements put on them, such as bans on selling advertising. In India and in Niger, by law community radio stations may not broadcast news.

Community stations also have to compete with commercial radio for broadcasting frequencies. Ensuring that the public interest and community groups have access to the spectrum may require special dispensation. There are encouraging examples. Mali became the first African country to provide a licensing category for community broadcasting, while South Africa, Venezuela, and Colombia have reduced or waived license fees for non-commercial radio.

In Search of a Business Model

A major challenge for community radio is economic sustainability. Community radio experts point to five basic options for funding: advertising, aid donors, community-based income-generation, patronage, and state aid.

Advertising. Generating revenue from advertising is an obvious and widely used strategy. Many stations actively seek local and national advertisers, from paid announcements by traditional healers to long-term sponsorship from large soft drink or mobile phone companies. But as previously noted, national laws sometimes do not permit or will limit advertising on community radio. Even where it is allowed, audiences are typically poor and small in size, limiting the appeal to advertisers. And in urban areas there is often strong competition with commercial radio stations.[264]

In the DRC, a program implemented by France Coopération Internationale, and funded by British and Swedish aid agencies, is supporting training partnerships between consultants and community stations to provide better audience research for potential advertisers. Other efforts include attempts to expand advertising to émigré groups and others beyond a station's immediate markets.[265]

Donor Funding. International grants, given either bilaterally or through NGO intermediaries, are what help sustain a large proportion of rural, semi-rural, and shanty-town-based community radio stations.[266] In theory this is not viable in the long term, as donors' funding cycles rarely last longer than five years, and a small radio station needs long-term funding to cover maintenance and running costs. Many community radio projects have foundered when donors pull out,

for example in Haiti where an NGO, Creative Associates International, helped build capacity at several stations, but once the project was closed, a large proportion of the stations did not survive.[267]

Some of the largest donors to community radio over the last 30 years have included UNICEF, UNESCO, the Open Society Foundations, USAID, Sweden's Sida, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. In some cases, a development NGO or a religious foundation will support the capital costs for equipment, a studio, and a building; in other cases NGOs will sponsor particular broadcasts, such as a weekly program on women's health, or a discrete campaign, such as polio vaccination. Sponsorship can come in the form of payment for airtime, covering costs for training or for new equipment, such as a CD player or solar panels. Sometimes sponsorship is as basic as buying diesel for the radio's generator during the on-air campaign.

Some critics warn that over-reliance on foreign donors can skew programming and fail to bring enough diversity or local content. "Most community radio stations [in Nepal] broadcast news bulletins and other programs produced and distributed by the same production units in Kathmandu," says Kishor Pradhan of Panos South Asia.[268]

Radio veteran Bill Siemering, founder of Developing Radio Partners, acknowledges the concern, but believes "it would take quite a lot of outside programming for [a] station to lose its 'community-ness.'" He advises that community stations "should only accept sponsored programs from NGOs that are consistent with the station's mission and values."

One way donors could help is through low-interest loans, like those provided by the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF) to independent media worldwide. The difficulty is that radio stations—especially small

BOLSTERING COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, known by its French acronym AMARC,[269] is an international NGO set up in 1983 to serve the community radio movement. It has about 4,000 members and associates in 115 countries, an international secretariat in Montréal, Canada, and regional offices covering Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.[270]

AMARC is run by an international board elected at general assemblies every four years. There are regional offices, with their own boards in Dakar, Buenos Aires, Brussels, and Kathmandu. The associative structure is based on membership and is designed to be loose and consultative. Regional and global assemblies are often vibrant and inspirational, according to attendees, who are usually a mix of community broadcasters, grassroots activists, academics, and NGO representatives.

The effectiveness of AMARC varies from one region to another. AMARC-Africa has suffered from funding problems, corruption scandals, and leadership crises over the last decade, and has existed in little more than name since it closed its regional office in Johannesburg in 2006.[271] In contrast, the Latin American chapter historically has been relatively well-organized and dynamic.[272] AMARC produces training resources and practical manuals for broadcasters and community organizers wishing to set up radio stations.[273] It does lobbying work and has contributed to national laws being changed to support community radio.

Funding for AMARC's $900,000 annual budget comes from members themselves and from a range of international donors such as Oxfam Netherlands and Québec, the Ford Foundation, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, UNESCO, and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.

In addition to AMARC's backers, various organizations help community stations to network, find financial support, access research and policy information, and build capacity. Among international NGOs and institutions offering support are the family of Panos Institutes, Free Voice and Radio Netherlands Training Center, Radio France Internationale, Deutsche Welle, MediaAfrica.net, the Communication Initiative Network, Internews, Freeplay Foundation, Developing Radio Partners, Farm Radio International, Search for Common Ground, BBC Media Action, and Open Society Foundations.

community ones—rarely are profitable and are therefore unlikely to commit to servicing a loan, no matter how low the interest rate.

Community-Based Income. Some stations manage to raise a significant portion of their budget through community-based activities. This can include small levies on audience members, announcements (births, marriages, lost and found), music requests and birthday greetings, income from spin-offs like cyber cafés, vegetable gardens, and livestock on station grounds. Radio Maendeleo in the DRC—with a satellite Internet connection thanks to UK aid—generates income by acting as an Internet service provider. Another potential source is funding from diaspora communities; Radio Rurale Kayes in Mali, which now streams its programs on the Web,[274] receives support from migrants from Mali's Kayes region working in France.

Inspiring tales of community sacrifice and volunteerism abound in the community radio literature. Costs such as building maintenance have been met through local contributions of labor and materials. In Nepal, Radio Madanpokhara has largely managed to sustain itself with handfuls of rice donated by the community.[275]

Patronage. Another option for supporting community radio is patronage—a strategy that calls into question the very definition and aim of community radio. Often patronage manifests itself by business people or politicians establishing stations under the guise of a community radio. Girard, author of *Empowering Radio*, estimates that up to 50 percent of stations in Colombia are effectively controlled by a single institution or individual.[276]

State Aid. State aid offers another source of funding. For example, South Africa has the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) "to enable historically disadvantaged communities and persons not adequately served by the media to gain access to the media."[277] Community radio receives grants through the agency which, in turn, is funded through a share of profits from commercial news enterprises in South Africa. As of August 2011, the MDDA had supported 343 small media outlets and disbursed 129 million rand ($16 million) since 2004.[278]

Other examples of aid from government sources to community radio include a tax on cable or telecommunication operators (Colombia); government funds for training and equipment, or subsidies such as fee and tax waivers (Venezuela, Bolivia, and Colombia).

The danger with state funding is that community radio can lose its independence and its ability to hold local and national government to account. An example of this allegedly occurred in Paraguay in 2009, when it was reported that President Fernando Lugo's government purchased ads on 51 community stations. The government reportedly sought to use the stations for self-promotion and to counter the independent press. Government payments of more than $400 a month had reportedly become an important source of income for these stations.[279]

The Impact of Digital Technology

As radio converges with the digital revolution, the distinctions between radio and new media are becoming blurred. People increasingly listen to radio via the Internet, on MP3 players through podcasts, and on mobile phones. Some radio stations no longer broadcast in the conventional sense but exist only online.

Community stations are exploring how to use the new technology. The online world (including e-mail) is able to facilitate much greater exchanges and networking among stations, making it possible to do joint reporting, share tools and information, distribute urgent appeals, and end the isolation of even the most remote station.

Sri Lanka's Kothmale Community Radio and Media Center is a notable exception. The center pioneered the technique of "radio browsing" in which radio program presenters surf the Web in search of answers to listeners' queries—aiming to make Web-based information meaningful to local people who do not speak English (the dominant language of the Internet). The project also has a touring auto-rickshaw, broadcasting station programs and offering villagers a taste of the Internet. Dubbed the "e-tuktuk," it can navigate steep mountain passes and features an Internet-ready laptop computer, power supply, digital camera, scanner, phone, and printer.[280]

The Internet also offers a chance to expand a station's reach virtually worldwide, connecting members of that community's diaspora with their home countries, keeping cultural traditions and languages alive, and helping to raise support from migrants abroad. An EU grant has

even made it possible for African migrants in Europe to take advantage of a free Internet radio set called Diaspo-radio, via an NGO, Afritude Europa.

More and more community stations are coming online every year. About 30 percent of community stations in West Africa had Internet access by 2008, according to a Panos Institute of West Africa survey,[281] and the number is sure to increase with the laying of fiber-optic cable across the region.

But there are still major impediments to Internet access: slow connections, high cost, frequent power outages, and old computer equipment. And while costs are coming down, language barriers, lack of computer literacy, and lack of appropriate content also complicate efforts. A third of the 108 community stations surveyed by Panos in West Africa had no computers at all; only six had their own websites.

Mobile telephony may represent the biggest revolution in radio broadcasting since the invention of the transistor. For community radio broadcasters, mobile phones now mean they can communicate with their audiences more easily, elicit greater listener participation, create more and better outside broadcasts, and feature reports from remote places. In West Africa, for example, more than 40 percent of 108 community stations surveyed in 2008 said they used mobile phones regularly in their programming. As Girard observed: "Mobile telephones are community radio's remote broadcasting units ... community members with phones can become empowered correspondents, commentators and critics."[282]

Despite rapid growth in mobile phone use, many of the poor and the marginalized, especially women, still do not have phones. This is a problem acknowledged, for instance, by Nakaseke Community Radio in Uganda, where tracking of calls to the station has shown it is the same few callers who always phone in—usually the better-off men.[283]

The Future

The growth and clear impact of community radio is a success story in international media assistance. But for community stations to continue expanding and reach their potential, they will need action on various fronts: continued investment by international donors and an openness by local governments to enact supportive laws and regulations. Community radio operators will also need to find models of sustainability and to embrace new technology. There are reasons for optimism. Given the record that already exists, one can expect a promising future from some of the world's smallest broadcasters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- International donors should continue investing in community radio in support of freedom of expression and democratic participation.
- The international community should exert more pressure on repressive governments to enact pro-community radio legislation.
- In addition to making grants, donors should look at business models for sustaining community radio in the long term.
- Donors and community radio stations should support networks of stations at the national level, to raise funds, leverage ad revenue, and advocate.
- Governments should adopt mechanisms for state aid to the community radio sector that allow for impartial allocation of resources without direct government handouts. Where such mechanisms are already in place, these should be expanded and improved.
- Governments should recognize the uniqueness of community stations in media legislation, should not categorize them with larger-scale commercial stations, should not oblige them to pay high taxes and license fees, and should reserve space for them when allocating frequencies on the radio spectrum.
- Community radio stations everywhere must embrace new technology in creative ways.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Each year, three organizations produce widely cited indexes of media freedom around the world—Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index, IREX's Media Sustainability Index, and RSF's Press Freedom Index.
- The studies are broadly seen as a crucial, credible, and useful way to track media freedom, and their findings are relied upon by governments, scholars, donors, NGOs, and the media.
- Critics have faulted the surveys for weak methodology, Western bias, excessive reliance on experts' views, lack of transparency, and focus on traditional media.
- The reports' findings should not be used to draw connections between a specific project and changes in a country's overall press freedom rating.
- Other attempts are being made to gauge the media landscape, including efforts by UNESCO, the African Media Barometer, and the Global Forum for Media Development.
- Measuring and evaluating media development at the program level also presents challenges, including a lack of shared metrics, a reluctance to share best practices, a lack of funding, and inconsistent use of terminology.

METRICS: EVALUATING THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

On the 55th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising against Soviet occupation, 70,000 people were out on the streets of Budapest again. This time, in October 2011, many were carrying mocked-up press cards sporting the image of a gagged Hungarian. That simple montage against censorship had become a symbol of opposition to Hungary's harsh new press laws.[284]

Months earlier, the country's ruling coalition had used its two-thirds majority to create a media authority with the power to preview content, require media outlets to register, and impose fines running into the hundreds of thousands of euros.

The headline on the newspaper in the foreground at a newsstand in Beijing reads: "Egypt's disturbances may upset Mideast situation." China's state media described the protests in Egypt as emblematic of the kind of chaos that comes with Western-style democracy. *Photo: Ng Han Guan/AP*

The law took effect on New Year's Day, 2011—ironically, the same day Hungary assumed the presidency of the European Union, an institution voicing strong opposition to the law.[285]

The new law sparked an international outcry. To support their claims, critics of the measure pointed to a study published in May 2011 by Freedom House. There it was: statistical proof. In its annual assessment of media freedom around the world, Freedom House scored Hungary at 30 on a scale of 0 to 100, seven points worse than its number the previous year. This change was nearly enough to bump Hungary's media from the study's category of "free" to "partly free." Hungary was now dangerously close to such countries as Egypt, East Timor, and Ecuador, rather than Sweden or Australia.

For more than three decades, Freedom House has been ranking countries by media freedom, joined in more recent years by Reporters Without Borders (known by its French abbreviation RSF) and the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX). The three surveys attempt to apply statistical approaches to a huge and in many ways subjective state of affairs: the entire media universe of individual countries. Such issues as libel law, censorship, news organization finances, diversity of views, physical safety of reporters, and dozens of other factors are rated, with the results boiled down to a single number.

The studies figure not only in political debates like Hungary's but in a broad range of foreign policy, journalism and aid decision-making all over the world. U.S. broadcast officials use them in deciding whether a particular overseas radio service should be converted into television. World Bank researchers use the numbers when drafting papers that help determine how much aid a country will get. Political scientists type the studies' findings into spreadsheets in efforts to identify new correlations and relationships between media freedom and other factors of countries' political systems. UN and national and private aid organizations use the surveys in programming hundreds of millions of dollars of media development money. Reporters and columnists employ them in discoursing on media freedom, diplomats in bringing pressure on governments that rank low.

Tolo TV's studio in Kabul, Afghanistan. Tolo TV, the most popular network in Afghanistan, is owned by a company that was established with support from USAID. *Photo: USAID*

As use of the indexes expands, they are drawing increasing attention from academics and other media experts trying to judge the quality of the underlying social science. In analyses by scholars, as well as in interviews, media freedom experts from a selection of backgrounds and countries variously faulted the major studies for elements of the methodology, including excessive reliance on experts' views, lack of transparency, Western bias, and focus on "old media" such as newspapers and TV at the expense of fast-expanding digital media. Yet at the same time many concluded that despite the shortcomings, the studies provide a crucial, credible, and useful tracking of media freedom around the world. "Everybody knows that these numbers are not perfect and not without error," says Mark Nelson of the World Bank Institute. "You have to use caution in interpreting the data … but they are really important and useful."

The surveys share the bedrock principle that media freedom applies in every country of the world, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That document, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1948, is officially embraced today by all UN member states. Article 19 reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."[286]

But from that common starting point, the studies strike out in different directions concerning what to study and how.

This section also looks at other attempts to gauge the media landscape, including a set of indicators used by UNESCO, the African Media Barometer, and a toolkit from the Global Forum for Media Development. But we begin with an overview of the big three: Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index, IREX's Media Sustainability Index, and RSF's Press Freedom Index.

Freedom House

The press freedom index of Freedom House owes its existence to a map. In the 1970s, a large world map rating countries on their overall freedom hung in the lobby of the New York headquarters of the NGO. Freedom House officials found the map to be a useful tool in attracting media attention to the group's core issue, and soon produced a map for the more focused but related issue of press freedom.[287]

Over the years, Freedom House has modified its press freedom questionnaire and methodology. A 1994 revision added a scoring system by which a country's level of press freedom was rated numerically, rather than just being placed in a category of free, partly free, or not free. With each change, the organization has tried to retain sufficient continuity in questions and weightings so that a country's performance can be credibly compared year-to-year. No other media freedom study has so long a run of what scholars call "longitudinal" data—the study's thirtieth anniversary was April 2010. The index has always been privately funded, with support coming from a range of U.S. and European foundations and individual donors.

The index today has 23 questions and 109 sub-indicators divided into three categories: legal environment,

political environment, and economic environment. A country's numerical rating, compared with those of other countries, will determine its place in the global ranking. To head up the evaluation of a given country, Freedom House selects a writer/analyst judged to have deep knowledge of the country and its media. This person may be an academic or a journalist, a local citizen, or a foreigner. In some cases a Freedom House staff member is chosen.

IREX

The Media Sustainability Index was born out of efforts to better direct the wave of media assistance dollars that flowed into Eastern Europe and Central Asia following the collapse of communism there. It is managed by the Washington-based IREX, which in Cold War days administered academic exchanges with the Soviet bloc countries. With the Freedom House index focusing on questions of media freedom, IREX developed an assessment tool that emphasized journalistic quality and economic factors in a country's media environment. Starting in 1999, IREX officials working in conjunction with USAID plotted what issues to measure and by what methodologies. IREX has since applied the index to 80 countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa.

IREX relies primarily on U.S. government funding for its surveys. The index for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, for instance, is underwritten by USAID. The Middle East and North Africa study has been paid for by USAID and the State Department. Other funding has come from the World Bank, Canadian International Development Agency, the People Technology Foundation, and UNESCO.

The MSI is based on five areas that IREX, working in collaboration with a range of media development and methodology experts, views as fundamental objectives in creating good media systems: legal and social norms that protect and promote free speech; professional standards of journalism; multiple news sources with reliable, objective news; independent media that are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence; and institutions that support independent media.

Under each of these objectives is a collection of indicators, such as "Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights." Each of these statements is scored 0 to 4, with 4 signaling that it meets the indicator in full. Panels of evaluators are chosen from each country representing diverse pool of professionals such as media owners, journalists, and managers, as well as representatives from academia, law, and NGOs.

RSF's questions seek to measure the traditional blunt-object weapons against media freedom: murder or imprisonment of journalists, ransacking of newsrooms, suppression of information for political purposes.

Reporters Without Borders

In its survey, Reporters Without Borders considers some structural issues such as state ownership of printing facilities. But most questions seek to measure the traditional blunt-object weapons against media freedom: murder or imprisonment of journalists, ransacking of newsrooms, suppression of information for political purposes.

Over the years, portions of RSF's overall budget have come from the European Commission, UNESCO, and the French prime minister's office, as well as foundations such as OSF and NED.[288]

The first global study was presented in 2002; a new version is now released every October. The survey consists of some 40 questions, such as "Were there any cases of journalists illegally detained, tortured, kidnapped, or exiled?" The questionnaire also asks about such issues as censorship and self-censorship, extent of government ownership of media, economic and legal pressure, and filtering of the Internet.

The questionnaire is filled out by affiliated human rights groups, the local member of RSF's network of correspondents, and various other journalists, researchers, jurists, and human rights activists. RSF's system assigns fixed numbers to yes-no questions. A formula is then applied to the answer to produce a number that goes into the country's total score.

Taking the Studies to Task

Over the years, the three studies have been repeatedly dissected in political science departments, foreign ministries, newsrooms, and media aid offices. Hardly anyone, it seems, is entirely happy with them.

The reports' own researchers caution that they must be used with care. The surveys should not, for example, be used to draw connections between a specific project in a country and changes in that country's overall press freedom rating. The research is simply not accurate to that level.

The most basic criticism of the indexes involve bias. In its starkest form, this critique depicts the three organizations as arms of Western governments, working to advance particular foreign policies. In some capitals, Freedom House and MSI are seen as delivering an American view, while Reporters Without Borders has been accused of a European bias.

RSF, for example, has been accused of soft-pedaling curtailments of media freedom in Europe while playing them up in the United States.[289] In its 2011 ratings, RSF ranked the United States 47th, seven places behind Hungary, which introduced far-reaching press control measures that year.[290]

Ownership and regulation also figure in differences between the American and European studies. "In the United States, the market is seen as the best guarantor of media independence," notes Christina Holtz-Bacha of the University Erlangen-Nuremberg.[291] The American broadcasting industry was largely the creation of corporations drawing on private capital, and American newspapers historically have been owned privately. Conventional U.S. wisdom is that government should stay out of the picture concerning media. Compare that to Europe, where political parties hold ownership stakes in mass-circulation newspapers. Broadcasting generally began as a state enterprise in Europe. Private broadcasters were only gradually introduced—Sweden, for instance, licensed its first private over-the-air television station in 1991. Though commercial broadcasting continues to expand in Europe, public service broadcasting remains a large and trusted presence in the daily lives of millions of people.

Some scholars see these contrasting points of views in the studies' questions. For example, one of the MSI's statements of desired conditions is: "Government subsidies and advertising are distributed fairly, governed by law, and neither subvert editorial independence nor distort the market." Freedom House devotes much less attention to this issue, but does ask: "To what extent are media owned or controlled by the government and does this influence their diversity of views?" In the view of media scholar Fackson Banda of UNESCO's Section for Media and Civic Participation, Freedom House has a "neo-liberal predisposition towards the state as predatory, always encroaching on media freedom and independence."[292]

The questionnaire of Reporters Without Borders, drafted on the other side of the Atlantic, marks countries down if the state holds a media monopoly or there is "narrow ownership of media outlets." But overall the study pays little attention to issues of ownership.

Other analysts suggest that the real bias is not American vs. European but West vs. East or North vs. South. Is it coincidental that indicators devised in Western industrial countries consistently rate Western industrial countries near the top?

The people who oversee the three studies generally respond that it's simply not possible to be biased in favor of the West because under international law media freedom applies everywhere. "We're trying to get at freedom of expression as a universal value," said Paula Schriefer, vice president for global programs at Freedom House.

The problem is that governments around the world praise the concept of media freedom but give very different descriptions of it.

Consider Singapore, which consistently gets low rankings in media freedom studies. In a 2005 speech, former Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong dismissed the latest RSF ranking as "a subjective measure computed through the prism of Western liberals."[293] China's government also routinely dismisses its low media freedom ranking (184 out of 196 by Freedom House in 2011).[294] "Such kind of criticism is ridiculous and not worth commenting on," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu told reporters after Freedom House's 2007 survey again placed Chinese media in the "not free" category. "The Chinese media enjoy sufficient freedom in reporting ... the Chinese media should conduct their work within the scope of the Constitution and law."[295] In China, such statements generally mean the media should serve the government and Communist Party.

In Africa, too, questions are aired, and not just by leaders, about the surveys' assumptions and whether Western

EVALUATING AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

While it's tough to rate the entire media system of a country, it can be just as challenging to assess a single aid program in that country to see if it made a mark on overall journalistic quality. Evaluation at the local level has a similar history of competing approaches.

After a decade spending hundreds of millions of dollars on former Communist states after the fall of the Berlin Wall, donors wanted to know if their funding was making a difference. Were those societies measurably better off in terms of democracy, accountability, independent media; and rule of law? Officials began creating special line items in their budgets for monitoring and evaluation. Sometimes the job was done in-house as part of day-to-day operations, and sometimes by outside consultants. In a 2005 study of U.S. government-funded media development programs, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found a hodgepodge of evaluation methods being applied in many U.S. missions overseas. "Anecdotal examples, rather than quantifiable measures, are frequently used to demonstrate success," the report said.[296]

Those challenges remain. Shanthi Kalathil, a consultant who has worked with the World Bank, observed that "there is no widely usable, standardized template or tool by which one can judge the impact of a particular media development program on the broader governance context."[297]

Critics, in fact, point to a series of problems in the field: a lack of shared metrics; a reluctance to share assessments and best practices; donor confusion about expectations; difficulty in finding funds to pay for full assessments; and a lack of clear and consistent use of terminology.[298]

Take, for example, the most popular planning tool required by major donors—the logical framework, or logframe, used by implementers to map out the path of their monitoring and evaluation plan. Aid agencies from the United States, United Kingdom, Sweden, and EU, as well as the World Bank, all require implementers to use different logframes.[299]

Another challenge is a tendency to rely on quantitative data, such as the number of journalists trained, compared to qualitative data that can be harder to measure: Did the quality of journalism visibly improve? What was the impact of reporting on corruption in government or business? And how does one measure success when nothing happens, such as bloggers not being jailed or newspapers not being shuttered? When bloggers are jailed, could that actually be a sign of progress—that independent media are pressing the limits of authoritarian rule and gaining an audience? How does one gauge whether newsroom culture has changed and that editors feel empowered to assign more watchdog and investigative stories?

A comprehensive 2008 study commissioned by USAID looked broadly at the impact of democracy aid, and found that the assistance had indeed had a significant effect, pushing countries toward democratic practices faster. In terms of media assistance, researchers concluded that a $10 million investment in media aid programs could be expected to produce a rise of 5.7 points in a 0 to 100 media freedom indicator on Freedom House and other indexes.[300]

But overall, using the national indicators to judge program-specific effectiveness is dangerous, most experts agree. "Multiple factors affect press dynamics," notes Silvio Waisbord of George Washington University. "For example, a turn towards authoritarianism may rapidly undo slow advances in media democratization supported by global actors. Domestic economic growth may open alternatives for press economies. The coming of administrations committed to media diversity may facilitate the work of global assistance programs."[301]

Despite the challenges, there are encouraging signs. Donors are placing greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation. The Knight Foundation has begun to put its assessments online, as has the implementing group Search for Common Ground, and USAID—the largest media assistance donor—is planning to do the same, with summaries available in a searchable database. And it's clear that the topic is not going away: donors and implementers—and those whom they hope to help—all deserve to know if their work is making the difference they hope it will.

concepts of media's proper role fit the culture of countries there. University of Cape Town professor Francis Nyamnjoh, for instance, has said that he sees an innate conflict between traditional African loyalties to social and ethnic groups and principles that journalists must be aloof from the subjects they cover. The result, he said, can be "media whose professional values are not in tune with the expectations of those they purport to serve."[302]

Such sentiments have fueled work on other indexes that are intended to be more culturally neutral.

One response is the African Media Barometer, developed by the Media Institute of Southern Africa and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, a foundation affiliated with Germany's Social Democratic Party. The barometer's stated purpose is not to compare countries, but to create consistent and credible assessments of media development and freedom in African states so as to facilitate a rise to the next level of quality. Since its debut in 2005, the index has been applied 47 times in 25 countries.[303]

Each assessment is carried out by a panel of about 10 people that convene in the country being examined. Half are media professionals, half are members of various civil society groups. Panelists debate the issues and share views before giving 1 to 5 scores on 45 indicators grouped under four areas: freedom of expression, the media landscape, broadcasting regulation, and professional standards.

The methodology and many questions from this index draw liberally from the IREX approach. There are differences, such as emphasis on the desirability of a three-tiered broadcast system of public, private, and community stations. But all in all, it's hard to point to many assumptions and values in the African Media Barometer that are particularly "African."

Rather, part of the goal was to create leverage with governments that have a political allergy to the Big Three studies.[304] The barometer also invokes the authority of regional agreements that African governments have pledged to uphold, such as the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa.

UNESCO has created another set of media development indicators. The organization funds a broad collection of media aid programs around the globe, and, like any donor, wants solid information about where its money should go. Also, as a UN organization, UNESCO strived to create a media indicator system that its members would accept as universal.

Adopted in 2008, the UNESCO system posits five categories of indicators for media development, focusing on freedom of expression; plurality and diversity of media; the media as a platform for democratic discourse; professional capacity building and supporting institutions; and infrastructural capacity sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media.[305]

These principles echo many of those found in the three major Western-based studies. In one sense, this suggests that the world's many systems for measuring media are converging. It could also reflect that nearly every country today at least goes through the motions of praising media freedom: Among the members of the council that adopted the evaluation standards unanimously were North Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam.

Once in motion, the evaluation process bears little resemblance to what happens in a Big Three survey. UNESCO's version can take months, involving committees and subcommittees, peer review, input by multiple professional groups, preliminary reports, and final consensus conclusions. The results are typically a very deep dive into the media landscape of a country rather than a comparison among countries. Funding for a survey may be raised in the country, because UNESCO lacks funds to support an entire survey itself. At the end of the process there is no numerical rating or ranking, but rather a sometimes lengthy report.

So far, eight countries have completed evaluations, and nine more are underway.[306] "It will have to be demand-driven, rather than supply-driven," says consultant Wijayananda Jayaweera, the former director of UNESCO's Division for Communication Development. But he expresses hope that a media study will become a standard part of UN aid. He believes the indicators hold special legitimacy because they are not seen as serving merely those people advocating for media freedom. "No one can disregard these indicators—they are not imposed by anyone ..."

Another attempt at metrics is by the Global Forum for Media Development, which in 2009 released *How to Assess Your Media Landscape*, a toolkit that surveys the various indexes and offers advice on how to best combine them in a comprehensive assessment of media in a given region. Like the UNESCO indicators and African Media Barometer, GFMD's toolkit is targeted at comparing media landscapes in a given country, rather than between countries.[307]

An opposition supporter holds up a laptop showing images of celebrations in Cairo's Tahrir Square after Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak resigned in 2011.
Photo: Dylan Martinez/Reuters

Old Media versus New Media

Other criticism of the big three surveys stems from perceived technology bias.

All three studies have their roots in times when media essentially equaled print publications and broadcast stations. But starting in the 1990s, new challenges to the dominance of these media arose from a range of digital technology that included computers and mobile phones. By 2010, with the meteoric growth of Internet access and social media, essentially anyone could set up as a journalist and put out the word through blogs or other online media. There was also the issue of measuring old-media institutions that were reaching into the new realm, such as newspapers and broadcast stations putting reports on websites or sending them out as text messages.

In some countries the old forms of information dissemination remain heavily regulated, while the new and expanding ones operate alongside them in relative freedom. A country's broadcast TV, for instance, may operate under tight direction while international satellite TV goes largely unregulated. "The most important trend in the 15-year history of the internet in China is that as government control of the internet tightens, Chinese citizens are becoming more active and creative users of the internet in expressing dissent and protest," writes Guobin Yang of Barnard College. "Thus, speech freedom seems to be expanding at the same time as the state steps up efforts to limit the spaces for public speech."[308] Yang warns that the failure to take into account the full impact of digital media could skew press freedom rankings.

Freedom House has taken steps to integrate an assessment of Internet-based media into its annual index; currently it is directly factored into at least a third of the methodology questions, and is also addressed in the narratives that accompany each score. In 2008, Freedom House convened a meeting of outside digital specialists to brainstorm about what form a detailed index methodology should take to measure an array of digital communications technologies. The group settled on assessing three broad issues: access to new media, limits on content, and violations of user rights. The result was a 2009 survey, Freedom on the Net, which in 2011 expanded to 37 countries.

Ivan Sigal, executive director of the international blogger organization Global Voices, believes that the Freedom House Internet index gets at many of the right questions. But he can think of quite a few more. What are a country's legal practices considering "fair use" of copyrighted material, a big concern for bloggers who

Customers at an Internet cafe in Tehran. *Photo: Raheb Homavandi/Reuters*

post other people's material? Do the software platforms available to a country's bloggers make it easy for anyone anywhere in the world to see their postings, or are the postings visible only to members of a closed online community? "We're still figuring out what it is that we want to measure," said Sigal.

For its part, IREX says that it does not intend to include specific digital questions in the MSI. From the start, it has shied away from assessing specific types of media, on the grounds that its objective is to assess a country's general climate. Reporters Without Borders added digital media questions to its list, stressing such areas as censorship and forms of coercion.

In the meantime, the leaps-and-bounds growth of digital communications is giving rise to separate systems for measuring freedom in that sector. Particular attention is going to mobile phones and other handheld devices as they become the primary platform of digital communications in developing countries. MobileActive.org, an NGO that seeks to harness mobile communications for social change, is creating a "Fair Mobile Index" that would assess the "enabling environment" for mobile communications. Is a country hostile or nurturing to the new methods of staying in touch? Pricing will be the first issue for consideration. Other indicators may include surveillance of mobile traffic and censorship.

How good is the social science?

Is it truly possible to reduce to a single number the collective interaction of hundreds of newspapers, websites, and broadcast stations; thousands of reporters, editors, and government officials; millions of readers and viewers; billions of words and images?

Leonard Sussman, the former Freedom House executive director who originated the scoring approach and used the results to create the group's colored world map, says he knew from the start he would hear claims of distortion. But Freedom House decided that "in this modern civilization, people want a quick fix and a map is one way of getting it." Certainly, reporters love rankings—individual country numbers are among the facts most noted in media write-ups of the Freedom House studies.

Reporters Without Borders also opted for scoring and ranking, and on release day each year it also gets a burst of media attention. IREX, whose index is aimed more at helping media professionals plan programs, assigns scores but plays down notions of neighbor-to-neighbor ranking. Its reports place countries in clusters of similar development as indicated by scores. But anyone who wants to can use the numbers to create a full top-to-bottom ranking.

What is the validity of a finding that country X's

media freedom is one tiny point different than it was the previous year? People inside and outside the studies generally say that differences as small as that cannot be accurately measured by these studies. IREX has expressed interest in considering the suggestion made over the years that studies publish a margin of error, if that were found to be statistically feasible. Freedom House says that a margin of error would not be viable for its own numbers. The organization's methodology is "not completely scientific," says Karin Karlekar, managing editor of Freedom of the Press. "We are producing data, but I would say it's soft data rather than hard data."[309] Nonetheless, statistically questionable tiny shifts sometimes translate into very substantial changes in the Freedom House classification, pushing countries between "free," "partly free," and "not free."

Crafting questions in public opinion polls is an advanced art, with the objective of avoiding leading the respondent and drawing only undisputable conclusions from the answers. Some analysts feel that the media freedom indexes don't measure up to these standards. The complexity of the media environment suggests that phrasing of certain questions could be improved. An RSF question, for example, about whether news was "suppressed or delayed because of political of business pressure," is actually four questions, say critics.[310] There's a difference between suppressing and delaying, they say, as there's a difference between political and business pressure.

Scholars Patrick McCurdy, Gerry Power, and Anna Godfrey note other shortcomings. The questionnaires tend to focus on news and current affairs programming, even though in many countries important political discourse takes place through such things as call-in shows and dramas. Nor do the studies have built-in ways to account for the influence of one-time big events in a country, such as elections or scandals.

Freedom House takes the position that it has to be careful about altering its questioning system, lest it upset a 30-year run of data that allows comparisons across a stretch of time found with none of the other studies. Leon Morse of IREX notes that long questionnaires run the risk of alienating the person filling them out. Do better results come if a person hurries through a long list of questions, or if he or she gives thoughtful consideration to a shorter one?

Another issue is the number of people rating a particular country. Freedom House, for instance, gives major responsibility to a single writer/analyst, with a small number of staff members or outside experts adding input later on. "One or a few people can have a large sway on things, which for social sciences is not a good indication," says Devra Moehler, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication who has studied the numbers over the years. Ideally, she said, an index of this type would have 50 people scoring each country, in order to screen out statistical "noise" and personal bias.

Of the three studies, only IREX's makes a systematic attempt to measure media quality, through MSI questions on whether "reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced" and "journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards."

Another issue is the reliability of the people on the rating panels. Do panel members tend to be ones who have bought into a certain world view, and do they answer their questionnaires accordingly? Do answers get shaped in part by hopes of getting invited back next year? UNESCO's Banda cites the danger of using respondents who are biased to see the media as tools for political repression.

What if media freedom means bad media?

Of the three studies, only IREX's makes a systematic attempt to measure media quality, through MSI questions on whether "reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced" and "journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards."

RSF does ask in its questionnaire if there is "frequent detailed investigative reporting on a range of sensitive subjects." But by and large, RSF and Freedom House leave the quality question aside, taking the position that what matters is whether there's an environment in which quality journalism can exist. Robert Ménard, RSF's

founder, has acknowledged that this has at times given RSF some unsavory bedfellows. "We have found ourselves in some difficult situations, defending people who are indefensible," he lamented in a magazine interview. "Take, for example, the newspaper in Cameroon that published lists of homosexuals in a country where homosexuality is considered a crime. Not only was their list false but such an attitude is immoral and goes against any journalistic ethics."[311]

But many analysts say that what ultimately matters is not so much the environment as what the country's media accomplish in that environment. To Monroe Price, director of the Center for Global Communication Studies at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, a prime question is: "Do the media in a particular society actually produce an informed citizenry?" He notes that the definition of "informed" varies country to country. "One society may think that familiarity with the Bible is a prerequisite for what constitutes being an informed citizen; another may have very high literacy demands in international affairs or economics."

But ultimately, Price proposes, "free and independent media are not a good in themselves, but only inasmuch as they support other, more intrinsic, values and goals, such as democracy, a particular economic structure, greater cultural understanding, general human development, and so on."[312]

Whom to ask—experts or citizens?

To judge the state of the food in a restaurant, should you query the people at its tables, or the chef and waiters? Certainly the staff will be better able to discuss the ingredients, the culinary artistry, the organizational skills that go into producing a meal, as well as whether the restaurant is making enough money to stay in business. But in the end, isn't it best to ask the customers?

For some years, a competing view has been gaining support that the thing to pay attention to concerning media freedom is a quality known as "citizen voice." This gained credence in the larger world of economic development in the 1990s, as James Wolfensohn made it something of a crusade during his 10 years as head of the World Bank. He initiated a Voices of the Poor program that by the bank's count funneled the views of more than 60,000 low-income people in 60 countries to the high-level (and high-income) people who make decisions on development funding. "I have been to literally hundreds of slums and villages," Wolfensohn said during a speech in Amsterdam in 2000. "They are the people that understand poverty better than any of us."[313]

In the context of media development, citizen voice is about being able to hear a full range of opinion in public space—voices of both the common citizenry and those who are marginalized, impoverished, and discriminated against.[314]

"Free and independent media are not a good in themselves, but only inasmuch as they support other, more intrinsic, values and goals, such as democracy, a particular economic structure, greater cultural understanding, general human development."

Some of the big three studies do attempt to get at questions of responsiveness to the public. The MSI, for instance, asks whether "state or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest." But, scholars note, even on this question, the indexes ask professionals, rather than the citizens themselves.[315] One alternative would be to use opinion poll questionnaires that would get at the question of citizen voice and the media.

People involved in the major existing indexes generally welcome the idea of measuring citizen voice, but say that it's outside the scope or resources of their studies. Moreover, citizens could not provide the information that the studies set out to gather. "I do not think that readers and viewers would be able to answer our questions and provide the in-depth analysis that we get regarding such things as access to information, broadcast licensing, self-censorship, use of market research, efficacy of professional associations and training," says Morse of IREX.

So how good are these indexes?

Despite criticism of the big three indexes, they have produced relatively consistent findings over the years. Conflicting rankings of individual countries, for example, do not seem that significant when viewed in terms of groupings of countries.

Lee Becker and Tudor Vlad of the University of Georgia gave the numbers a scrubbing as political scientists and found general uniformity of outcomes and evidence of statistical integrity. Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders "reach much the same conclusion over the years about the media systems they evaluate," they wrote. IREX's Media Sustainability Index is difficult to compare directly to the other two because it examines only select countries that are targets of media assistance, leaving out Western Europe and the United States. Still, the authors found correlation where there was overlap of countries surveyed. All three measures, they concluded, appear to be "more similar than dissimilar."[316]

The authors also examined polling data and found a correlation with public opinion data and the findings of the big three media indexes. Moehler of the Annenberg School offers this summary: Despite widespread concerns over the social science credibility of the media freedom studies, "they are almost always in the ballpark of being accurate."

Another way to look at it: Even if one believes that the studies are applying a Western-centric notion of media freedom, they are applying it with reasonable uniformity in all countries of the world, and therefore the information that results is worth considering.

In the end, there is practically no one (save perhaps officials in thin-skinned governments) who wishes that the three organizations would end their freedom rankings. In the absence of the ideal, universal, unbiased, statistically flawless index, great numbers of people all over the world rely on the existing ones for a great variety of uses and do so in the belief that the data are solid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organizations that produce the three major studies of media freedom as well as the lesser-known ones should continue to work to increase technical sophistication, validity across time, and transparency of sourcing.
- As stable research is invaluable to the field, donors should work to assure that there is adequate funding for the indexes. Funding IREX's Media Sustainability Index for additional regions of the world would be useful.
- Governments should resist the temptation to dismiss studies and rankings of media freedom in their countries as outside interference and should consider the findings seriously when crafting media policies.
- Donors should resist making connections between a specific project in a country and changes in that country's overall press freedom rating. Donors and implementers should work toward common and increasingly sophisticated methods of monitoring and evaluation at the program level.
- Index administrators should continue work to measure conditions of freedom for the Internet, mobile phone texting, and other digital technologies that are growing rapidly in importance in the world's media systems.

Looking Ahead

These are exciting times for those who believe media can help transform the world.

The global reach of digital technology has armed the public with tools hard to imagine even a decade ago. Journalists—both citizen and professional—now have the ability to shoot video, record audio, and send dispatches from the remotest corners of the world. Armed with smart phones, tablets, and tweets, a media-savvy citizenry has the chance as never before to enforce accountability on those who hide from public scrutiny.

For two decades, the media development community has worked to empower a free press around the world, in the belief that independent media will foster democracy and development. Those in the field are now moving rapidly to embrace these latest digital tools, combining them with the best practices of professional journalism—watchdog reporting that is fair and accurate, backed by high ethical standards and smart business practices. As we move forward, the impact could be nothing short of extraordinary.

Even before the digital revolution, the evidence was in. Research by respected scholars confirms what media development veterans have long known from their work abroad: that free and independent news media are closely tied to social and economic progress. The more media freedom, the lower are rates of corruption, the higher are incomes and investments, and the greater is political stability. A free press, in other words, is inextricably bound up with successful development, and for societies to move forward, they will need to open up their media and allow their citizens unfettered access to the Internet.

The road ahead is full of obstacles, however. After

Journalist Sathiyavani conducts an interview for the Lifeline project, which provides humanitarian information to communities affected by conflict or by natural disasters in Sri Lanka. *Photo: Internews*

two decades of progress on media freedom, the world has lost important ground. Journalists are being killed and imprisoned at alarming rates, and those who attack them quite literally get away with murder. Repressive governments are quickly learning ever-more intrusive ways to disrupt and spy on those who express themselves online. The amount of funding for media development, meanwhile, remains modest, compared to both the job at hand and the amount of international aid dispensed each year. At just 0.4 percent of official U.S. foreign aid, media assistance remains a minor player in the development world. And even that amount could be sharply cut if deficit-ridden Western governments pare spending on foreign assistance.

At the same time, there is plenty of good news to celebrate. The media development community has grown in size and sophistication over the past two decades. Funding is at record levels since CIMA began charting it in 2006, and the field is more widely recognized than ever before. New donors with roots in the tech industry have brought needed funding and novel approaches to the field. The digital revolution has produced levels of connectivity whose impact is only beginning to be understood.

The progress can be hard to see, and hard to measure. But it is there—in the hundreds of citizen journalists ready to report from the streets of Cairo, Nairobi, or Beijing; the thousands of community radio stations broadcasting across the developing world; the scores of investigative reporting centers that have arisen from Manila to Sarajevo; and the more than 90 countries that now boast freedom of information laws.

There remains much to do. Leaders of the media development community acknowledge they need to further expand and diversify their funding sources. Programs and progress need to be evaluated better. With rapidly shifting technology and tough economic times, making independent media sustainable is still a major challenge. The legal environment also demands attention, with scores of criminal defamation laws still wielded like clubs against the press.

Education poses another challenge. More than 2,300 journalism education programs exist worldwide, giving U.S. journalism schools the chance to make a powerful contribution to educating the next generation of journalists. The field of media literacy also holds great promise, with the potential to educate millions in the value of a free press and the need for accountable government.

While it's easy to get caught up in the rush of new ideas, harnessing the digital revolution will pose challenges, as well. Many tech-driven experiments may fail, and new approaches may not pan out. But importantly, donors and implementers alike appear willing to take some chances. And the potential is hard to ignore. The reach of mobile phones and the Internet will continue to expand, bringing more of humanity into teeming, global networks of information. Investments made today in free, independent media seem likely to yield impressive returns tomorrow—in economic development, accountable government, and open, democratic societies.

Endnotes

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