

International Training Programme on
Media Self-Regulation in a Democratic Framework

Final report

Sida-funded International Training Programme
“Media development in a democratic framework”

Abbreviations

(In alphabetical order)

ACME	African Centre for Media Excellence
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ASDER	Asociación Salvadoreña de Radiodifusores
BAKE	Bloggers Association of Kenya
CA	Communication Authority of Kenya
CONCIP	National Communications Commission for Indigenous Peoples
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EPOCA	Electronic and Postal Communications Act
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
HAICA	Independent High Authority for Audio-visual Communication
IMPI	Information and Media Panel of Inquiry
ITP	International Training Programme
MCU	Media Council of Uganda
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
MEO	Media Ethics Observatory
MLC	Media Liaison Committee
MOI	Ministry of Information
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	National Races Channel
NF	National Facilitator
PD	Programme Director
PM	Programme Manager
POSA	Public Order and Security Act (Zimbabwe)
QA	Quality Assurance
TM	Thematic Mentor
UCA	University of Central America
UEG	Uganda Editors Guild
UMSWG	Uganda Media Sector Working Group
ZAMEC	Zambia Media Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In the past 30 years, the media sector has undergone substantial transformations that have re-shaped industry norms. Intense political discussions have propelled issues surrounding freedom of expression and media freedom into the limelight for governments, international bodies, NGOs, civil societies, and informed citizens worldwide.

The media landscape's rapid evolution under Digital Transformation has positioned large online platforms, particularly social media companies, as gatekeepers of news and key players in online advertising. Amidst these changes, the need for independent, professional, ethical, and gender-inclusive content is more crucial than ever. The ITP focuses on fostering informed discussions about self-regulation's nature, its connection to safeguarding freedom of expression, and its role in complementing legal approaches.

The International Training Programme (ITP) aims to strengthen strategically important actors and organ-

isations in their efforts to establish, support, and protect institutions within the self-regulatory framework of freedom of expression by actively applying the theoretical and practical knowledge gained through the programme.

The ITP 295 Media Self-Regulation in a Democratic Framework has been operating since early 2018 when we started the pilot programme in five countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. This report covers the entire period from the start of early 2018 to the very end of the programme in October 2023. The report is mainly based on the final country report drawn up by our National Facilitators, a survey which was sent out to all participants in the programme. The programme has been implemented by a consortium led by NIRAS Sweden AB. The other consortia partners are International Media Support (IMS), Linnaeus University (Fojo Media Institute), and Global Reporting Sweden AB.

The programme was implemented in 22 countries in five regions: Southern and Eastern Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the MENA region. The regional programmes were implemented 21 times (not including 3 regional Alumni conferences). Altogether, 510 participants completed the programme. From Africa we have had 129 participants (5 cohorts), from Latin America 118 participants (5 cohorts), from Asia 89 participants (4 cohorts), 99 participants from Eastern Europe (4 cohorts) and MENA 73 participants (3 cohorts). 53% of the participants were women and 47% were men.

The programme cannot be easily summarised. In this executive summary, we present several changes that define both **institutional and organisational levels**. We have included the number of changes at both levels that can be attributed to the ITP. For further information on what these changes entail, please see regional summaries and country reports.

Our main role as organisers has been dedicated to creating the best possible conditions for participants to drive and implement their desired change initiatives. We achieved this by providing opportunities for participants to gain new knowledge, relevant tools, skills, networks, and peer support. As outlined in this report, we have demonstrated that the formation of a platform for dialogue and establishing strong connections and trust among stakeholders who do not typically engage is a key achievement and result of this programme.

Key achievements

Collectively, the participants have advocated for the promotion of free and independent media through the agenda of self-regulation. As a result, both *organisational and institutional changes* have been initiated and developed.

The changes we have identified encompass both planned change initiatives where participants collaborated, as well as spin-offs that exhibit a clear contribution or linkage to the ITP. The programme has

contributed to both formal and informal institutional results and changes.

ITP contribution in institutional level ²		
Region	Inst/formalised	Inst/informal
Africa	10	9
Latin America	3	14
Asia	3	6
Eastern Europe	5	2
MENA	2	13
Total	23	44

Table 1: The total change initiatives at formal and informal institutional level

Examples of a formal institutional change initiative are the setting up of a self-regulatory body such as the Media Council in the Philippines, the establishment of the Freedom of Information Act in Zimbabwe, the creation of the Alliance for the Encouragement of Self-regulation in Colombia, a new law in “Electronic Communications” in Ukraine and formation of an NGO from media outlets in Palestine.



For informal institutional change initiatives, all five regions have incorporated media ethics as curricula of journalism schools. Other examples are training

¹ For the first pilot program, we initially admitted 30 participants, but discovered that logistically and pedagogical-ly, it would be more effective to aim for around 25 participants. As indicated in Annex 5, we experienced few dropouts, except for the Asia Year 2 cohort, where the military coup in Myanmar resulted in the entire team discontinuing the program

² 1. *Formal / institutional (external)* of the self-regulatory framework refers to the changes where ITP contributed to formalised self-regulatory structures such as media bodies such as the media councils and formal decisions contracts. Change initiatives and spin offs that have contributed to new laws policies and legislative co-regulations are also included in this box (see overall media governance model above)
2. *Informal / institutional (external)* is referring to changes that involved other entities such as academies, media groups on media self-regulation, media ethics, and other related public debates.

courses for journalists in Bolivia, promoting media literacy against misinformation in Armenia, the creation of a Media Club for youngsters to discuss social issues and media self-regulation in Vietnam, video production in demystifying media self-regulation in Lebanon and setting up of online resource platform regarding media laws and regulation in Uganda.

ITP contributions on an organisational level ³		
Region	Organisational/ formal	Organisational/ informal
Africa	6	3
Latin America	7	6
Asia	3	2
Eastern Europe	8	1
MENA	8	4
Total	32	16

Table 2: The total change initiatives at formal and informal organisational level

Formal and organisational change initiatives such as Code of Ethics, editorial guidelines and establishment of ombudspersons that can be found in all five regions' ITP initiatives.

In terms of informal and organisational change initiatives, examples are in-house training, consultative workshops and the development of reference books that facilitate media professions training and learning.

Furthermore, the survey has provided us with some interesting insights and learnings from the ITP. For instance, when asking the participants to summarise the ITP experience in three words, the following picture emerges (Figure 1). One keyword that stands out is 'networking'. This fact is confirmed by the survey, where more than 99% of participants answering the survey claim that they are in regular contact with other participants from their own country, and more than 80% are in regular contact with their fellow participants from the regional cohort.⁴

The survey results indicate that over 60% of participants affirm the ITP primarily *operates as a dialogue platform* for diverse stakeholders, including the media industry, civil society/academia, and state actors. Many participants describe how the ITP has facilitated a better understanding of other stakeholders' perspectives on crucial questions and dilemmas related to self-regulation and regulatory aspects. Almost all participants have been actively engaged in designing and implementing change initiatives "to develop



Figure 1: Word Cloud on participants' ITP experience

³ 1. Formal / organisational (internal/inward) refers to formal code of ethics and ombudsperson functions within and cooperation between media houses

2. Informal / organisational (internal/inward) mainly refers to organisational culture and learnings on media ethics that goes on within or/and between media houses.

⁴ A great majority of the participants are in regular contact with other participants (more than once a week or every three weeks). It is reasonable to assume that the ones not answering the survey have less contact with fellow participants than the ones answering it.

common solutions to shared problems". This active involvement serves as a strong indicator of the importance of the dialogue platform provided by the ITP.

According to the final survey among all participants:

- It is evident that most of them have gained a better *understanding* and changed their *attitude* towards self-regulation; More than 76% claim that their understanding of self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom has significantly increased (when starting the programme a majority of the participants had a vague idea about the concept). 77% now believe that self-regulation is highly preferable as a method to increase media freedom, whereas only around 27% held that opinion before entering the programme.
- 70% of the participants assert that their understanding of the linkage between gender equality and self-regulation has increased. Approximately 20% of the participants stated that gender equality was a core element of their change initiative, while 35% said it was mainstreamed into the initiatives.

Reflections, lessons and suggestions

In summary, ITP has been able to initiate many change processes, contributing to reforms and establishing entities despite challenging political environments. The programme's success lies in creating enduring networks, facilitating dialogue built on mutual trust. As we see it, the key success could be summarised by following key elements of ITP:

1. *Trust building and interaction*, i.e. that fact that the programme emphasises networking, fostering close bonds among diverse stakeholders, which is vital for sustainability;
2. *Ownership and commitment to change*, i.e. most participants are motivated (and have their own incentives) to drive meaningful change within the media sector, showcasing a strong commitment beyond external funding;
3. *Bottom-up approach and flexibility*, i.e. the programme's adaptability to changing context and its participant-driven approach contribute to its success including the recruitment of capable National Facilitators who have been key for contextualising learnings, ensuring realistic change initiatives, and promoting group cohesion among participants;
4. *Informal collaborative structure*, i.e. collaboration is built on informal coalitions based on familiarity



and trust, and continuous communication plays a vital role in sustaining collaboration and mobilising stakeholders in unexpected ways.

Some suggestions

- Sida and embassies could leverage the ITP format to establish discussion platforms, focusing on contentious topics. These platforms should address themes with varying perspectives, providing UM access to crucial networks.
- Consider creating a funding mechanism (like small seed funding) to support participant-developed initiatives. It's crucial to avoid fostering competition for funds and instead encourage collaboration towards shared goals.
- Consider engaging in developmental evaluation (external QA mission) to provide feedback and guidance on content and process issues throughout the programme's implementation. This can act as a valuable management tool for improvement.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	12
1.1 Survey methodology/ information	13
1.2 Chronology of external events	13
2. FRAMING THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA REGULATION AND SELF-REGULATION	16
2.1 Overall media trends	17
2.2 Media self-regulation put in a broader media governance landscape	18
2.3 From “hypothesis of change” to theory of change	20
2.4 Gender, inclusion, and diversity	21
3. PROGRAMME RESULTS OVERVIEW	24
3.1 Change initiative (according to our operational framework)	25
3.1.1 National/institutional level changes	27
3.1.2 Gender equality and social inclusion	29
3.1.3 Changes in organisation	30
3.2 Regional Summaries by Programme Directors	31
3.2.1 Eastern/ Southern Africa	31
3.2.2 Latin America	35
3.2.3 Asia	39
3.2.4 MENA	44
3.2.5 Eastern Europe	50
3.3 Key findings and observations from the survey	51
3.3.1 Strong ITP networks and platform for dialogue	51
3.3.2 Improved understanding and changed opinion	52
3.3.3 The challenges faced when implementing change initiatives	53
4. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND REFLECTIONS	54
4.1 Main Conclusions	54
4.2 Reflections and lessons learned on methodology and implementation of the ITP	55
4.3 Concluding remarks and suggestions	57
ANNEX 1 – UPDATED RESULTS FRAMEWORK	58
ANNEX 2 – COUNTRY REPORTS	62
1 Eastern/Southern Africa	63
1.1 Kenya	63
1.2 Uganda	69
1.3 Tanzania	75
1.4 Zambia	82
1.5 Zimbabwe	86

2	Asia	91
2.1	Bangladesh	91
2.2	Cambodia	96
2.3	Vietnam	100
2.4	Philippines	103
3	Eastern Europe	109
3.1	Armenia	109
3.2	Georgia	113
3.3	Moldova	116
3.4	Ukraine	120
4	Latin America	125
4.1	Bolivia	125
4.2	Colombia	131
4.3	El Salvador	137
4.4	Guatemala	141
4.5	Honduras	147
5	MENA	153
5.1	Lebanon	153
5.2	Palestine	159
5.3	Morocco	165
5.4	Tunisia	170
ANNEX 3 – THE ITP PROGRAMME IN RELATION TO OVERALL TRENDS IN THE MEDIA SECTOR BY JOAN BARATA		177
ANNEX 4 – SURVEY QUESTIONS		181
ANNEX 5 – PROGRAMME OVERVIEW		183



1 INTRODUCTION



The International Training Programme (ITP) aims to strengthen strategically important actors and organisations in their efforts to establish, support and protect institutions within the self-regulatory framework of freedom of expression by actively applying the theoretical and practical knowledge gained through the programme.

The programme was implemented in 22 countries in five regions: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the MENA region through 6 call-offs from the Framework agreement media self-regulation within a democratic framework. The regional programmes were implemented 21 times excluding 3 regional Alumni conferences. Altogether, *510 participants completed the programme*. From Africa we have had 129 participants (5 cohorts), from Latin America 118 participants (5 cohorts), from Asia 89 participants (4 cohorts), 99 participants from Eastern Europe (4 cohorts) and MENA 73 participants (3 cohorts). 53%

of the participants were women and 47% men. See Annex 5 for an overview.

This final report summarises the entire Sida-financed ITP programme - Self-regulation in a democratic framework, representing the culmination of numerous individuals' efforts. Especially, the 22 National Facilitators from various countries and regions, Programme Directors, Programme Managers, as well as the Steering Group members and the QA group, have all contributed valuable input to this report. The writing process, data collection, editing, and analysis of material have been conducted by Joakim Anger (Head of Programme) and Emma Chan (Media Consultant).

The findings presented in this report are derived from the following sources:

- Results obtained from a survey sent to all participants who have undergone the programme (excluding participants from Myanmar and Laos).

- Country reports compiled by the National Facilitators (refer to Annex 2).
- Insights and reflections gathered from staff working in the programme.

The report primarily focuses on two key elements: a) describing the results/changes that can be clearly attributed to the activities undertaken by the ITP, and b) providing an analysis of how the programme has been instrumental in producing these results.

This report consists of the following sections:

- Brief overview of the context in which the programme has been operating, including an updated theory of change.
- Summary of results from regions and the survey.
- Analysis and lessons learned from the implementation of the programme.

In annexes, we present:

- An updated results framework summarising some of the key results and objectives;
- standalone country reports that summarise key changes/results/achievements for each of the countries participating in the programme;
- Survey questions;
- Overview of the number of programmes, when they have been carried out, number of participants etc.

1.1 Survey methodology/ information

To gather ITP participants' opinions and experiences about the programme, a survey was designed and sent out to 440 respondents in 22 countries who have participated in the programme between 2018 and 2023.⁵ A purposive sampling strategy was applied to identify respondents who have engaged in the programme. In total, **258** responses were collected. The turnout rate was around 60%.⁶ The questions of the survey can be found in Annex 4.

1.2 Chronology of external events

The implementation of the programme can be delineated into three phases/periods:

The Build-up Period (2018-2019)

In this phase, ITP started the inception of the pilot programme in Africa (commencing with an inception phase in March 2018) and the inaugural programmes in Latin America (started in March 2019), Asia (started in September 2019), and Eastern Europe (31 September 2019). During this period, the programme developed the Theory of Change, tested various approaches, and consolidated lessons learned, all of which were summarised in an Inception Report and submitted to Sida in February 2019. A consensus was reached with Sida that a classical "results framework" would risk being non-flexible and difficult to adhere to in such an extensive programme where the participating countries have diverse media environments⁷. Therefore, a more flexible tool – "outcome harvesting" was agreed upon to be used for following up on results in the programme. Additionally, Thematic Mentors and National Facilitators were recruited, and we prepared to expand the programme to include the MENA region.



⁵ Survey collection period: 3 Oct to 30 Nov 2023

⁶ Given that a large number of participants live in war, and political turmoil- the turnout is acceptable. The survey was not sent to participants from Laos, Myanmar and Cuba which only participated for 1-2 years. Some participants left the media field, and some participants tragically left us during the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁷ The participating countries have different Press Freedom Index ranging from 28 to 178th, see section 2, Figure 2.

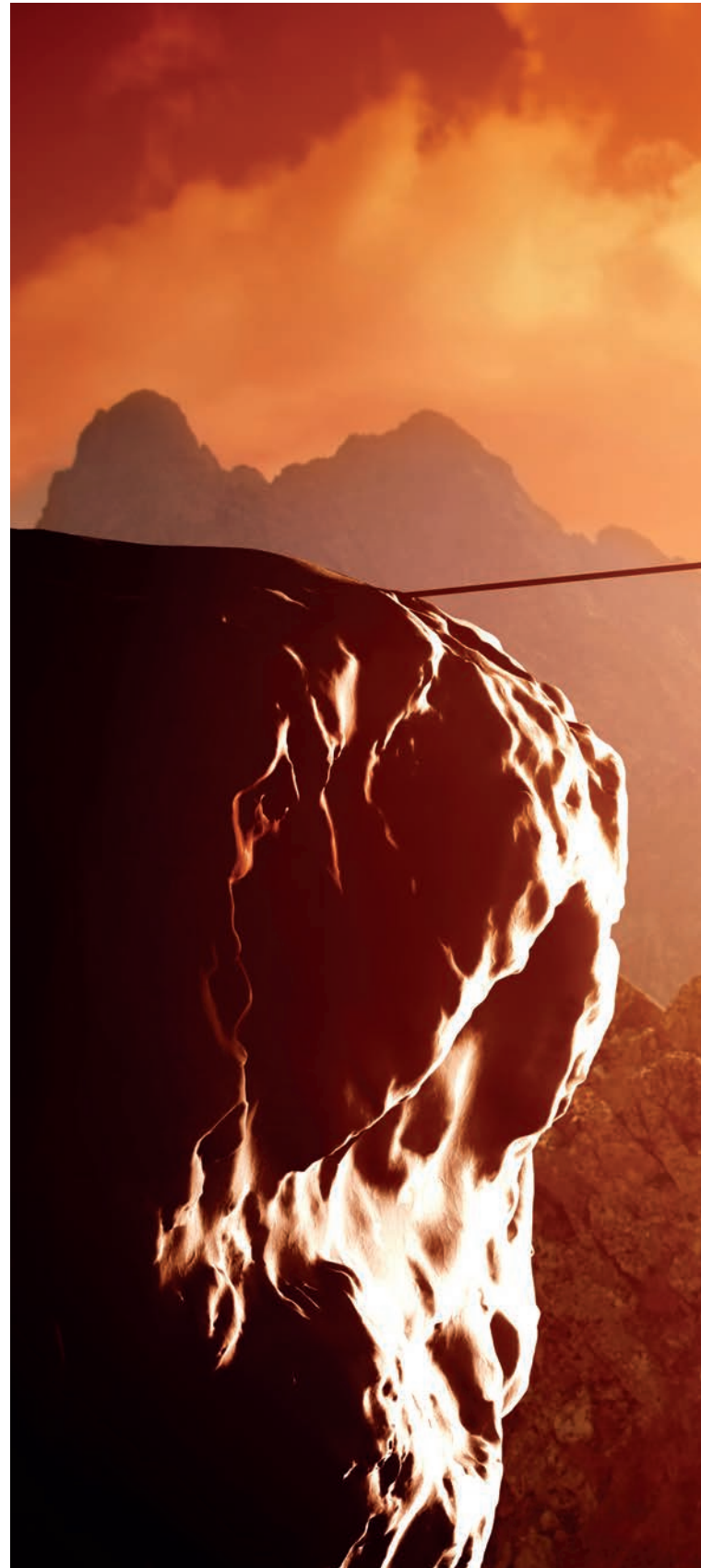
The COVID-19 Period (March 2020-March 2022)

From March 2020 until March 2022, it was not feasible for participants outside Europe to travel to Sweden due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the programme underwent pragmatic adjustments, leading to significant alterations in initial plans. Despite the challenges, the programme transitioned to a largely online training and capacity-building model. The pandemic affected all regions, some more than others. Asia and Latin America had full lockdowns, which made it difficult to even have national meetings. In MENA and Africa we were able to have some national and regional meetings while in Eastern Europe, the programme was able to meet regularly despite the restrictions.

However, through our National Facilitators in each country, our presence enabled the successful initiation, continuation, and implementation of locally-driven change initiatives. Furthermore, when numerous processes came to a halt in societies due to COVID-19, the ITP programme became one of the few activities where media-related discussions were still carried out in many countries.

Post-COVID Period (Hybrid Setup)

The subsequent programmes in Africa '22, Asia '22, and Latin America '22 were executed in accordance to the newly updated setup that emerged after the pandemic. In 2022, we welcomed Palestine and Georgia to the programme as part of the MENA and Eastern European editions. As the effects of the pandemic waned, larger and more frequent physical meetings resumed. Since March 2022, there have been no restrictions on travelling to Sweden and we facilitated approximately 275 participants' visits. The autumn of 2022 was particularly eventful as the groups that had not visited Sweden during the pandemic were given the opportunity to continue the study visit. Although it was challenging to combine two cohorts and re-schedule the order of the visits, we managed to fully and smoothly implement the programme.





In this section, we present a brief overview of the context in which the programme operated.

2.1 Overall media trends⁸

In the past 30 years, the media sector has undergone substantial transformations that have reshaped industry norms. Intense political discussions have propelled issues surrounding freedom of expression and media freedom into the limelight for governments, international bodies, NGOs, civil societies, and informed citizens worldwide.

As depicted in the World Press Freedom Index⁹ in the graph below, the programme was implemented under varying circumstances and often encountered significant challenges concerning media freedom.

The 22 ITP participating countries exhibit a notable disparity in their rankings on the World Press Freedom Index, ranging from the highest (most open) rank of 28th (Moldova) to the lowest of 178th (Vietnam), highlighting the diversity of media environments in implementing ITP change initiatives. As a result, implementation strategies needed to be adapted to each country's context¹¹.

The Digital Age has presented challenges in balancing international freedom of expression standards with national regulations. Globally, democratic spaces for free expression are shrinking, accompanied by a rise in authoritarian tendencies in numerous countries. Autocratic regimes respond to technological changes in communication with increased speech restrictions and new repressive laws and policies. These threats to freedom of expression and the rule of law have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

National policymakers lean towards shaping the public sphere based on local traditions, national security, culture, and morals, often resisting 'Western' values despite the nominal acceptance of international standards. A broad consensus exists regarding the decline in protecting freedom of expression worldwide, as highlighted in the UN's annual Joint Declaration.

The media landscape's rapid evolution under Digital Transformation has positioned large online platforms, particularly social media companies, as gatekeepers of news and key players in online advertising. These platforms enforce internal content standards, focusing on legal-but-harmful speech, influenced by com-

World Press Freedom Index

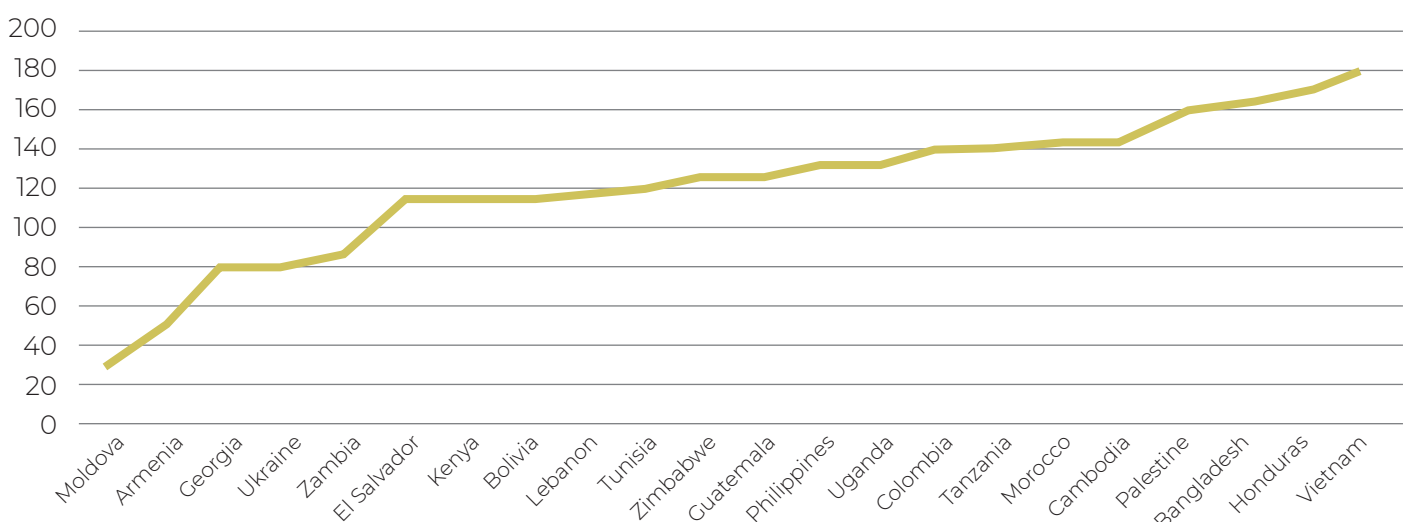


Figure 2 The World Press Index of participating countries¹⁰ (Reporters Without Borders, 2023)

⁸ A more exhaustive context and trend analysis is found in Annex 3.

⁹ Press freedom is here defined as "the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety." The five indicators in compiling the Press Freedom Index are *political context, legal framework, economic context, socio-cultural context, and safety*.

¹⁰ Sweden ranks 4th in Press Freedom Index in 2023.

¹¹ See country reports for concrete information for each country.

mercial interests and stakeholder pressures. Platform regulation, especially in the EU, targets risks associated with social media's use to spread information, including harmful content that is not necessarily illegal but conflicting with certain societal values.

Amidst these changes, the need for independent, professional, ethical, and gender-inclusive content is more crucial than ever. The ITP focuses on fostering informed discussions about self-regulation's nature, its connection to safeguarding freedom of expression and its role as a complement to legal approaches.

2.2 Media self-regulation put in a broader Media governance landscape

The long-term vision of this programme is to contribute to free, trustworthy, independent, and inclusive professional journalism. We seek to empower participants and their organisations to make strategic decisions and take actions that contribute to a media land-

scape of reliable and professional journalism. Hence, *we see advocating for self-regulation as a method to increase media independence and freedom.*¹²

Self-regulation in media is preferred over statutory regulation for several reasons, such as

- upholding freedom of speech without government interference,
- allowing flexibility and quicker adaptation to industry changes,
- benefiting from professional expertise in creating relevant guidelines,
- building public trust through accountability and responsible reporting,
- allowing a better and closer interaction between media actors and the general public, and handling issues more efficiently and timely.

To understand self-regulation as a method to uphold and protect media freedom, it is necessary to contextualise it within a broader **media governance framework**.

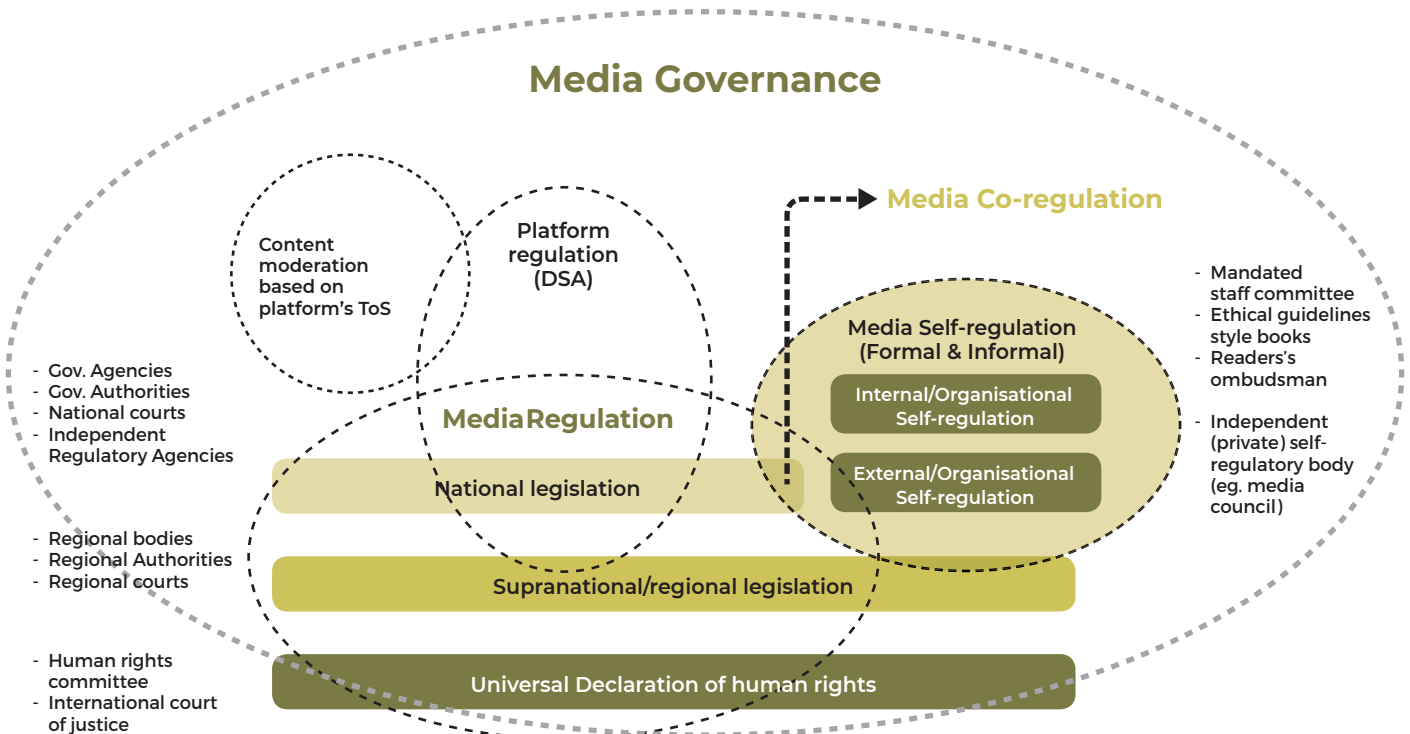


Figure 3: The model of media governance¹³

¹² It is important to note that the reference to media and journalism must nowadays embrace "new" types of media such as bloggers, citizen journalists and other modalities of digital reporting.

¹³ This model is a hybrid of several models in section 1 in the reference book and have been further elaborated by Anette Novak and Joan Barata.

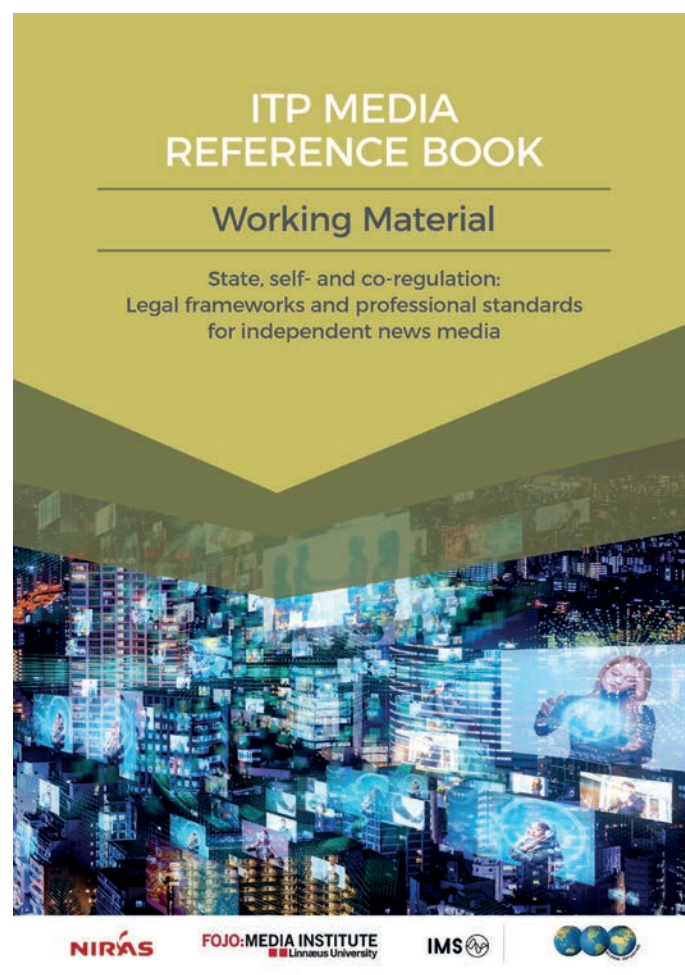


This programme has been focusing on expanding the room for self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom. The foundation of the efforts within the ITP is based on human rights and universal principles such as freedom of expression, which are protected/upheld by international courts of justice and regional bodies and courts.¹⁴ The space and conditions for self-regulation vary significantly across different regions and countries. But in all countries, there is at times an *inherent competition* between national legislation/statutory law and self-regulation on how to define the extent to which the media should be regulated by law and how much autonomy can be left for self-regulation.

Without mentioning online platforms, this introductory model and analysis would be incomplete. Unlike online speech or media, platforms serve as intermediaries enabling access to third-party content. Due to pressure from lawmakers, regulators, and civil society, platforms have increasingly developed internal rules for content moderation, leading to a new form of private speech governance. There are ongoing discus-

sions and models for defining fundamental rules and principles that platforms must adhere to when making decisions affecting users' rights, notably freedom of expression.¹⁵

ITP participants have successfully conducted change initiatives within the self-regulation framework and pushed changes in both organisational and institutional level. (See section 3.2 Regional Summaries for more examples and further explanations). We have summarised the core curriculum in a reference book **“State, Self- and Co-regulation¹⁶: Legal Frameworks and Professional Standards for Independent News.”**



¹⁴ albeit not uniformly across Asia.

¹⁵ For instance, the Digital Services Act (DSA) in the European Union stands out as a unique and advanced regulation specifically addressing platforms.

¹⁶ The reference book was developed during 2020 and updated to its second edition in 2022. Since the spring of 2020, Dr. Joan Barata, an expert on regulation and self-regulation from a legal perspective, along with Agneta Söderberg Jacobson, ITP gender advisor at Fojo Media Institute, have collaborated with Joakim Anger, the Head of the Programme, to enhance learning and exchange experiences among the various regional editions of the program. Link of the book is [here](#).

¹⁷ This ToC is built on realistic assumptions and empirical evidence. See also the updated results framework presented in Annex 1.

2.3 From “hypothesis of change” to theory of change

In this section we summarise the principles and underlying thinking in implementing the programme. While we began with clear ideas on programme implementation, ongoing development has been integral. Both content and operational processes have evolved to respond to real-world complexities and insights gained through continuous learning and adaptation.

Our approach to learning and capacity development on individual, organisational and institutional level is summarised in the model below. The role for us as organisers has focused on *fostering optimal conditions for participants to autonomously drive and implement their desired changes*.

The Theory of Change has been refined throughout the programme implementation, ensuring it remains a living document that captures our way of promoting change. We have thus, through several iterations moved from a “hypothesis of change” presented in

the original tender document to a theory of change illustrated in the model below¹⁷.

In our view, change has essentially happened thanks to two key dimensions of the ITP: a) *Building trust through collaboration and networks* and b) *Change initiatives* driven by participant interactions (peer support) and insights from study visits, webinars, and readings.

A fundamental principle of the ITP instrument is to empower participants to independently identify and lead **change initiatives** that are relevant to their specific roles, mandates and potential synergies. These change initiatives serve as the “pedagogical backbone” of the programme, where thematic issues are translated into practical actions.¹⁸ As outlined in our handbook, institutional and organisational development is a gradual and iterative process characterised by non-linear changes. Our main task as organisers is to create the best possible circumstances for change to happen. Consequently, the overarching outcomes of the ITP serve as a flexible results framework, capa-

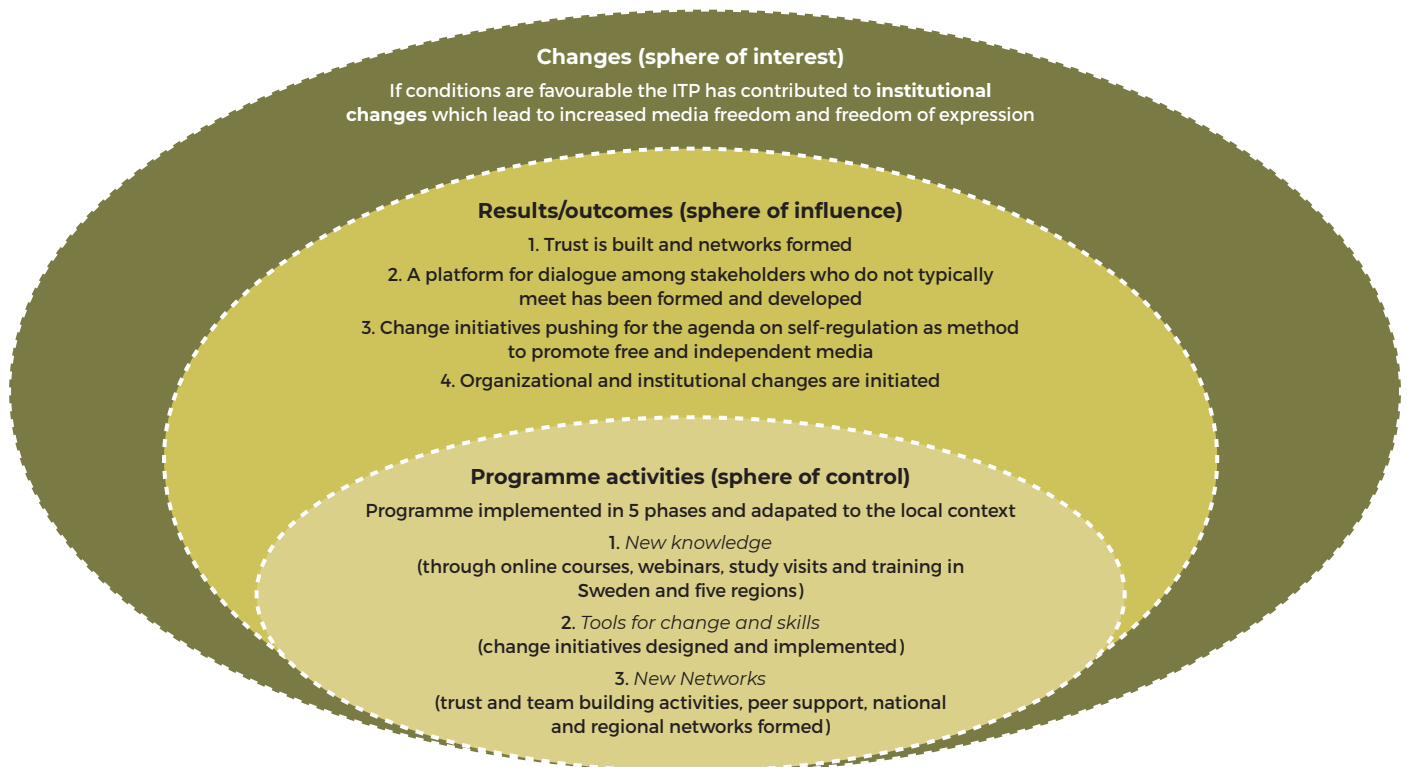


Figure 4: The refined theory of change model

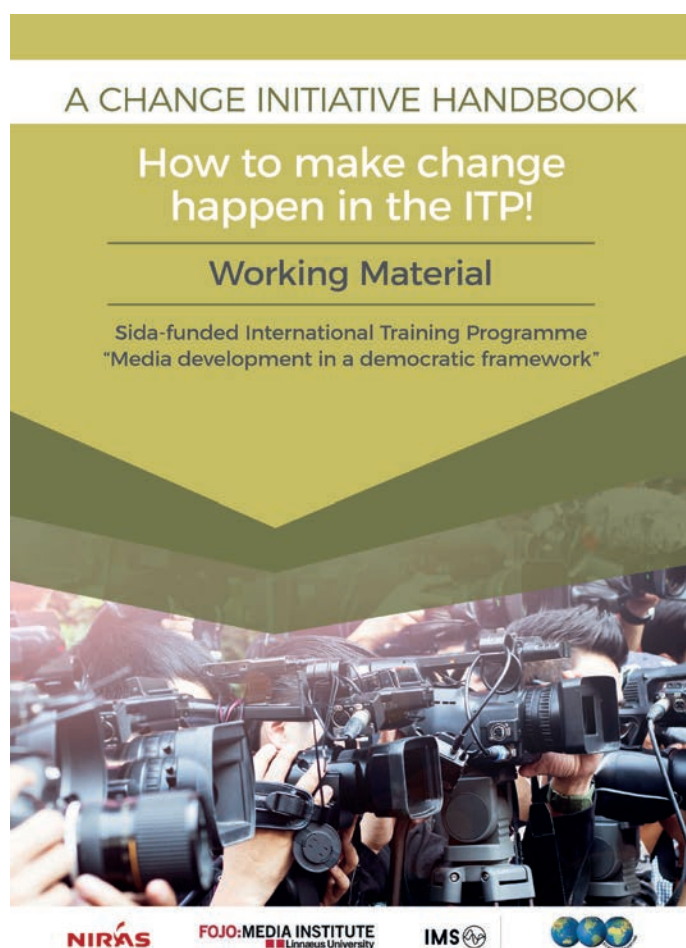
¹⁷ This ToC is built on realistic assumptions and empirical evidence. See also the updated results framework presented in Annex 1.

¹⁸ This is referred to as the Action learning approach.

ble of capturing the diverse manifestations of the programme's results and allowing for adaptability to the evolving nature of the initiatives.

In the handbook on "How Change Happens in the ITP", we have outlined our approach and philosophy, encompassing insights into project design, multi-stakeholder partnerships, change management, trust-building, and advocacy to support participants in formulating and progressing their change initiatives. Over the years we have further enhanced our guidelines, templates, and tools to empower the participants in effectively driving their change processes.

The handbook can be found [here](#).



The programme's approach to PMEL as organisers

Our overall approach to RBM includes how we plan, monitor, evaluate and learn (PMEL) within the programme. Our ambition throughout the programmes has been to maintain flexibility in order to allow for

learning and improvements and for continuous quality assurance of the implementation of the programme. Collection of information/data from participants, National Facilitators and the Programme management directors, as well as sense-making of information, has been undertaken to *make better and conscious decisions* on which type of activities are to be carried out (e.g. study visits, lecturers/facilitators to involve, pedagogical approach to use etc.)

Results at the outcome level are linked to the types of processes initiated among participants, and certain outcomes may require several years to materialise. Our approach has involved *identifying and assessing the programme's contribution to these changes*. The *Outcome Harvesting method*, a central monitoring approach within the ITP framework agreement, has proven to be very useful in this regard. Outcome Harvesting is particularly suited to programmes such as ITP where the outcomes are not predetermined at the time of planning or projects where the nature of the activities and the context evolve. The method has allowed us to adeptly track both formal and informal institutional and organisational changes initiated by participants. It also helps capture the unintended outcomes of interventions. The national facilitators have played a key role in identifying and gathering (harvest) stories of change (outcomes), substantiating them, and analysing and describing *how* programme activities contributed to these changes. Additionally, NFs have ongoing dialogues with management through quarterly reports and informal discussions to continuously enhance the programme and tailor activities to participants' specific contexts.

2.4 Gender, inclusion, and diversity

Mainstreaming of gender equality and diversity has been an integral part of the design and implementation of the ITP programme. In addition, specific activities and processes to enhance the understanding of how gender equality and diversity relate to media regulatory reform have been developed.

A key highlight related to gender equality during the programme period is the launch and publication of the [Global Gender and Media Regulation Study](#). The study addresses a general lack of data and subsequent analysis when it comes to gender equality about media regulation and self-regulation. The research project was initiated in 2021 as a spin-off of the ITP in collaboration with the Fojo Media Institute (Linnaeus University) and the Department for Journalism, Media and

Communication (Gothenburg University). Six countries - Armenia, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Somalia, Sweden and Zimbabwe - were covered by the study, which resulted in a global analysis and six national reports.¹⁹

The ITP programme provided support to the project, addressing an identified gap in knowledge when it comes to gender equality in regulation and self-regulation of the media. The study has been distributed widely and was presented at the UN HR Council session in March 2023, where it claimed recognition from UN Special Rapporteur on promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Irene Khan.²⁰

The data and the findings have been used to update existing key documents within the ITP programme (handbooks, manuals, guidelines etc.) and for internal capacity building. In addition, the study findings have been used in different kinds of activities ranging from global seminars and specialised workshops/webinars to study visits. Findings of the study are being popularised and presented to all ITP participants (in different formats). A short video summarising the research has also been produced.

Other resources

Introducing gender and inclusion discussions early in the ITP process has been vital to stimulating the integration of gender perspective into the coming change processes. In addition to dedicated workshops, gender mainstreaming of general ITP manuals and handbooks have been important resources to engage the participants. One key document that has been gender-revised is the Change Initiative Handbook. A dedicated chapter that focuses specifically on gender was added to the ITP reference book (compulsory reading for all ITP participants) in 2022. In addition, International Media Support (IMS) has elaborated a briefing note on “Regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation in media and gender equality” which is considered a key document linked to (but separate from) the reference book.

The ITP online training platform has an integrated gender module (since 2019/2020), in which relevant gender concepts are explained and put into a media

context. A spectrum of gender-related issues is discussed, such as: why gender equality is good for the media business, gender equality in media code of ethics, and gender and diversity in public service. The module also features media experts who reflect and share their views on why gender equality is important in media reform.

The introductory gender module is followed by an online webinar on gender equality and diversity. Support for programme managers and teams is also provided by the ITP Gender Advisor, who holds overall responsibility for mainstreaming gender in the programme. During the reported period, the Gender Advisor participated in several activities (such as change initiative webinars) and contributed input at various stages of the processes. In general, the ITP extended management team has a strong gender profile, with several members possessing extensive knowledge and expertise in this field. In 2022, a new Programme Director (PD) with substantive gender expertise was recruited for the Asia programme. Additionally, considerable expertise is available within the regional/national teams and among ITP alumni.

During the development of the change initiatives, teams are encouraged to conduct gender analyses that may lead to incorporating a gender perspective into their projects, or in some cases, developing gender-specific projects. For instance, gender-sensitive reporting guidelines in Cambodia and practical guidelines on reporting gender-based violence in Guatemala, which include a list of resource people for media to contact on the matter, are two examples of such initiatives.

The programme has effectively integrated gender equality into complex discussions and change projects in the field of media regulation. What wasn't initially clear for many participants has gradually evolved into a broader understanding of the interconnectedness between media regulation/self-regulation and gender equality in society at large. In fact, according to the survey, most of the change initiatives have included the perspective of gender equality and social inclusion in the problem analysis and part of the change initiatives. (See section 3.1.2)

¹⁹ <https://fojo.se/en/global-study-gender-equality-and-media-regulation/>

²⁰ “The comparative data and analysis presented here increases the understanding of the ways and extent to which legislators and media regulatory bodies have carried out their mandate. This report is bound to be a key learning and a reference source for States, industry actors, civil society and other stakeholder working on the issue.”, Irene Khan.



3

PROGRAMME RESULTS OVERVIEW



In this section key highlights of results and changes will be presented. The changes referred to are often the results of simultaneous processes driven by ITP and several actors. The actions of the ITP in the change processes identified are often substantial and complementary to the already ongoing process. This report focuses on the effects that the ITP has had in the institutional and organisational framework on self-/co-/statutory regulation of the media sector.

3.1 Change initiative (according to our operational framework)

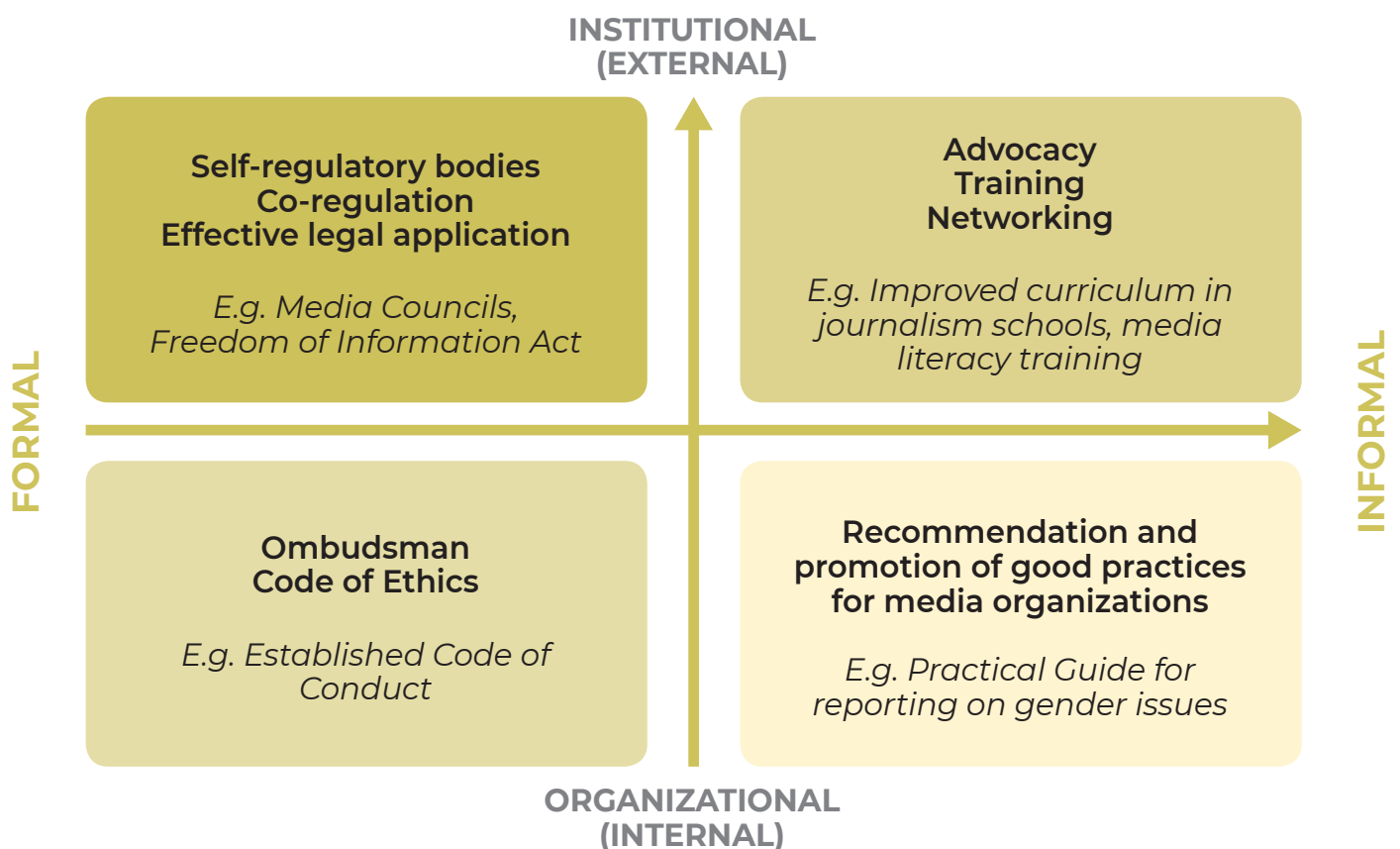
In this final report, we have updated the operational framework, introducing changes in both **institutional** and **organisational domains**. While the core essence of these concepts remains consistent with their previous definitions²¹, they have been refined to align more closely with the general concepts commonly employed in capacity development interventions.²²

Formal and informal institutional development

1. **Formal / institutional** (external) of the self-regulatory framework refers to the change initiatives including formalised media bodies such as the media councils and formal decisions contracts. Change initiatives that have contributed to new laws policies and legislative co-regulations are also included in this domain (see Figure 3: for the overall media governance model)
2. **Informal / institutional** (external) is referring to change initiatives that involved other entities such as academies, media groups on media self-regulation, media ethics, and other related public debates.

Formal and informal organisational development

1. **Formal / organisational** (internal) refers to formal code of ethics and ombudsperson functions within and cooperation between media houses.



²¹ In the previous annual report, we have labelled institutional changes as external and organisational changes as internal. However, the categorisation of this year is like previous years.

²² See for example Sida/capdev brief on Institutionsutveckling (May 2023)

2. **Informal / organisational** (internal) mainly refers to organisational culture and learnings on media ethics that go on within or/and between media houses.

The process of pushing the agenda for self-regulation often starts internally (inside organisations) in increasing awareness and then expands to a structured/formalised self-regulatory framework. Typically, the progress towards a more formalised institutional change follows this path:

1. *Internal Awareness of Media Ethics*: Media outlets internally cultivate an understanding of ethical standards, fostering discussions and acknowledging their significance in journalism.
2. *Formalising Ethical Guidelines*: Outlets codify ethical principles into official policies, sometimes appointing a media ombudsperson to ensure adherence.
3. *External Discussions on Self-Regulation*: Broader discussions among stakeholders occur, focusing on industry-wide self-regulation and sharing best practices.
4. *Formalising External Self-Regulation*: Collaborative efforts aim to create a wide-reaching self-regulatory framework, balancing media freedom and ethical standards.

The conditions for advocating self-regulation vary significantly among the countries participating in the ITP. As outlined in regional summaries and country report, each country and its associated change initiatives have identified unique entry points based on where they perceive opportunities for effecting change. For example, some countries/regions perceived informal institutional changes to be more feasible than formal ones.

Distribution of different types of change initiatives

Based on the above operational definition of the self-regulatory framework, change initiatives of all years' ITP participating countries are categorised as follows.

Total change initiatives in the four domains

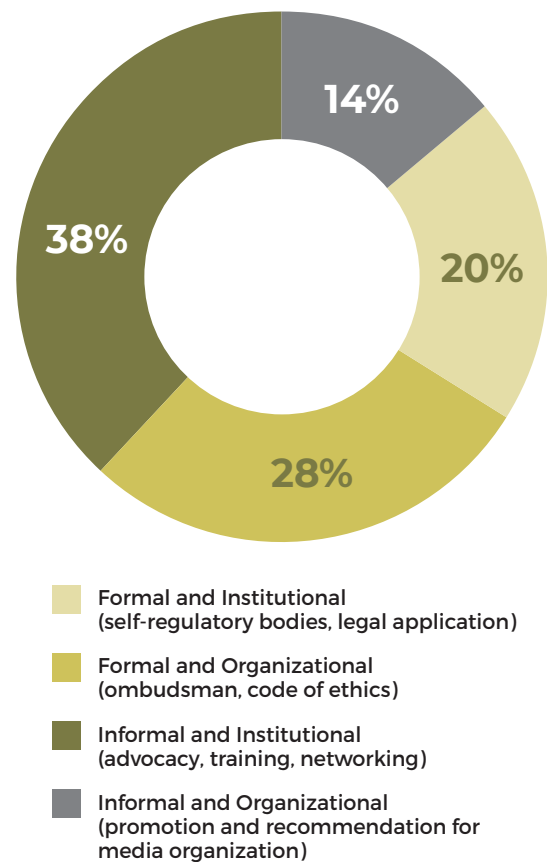


Figure 6: Change initiatives of all countries in different domains of the operational framework

From the data extracted by country reports, the change initiatives of all countries over the years spread differently between the four different dimensions of the operational framework. The highest percentage of change initiatives (38%) landed on the *informal and institutional* section of the operational framework while the lowest portion (14%) belonged to the *informal/organisational* category. However, the result also indicates well-balanced change initiatives between formal (48%) and informal (52%) dimensions which are crucial in facilitating effective capacity development. It is noted that while formal institutional and



organisational changes are important in carrying out systematic changes, informal institutional and organisational changes also play a major role in the change of norms and behaviours that can promote realistic reforms in practice.²³

3.1.1 National/institutional level changes

As shown in the table below, a significant number of participants who took part in the survey claim that the ITP to a large or some extent contributed to changes on the national level. The main examples of these changes are described in section 3.2 Regional Summaries and Country Reports (Annex 2).



ITP contributed to concrete changes on national level

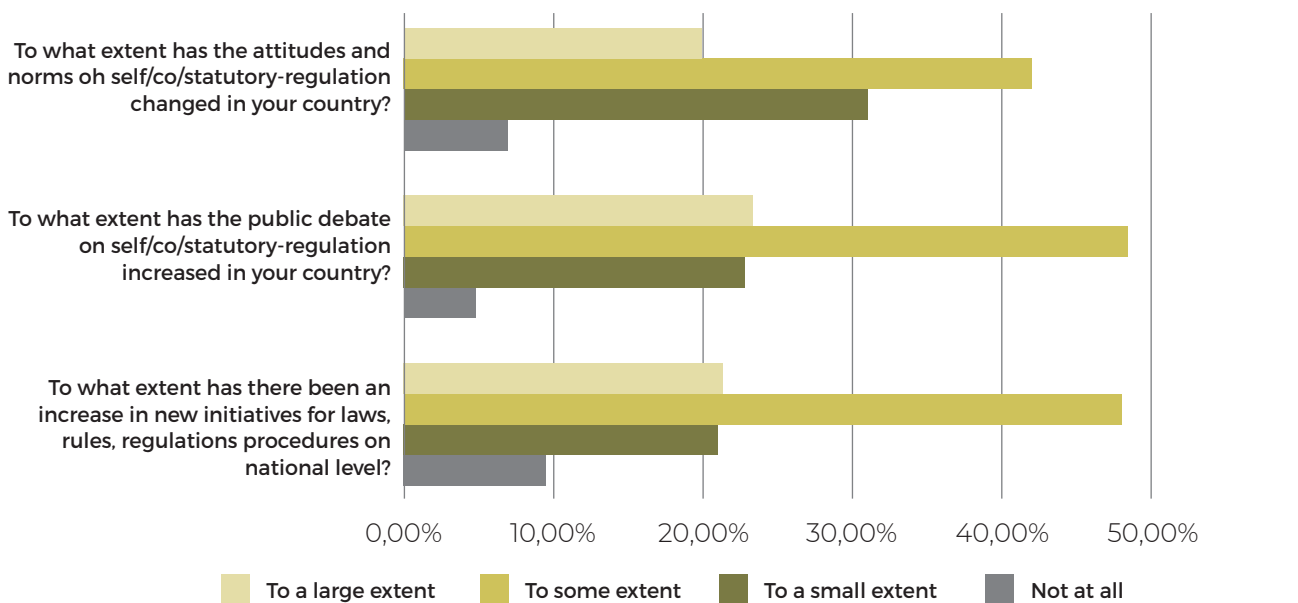


Figure 7: How participants considered ITP has contributed to changes in national level

The great majority of the participants from all cohorts claim that the ITP has significantly contributed to different attitudes and norms regarding self-regulation among the media community in the countries. About the same number of participants assert that the debate and initiatives for institutional change have been altered due to the programme.

The following is a summary of the participants' testimonials of how the ITP contributed to media development in their respective countries.²⁴ One significant

response is the **increased awareness and discussion** surrounding media self-regulation. Participants reported a substantial rise in discussions and awareness among stakeholders, governmental bodies, media professionals, and the public. The ITP has, according to many participants, contributed to **professional development**, equipping participants with knowledge, skills, and understanding of media self-regulation which helped them to develop ethical guidelines, tools, and advocacy efforts.

²³ See for example Sida/capdev brief on Institutionsutveckling (May 2023),

²⁴ Summaries extract from the comments of the survey question.

Also, the ITP has encouraged a focus on ethical journalism, improving quality, fact-checking, and adherence to ethical standards as well as gender-sensitive reporting. Many participants claim this shift in attitude is often crucial for maintaining the credibility and professionalism of media outlets.

A noteworthy development is the **formation of networks and councils** dedicated to responsible journalism and citizen engagement. These initiatives further strengthen the commitment to self-regulation and ethical practices within the media industry. The programme's emphasis on **networking and collaboration** provided participants with a platform for engaging with diverse stakeholders, fostering cooperation and discussions on media self-regulation. This collaborative approach has proven effective in bringing about positive change. The ITP has stimulated **advocacy and dialogue** by encouraging conversations between various stakeholders. This has, according to many participants, led to advocacy for self-regulation and improved communication between media, citizens, and regulatory bodies, fostering a more transparent and accountable media environment.

Legislative changes have been observed in some countries as a direct or indirect result of the ITP. Legislative amendments addressing self-regulation in media laws have been introduced, reflecting a shift towards more comprehensive and accountable media governance.



Participants claim the programme has been instrumental to forming organisations like press councils and influence decision-makers toward self-regulation. This has, in some cases, led to the **formation of groups/organisations** aimed at enhancing media ethics, professionalism, and freedom. Educational initiatives, including programmes, workshops, and seminars, have been a natural effect of the ITP, with alumni actively engaging in sharing their knowledge and experiences in media self-regulation.

International collaboration has been facilitated through visits to other countries, interactions with international experts and the sharing of experiences. This exposure has contributed significantly to understanding successful self-regulation practices in Scandinavia and other regions. The observed "shift in perspectives" is in itself an important result of the ITP.

In sum, participation in the ITP has brought about a multitude of positive changes, ranging from increased awareness, contribution to legislative reform, professional development and international collaboration. The programme's holistic approach to media self-regulation has not only equipped participants with the necessary skills but also fostered a culture of responsibility and cooperation within the media industry. While challenges remain, the overall impact of the ITP on media self-regulation is undeniably significant and far-reaching. For concrete examples of the changes/results, please see the regional summaries and country reports.

Voices from participants:

"We are carrying out self-regulation initiatives in the country, which were not seen before."

"The motto: if you do not self-regulate, someone else (government) regulates you stricter"

"ITP initiative is filtrated at the national level directly due the fact that all ITP alumni directly and indirectly are engaged with the government."

"I change my attitude and perception of self-regulations and believe that I can make a change in our system from within."

3.1.2 Gender equality and Social Inclusion

Did you include any gender equality and/or social inclusion aspects in the development of your change initiatives?

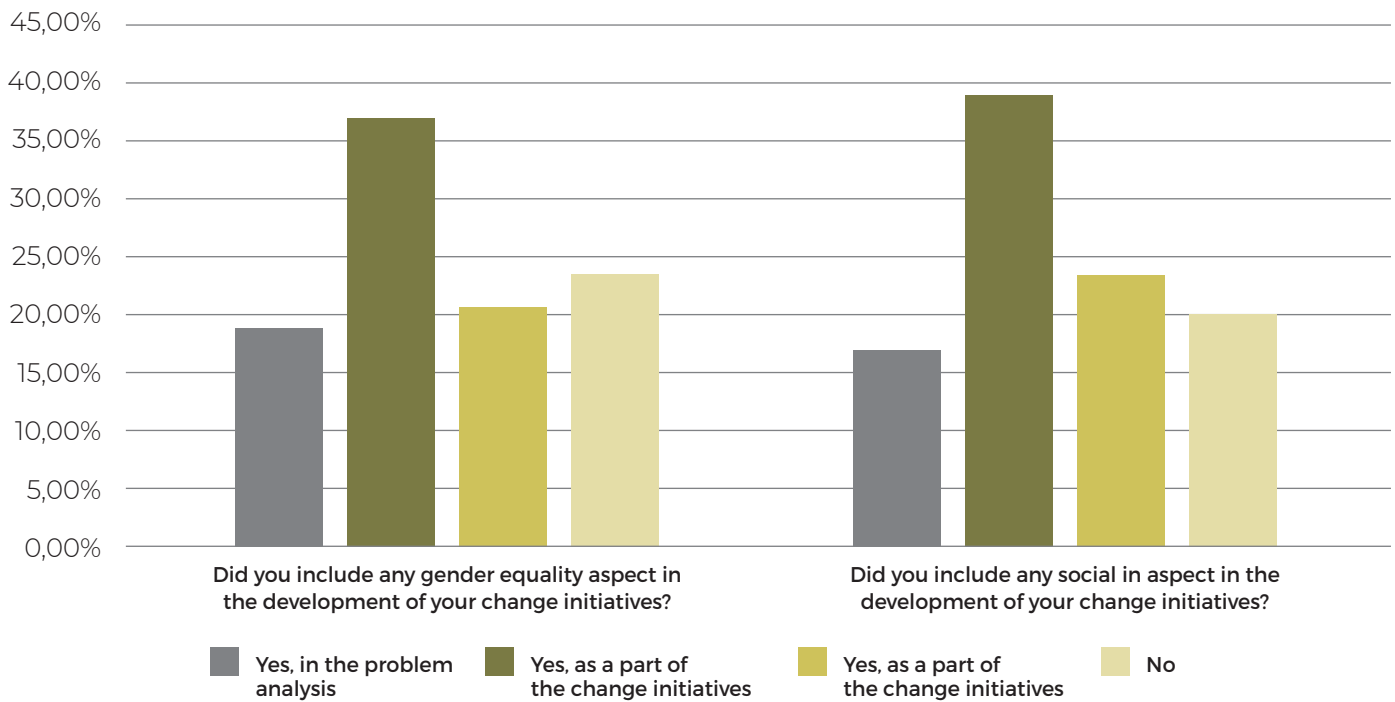


Figure 8 To what extent ITP participants include gender equality and social inclusion in change initiatives

Around 35% of participants claim they have included gender equality aspects as part of the change project. Around 20% consider it to be a core element of the change initiatives. In terms of social inclusion, more than 20% of the participants include it as the core of the change initiatives. Overall, these responses collectively demonstrate efforts to embed gender equality and social inclusion within media and journalism practices, acknowledging the importance of representation, ethical standards, education, and policy initiatives in fostering more inclusive and diverse media environments.

The change initiatives involving gender mainstreaming in media ethics, education and self-regulation are:

- Practical guide for journalists: How to cover violence against women (Guatemala)
- Training for 50 journalists in reporting violence against women and girls (Vietnam)
- MOU between media outlets on code of conduct for women in media (Morocco)
- Gender-sensitive reporting guidelines in Khmer and English in journalists' community (Cambodia)

- Media stakeholders collaborated to establish a joint online platform about Gender and Media (Tunisia)
- Developed an assessment tool for gender and media to be used internally (Tunisia)
- Online platform on gender and media used internally by the institutions (Tunisia)



Voices from participants:

“I learned how to mainstream gender equality in media codes of conduct and practice.”

“In digital platforms, images of women and children are often used as clickbait. Here the understanding of self-regulation contributes to creating a gender-sensitive journalistic environment.”

“Gender equality was always taken into account in both the curriculum development and the participation of journalists. Self-regulation norms and their dissemination should not differ based on gender and, by definition, should be socially inclusive as they are based on human rights principles.”

“The explicit consideration of a gender perspective and intersectionality was a key aspect in the development of the Project for Change on Self-Regulation. One of our objectives was to raise awareness of sexism and objectification on television as a violation of women’s human rights.”

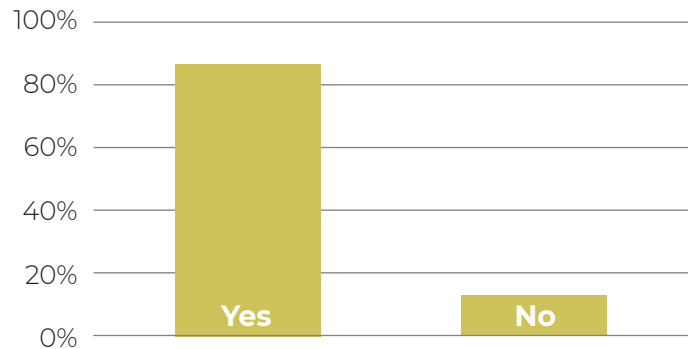
**3.1.3 Changes in organisation****Do you consider that the ITP Programme has contributed to any concrete change in your organisation?**

Figure 9 Participants’ opinion on how ITP contributed to concrete change in their organisations

More than 80% of the participants consider ITP has contributed to concrete change in their organisations. For example, participants claim that there is an increased understanding among members about the positive effects of media self-regulation in developed democracies. Many see an increased level of **collaboration** with other organisations and experts to advance media ethics and self-regulation. Academic institutions have integrated self-regulation principles into **educational curricula** for future journalists.

Other examples are **advocacy efforts** to safeguard press freedom and challenge restrictive laws affecting the media, as well as **improvement in journalistic quality**, understanding of media laws, and regulatory mechanisms. These statements collectively reflect a widespread shift towards understanding, implementing, and advocating for media self-regulation, encompassing various aspects such as gender equality, ethical considerations, legislation, and educational initiatives within media organisations.

Voices from participants:

“Our newsroom now counts on my advice when it comes to some decisions.”

“We have developed a verification bot to combat disinformation during elections and crisis periods like disease outbreaks.”

“We are incorporating it in our curriculum to educate future journalists.”

3.2 Regional Summaries by Programme Directors

In this section the Programme Directors have summarised a) *Institutional Level Insights/results*, which include highlighting the changes of the ITP on participating institutions, new institutions that have emerged thanks to the ITP, b) *Regional Level Learnings*, i.e. broader regional insights and learnings from the ITP such as common trends, challenges, and opportunities that have emerged across the regions and c) *Forward-Looking Perspective* i.e. new collaborations, partnerships, or initiatives that have been sparked thanks to the programme.



3.2.1 Eastern/ Southern Africa

PROGRAMME DIRECTORS: Lars Tallert (2018-2019) & Annicka Flovin (2019-2023)

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Institutional level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralisation of complaints handling mechanism in Media Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kenya media sector working group becomes a strong coalition to oversee the performance of the Media Council Training on media ethics in journalism schools and networking
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uganda Editors' Guild created Committee under Uganda Editor's Guild to review editorial guidelines Uganda Editors' Guild created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uganda Media Sector Working Group News Literacy Campaign Media On The Go (resource centre for information regarding media laws and regulation)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Efficacy of Access to Information Act Make the work of Media Council of Tanzania more visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive Digital Business Module Strengthening journalism curricula to include media accountability and mediation of media disputes Incorporated course outlines on media ethics in several universities
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing Media Development Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-ignite conversations on media self-regulation among stakeholders
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilised media law reforms Repealed the authoritarian Access to Information and established the Freedom of Information Act Cabinet enhanced the transparency and implementation of the Freedom of Information Act Opening television and community radio stations licensing 	

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Organisational level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Editorial guidelines adopted by 40 media outlets in community and regional levels · Chief editors committed to establishing public editor role · Promote the adoption of the establishment of public officer role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Individual head of journalism school reviewed curriculum at department levels
Uganda		
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Guideline for Online Content Producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consultative meetings with Editors on media self-regulation
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strengthen media associations and develop a code of ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase knowledge and understanding of media regulation through meetings with journalists
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strengthening internal self-regulatory systems 	

A) Institutional level insights/results**Kenya**

ITP 1 initiated a critical focus on raising awareness of media freedom. Collaborative efforts involving the **Kenya Media Sector Working Group**, civil society, and media defenders resulted in active engagement with the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), emphasising the necessity of a diverse coalition in upholding democratic principles.

ITP 2 delved into fortifying in-house media self-regulation, introducing **editorial guidelines** to regional and community media outlets in Kenya. With 40% of the target media outlets adopting these guidelines, a tangible improvement in professional conduct within media houses was achieved. Collaboration among editors, MCK, the Communications Authority, and community media associations underscored the importance of networking and commitment to effecting positive changes.

ITP 3 centred on fostering solidarity and support for the **Media Council's Complaints Commission**, achieving decentralisation of complaints handling to Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret, and Meru. While challenges like parliamentary approval and insufficient lobbying were noted, the initiative stressed the necessity of coalition-building and stakeholder commitment for successful media self-regulation.

ITP 4 aimed to enhance in-house self-regulation by promoting **public editor** roles. Six mainstream media houses adopted public editor offices, showcasing the effectiveness of complementary relationships with self-regulatory mechanisms. Engaging top editors in providing voluntary public editor services to regional media outlets and blogger associations expanded the conversation on the need for in-house media self-regulation.

ITP 5 focused on instilling **ethics training** at the university level, fostering collaboration between academia and media houses. While facing challenges in the slow adoption of changes by all universities, the project highlighted the importance of persistent lobbying. The individual-level change was recognised as an accessible entry point for broader organisational and institutional transformations.

Uganda

The first batch (ITP 1) founded the **Editors' Guild**. This was the first step in building a professional organisation of editors and content managers that promotes self-regulation. The Editors' Guild has given media organisations a credible platform, a common voice and effective peer-to-peer mechanism to promote self-regulation and to hold each other accountable.

The next cohort, ITP 2, followed and set up the **Uganda Media Sector Working Group**, UMSWG, with inspiration from Kenya. This multi stakeholder platform aims

at promoting effective regulation, which includes self-regulation of the media industry. UMSWG was formed at a sector level, involving all stakeholders, to be the driving force behind reforms and development of the media industry. It has organised conversations on media sector reforms and has also become the umbrella body which annually organises the World Press Freedom Day in Uganda.

The last team, ITP 5, had its focus on setting up a committee under the Uganda Editors' Guild that will hold journalists accountable: **Editorial Guidelines and Editorial Standards Committee**. The committee is reviewing editorial guidelines and aims to create more trust in the self-regulatory system.

These examples from Uganda show how the ITP has achieved a long-lasting impact. The work is on-going, and the ITP alumni network is solid, as are the new organisations.

Tanzania

ITP 1 shaped the vision for all the participating teams: to increase actors in the promotion of self-regulation in the country to give media more supporters advocating for media self-regulation. The goal was to enhance a strong, professional, and independent media. Several ITP cohorts have been working closely with the Media Council of Tanzania, MCT, which has operated for 27 years overseeing the ethical conduct and accountability of the media industry.

The last change project by ITP 5 aims at developing the journalism programmes at the universities: **Strengthening the journalism curricula to include issues of Media Accountability and Resolution of Media Disputes**. One of the objectives of the initiatives is to make the work of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) more visible by using their case studies in the mediation of media disputes.

MCT is now under pressure in Tanzania, being threatened by the Media Services Act of 2016. The government intends to start a statutory council of its own. The ITP collaboration with MCT is highlighting the importance of the independent work conducted by MCT, enhancing the knowledge of MCT's work and the self-regulatory system and putting the organisation in the spotlight.

Zambia

The ITP has built a bridge between different sectors of journalism and media to enable discussion and future consensus of the self-regulatory model to be adopted. The last cohort's change initiative project aimed at building a **Media Development Hub**. The hub, still a work in progress, will contain information on media, research papers and material from the ITP Basecamp etc. Since the media actors in Zambia have been divided for many years, this Media Hub is an important step to creating unity and a common ground regarding the understanding and knowledge of self-regulation as a model and media ethics.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe the vision of all ITP teams has been to contribute to the enactment of a media regulatory framework that supports an independent, pluralistic, and diverse media structure. This has been done by using a multi-stakeholder approach which includes influencing stakeholders, media houses, law makers, political actors, cabinet etc.

The different ITP cohorts have been able to influence several institutions, through persistent work and lobbying skills. The ITP teams have accompanied, informed, and advocated for an ambitious legal reform that has successfully ended in the **repeal of the authoritarian Access to Information and Protection to Privacy Act** and the introduction of the **Freedom of Information Act**.²⁵

By doing so, the teams have also influenced the attitude and interaction between government institutions and media and civil society; today there is a sense of increased dialogue and openness. The legal change also led to the establishment of a **new co-regulatory mechanism**. The Media Practitioners Bill was amended in 2023 to give a formal recognition of self-regulation. Now the statutory Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) will delegate its regulatory powers to self-regulatory mechanisms. Furthermore, the United States of America aid agency USAID for the first time explicitly supported the media programme in Zimbabwe in recognition of the momentum built around reforming and strengthening the media sector.

²⁵ Success story of the repeal of AIPPA can be found in Annex 2-Country Reports, Section 1.5 Zimbabwe

B) Regional level learning

The participants have gained increased understanding of challenges, opportunities, threats, and trends in the region. Several countries are facing similar challenges, with lack of understanding of self-regulation as an independent tool, lack of a proper institutional framework with clearly defined attributions and responsibilities, lack of unity in the media industry, poor media economy, declining advertisement market, and an increased influence from the tech industry. Several countries have previous poor experiences in the field of self-regulation, where attempts have failed, due to lack of support, resources and political resistance.

This experience has created an opportunity to learn from other countries, and to discuss possible ways forward. The ITP network is very generous in sharing knowledge, advice, new research, and information related to the specific situation in the country. This communication is carried out through the different WhatsApp groups. Every day, the **WhatsApp groups** are used as an important channel for spreading news and information about media related matters, as well as alerts on political activities that are working against media freedom and freedom of expression. The discussions are both frank and supportive, often referring to useful web links and documents and/or information. Through the app, the different ITP teams are also self-organising physical meetings, while travelling to countries for other work-related reasons.

This is a side effect of the ITP, which has enabled strong mutual networks, and friendship, among the ITP alumni. The digital tools are completely automatic, filled with updated information on activities, such as seminars, presentations, journalism courses and relevant information regarding self-regulation and media business in the ITP countries. WhatsApp has also become an important platform where ITP alumni share ads with job opportunities in the whole region.

Some of the change projects are similar in the countries. Kenya and Tanzania have been sharing ideas and information since the last cohorts (ITP 5) are focusing on journalism education aimed at promoting training and application of ethics as the foundation of media self-regulation. The collaboration between ITP countries is important and useful, generating ongoing discussions and personal contacts.

C) Forward-looking perspective

In **Tanzania** there is an ongoing discussion with Jamii Forum, an organisation which had a participant in the first ITP-batch. Now there is a process to put into action an organisation/formal coalition which would continue the work done under the ITP.

The **Swedish Embassy** in Tanzania has put some funds into Jamii Forums to assist the ITP alumni through the transition to sustain the principles and spirit of ITP. Some objectives are:

- To create a community of practice to document experiences, lessons learned and best practices in the country;
- To act as a bridge between different actors in capacity building of media (the government, private sector, media) on issues of self-regulation, press freedom, access to information and freedom of expression;
- To create a One-Stop Centre/Knowledge Hub on media issues.

The alumni network of Tanzania is planning on carrying out different activities, such as establishing a **Community of Practice (CoP)** and convene annual CoP forums (local and regional), document and publish best practices, experiences on media issues, work with capacity building to media organisations on media self-regulation/sustainability and conduct operational research and surveys related to media issues.

The **Tanzania Digital Awards**, an offshoot of ITP3 change initiative, was introduced to recognise individuals and organisations using digital technologies effectively in the media sector.

In **Uganda**, the ITP alumni often get invitations to take part in seminars, meetings and events to discuss matters on self-regulation and media ethics. They are regarded as experts representing the **“ITP think tank”**. This fact might ultimately translate into sustained public debate about self-regulation. It has also increased the interest on a higher level (government, official offices), as well as the general knowledge on media regulation issues.

In **Zimbabwe**, annual **ITP Alumni networking** meetings will be organised to review and assess the environment to keep media regulation discourses alive. This idea could be extended to the other participating countries too. In addition, other key stakeholders can also be identified to sustain the work of the ITP at a national level.

3.2.2 Latin America

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR: David Isaksson

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Institutional level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Promote the establishment of Media Observatory · Propose the set up of Economically Independent Competitive Fund · Implementation of a self-regulation framework within community media organisations and several others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Training programme on journalists' rights · Massive Open Online Course on security protocols and Code of ethics · Awareness Campaign on aggression against journalists · Incorporate the ideas of ethical guidelines and responsible journalistic practice in curricula in communication studies in the university
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creation of Alliance for the Encouragement of Self-Regulation (ALDEA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Massive Online course on self-regulation
El Salvador		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Incorporate self-regulation and media ethics in the new curriculum of journalism studies · Fact check online platform created for public use · Research on promoting media literacy among young people · Promote media ethics in digital journalism
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creation of the Human Rights Ombudsperson Office for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, directed by Ruth del Valle, an ITP alumna. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Let's talk about rights (podcast series on self-regulation and freedom of expression)
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Implementation of a self-regulation framework within community media organisations and several others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Advocacy school for training in self-regulation and ethical standards of media · Public debate against corruption and defence of freedom of expression · Lectures on self-regulation among influential stakeholders · Research on "Creating the Defender of Freedom of Expression in Honduras"

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Organisational level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Bolivia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Six information booklets created and distributed to journalist associations
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Implementation Guide for Sustained and Systematic Self-Regulatory Practices in Electoral Reporting · Creation of "Transparentometer" for media outlets to adopt ethical standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Study "Characterisation of media self-regulation in Colombia: two approaches, one reality" and "Toolbox for self-regulation"

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Organisational level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical decalogue created in media outlets • Campaign in adopting ethical standards in more media outlets 	
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Ethics established in media outlets in Guatemala • Practical guide for journalists: How to cover violence against women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic concepts on self-regulation (interactive theoretical document) • Acceso.gt (website on the Guatemalan Law on Access to Public Information)
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guides and protocols in dealing with disinformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-regulation portal called FOCA developed • Protocols and practical guides in detecting disinformation

A) Institutional level insights/results**Bolivia**

Within the Bolivian journalists' community, a prevailing sentiment of vulnerability and constant danger exists. This feeling intensifies among journalists who refrain from aligning with any particular power. The push on creating change initiatives led to a shift in mindset among participants. Initially focused on denunciations, they transformed into seekers of alternatives and solutions.

While engaged in developing their Change Initiative for a whole year, participants "recognised the importance of establishing a project that could have short- and long-term impacts". Hence, all Bolivian projects exhibited a vision that extended beyond the programme's duration.

The collaboration with **Fundación para el Periodismo (FPP)** stands as a beacon of sustained partnership for the ITP programme in Bolivia. The partnership between ITP-3 and ERBOL not only marks a successful collaboration in implementing a training programme but also demonstrates the transformative potential of inter-organisational alliances spurred by the programme.²⁶ By strengthening ERBOL's ethical foundations and engaging its vast network of radio stations, this initiative extended the impact of the ITP programme to diverse corners of Bolivia. The ensuing seminars on ethics and self-regulation illustrate how an alliance, beyond the immediate goals, can influence a network's ethos, emphasising the ripple effect of impactful partnerships in the realm of journalism and media.

Colombia

At the beginning of the ITP programme, there was a lack of awareness of the benefits of self-regulation with regard to audiences and the strengthening of democratic principles; there was also a reluctance to establish it as a mechanism for transparency and sustainability and a lack of interest in implementing it due to fear of self-censorship, as if this ethical framework were contrary to freedom of expression.

Therefore, the ITP's mission in Colombia has been to contribute significantly to the **understanding of the benefits of self-regulation** and the appropriation of systematic self-regulation practices through the creation and strengthening of training mechanisms and professional networks.

Self-regulation instrument that invites newsrooms and media to adopt the ethical standards necessary to regain the trust of audiences in quality information. It consists of 10 rules based on established standards to ensure media transparency in the production and dissemination of content. It is aimed at media outlets and journalists, with the objective to enhance a way of reporting that is more transparent with their audiences. The **Transparentometer**²⁷ has been piloted and has a communication strategy for its socialisation and appropriation.

In Colombia, journalists, lawyers, publicists, communicators and audio-visual communication professionals have promoted a platform for dialogue that has contributed significantly to promoting an ecosystem governed by the principles of self-regulation, understood

²⁶ Success story can be found in Annex 2-Country Reports, Section 4.1 Bolivia

²⁷ Success story can be found in Annex 2-Country Reports, Section 4.2 Colombia

as the voluntary commitment of the media and the people who make up and represent them to establish their own clear and explicit rules of the game in order to develop a free, independent and responsible journalistic and content production exercise, guaranteeing compliance with social goals, human rights, democracy and ethics.

In addition, the Truth commission for reconciliation (<https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co>) also mentioned the ITP programme as an important inspiration regarding how to develop media relations.

Guatemala

The great contribution of the ITP programme to Guatemala is that it has generated dialogues that did not exist before the programme. Journalists from different media and actors from state institutions and civil society were brought together to discuss the importance of ethics and self-regulation in the exercise of freedom of expression.

The work of all cohorts of the ITP programme added to the building of a dialogue and to the idea that self-regulation is important to protect the exercise of press freedom and journalism, especially in an urgent context that requires ethical responses to abuses of power.

The first cohort created a **Code of Ethics**, the elaboration of which involved journalists and the media in a debate that, until before the ITP Programme, did not exist in Guatemala. The media began to gather around initiatives that allowed for dialogue on self-regulation, which was approached pragmatically so that it would not be confused with “self-censorship”.

By 2022, the criminalisation of journalists had escalated considerably: journalists were in exile, others were in prison and *el Periódico*, one of the most important media outlets in the country, was closed down. In this context, discussions on self-regulation became vital.

The biggest, unexpected impact of the ITP in Guatemala came right at the start. In 2019, while Cohort 1 was identifying its stakeholders, it proposed a meeting with the then Human Rights Ombudsperson, Jordán Rodas (now in exile), to talk to him about the ombudsperson model applied by Sweden as part of its self-regulation process. After that meeting, the Guatemalan ombudsperson decided to add journalists to an ombudsperson's office he was about to create, which led to the creation of the PDH's Office for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, directed by Ruth del Valle, an ITP alumna.

Honduras

In Honduras, the ITP's work over five years has generated debate, knowledge, and experiences of change by promoting codes of ethics, a manual on self-regulation, practical guides, and a podcast on disinformation, as well as generating a community of alumni and strategic allies with identified priorities around the promotion and encouragement of self-regulation as an important mechanism for freedom of expression. The contribution of Swedish cooperation and the consortium of institutions that formed and promoted this initiative has been substantial in placing the importance of self-regulation in strengthening freedom of expression and societies in democratic contexts on the agenda of the media, academia, and society in general.

The practice of communication in community radio stations was, until before 2019, quite empirical, without the minimum techniques to practice journalism. Self-regulation did then not exist among the community media and the Association of Community Media in Honduras (AMCH). The ITP programme laid the groundwork for media self-regulation to be seen as the way to better structure communication to safeguard the lives of people and their work (e.g. against equipment seizures).

Self-regulation has been conceived by the community media as one of the strengths that will allow the so-called “Third sector of communication: community media” to be considered within the media ecosystem as a communication model open to diverse voices, especially from the most vulnerable groups that are not part of the media agenda of the country's large social communication.

B) Regional level learning

The main added value of the ITP programme lies in the selection of participants, as few other programmes incorporate participants from civil society, journalists, media owners, as well as public and private sector actors in the same joint workspace. Despite the risky nature of these spaces and the inevitable conflicts, it was possible to generate dialogues and exchanges of ideas that otherwise would not have been possible. Participants also highlight the value and opportunity of bringing together institutions that have not traditionally collaborated with each other.

Finding and discussing joint ways to counter disinformation has another important features of the programme in which self-regulation plays a key role. Sev-

eral cohorts in the countries have also chosen to work in disinformation issues and ethics.

Media self-regulation in societies in democratic contexts was not an issue on the agenda of public debate, not even among media and journalists when the programme started. On the contrary, self-regulation was seen as something similar to self-censorship. For example, a perception survey on freedom of expression and self-regulation conducted by the second ITP group (2020) in Honduras, revealed that 40% of journalists and social communicators associated self-regulation with censorship.

The ITP has helped change this perception as more and more editors and journalists see self-regulation as a tool to increase their credibility and reduce the risk of government interference.

During the project period several tools and proposals for self-regulation have been developed, such as codes of ethics, conversations, or toolboxes, which serve to reflect on the practice of journalism and the importance of working rigorously. This is something that has taken place both in the individual countries and on regional level.

The programme also consistently encouraged collaboration between cohorts. This fostered a sense of community, shared expertise, complemented context analyses, and facilitated active cooperation.

Learning in action

The ITP was able to build strategic alliances in polarised contexts, creating trust and credibility among the members of the different cohorts and partner organisations in order to design, implement and promote their projects for change. These gradual change processes have taken place in traditional media, community media, digital media, parliamentary debate, prosecution, and the court of justice.

The methodology of continuously revisiting and refining concepts, objectives, areas of impact, and alliances played a vital role in constructing the change initiatives. Many of the programme's participants have never worked in change project management before, as many were journalists who are exclusively dedicated to journalism. Now, they have acquired skills in how to undertake a collective and multidisciplinary project. This, several participants pointed out, is something that they find very useful for the future.

C) Forward-looking perspective

A special website for ITP Latin America

Early on, ITP Latin America decided to create its own website, which we were the only regional programme to do. The website (<https://www.auto-regulacion.org>) was developed by the first cohort and has since been updated. The website will now be remade in order to function as a source of inspiration and as a learning tool for others who are interested in media ethics and self-regulation.

Interest from other donors

The ITP experience has attracted the interest of other donors interested in self-regulation, freedom of expression and disinformation. In Honduras the German cooperation GIZ has funded protocols for community and regional radio stations to implement their codes of ethics and to move towards the creation of the figure of the Audience Ombudsperson. In El Salvador, other donors have shown and given interest.

Regional contacts

Besides the network created among the participants from different cohorts, contacts have also been established with media, academia and regional actors in other Latin American countries outside of the programme. This will contribute to long-term sustainability.²⁸

Contacts with ITP participants from Ukraine and the Middle East

A sustainable regional network

Participants from the five cohorts have now formed a joint network for exchange and discussions and are in dialogue with possible donors that could finance the network as we plan to continue to organise digital regional seminars and possibly also live meetings in the countries.

A Massive open online course (MOOC)

Together with Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia, members of ITP LA are developing a MOOC on media and self-regulation. The course is mostly financed and the team behind the course expect the work to commence soon. With the MOOC, a large part of what was produced by ITP LA will be made public in an accessible academic format.

²⁸ On the initiative of ITP Latin America, several seminars were organised with ITP's in Eastern Europe and the MENA region. The seminars were very appreciated and has led to a continuous contact between participants from different regions.

3.2.3 Asia

PROGRAMME DIRECTORS: Carolina Jemby (2019-2022) and Helena Thorfinn (2022-2023)

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Institutional level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Information and Broadcast and Bangladesh Press Council acknowledged the status on how media is regulated by the existing laws, rules and policies and recommendations on the need for self-regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media critiques, academia and CSOs started discussion on media self-regulation.
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A policy paper brief on the setting up of a Press Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultative workshops on discussion of setting up Press Council among stakeholders
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of local media-citizen councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting public awareness and knowledge of media-citizen councils
Vietnam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fake news syllabus created and used in journalism schools Training for 50 journalists in violence against women and girls Creation of Media Club (F.I.K.A.) to connect stakeholders to discuss social issues and media self-regulation

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Organisational level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted 2 news outlets in the process of reviewing their editorial policy & guidelines and developing new business strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 5 ITP fellows utilised their knowledge in their respective organisations.
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender sensitive reporting guidelines in Khmer and English in journalists' community 	
Philippines		
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated guidelines in reporting violence against women in the code of ethics in several media houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reference book based on the OSCE's self-regulation model was translated into the local language to facilitate training and learning

A) Institutional level insights/results

Bangladesh

The first change initiative in Bangladesh was created to focus on how gender equality is integrated into media law and policy as well as developing an understanding of the available media laws and the use and misuse of it in the media sector. The research was

shared with the Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Information and Broadcast and the Chair of the Bangladesh Press Council for taking future steps.

The second change initiative included conceptualising what “sustainable journalism and media self-regulation” could be in a Bangladeshi context. The vision

of this change initiative was that leading media outlets will gain knowledge about the concept of sustainable journalism (SJ) and that at least three news outlets will practice it within the next three to five years. Through this initiative, an evidence-based desk review was carried out.

A later study was conducted with the objective of, “advancing self-regulation in digital platforms to enhance credibility of news content” in mind. The findings from the study were shared with stakeholders during a consultation that included members of the press council, the joint secretary of the Editors Guild, trustees of the Broadcast Journalist Centre, editors and newsroom managers.

Through the discussion and dissemination of the research findings, the significance of introducing media self-regulation is now being widely discussed.

As a spinoff of the ITP activities, an initiative has been taken to include self-regulation as part of the curriculum in the Media and Law course at Rajshahi University.

Additionally, as a National Facilitator of Bangladesh, the NGO MRDI (Media Research and Development Institute) will prioritise self-regulation while designing new projects and implementing existing initiatives.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, the first change initiative produced Gender Sensitive Reporting Guidelines in both Khmer and English, which aimed at helping Cambodian journalists to improve gender reporting.

These guidelines have been used by the journalist community and have been presented in a number of workshops related to gender reporting. The guidelines have been published online where professional and citizen journalists can access them.

But the more institutional level change initiative in Cambodia came with later batches. ITP insights paved the way for a wider discussion on the need for a new and independent press council. After the ITP programme, it was clear to the participants that Cambodia needed to set up an effective and independent mechanism to replace the government-led tools.

ITP, in collaboration with UNESCO, organised a series of consultations on “Paving the Way Toward Establishment of the Press Council of Cambodia” with pub-

lishers, senior editors and journalists’ associations to discuss possible models of self- and co-regulation for Cambodian media.

On an organisational level, the team members’ respective organisations have fully supported their staff in this endeavour. For instance, Transparency International Cambodia and Cambodian Centre for Independent Media, (where two fellows of Batch 3 are from), financially contributed to the project to raise awareness and collect inputs on the possibility of establishing a Press Council in Cambodia. Other national key players like the Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association and UNESCO Cambodia also supported the ITP fellows’ Change Initiative financially.

Additionally, the fact that ITP has had participants from the Senate and Ministry of Information has benefited the projects since there is a channel to directly communicate the concept of media self-regulation and its importance to high-ranking officials in the government body and Senate.

Other institutions that have been involved are Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ), which is closed to the Ministry of Information.

Subsequently, UNESCO also conducted a workshop on self- and co-regulation in March 2023 by having renowned experts on media- and information-related legislation from the Centre for Law and Democracy, in which the ITP fellows also participated. The workshop aimed to deepen the understanding and knowledge of the rules and importance of professional complaints systems for the media to promote freedom of expression both online and offline.

CamboJA has now engaged ITP alumni in their four-year plan from 2024. CamboJA will get ITP to be involved in discussion on the Press Council and give financial support for alumni meetings twice per year as well as any future activities that need their support.

Philippines

In the case of the Philippines, a localised approach and strong commitment from the local communities has shown a different way from in Cambodia to galvanise interest for the mechanisms of self-regulation via a press council. It is described by team members as “an understatement” to say that the ITP was a catalyst for these local councils. On an institutional level, the Philippines Press Institute (PPI) has gained new momentum as a hub for this development.

Within a month of the completion of the programme in 2022, the Press Institute, now supported by other institutions represented in the team, was able to conduct orientations in three cities (Batangas, Iloilo and Davao). These sessions led to further activities leading to the actual establishment of the councils.

In 2023, they held orientations in Angeles, Kalibo and Tacloban. As of this writing, three more orientations are in the pipeline for Surigao, General Santos and Cotabato. Other prospective councils not yet named are already in touch with the Press Institute.

The teams consist of representatives from the Asian Centre for Journalism, Cebu Citizens-Press Council, Centre for International Law, Commission on Human Rights, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Mindanao Times, Philippine Press Institute and VERA Files.

Vietnam

In Vietnam the concept of self-regulation is basically unknown to the media sector and to journalists. It is even misinterpreted as self-censorship, something that almost all journalists and media managers in Vietnam understand and do very well. As a recurring theme for all the change initiatives is the investment in young generations, the future media professionals.

The first batch chose to raise awareness of fake news among journalism students to prevent them from being the disseminators of fake news on social networks. The team conducted a survey of nearly 1000 students at the Academy of Journalism and Communication. The survey was also conducted in two other universities in the central and south region, bringing the sample size up to 1620 students. One of the key findings has shown that up to 91% of students have once been fooled by fake news.

Following the result, a syllabus on how to detect fake news has been built and used in the training programme for undergraduate students and in post-graduate school as well. During their tenure, a series of webinars were created to provide tools in detecting fake news. These tools are still being used and updated in the work of lecturers and trainers of team members at different universities.

The next group realised that there was a language barrier in disseminating the knowledge provided in ITP's training programmes, so they decided to translate a book by OSCE's self-regulation model and added how this model applied in some media houses and

training agencies in Vietnam. The book would function as a reference book for journalism students and reporters. Members of the group also participated in webinars under a variety of topics and used the book as a resource to introduce the operating model of the self-regulation mechanism.

A participant made contact with UNESCO to create a project on a campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and girls. The participants in Batch 3 decided to build upon this and secured funding with UNESCO to organise training for 50 journalists from different media organisations on violence against women and girls. This was incorporated into the "code of ethics" in two of the leading media houses in the country including VN Express and Thanh Nien. In the online edition of VN Express Newspaper a sub-column was created that connects lawyers and experts dealing with the issues. The paper has traffic upwards of 43 million visits a day. In addition, the team held another two webinars for 40 young journalists and journalism students, in which they invited a lawyer and a veteran international journalist to share their knowledge and experience of reporting on the topic with the group.

During the visit to Sweden the group was inspired to set up their own "media club" in Vietnam, a place where journalism students, young journalists, KOLs and content creators can debate on current affairs. Here self-regulation is embedded in responsibilities and ethics of information workers. F.I.K.A (Fun, Interactive, Kool and Active) was inspired by Swedish fika, the social custom of meeting for a coffee and cake. The club aims to create a forum for youngsters to discuss social affairs in Vietnam and the club is intended to introduce the ideas of media self-regulation and responsibility so that prospective journalists can bring it into their future careers. The debate is held monthly on a variety of current affairs.

B) Regional level learning:

During the Alumni meeting in September 2023 an initiative was launched by the host country, Philippines, to further explore the possibilities of a Regional Press Council in Southeast Asia. It should be seen as an embryo to something, and steps are taken to explore it further.

The ownership of the idea is with the Philippines Press Councils, since the other participating countries didn't see this as a viable trajectory for them in the near future.

The networking and partnership between countries that have been building throughout the ITP experience has been described as unprecedented and invaluable. There is now an understanding that journalists in the region are struggling with similar constraints and challenges, and that there is a fraternity of like-minded persons to turn to.

The social (media) networking that is happening between media professionals, academics, colleagues and competitors is most likely not going to go away shortly, since there is “a felt need”, as expressed by a participant.

C) Forward-looking perspective

Bangladesh

In terms of sustainability, all teams have made major efforts to create the conditions for the continuity of the ITP initiatives beyond the timeframe of the programme. Besides networking and setting up impromptu “hubs” there has been efforts to secure funding and find donors that can provide support and long-term engagement. Some of these efforts have still not materialised in partnerships but are ongoing.

Through the string of studies conducted by the ITP teams in Bangladesh and the host-ITP partner MRDI, it is clear that there is a strong urge from media leaders and practitioners to develop functional media code of conduct and improving self-regulations.

Rajshahi University, a leading public university in Bangladesh, has through the work of ITP received a novel suggestion to introduce a course on media self-regulation in its journalism curriculum for the first time. The discussions during the ITP journey played a pivotal role in making this idea feasible.

This will in the future mean that the concept of self-regulation is actively promoted in various settings, including classrooms, training sessions, and seminars.

The research conducted under the ITP programme have also spurred immediate demands. News outlets have requested for support in establishing in-house capacity building programmes focused on media law and regulation to prevent unwarranted harassment of journalists and media entities. Also, the Editors Council and union leaders have requested a comprehensive analysis of media laws and regulations to aid their discussions with policymakers, aiming to facilitate the promotion of quality journalism.

As part of the effort to implement media self-regulation in Bangladesh, three news outlets have request-

ed support in developing their editorial strategy and devising new plans for the sustainable operation of their legacy and digital platforms. One leading newspaper has shown interest in introducing an ombudsperson within the organisation, and has requested support in developing the scope of work for this role.

Most importantly, a news outlet is considering to scrap the clickbait or pageview model, and introduce a subscription-based approach, gradually transitioning through phases while emphasising quality journalism.

Cambodia

There is an expressed commitment from the ITP teams in Cambodia to keep being involved in process of establishing a Press Council and working with ITP cohort fellows.

There is now a “Cambodia ITP Alumni” group with a dedicated focal point that have agreed to meet in person twice a year and have two online meetings starting from March 2024.

UNESCO and CamboJA, the journalist-based organisation, have agreed to financially support ITP fellows for all meetings and any activities related to the Press Council.

The alumni have also agreed to meet and discuss with Minister of Information in late 2023 about the Press Council.

Philippines

The role of the ITP Media Asia-Philippines alumni group will be to inform, advise, inspire, encourage, facilitate, support and guide the media-citizen councils which they, through the Philippine Press Institute, have established.

There is a firm belief in the teams that community-based media-citizen councils would be effective in deterring libel cases, and bringing positive effects: higher public trust, reduced media killings and harassment, greater public trust, more news consumption, higher revenues and improved press freedom.

Aside from the Press Institute, the different participating organisations (particularly the Integrated Bar, the Commission on Human Rights, and the National Union of Journalists) have embraced their respective roles in realising the importance of their mission in accomplishing their vision.

There is now a plan for MOUs among the Philippines ITP alumni institutions signifying their intent to continue collaborating to support independent co-regulation of media.

Encourage and facilitate their training and accreditation as ADR providers with the Department of Justice and actively support legislation to decriminalise libel.

Aside from this, the ITP cohort has also attracted potential collaborators, resulting in funding from the Dutch government to set up five more media-citizen councils. Supplemental funding was received from local IMS representatives, and positive discussions for future collaboration with Internews representatives took place. The United States and Swedish embassies have committed to projects for implementation in 2024.

Vietnam

Discussions related to the development of journalism and the concept of self-regulation in Vietnam have so far involved those from government agencies, media

houses and educators, many not to be mentioned here. Never in Vietnam has there been a discussion about journalism and the future of the industry with the participation of independent content creators such as youtubers, KOLs and even comedians.

In the discussions at Vietnam Alumni Meeting, some ideas have been put forward on how to sustain the momentum created during ITP. To maintain a network of experts with similar understanding and ready to support each other was the first to come up. There have also been discussions on how to continue to develop the momentum created around the F.I.K.A Clubs, and a need for a modest funding.

One suggestion has been to develop a syllabus for self-regulation and internet security with hands-on tools for teenagers from universities and schools. Another suggestion was that the group could work together on building a handbook on promoting human right in the media, a topic on which the Vietnamese government wants to improve public understanding.



3.2.4 MENA

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR: Hala Bejani (2020-2023)

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Institutional level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New media law draft created on protection of sources and self-regulation policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A video was produced about demystifying media self-regulation • Meetings held with multiple stakeholders to discuss on creating code of conduct
Palestine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the first NGO for 31 media outlets in Hebron 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University courses on media self-regulation • Self-regulation online platform created
Morocco		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master classes on media self-regulation in two universities • Signed advocacy statements on media ethics on reporting on people with disability. • Open session to analyse Morocco's six years working with HACA. • Diagnosis of the media landscape in Morocco.
Tunisia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International conference to assess the work of self-regulation body in Tunisia, HAICA. • Media stakeholders come together to organise a workshop for media students. • Media stakeholder collaborated to establish a joint online platform called Gender and Media • ITP3 joint podcast on how to promote the role of ombudsperson and media ombudsperson at work as part of improving media self-regulation culture at the organisations • ITP3 joint podcast on status of media self-regulation in Tunisia, and a promotional video on the role of ombudsperson prepared by media stakeholders



OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Organisational level		
Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of conduct and MOU signed between two institutions A manual on protection of sources in journalism in Maharat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of journalists in source protection law
Palestine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ombudsperson at Maan News Signed MOU and code of ethics in media houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in media self-regulation among staffs in media outlets
Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media ombudsperson, code of ethics, and MOU established in 39 media outlets MOU between media outlets on code of conduct on women in media, also used for advocacy Inspired the Media ethics publication at Aljazeera Media Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal trainings on media self-regulation
Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed an assessment tool for gender and media to be used internally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online platform on gender and media used internally by the institutions

A) Institutional level insights/results

Below is our summary of the changes at the institutional level in the MENA region at each country's level and at the regional level. It contains in addition to major outcomes, and visible outputs, our analysis of observations from the last three years. We will start with each country and then move to key regional changes, and end the report with our analysis of the sustainability of the work and if we anticipate more results in future.

Lebanon

The ITP MENA have worked with three cohorts in Lebanon. Each member of these cohorts represents a stakeholder, such as media outlets (print and audio visual and online), journalist associations/unions, and NGOs & foundations. These stakeholders are working on two key rights: freedom of expression and access to information.

All three cohorts focused on two interrelated key problems in Lebanon:

- Lack of experience in/awareness/application of media self-regulation in Lebanon; and,
- Lack of constructive dialogue among media outlets that can have the potential of protecting journalism.

Therefore, it was logical that all three cohorts decided to implement a variety of activities aiming at creating a critical mass of interested media stakeholders in:

implementing intra-organisational changes and inter-cooperation with other like-minded organisations. Below are examples of notable changes indicating there has been a noticeable rise in the understanding and application of media self-regulation in Lebanon:

1. Two media outlets in Lebanon have signed an agreement to respect a code of conduct they have jointly created. They have also planned to have in the future a joint media ombudsperson. Further, both organisations have taken the necessary institutional steps towards respecting this code of conduct. From our discussion with another three large media outlets in Lebanon, they all expressed interest in cooperating with these two outlets irrespective of their different ideological views. This change needs to be monitored in Lebanon because the work is still underway despite the end of the ITP MENA activities in Lebanon.
2. The participating organisations continue to work on their internal systems to develop and implement their code of ethics, their policies, and practices. For example, one organisation has created [an educational video](#) to educate their staff and the public on media self-regulation. Another organisation published a study titled "The Protection of Sources in Journalism in Lebanon", which was sent to the Lebanese Parliament for review.

These are examples of the results of the awareness activities the three cohorts have done in Lebanon.

Palestine

The project has worked with only two cohorts in Palestine.

Like Lebanon, Palestine had limited experience in media self-regulation, and therefore the focus of the two cohorts was:

- To stimulate debate among media stakeholders on media self-regulation in Palestine;
- To encourage more participants and stakeholders to institutionalise media self-regulation in their organisations; and
- To encourage collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders.

Comparable to Lebanon, the Palestinian organisations started with activities that bolstered their cooperation together and conducted activities that aimed at raising more awareness about the importance of media self-regulation for the protection of the profession. Among the key achievements:

1. Cohort 1 organisations have signed an MOU to guide their cooperation and spell out the role of each organisation in advancing media self-regulation.
2. All the organisations of Cohorts 1 and 2 have signed a policy statement asking the Palestinian Authority to remove any legal obstacles that limit media self-regulation and create the necessary environment for the advancement of the freedom of speech and the access to information.
3. The below are examples of how the organisations have taken steps in advancing media self-regulation:
 - a. An organisation has established an online public complaints mechanism and has established the first ever in-house ombudsperson. The ombudsperson is receiving and handling complaints on the content of the outlets' work.
 - b. The first ever course taught in Palestine at the university level on media self-regulation. A university teacher from Cohort 1 has started giving elective courses on media self-regulation at the faculty of journalism in three universities. The syllabus is inspired by the ITP MENA online course in Arabic and the ITP Media Reference Book.
 - c. One media professor (from Cohort 2), who is also a member of the national curriculum development task force in Palestine, is currently adding the first-ever material on media self-regulation as an obligatory course at the national level. He also started to teach yet another elective course on media self-regulation at the university he works in.

4. Externally, the organisations have achieved the following:

- a. The Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists pledged during the closing ceremony of Cohort 2 to encourage other media outlets to sign on the policy statement that is mentioned in point 2 above. The Syndicate will invite more media outlets to regular meetings and engage in policy dialogue to bolster media self-regulation.
- b. Thirty-one media outlets in southern West Bank have created a new NGO that aims to protect the interests of these media outlets, encourage collaboration and cooperation, represent the interests of its members and ensure adherence to a code of conduct to protect and promote media work. This is the first ever formal cooperation between media outlets in Palestine, which paves the way for the establishment of their first ever media self-regulation formal structure in Palestine. The NGO is planning to establish a complaints mechanism and a media ombudsperson inspired by the Swedish media ombudsperson.
- c. All the participating organisations have designed a joint online platform to collect sources on media self-regulation from local and international sources. One NGO is currently managing this platform in conjunction with a local university.

Despite the fact that Palestine has implemented only two cohorts, the results that were achieved are very impressive. We believe that the project has succeeded in assembling key stakeholders in Palestine that have the authority, the power, and the will to affect changes at the institutional level. We also believe our National Facilitator played a key role in our success. She managed to assemble these key figures because she herself is a well-respected media figure in Palestine, a competent person who functioned as catalyst and a leader of change and a person who the stakeholders perceive as a connector.

Morocco

The programme has established three cohorts in Morocco. Morocco has a media co-regulatory body that was established about seven years ago, but application of media self-regulation was still far from being aligned with international standards and the principles of media self-regulation. It was difficult for our team to attract key media figures to enroll in the first cohort. We however used the first year to get access to key media stakeholders and build trust. This investment paid dividends, and we have managed to attract key stakeholders in Cohorts 2 and 3.

The main problems that the Morocco cohorts have tackled are:

- The poor application of the code of ethics by media outlets and online platforms, and disrespect of the ethical codes;
- The absence of effective collaboration between media outlets and media professionals in Morocco.

Therefore, the three cohorts have focused on advocacy tools to encourage application and abide by the code of conduct and accountability of media outlets and the regulators. The below are key results:

1. The creation of the first regional media ombudsperson in the north of Morocco, spearheaded by one of the participants of Cohort 3. Twenty-two media outlets in the northern government of Tangier signed a MOU that established the first ever media ombudsperson in Morocco. In the MOU, the media outlets endorsed a specific code of ethics as well as complaints mechanisms and procedures and pledged to support one another in improving the quality standards of their work. The media ombudsperson is currently serving these twenty-two media outlets.
2. The participants developed a masterclass to promote media self-regulation among students in two universities in Morocco. It might not be the first ever class on media self-regulation, but they used the ITP model and understanding of media self-regulation and how it differs from co-regulation.
3. Cohorts 1, 2 and 3 have agreed on three joint advocacy documents that they have shared with the regulators, the media self-regulation body and other key stakeholders in Morocco on three different issues: the first on how media portrays disabled people, the second on assessment of the self-regulatory body for the past 6 years and the third on establishment of internal ombudspersons in media outlets.

Tunisia

Tunisia joined the ITP MENA during a time the country was still progressing with democracy and fulfilling human rights, especially the right to freedom of expression. Having Tunisia in the ITP aimed at displaying a promising example of media self-regulation in the region. Despite the deterioration of freedoms during the last three years, Tunisian media outlets continue to maintain professionalism and be resilient against the deteriorating economic and political situation in the country.

The three cohorts in Tunisia continued to work on:

- Assessing the effectiveness of self-regulatory body HAICA and advocating for improving the legal and regulatory environment;
- Maintaining and improving the quality of their media production and internal systems for quality assurance;
- Gender equality.

Below are examples of key achievements of the three cohorts:

1. The concluding recommendations of the international conference that Cohort 1 has done in partnership with the self-regulatory body and the Syndicate of Journalists has been used as an advocacy tool and as a tool to enforce the establishment of internal ombudspersons in all of the media outlets in Tunisia. The Syndicate has a directive that all media outlets should have an internal ombudsperson.
2. Joint development of an online assessment tool to allow media outlets to assess their gender equality at the workplace and media production. Many media outlets of the three cohorts have adopted the assessment tool, including the Official Media Agency of Tunisia (the Agence Tunis Afrique de Presse, TAP) and the Association of Community Media that regulates twenty Community Media in Tunisia.
3. All organisations have been improving their internal structures, and one has already decided to establish an internal media ombudsperson. The Association of Community Media is currently collaborating with its members on the content of the assessment tool and the creation of an internal ombudsperson. It is important to monitor what is happening in the association and whether they will use the Swedish model of media ombudspersons or not.

B) Regional level learning:

It was clear from our fact-finding that the four participating countries are at various stages of their development in media regulation and self-regulation. While Lebanon and Palestine have limited experience in media self-regulation, Morocco and Tunisia have more than 6 years' experience each in forms of media self- and co-regulation. These differences have presented the ITP team with an opportunity to encourage cooperation and collaboration and advance peer-to-peer capacity development.

Despite their differences, these countries have common denominators. Arab countries share the same written language and understand each other's dialects, know each other well enough, watch each oth-

er's news and read/view each other's media productions, especially since these productions are produced to a substantial extent in classical Arabic. It was natural and easy for them to collaborate at the professional and the personal level. Below are examples of collaborations at the regional level.

Inspired each other with ideas for their change projects. We have noticed that cohorts have been also getting inspired by the project ideas and experiences of the other countries. For participants, the Swedish and Danish models of media regulation and self-regulation are effective because the political, economic, democratic, and legal context in these countries have created an enabling environment for freedom of expression. The political, economic, legal and democratic context in the Arab countries is however quite different, and therefore the approaches to working with media self-regulation require a careful analysis of opportunities, risks, and threats. Therefore, the cohorts were interested in getting inspiration from other Arab countries on how to work more internally and informally on building alliances, working on their internal governance and quality control mechanism, and having more focus on the safety/security of their journalists and data. For instance, all countries have worked on raising awareness, establishment of internal codes of ethics, development of an internal ombudsperson, establishment of complaints mechanisms and fact checking tools and gender equality.

The regional meeting in Morocco. When asked about how the countries would want to continue working beyond the ITP project, several regional projects were discussed including having a regional platform to assemble, distribute and share experience on media self-regulation. This platform is already in place and acts a community of practice for all countries. Many wanted to continue to meet and started asking to conduct an alumni meeting with or without the ITP programme and form their own resources.

Interviews, expert advice, inviting for conferences and visits to other countries. The participants continue to invite each other to conferences, workshops, and even worked together as experts at the regional level. This is one example of a workshop done with UNESCO where four of the speakers are ITP alumni from the four countries. <https://en.unesco.org/events/launch-webinar-arabic-version-report-balancing-act-countering-digital-disinformation-while>. There are more examples of these cooperations, interviews, visits and collaborations. The joint online course. As an important regional cooperation project for the four countries, three NFs of

the ITP project --Palestine, Lebanon, and Tunisia, have developed a joint online course in Arabic on media self-regulation. A university in Palestine and two universities in Tunisia and Lebanon are going to upload the online course on their portals.

The WhatsApp groups. The WhatsApp groups of the three cohorts are regularly active. The participants engage with each other on daily basis, and they are using this platform personally and professionally to share information, request help, discuss sources of the information, exchange opinions about subject matters and ask for sources within each country. It is a very lively and vibrant community of practice.

All the above are examples of why working at the regional level has been a successful approach. Please see below more on sustainability at the local level.

C) Forward-looking perspective

Without the ITP programme, members of three cohorts would not have had quality time to discuss common interests and problems or devise common solutions related to freedom of expression in all the four countries.

Section 2 above contained examples of continuous regional cooperation and collaboration that would not have happened without the ITP programme. In this section we highlight examples of continuous collaboration at the local level, which we also mentioned in Section 1 above.

In Lebanon. In section 1 we discussed what the organisations have done internally, in which we assumed that the institutional changes would continue to take effect. However, there are critical issues that could lead to more results in the future.

1. The collaboration between the two media outlets that decided to sign an MOU to create and respect one ethical code and paved the way for establishment of joint ombudsperson. The work with the other media outlets to join this work have been discussed, and there is interest from other media outlets to join this movement.
2. In Nov 2023, the Lebanese parliament started the debate process on the new media law. According to experts, this draft law contains grave limitations to freedom of expression. Eight out of the 14 members of the Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression in Lebanon are alumni of the ITP Programme, and they are currently active in defending freedom of expression.

3. Currently, the WhatsApp groups of the Lebanese team are still highly active.

In Morocco, in Section 1 we also discussed what has been done internally in each organisation in Morocco, in which we assumed that the institutional changes will continue to take effect. However, there are critical issues that needs to be revised in the future.

1. Three members of cohort 3 are working on establishing two other media ombudsmen in two governorates in the south of Morocco, like the one they spearheaded in Tangier. There is a need to monitor whether this will take effect or not.
2. The capacity of the media ombudsperson in Tangier continuously needs to be developed, and there is a need to monitor how effective the system is as well as its effect on people's trust in media outlets in Morocco.
3. There is still discussion within Morocco on the reorganisation of the National Press Council. All members of Cohorts 2 and 3 are active in this debate, either in advocacy work or research regarding assessment of the work done by the council for the last six years, and any regulatory modifications of its mandate.

In Palestine. The networks that have been established have created the necessary conditions to thrive and sustain beyond the programme. There are however key actions that can be monitored in the future.

1. How effective the online platform Palestine Forum for Media Self-Regulation (PFMSR) is in conjunction with the local university. This platform requires continues management to fulfil its purpose as a community of practice for the two cohorts in Palestine.
2. Collaboration between key actors in Palestine such as the Journalist Syndicate, the Palestinian Independent Commission of Human Rights, and the key academic institutions and think tanks in Palestine that are alumni of this programme.
3. The function and effectiveness of the ombudsperson at one of the media outlets.
4. The NGO for 31 media outlets in southern Palestine and whether it continues to have a proper structure and effective work.
5. If the Palestinian teams continue to communicate on WhatsApp as a valuable tool for continued cooperation at the local level.

In Tunisia. Despite the deteriorating political and economic situation in Tunisia, the participants have started to shift their focus internally and on advocacy work. During our closing meeting in Tunisia, the activities below need to be monitored.

1. How active the Media Gender Platform is. Many participants are currently committed to share and disseminate reports and studies on self-regulation on the Media Gender platform.
2. The president of community media union is currently developing an Ombudsperson who will work for the associative radio stations that are members of the Union. Fifteen active members are committed to this work, and they are identifying the Ombudsperson's profile.
3. Three key organisations (JHR, SNJT, HAICA) have committed themselves to organising regular informal meetings to discuss issues related to journalists, the regulatory framework, and safeguarding the profession.
4. Two participants have been promoted to key positions in Tunisia, one as of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of La Presse and the other as CEO of Agency Tunis Afrique de Presse (TAP). These two participants in the programme have expressed their interest in facilitating the implementation of self-regulatory mechanisms within their media outlets. The latter has mentioned to us during the meeting that launching at the self-regulatory body within TAP in the final stages of institutionalisation.



3.2.5 Eastern Europe

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR: Gohar Khodjayan

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Institutional level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house code of ethics adopted in 8 newsrooms • Several media organisations considered the establishment of ombudsperson positions 	
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A media ombudsperson was created in Radio NOR • Editorial board established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained media staff on ethical journalism and media self-regulation mechanisms
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inward code of ethics/conduct for journalists • Attempts in setting up ombudsperson in media house 	
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing of “Journalist’s Code of Ethics” • Promoted the setting of ombudsperson in regional media groups 	

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS – Organisational level

Country	Formal and Institutional	Informal and Institutional
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Media Ethics Observatory (self-regulation body/ media complaints commission in Armenia) facilitated by 8 media NGOs 	
Georgia		
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the new law “On Media” • New law on “Electronic Communications” • Initiatives in setting up Media Council 	
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normative documents on Media Development Law, Action Plan and Advertising Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed two training courses for journalism students • Promoted media literacy as anti-dote to Russian disinformation

In this section some key results are highlighted, but **please note** that the programme will continue in Eastern Europe through 2024. Hence, the sections on regional level learning and forward-looking insights will be provided for the reports in September 2024.

A) Institutional level insights/results

Armenia

In June 2020, Armenia adopted a new law on audio-visual media. Initially, regulatory control was heavily vested in the state, allowing interference in editorial policies. Through intense discussions with media experts, the law was amended, delegating key func-

tions to self-regulation bodies. Broadcasters seeking a slot in the public multiplex were mandated to adopt self-regulation - a pivotal step marking the first mention of “self-regulation” in Armenian media legislation.

The significance of media self-regulation garnered attention from the government. Following the 2021 Parliamentary election, the Armenian Government’s five-year programme (2021-2026) proposed the adoption of a concept promoting self-/co-regulation in media. Despite a draft initially emphasising state involvement, media community criticism prompted revisions. International organisations, including the Council of Europe and Freedom House, joined efforts,

aligning with the Media Ethics Observatory's alternative draft. The ensuing constructive cooperation between the government and the media community during 2023 aims to align regulatory frameworks with European standards.

Ukraine

The impact of the International Training Programme (ITP) on media standards in Ukraine is evident through the initiation of the Whitelist of trusted media. Faced with concerns about journalistic standards in Ukrainian media, the 1st-year ITP group proposed a positive approach to support credible outlets. In collaboration with the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), the Whitelist was implemented, monitoring 50 popular Ukrainian online media for manipulations, fake news, and adherence to various criteria such as balance, credibility, and transparency. The IMI continues this monitoring, and more media outlets have willingly joined, recognising the ethical value. Funding remains a challenge to expand monitoring to accommodate the growing number of online media.

The ITP programme has played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the media sphere, including journalists, lecturers, managers and experts. Over one year, these participants worked on a shared project, negotiating and navigating complexities. Notably, the 3rd and 4th ITP groups committed to ongoing professional discussions through the NGO "Responsible Media Club" (RMC). Their focus includes facilitating meetings with journalists, regulators, experts and other media actors, aiming to enhance professional standards. Additionally, they plan to support regional media in developing internal editorial codes, promoting self-regulation and adherence to professional standards.

Moldova

Since 2020, the ITP team successfully influenced journalism faculties, leading to graduating students from prominent institutions solemnly pledging to uphold the Journalist's Code of Ethics, contributing to the broader goal of nurturing a better-informed society. A strategic awareness campaign, marked by the emblematic "We've signed the Journalist's Code of Ethics" logo, garnered widespread adoption by approximately 70% of signees, including major media outlets.

Simultaneously, the ITP team played a crucial role in crafting and submitting normative documents, such as the Media Development Programme, Media Development Action Plan, and Advertising Law, further fortifying Moldova's media landscape.

Furthermore, ITP alumni, distinguished journalists and media experts, initiated thematic training sessions and promoted media literacy as an antidote to Russian disinformation during critical events. Their efforts, including fact-checking initiatives and targeted training for young journalists, students and vulnerable populations, addressed inaccuracies and biases in reporting. The ITP's multifaceted approach, from ethical journalism advocacy to legislative impact and media literacy promotion, underscores its effectiveness in driving transformative changes in Moldova's media sphere.

3.3 Key findings and observations from the survey

In this section we briefly describe the key results from the survey which relates to networks learnings and challenges implementing the change initiatives.

3.3.1 Strong ITP networks and platform for dialogue

Participants often assert that the most significant benefit of the ITP programme lies in its networks and its role as a platform for dialogue among sectors that don't typically interact. This assertion is supported by the survey findings, where over 99% of participants claim regular connections with others from their own country, and more than 80% maintain regular contact with their regional cohort.²⁹

The survey results indicate that over 65% of participants affirm the ITP primarily operates as a **dialogue platform** for diverse stakeholders, including the media industry, civil society/academia and state actors. Many participants describe how the ITP has facilitated a better understanding of other stakeholders' perspectives on crucial questions and dilemmas related to self-regulation and regulatory aspects. Almost all participants have been actively engaged in designing and implementing change initiatives "to develop common solutions to shared problems". This active

²⁹ A great majority of the participants are in regular contact with other participants (more than once a week or every three weeks). Among more than 40% of those, they have currently stayed in touch with other participants at least once every 3 months in and outside their countries (see figure 11). Within member countries, more than 45% of participants keep in contact at least once a week showing a very frequent connection between them.

involvement serves as a strong indicator of the importance of the dialogue platform provided by the ITP.

Respondents have also expressed that the programme goes beyond creating connections; it establishes a common ground where individuals from various sectors can share experiences, thereby cultivating a deeper understanding of the importance of media self-regulation.

Moreover, participants highlight ITP's impact on professional development and knowledge exchange. It is viewed as a bridge between government and non-governmental organisations, facilitating productive dialogues on crucial aspects such as media ethics, self-regulation and legal frameworks.³⁰

Also, many respondents emphasise its regional perspective, achieved by bringing together participants from different countries for cross-cultural exchanges. The programme has been appreciated for fostering continuous discussions through alumni networks (online platforms and regional forums), ensuring knowledge sharing and peer learning.

All change initiatives have their own rationale: what can be sustained for a longer period depends on the possibilities within each participating country. Although the overall media development, as described in section 2.2, appears quite bleak at the moment, as outlined in sections 3.2 and 3.3 and in country reports, participants have been able to contribute to a number of institutional and organisational changes that are perceived to be sustainable.

3.3.2. Improved understanding and changed opinion

From the survey result, more than 75% of the participants have an increased understanding of media self-regulation as a way to increase media freedom after attending the programme. All groups have increased their understanding of self-regulation as an effective method to increase media freedom. Another significant change is that after attending the programme, the participants who highly prefer media self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom changed from 29% to almost 80%.

How often are you currently in contact with other participants?

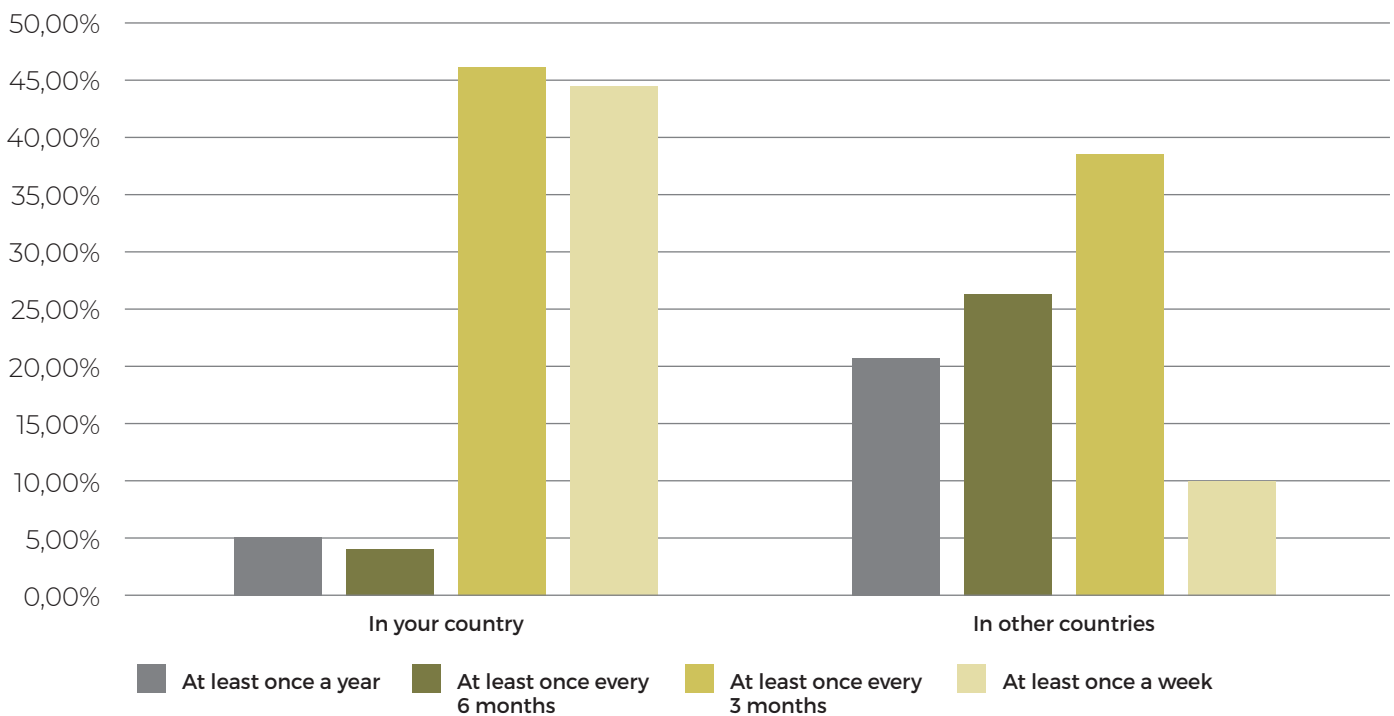


Figure 10 Frequency of ITP participants in contact with other fellows

³⁰ For example, participants mentioning that the ITP has been instrumental catalysing the formation of media working groups, sector forums, and editorial boards, providing dedicated spaces for ongoing discussions on media reforms and self-regulation.

The result indicated a significant **increase in the understanding of and opinion towards media self-regulation** as a method to increase media freedom after participants attended ITP, especially in the media sector and NGOs/CSOs.

3.3.3 The challenges faced when implementing change initiatives

What would you consider to be the biggest challenge during implementation?

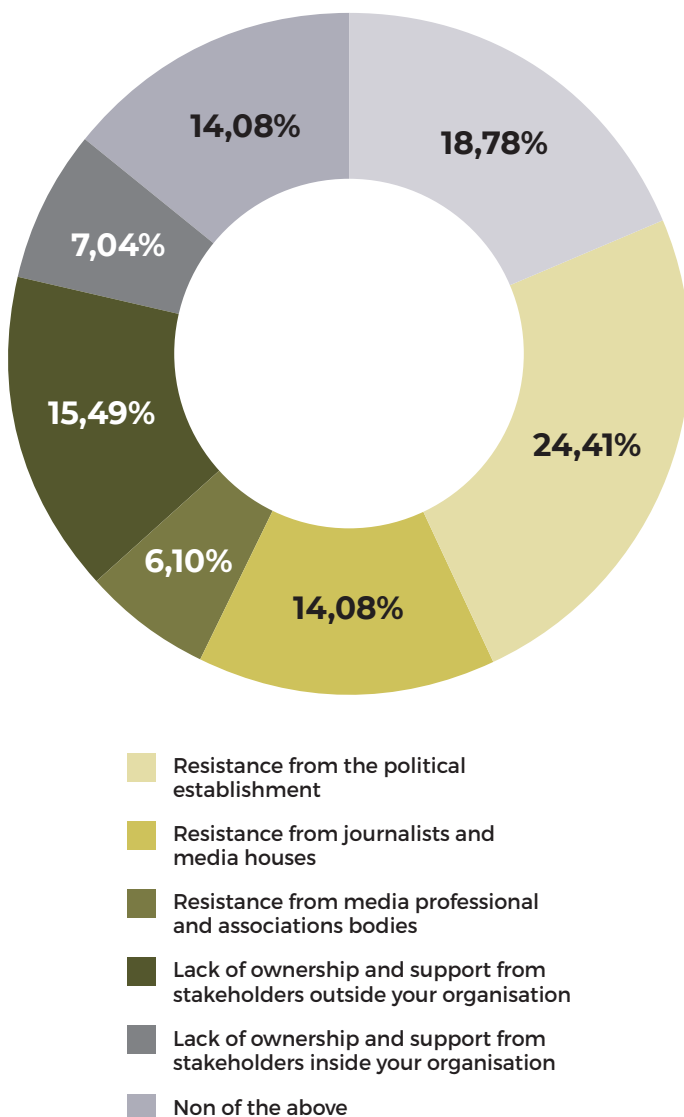


Figure 11: Biggest challenges when implementing change initiatives

Around 65% of the participants faced fundamental challenges when they implemented their change initiatives. The biggest challenge was the resistance from the political establishment. But we have also detected internal resistance from journalist and media houses.

The resistance from political establishment is often natural since they favour regulatory control over self-regulation, perceiving the latter as a threat to their political or financial interests. Internally, we see for example **a lack of awareness and understanding within the media houses**. It could for example be limited sensitisation and understanding among stakeholders about the importance and meaning of self-regulation and its impact on journalistic practices. Some participants also claim institutional challenges, stemming from institutional rigidities where traditional curriculum formations may not align with the objectives of change initiatives, are hindering integration efforts. There are also questions about the viability, purpose, and ultimate goals of change initiatives that create doubt and hinder commitment from stakeholders.

The participants also claim different types of **constraints**, e.g. lack of funding and support from external donors, and other types of resource constraints such as scarcity of material resources, limited time and internal capability challenges within organisations, which hinder the execution and dissemination of initiatives.

Voices from participants:

“With a full-time editing job, I found it challenging to steer major initiatives. However, the experience has helped us as media to have a stronger lobbying voice.”

“The pandemic was the main challenge limiting our interactions with stakeholders.”

“In our country context, we have a very fragile political environment.”

“It is about the finance issue to keep it going further.”

“To achieve progress, we need to begin by seeing things as they are, and to work from there. If we do that, we have the possibility of forward movement.”

4

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND REFLECTIONS



4.1 Main Conclusions

In this section, we aim to briefly summarise our key findings and draw overall conclusions based on the country reports, regional summaries and the survey.

The programme has demonstrated striking resilience, despite numerous challenges within the media sector, war situations, a global pandemic and political turmoil. This active involvement of the participants serves as a clear indicator that the programme is considered to be relevant. In fact, political and media developments in recent years have even underscored the significance of issues related to regulation and self-regulation, bringing them further into the centre of attention of the debate.

The methodology has been constantly evolving over the years, but the overall “theory of change” has proven to be viable and effective throughout the implementation of the programme.³¹ Although the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted some ongoing developments, it also came with new opportunities. Shifting more activities online has enabled us to engage in increased global/regional networking, attract experts worldwide, and conduct shorter yet more effective physical visits. The visits to Scandinavia are crucial for building cohesion in the national teams and the regional networks.

The ITP programme has been instrumental in fostering numerous transformative processes such as legal

³¹ The program has continuously evolved the methodological development has been described in previous annual reports (2019-2022)

reforms and setting up of official or informal entities (eg. Media Council, Media Working Groups) at both the **organisational and institutional levels** across all regions involved, despite the challenging political and media environments prevalent in most countries where we operate. There is a slight tendency that participants from countries with less media freedom and more authoritarian regimes more often opt for informal institutional changes and focus on organisational shifts (rather than formalised ones).³² However, this evidence is inconclusive and requires further investigation.

The results related to the institutional level, as presented in the report, surpass the anticipated outcomes outlined in the original tender document and our initial proposal. These achievements are a clear testament to the programme's effectiveness. We have observed that the ITP serves as a catalyst for advocacy, policy formulation, and legal reforms regarding media self-regulation. The programme's influence often extends to decision-makers such as Parliament members, chief editors and school department heads, and has in many cases contributed to the cultivation of responsible and ethical journalism.

One important factor is that communities focused on self-regulation and regulation in most countries are limited. In less populous countries, we have managed to target key decision-makers, giving the ITP more leverage and power. Therefore, participation in the ITP is often seen as an informal club or expert group on the issues at stake.

The networks have created a **platform for dialogue** between stakeholders which is built on mutual respect and trust. Participants and staff foresee a continued collaboration among national teams, improved regional cooperation, and enhanced understanding among diverse viewpoints to reduce polarisation. Furthermore, stakeholders in the media sector often recognise ITP participants as informal 'expert groups' in their respective countries regarding self-regulation/regulation issues. In other words, having a certificate from the ITP in media self-regulation within a democratic framework has become a valuable merit and a quality stamp for future careers.

The **sustainability** of these changes remains uncertain due to their heavy reliance on contextual factors

beyond the control of both us as organisers and the participants involved. And yet, the established **networks exhibit strength and resilience**. Many regions will keep working on the change initiatives and new cooperations with partners within and outside their own countries. Many participants have forged new and trustworthy connections with stakeholders across sectors fostering cross-sectoral collaborations which itself is perhaps one of the most important added value of the programme.

In summary, we can conclude that the programme's outcomes and networks will endure in various forms and will, most likely, continue to shape initiatives and practices well into the future.

4.2 Reflections and lessons learned on methodology and implementation of the ITP

In this section, our aim is to summarise and analyse key aspects that explain how and why the ITP model has generated or contributed to the institutional changes outlined in this report.

Success factors

Based on an analysis of the country reports, participant surveys, and staff dialogues, successful change processes typically include four key elements, as outlined in the model (see Figure 12): trust, ownership, a bottom-up approach, and informal structures. Attempting to unpack each of these success factors, we have identified the following aspects:

Trust building that facilitates interaction

A prevailing theme across responses is the emphasis on networking, bringing together diverse participants from different sectors and backgrounds. In all regional editions of the programme, it is evident that the collaboration and tight bonds built between stakeholders is one of the key achievements of the ITP and perhaps also a key asset for sustainability.

When we started the programme five years ago, we focused quite a lot on enhancing the knowledge and skills of the teams and used flexible methods for developing and implementing change initiatives. But

³² When we categorise participating countries into three intervals of the Press Freedom Index, it is found that 50 % of the informal Institutional and organisational change initiatives came from lower press freedom countries.

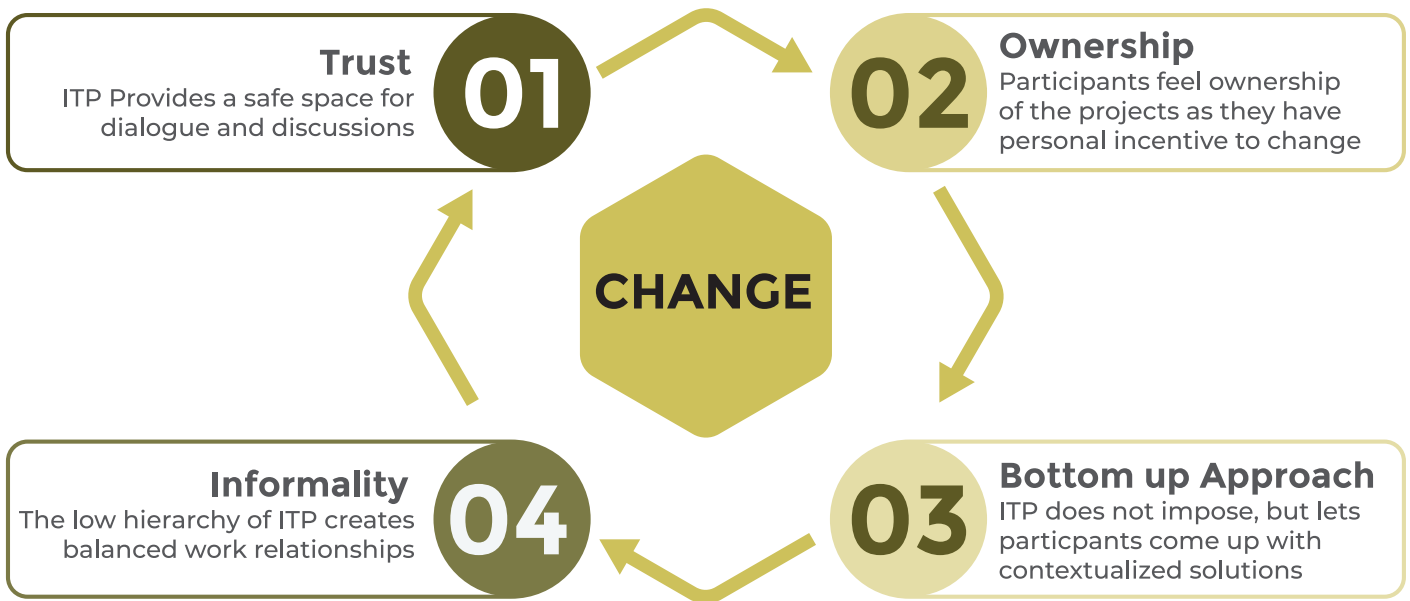


Figure 12: The success factors model

we have learned over the years that without good relationships among participants, and inherent motivations/incentives, the prospects of sustainable change are very slim.

By providing a safe space for open dialogue, the ITP encourages discussions around self-regulation and co-regulation within the media sector. This exchange often involves stakeholders who may initially hold divergent perspectives, in which ITP has been instrumental in facilitating an inclusive approach towards addressing sometimes sensitive issues.

Ownership and commitment to change

A significant aspect of the success of the ITP lies in the motivation and ownership of its participants. Many join the programme driven by a genuine desire to bring about meaningful change within the media sector. Their commitment to driving these initiatives remains strong, even in the absence of external funding³³. This dedication demonstrates a deep-rooted motivation among participants to address the challenges and issues they identify within their respective contexts. The programme's design, combining individual and collective learning experiences, was highlighted positively. The hands-on learning approach,

freedom to decide on country-relevant initiatives, and the sustained effort over time were perceived as crucial in generating lasting change.

Bottom-up and a flexible approach

The programme's adaptability to new circumstances, including its adaptability to changing environments and needs, has been highlighted by the participants as key to its success. Additionally, the programme's safe and trustworthy platform for the exchange of thoughts and experiences has significantly contributed to its success. The ITP refrains from imposing a predefined model for the development of regulatory or self-regulatory systems within national teams. Instead, it empowers participants to take ownership of the change initiatives tailored to their specific country contexts. This approach allows for flexibility and adaptability, ensuring that the strategies devised are contextually relevant and responsive to the unique challenges and needs of each country's media landscape. Also, a focus is on *promoting mutual learning* between Scandinavian expert organisations and participants, since we all share similar challenges. The emphasis, in for example study visits, has been to facilitate curiosity, encourage discussions, and promote learning between participants and Scandinavian actors.

³³ It has been highlighted that one reason for the strong group cohesion is that participants are not (as in many other cases) competing for donor funds, but instead work collectively towards common goals.

Another important aspect of the bottom-up approach is that we recruited highly capable, trusted and available National Facilitators who served as our “eyes and ears on the ground”. The NFs played a key role in contextualising and comprehending the learnings, ensuring that change initiatives were realistic and feasible. When necessary, they pushed participants to go the extra mile while at the same time promoting group cohesion. With their assistance, we connected different cohorts and built new change initiatives based on the accomplishments of previous groups.

Informal Collaborative Structure

We have learned that familiarity, friendship, and trust are essential in growing the membership of the coalitions, and inspiration, motivation and continuous communication have been essential components in sustaining coalition and collaboration. These informal coalitions are more organic than mechanical, that grow their own ways.³⁴ As further explored in the country reports, these coalitions have the ability to mobilise stakeholders in unexpected ways.³⁵

In summary, the **success factors** identified include networking and collaboration, flexibility and adaptation to change, emphasis on self-regulation, a strong focus on learning and development. All these factors/preconditions lay the groundwork for developing networks and collaboration platforms to advocate for self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom.

4.3 Concluding remarks and suggestions

Based on findings and lessons learned, below are some overall recommendations for possible similar capacity development programmes in the future:

Meeting venues for discussing challenging and sensitive topics are scarce in today’s polarised world. There-

fore, Sida and embassies (UM) could make use of the ITP format to establish and promote **platforms for dialogue** and capacity development. These platforms could specifically focus on themes where disagreements or varying perspectives among participants are common. Through the ITP platforms, UM will gain strategic access to important networks that could be further nurtured and utilised. To gain leverage within the ITP instrument, it is crucial to target specific thematic areas where there are limited groups of stakeholders and established networks are typically lacking. The thematic area of media regulation and self-regulation is a good example of such a domain.

In line with the above, it is suggested that future programmes put an even stronger emphasis on how to promote **collaboration, networks and team work**. Although the participants represent different types of organisations and interests, a capacity development programme is ultimately about bringing people together. It is therefore important to explicitly recognise the importance of physical meetings in fostering trust and friendship.

Sida could also consider the **elaboration of a mechanism for financing** (such as small seed funding for meetings) to support viable change initiatives developed by the participants. However, it is crucial that this is executed in a manner that will not damage the group cohesion and will promote incentives for collaboration. In other words, it is essential to ensure that organisations don’t solely pursue funding and compete for donor funds, but instead work collectively towards common goals.

In such as a large and comprehensive programme, it could also be beneficial to engage in a **developmental evaluation** (external QA mission) which could work as sounding board to the management both on content as well as process-related issues through the implementation of the programme³⁶.

³⁴ The ITP informal setup contrasts with formal contractual relationships, which often lead to conflicts over positions and financial matters. However, while this informal structure is beneficial, there might be scenarios in certain countries where establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or similar non-binding agreements between participating organisations could further strengthen and sustain their partnership.

³⁵ The African programme financed a study which outlined the dynamics on how media coalitions are elaborated and sustained. The study could be downloaded here.

³⁶ With the extensive spectrum of achievements of over 22 countries in this ITP, there should be a high research value in both a) the thematic area how self-regulatory systems are developed and sustained but also, b) how and why the ITP model works, i.e. mechanism for how changes are happening (e.g. mechanisms promoting changes not only on individual and organisational level but also on system/institutional level).

ANNEX

Updated results framework

After implementing numerous regional ITP programmes, we have established the following main principles based on what we know works:

1. By identifying synergies and promoting cooperation, the programme facilitates the exchange of ideas and encourages proactive collaborations and constructive interactions among civil society, non-governmental organisations, and government officials.
2. While participants can draw inspiration from experts and Swedish and Danish cases, we consistently advocate for locally tailored (home-grown) solutions over preconceived and packaged “blueprint solutions.” Progress is best achieved by first understanding the current context and building upon existing efforts. Therefore, our alumni play a crucial role serving as both experts and colleagues to promote the network of ITP participants.
3. In our approach to change initiatives, we emphasise agile solutions and structures that can adapt to emerging needs, creating opportunities and enabling contextual changes. It should also be noted that the participants themselves are considered as key resource persons, and they are themselves doing the analysis and the formulation of the objectives of the change initiatives.
4. Our pedagogical approach prioritises interactivity, with brief presentations. Our primary role as organisers is to moderate and facilitate discussions among participants. Peer learning and peer-to-peer support are essential in this approach.

This is a summary of the results framework – which also could serve as aggregated summary if the results achieved on different levels throughout the programme.

Changes/results attributed to the ITP	Our key strategies and activities to achieve the goals	How we have follow up results and learnings	Where to find aggregated results
<p>Our long-term vision of this programme is contributing to free, trustworthy, independent, and inclusive professional journalism.</p> <p>Systematic / Institutional level</p> <p>At systematic /institutional level, the ITP has driven change initiatives and spin-offs to the set-up of:</p> <p>A. Formalised media bodies such as the media councils and formal decisions contracts, new laws policies and legislative co-regulations</p>	<p>The strategies to achieve the institutional and organisational changes are in the hands of the participants and depend on the specific context. All these changes have their own specific results framework and have made possible through the following activities;</p> <p>Participants and their managers recognise the importance of developing inclusive self-regulatory frameworks adapted to the new media landscape and aiming at increased balance between traditional- and new(digital) media.</p>	<p>This type of results has been mainly followed up through outcome harvesting.</p>	<p>23 formalised institutional change initiatives and spin off have been documented in Table 1.</p> <p>See Section 3 and Annex 2 country reports for more information on the specific results that has been achieved.</p>
<p>B. Informal institutional, media groups on media self-regulation, media ethics, and other related public debates</p>	<p>Participants collaborate in national-level teams to establish effective frameworks.</p>	<p>This type of results has been mainly followed up through outcome harvesting.</p>	<p>44 initiatives are documented.</p> <p>See Section 3 and Annex 2 Country reports for more information on the specific results that has been achieved.</p>

<p>Organisational level At organisational level the ITP has through change initiatives and spin-offs contributed to changes relating to:</p> <p>C. Formalised code of ethics and ombudsman functions within and across media houses, including co-operation between media houses</p>	<p>Participants exchange and apply the knowledge gained from the training in their respective organisations' change efforts.</p> <p>We succeed in recruiting people of all genders in all their variety who have the authority, willingness, capability, resources, and position required to contribute to the change.</p>	<p>This type of results has been mainly followed up through outcome harvesting.</p>	<p>In our survey, 85% of participants claim that the ITP contributed to organisational changes. Also, around 90% claim that the new competencies gained through the programme have been (to a large (54%) or to some extent (36%) beneficial to their home organisation.</p> <p>32 change initiatives and spin offs are documented in Table 2. See Section 3 and Annex 2 country reports for more information on the specific results that has been achieved.</p>
<p>D. Informal organisational culture and learnings on media ethics within or/and between media houses.</p>	<p>We use methods to strengthen participants' capabilities to drive transformational projects and, thereby, bring about necessary institutional-level change.</p>		<p>16 change initiatives and spin offs are documented in Table 2. See Section 3 and Annex 2 country reports for more information on the specific results that has been achieved.</p>
<p>E. Participants' access to expanded regional and national networks and support for effective work with self-regulatory frameworks.</p>	<p>We successfully establish and sustain networks among participants that can continue to develop and thrive even after the programme concludes.</p> <p>Through our pedagogical methods, we stimulate communication and collaboration, even among parties who are initially apart from each other in terms of organisational structure, ideology, and substantive issues.</p>	<p>This has been followed up through observations on social media groups (e.g. WhatsApp) and dialogue with participants. The notion that networking is important for the participants was also confirmed in the survey results regarding ITP's role in networking. See Section 3.3.</p>	<p>According to the survey more than 99% are in contact with other participants from their own country and more than 80% are in contact with the regional cohort. A great majority of them have been in regular contact with participants (more than once a week or every 3 weeks) (See Figure 10).</p> <p>As observed on the joint WhatsApp groups, the participants are very active. We can for example see that groups created already in 2018/19 still are very active and post several messages a week related to media development issues in general and on regulatory/self-regulatory issues in particular..</p>
<p>F. Platforms for dialogue between key stakeholders for discussion about media self-regulation</p>	<p>We convincingly ensure participants' personal security during and partially after the programme's completion.</p>	<p>The assessment is based both on observations and dialogue as well as the survey.</p>	<p>Q 14 in the survey confirms that more than 60 % claims the ITP to a large extent serves as a platform for dialogue.</p> <p>The very fact that almost all participants take an active part in national change initiatives must be seen as clear indicator that.</p>

<p>Individual level</p> <p>At individual level the ITP has contributed to change with regards to:</p> <p>G. Participants' understanding of and opinion toward media self-regulation as a method to promote media freedom.</p>	<p>We successfully attract and recruit motivated, talented, and dynamic participants who can influence conditions within their own organisations</p> <p>Relevant organisations and on-site experts are identified and selected to benefit from and have an interest in collaborating with each other.</p> <p>Participants receive genuine support and a mandate from their respective organisation's managers to drive change processes at various levels and in different contexts.</p>	<p>Learnings and attitudes are followed up regularly through dialogue with the participants, but also through surveys throughout the programme implementation but also through the final survey.</p>	<p>In our dialogue with participants it is clear that most of them have both a better understanding of different aspects of self-regulation, but see the benefits on how it could be used.</p> <p>According to the final survey to all the participants:</p> <p>a. 76% claim that their understanding on self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom have increased to a large extent.</p> <p>b. 77% is of the opinion that self-regulation is highly preferable as method to increase media freedom while only around 27% were of that opinion before entering the programmes.</p>
<p>H. Participants' understanding of the connection between gender equality and media self/co/statutory regulation as well their ability to apply some of this knowledge within their change initiatives</p>	<p>We employ pedagogical methods that promote engagement, exchange, inclusive dialogue, and development that benefits all</p>	<p>This is followed up by observing the participants and dialogue with NFs but also the final survey</p>	<p>70% of the participants claim that their understanding of the "linkage between gender equality and self-regulation have increased.</p> <p>Around 20% of the participants claim that gender equality was a core element of their change initiative while 35% said it was a part of the initiative itself.</p>
<p>I. Participants' making use of knowledge of experiences, methods, and tools, as well as strengthened self-confidence to conduct structured, long-term change work and dissemination of knowledge and experiences obtained through the programme.</p>		<p>This is followed up by observing the participants working together in change projects as well as through an ongoing dialogue with participants and NFs</p>	<p>The many change initiatives are themselves a clear indicator that this work 90% of the participants claim that they (to a large 46% or some extent 44%) have made concrete use of change initiative tools that were presented and practiced during the programme.</p>



ANNEX **2**
Country Reports

1. Eastern/Southern Africa Country Sheet

1.1 Kenya



**National Facilitator
Dr. Haron K. Mwangi**



Reporting Period

From 2018 to 2023.

Background/ Context

The ITP programme was introduced to Kenya in the backdrop of the effort to consolidate the gains of the struggle for media freedom and freedom of expression following the bumpy and protracted process of media legislation, attempts to introduce national security laws where some provisions were deemed affront to media freedom, the struggle for regulation of digital and social media platforms, plummeting public trust in independent journalism and viability and sustainability challenges of news media. Thus, by the time ITP was first introduced in Kenya in 2018, media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information had respectively been secured in Articles 33, 34 and 35 under chapter four of the Kenya Constitution. These provisions and the attendant legislations have been a bedrock of exponential growth of private and commercial media, expanded spaces for freedom of expression and a vibrant media market valued at 2.5 billion USD. Introduced in 2004 as a voluntary, media industry-led and -supported self-regulatory mechanism, the model was struggling with support of the media industry. In 2007, the industry through the Media Council Act 2007 (which was repealed by the Media Council Act 2013) introduced a co-regulatory model which towards the end of 2016 was unfortunately facing similar challenges of ownership and support of the media industry, interference from commercial and political interest and challenges related to independence and governance. Arising from these, journalists and other media stakeholders started to question the philosophical and practical

relevance and efficacy of the co-regulation model as a vanguard of safeguarding professionalism and the independence of journalism practice in Kenya. ITP stepped in with a new perspective and impetus of strengthening media industry coalitions and the role of the media co-regulation in promoting independent journalism.

Outside the confines of regulation and within the context of media and democracy, the Kenyan media has played major role in the democratisation process, including uncovering some of the operations of powerful individuals and government officials through investigative reporting and whistle-blowing. Being editorially independent and professional in its conduct, media has cultivated public trust and attracted foes in the same measure. There have been increased threats and intimidation of journalists, outright denial of rights to cover sensitive issues of political and social nature, explicit castigation and condemnation of the media by some state and government officials (including some sections of the opposition political parties), attempts to censor the media by the broadcast regulatory authority as well as editorial and soft censorship through allocation of advertisement by the government. More threatening has been government interference with the independence of the Media Council of Kenya which has paralysed its governance system.

These externalities notwithstanding, the media has displayed remarkable resilience through incisive reporting of incidents of corruption, commentaries and editorialisation of political events and conduct of state officials. Media professional conduct and reportage of issues of corruption, high cost of living and state pilferage and wastage of public resources has continued to endear the media to the public. The protection of media spaces and hedging media against state attacks by media coalitions, civil society and associations of lawyers has given media lease of life. It is in the context of this background that ITP has for the last five years of media reforms envisioned an independent and professional public interest by creating a mechanism of media self-regulation that promotes professionalism and media independence and cultivates support of media stakeholders and frontline actors to defend media freedom and promote democracy and good governance.

ITP change initiatives

There are significant changes in Kenya's media sphere that are associated with the ITP programme. These have occurred at institutional, organisational and individual levels, and in some instances directly triggered a national conversation on the role of media in democracy. The following summarises the outcomes of the change projects.

Cohort	Change project	Outcome, effect and impact	Cross-cutting issues in theory of change	Lessons learned
ITP 1	Raise public, media stakeholders and government awareness of their role to protect media freedom and freedom of expression – a key ingredients in a democracy	Kenya Media Sector Working Group (MSWG), civil society and front-line media defenders protecting media freedom and the self-regulatory body (Media Council of Kenya) by issuing press statements and speaking for MCK in parliament and standing in solidarity with the regulator	Raised awareness of the Media Council of Kenya and its role in handling of complaints and in promoting independent journalism	Hedging media freedom and freedom of expression against attack and promoting independent journalism require broad supportive base of many actors
ITP 2	To strengthen in-house media self-regulatory mechanisms by introducing editorial guidelines to the regional and community media outlets in Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed editorial guidelines. Adoption of editorial guidelines by at least 40 percent of the target media outlets Improved professional conduct of the media houses In-house based self-regulation practiced more effectively 	Collaboration between different actors i.e editors, Media Council of Kenya (MCK), the Communications Authority (CA) and the associations of community media yielded better results. Networking and commitment of change agents is instrumental in effecting changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking and collaboration between actors is indispensable in media reforms Where in-house based self-regulation is practiced, it complements National regulatory mechanism of the MCK
ITP 3	To promote solidarity and support for the Complaints Commission (of the MCK) by Journalists' Professional bodies, journalists' associations and the general public, through sensitisation, networking and continuous engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership and support of the MCK by the KMSWG guaranteed Capacity building of the Complaints Commission on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) achieved Decentralisation of complaints handling mechanism to access the service of the MCK to the people away from the Centre effected. Decentralisation done in four countries: Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret and Meru 	Ownership and support of national media self-regulatory mechanism by the media associations, journalists, editors, publishers and attendant stakeholders is a prerequisite for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition of various media actors is imperative in building functional media self-regulatory mechanism The solidarity and commitment of the media industry to self-regulation builds public trust in the media
	Proposed review of the complaints handling procedures for approval by Parliament.	Not yet approved	Lobbying wasn't done and broad stakeholder base not built in this initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the state to act on media reforms, lobbying by a coalition of actors is imperative. -Institutional level change is harder to realise than organisational one

<p>ITP 4</p>	<p>To enhance in-house self-regulatory mechanisms by promoting the establishment of the role of public editor in media houses and in media professional associations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 mainstream media houses have resemblance of the office of public editors (The SMD, NMG, RMG, Media Marx, The RAMG), KASS, • Engaged all top media houses, editors and Complaints Commission to see a complementary role between the office of public editors and the external and national self-regulatory mechanism of the MCK • Trained top editors to offer volunteer public editor services to community and regional based media outlets and blogger associations 	<p>Conversation and debate on the need for In-house media self-regulation heightened</p>	<p>Consultation of media stakeholders and power mapping important in identifying key movers and their power base</p>
<p>ITP 5</p>	<p>Promote training and application of ethics at university level as the foundation of media self-regulatory mechanism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged universities and editors on gaps in quality of journalism training in middle level colleges and universities • Agreed on collaboration between academia and media houses in ethics training • Build a network of heads of school and departments training in journalism 	<p>This project was outside the sphere of control of ITP 5 and therefore depended increasingly on the support of agents of change as sphere of influence and the goodwill of the universities. Change at sphere of influence where agents of change are not members of the ITP was hard to execute.</p>	<p>Training of ethics in journalism though looked at from organisational level, adoption of the same by all universities could be reviewed as institutional change. Institutional level change is gradual and requires persistent lobbying. This could not be done within the life of the project and is therefore one of those projects that require more time to realise results.</p>
<p>To engage individual heads of departments and schools to the review modules on ethics training</p>	<p>Individual head of department of schools of journalism reviewed curriculum at departmental levels</p>	<p>Mainstreaming of new ideas in curriculum in universities is not very easy particularly when the idea originates from outside of the university</p>	<p>Individual level change is an easier level of change to achieve and an entry point to both organisational and intuitional level changes.</p>	



Case studies

Story 1: Introduction of in-house editorial guidelines for Community and regional media houses

The community and regional media houses and related small-size media outlets, in terms of staff establishment, financial resources and geographical reach, are often unable to employ and retain editors and reporters. Comprising over 60% of media outlets in Kenya and controlling over 70% of the rural audience market share, these outlets face challenges of serving their audience profes-

sionally with most of the profession-related complaints arising from this category of media enterprises. Drafting, launching and adaption of the editorial guides by over 40 outlets (out of the possible 120) and enhanced external self-regulatory mechanism of the MCK improved the compliance with programming code of the broadcasters (institutional level), improved the editorial performance of media houses (organisational level) and enhanced professionalism among journalists. The engagement of the media houses and drafting of the guidelines was supported by the communication authority through one of their employees who was also

a member of the ITP 3 cohort. It was also supported by the Kenya Editors Guild, from where we drew the expert to draft the guidelines. The launch was supported by the CA while the associations of the community media outlets and digital television broadcasters mobilised their members to attend the engagement forum that was organised by the ITP 3 cohort.

One of the journalists from a community media house appreciated the change initiative and during the launch of the guideline commented that, ***“this is the most important intervention in the efforts to professionalise journalism in community media houses. We have been isolated from the mainstream self-regulatory mechanism for long. At least, we can self-regulate though these guidelines and improve our professional conduct”.***

This project, which was within the sphere of control of the ITP 3 cohort, drew technical and financial support from the members of the cohort as well as support from the beneficiaries (media outlets and journalists), bringing systemic change at organisational, institutional, and individual levels. It supported the in-house based media self-regulation mechanism, which complemented the external self-regulatory mechanism of the MCK.

Story 2: Introduction of the function of the office of public editor in media-houses and at the Apex of the media professional Associations

The function of the public editor in Kenya's journalism and media practice is over two decades old, when it was first introduced by the Star Newspaper by appointing Karen Rothmyer in 2011; it was a first not only for the paper but also the press in Kenya to have established this role. This was followed in 2015 by the Nation Media Group, which established the role of the Ombudsman by appointing Peter Mwaura, one of country's renowned veteran journalists, to serve in this capacity. Other media houses followed suit by establishing similar functions that were played largely by their legal departments.

The ITP 4 cohort aimed to grow the function to at least ten media houses and introduce the role to at least two umbrella media professional associations. This was an organisational-level intervention and only possible through the influence of the various media houses' top editors. Though the target was not achieved, the cohort, by engaging expertise of the NMG public editor and chief editors of leading media houses, stirred the conversation on the importance of promoting accountable, independent and responsi-

ble journalism though the role of the of public editor. The Complaint Commission of the MCK pressed for a more inward-looking mechanism (newsroom-based) of handling complaints, which the top editors pledged to support the function in their respective media houses. A few veteran journalists were trained on the role of public editor and committed to volunteer their skills to play this role in small media houses.

Appreciating this initiative, one of the leaders of the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) said,

“We as news bloggers have on many occasions been accused of spreading misinformation and disinforming, misleading our audiences, being insensitive and failing to adhere to journalistic ethics in our practice. Because we cannot run away from the blame, we would want a public editor at the apex of BAKE to monitor our work and pinpoint areas of weaknesses. We don't want to be considered and treated as journalists and we are not claiming to be recognised as such but at least we want to practice our work ethically.”

Though an extremely relevant project that had support of the media industry, we lacked change agents in our midlist (ITP 4) to engage media managers and most of the editors to fully enlist their support to establish the office of public editor in their respective media houses. Our power of influence and clout in the newsroom were limited. Secondly, the financial viability crisis, and therefore the inability to employ public editor, coupled with recorded resistance from some editors, were major challenge towards full realisation of the objectives. Nevertheless, there has been growing interest in newsroom-based self-regulatory mechanisms even among small media houses. Scholars, independent advocates of media self-regulation and veteran journalists are a pointer towards a promising future where multiple media houses could finally adopt this in-house based self-regulatory mechanism.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

ITP has built the capacity of organisational leaders and established networks of like-minded individuals to support media reform initiatives including media self-regulation. Most of the ITP alumni are distinguished media industry and civil society leaders who

have coalesced themselves into the Kenya Media Sector Working Group (KMSW), an industry-led coalition that plays a central role in hedging journalism practice and media freedom from interference from the government and other sectarian interests.



Bonus results related to ITP

Besides direct intervention by the ITP change initiative, there have been important spin-off projects. First is the building of a regional network of editors pioneered by the ITP alumni, and the mobilisation of the Ugandan team by the Kenyan colleagues to form professional associations such as the Uganda Editors Guild and the Uganda Media Sector Working Group. Other activities were the exchange of experiences between various media associations and individuals in the region. In Kenya, there has also been debate and attempt to establish a Fund for Public Interest Journalism as well as review of key media policy and laws touching on governance and independence of the self-regulatory body, the MCK, and the regulator of the broadcast industry.



Lessons learned

The key driver of media reform in ITP are individuals drawn from various strategic media organisations. These are influencers of changes in their own organisations as well as advocates for change at institutional level. Most of the projects in Kenya focused on organisational level change, particularly touching on improving ownership and support of the self-regulatory mechanism by media stakeholders. There were also initiatives to improve in-house based media self-regulation through editorial guidelines and by establishing the role of public editor. At the individual level, there were initiatives to mentor journalists and reporters as well as mechanisms for enforcing the code of conduct in the practice of journalism by editors.

There was minimal focus on the national level media ecosystem such as legislation because the legal system, a few lacunas notwithstanding, has been favourable. However, there were calls for vigilance by the KMSWG and calling out where there were direct policy or legal actions that were an affront to media freedom by the government and attendant state agencies. There has also been a push at institutional level to reform laws that are still inimical to media freedom, enact media policy and tighten legislation that touches on the independence of media self-regulatory body- the MCK.



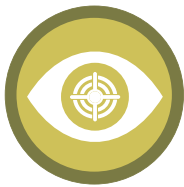
Steps to success

Learning has been very progressive, and every ITP cohort and new change project has injected new lessons. Overall, the following were major lessons that explains the success of the project and which, if infused into future media reforms, would be instrumental in sustaining the momentum of change.

- **First, though there were defined change projects with clear deliverables and timelines, the teams were able to quickly take advantage of the window of opportunities and quickly adjusted their schedules and plans to take advantage of those opportunities. This did not affect their deliverables but significantly changed strategies and activities. Those projects that were agile and organic, taking a life of their own within the implementation period, were successful.**
- **Some change projects took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and election-related campaigns. Quick adaptation to the social and political changes by, for example, commitment to working remotely/ online and getting involved in emerging and pressing issues likely to affect change project defined the success of our projects.**
- **Without financial resources, human resources became a critical driver of the change project. Collegiality, teamwork, openness to new ideas without imposing specific sentiments and models, and the commitment to change the circumstances, became key stimuli for change. It gave the impetus for building strong bonds and trust among participants.**
- **Besides adaptation, continuous learning and demonstrated outcomes/change (read tangible deliverables), played a catalytic role, fostering networks and collaboration between ITP team members and key stakeholders. This built a critical mass of experts and a hub of diverse skills, knowledge and competencies required to effect systemic change. The KMSWG, for example, invited more media associations, eventually emerging as an apex and referral point for the entire media reforms process in the last five years.**



ITP Media Africa Alumni and Stakeholder Meeting in Nairobi, May 2023.



Sustainability of the project

- The institutional capacity and commitment of the change agents is already playing a major role in sustaining and promoting the change initiatives spurred by the ITP. However, some of the remaining activities could be supported within the existing Swedish embassy and SIDA projects. The Department of Political affairs for example could support some of the initiatives.
- The ITP alumni could transform themselves into an NGO or form a formal network that could raise funds to continue with reform and attendant spinoff.
- The ITP alumni or associates from the five participating countries could form a regional network of ITP alumni. Annual meetings and exchange between individuals and coalitions could be supported by Sida. Experiential knowledge and emerging lessons and models could be shared in and outside the network through exchange visits and online engagements.
- Some organisations like Fojo and IMS that are familiar with the ITP programme could identify and support some of the change initiatives that falls within their programmes. This is possible given that these two implementing organisations are operating in almost all the countries covered by ITP Media Africa.
- SIDA could be requested to maintain meet the annual fee for the basecamp at least for the next three years to allow it became a rallying point and a resource for media reforms in the region. An organisation could also be identified to manage the hub.

1.2 Uganda



National Facilitators



George Lugalambi
(2019-2023)



Peter Mwesige
(2019-2023)

Reporting Period

From 2018 to 2023.

Background/ Context

There is a growing consensus in Uganda that the lack of effective self-regulation and absence of credible self-organisation are among the main and most intractable internal barriers to professionalising journalism and media practice. Without a culture of self-regulation, government-led external interventions to regulate the media industry by imposing professional values, enforcing compliance with standards, and policing adherence to ethics are often suspect and resisted. Such state-led measures are usually high-handed, arbitrary, selectively applied, and politically expedient. Consequently, many of these measures end up being harmful to journalism and media practice and have ultimately undermined freedom of expression and weakened the civic space. Also, in the absence of credible self-organisation mechanisms, it is impossible for the industry to harmonise its interests and to speak with a common voice on professional, welfare, occupational, safety, and security matters affecting journalists and media practitioners in Uganda.

The vision of ITP Media in Uganda is to build “a professional and accountable media that inspires public trust and effectively plays an enabling role in democratising society.” ITP alumni and fellows are active in the ongoing advocacy to promote self-regulation, broader reforms of the media industry and regulatory framework, and mechanisms for self-organisation. These efforts have gained steam over the five-year duration of ITP and are now widely recognised across the sector.

ITP change initiatives

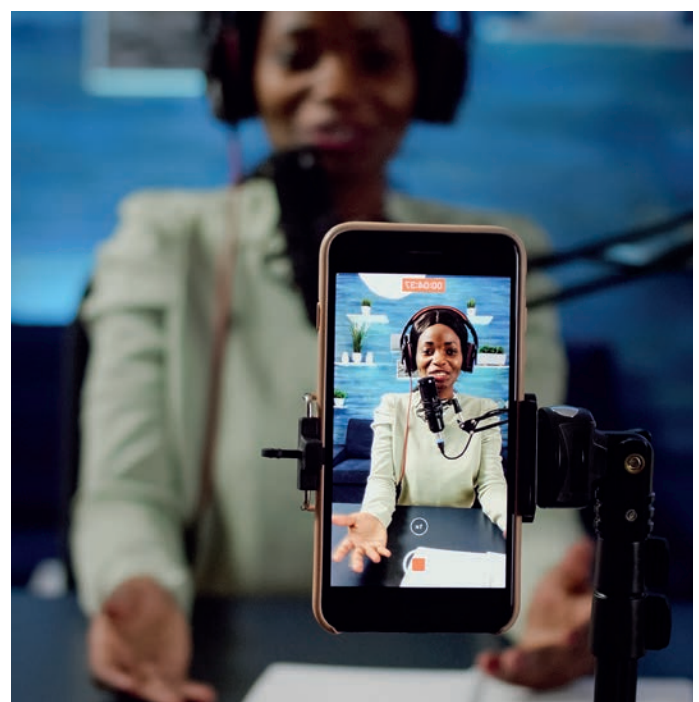
ITP1: *Uganda Editors' Guild – A professional organisation of editors and content managers that promotes self-regulation.*

ITP2: *Uganda Media Sector Working Group – A multistakeholder platform for promotion of effective regulation including self-regulation of the media industry.*

ITP3: *News Literacy Campaign – An advocacy and public awareness campaign to promote news literacy among media and information consumers and audiences.*

ITP4: *Media on the Go – An app (with Telegram chatbot and web-based versions) that provides curated resources for journalists to enable them to access easily and quickly vital information related to media laws, regulations, policies, standards, practices and guidelines.*

ITP5: *Editorial Guidelines and Editorial Standards Committee – A committee set up under the Uganda Editors' Guild that will hold journalists accountable.*



Cohort	Change project	Outcome, effect and impact	Cross-cutting issues in theory of change	Lessons learned
ITP 1	Uganda Editors' Guild	Uganda Editors' Guild has given media organisations a credible platform, common voice and effective peer-to-peer mechanism to promote self-regulation and to hold each other accountable.	Inclusiveness through representation and participation of a diverse range of interests in terms of gender, ownership, service model (commercial, public), geography (rural, urban), and platform (traditional, digital).	Journalists and media owners tend to operate as ostriches, complaining but reluctant to engage. Drawing them to be actively involved is the challenge to overcome. The editors, reporters and media owners have been reticent, preferring to either protect their assumed spaces or sticking to the familiar territory of disorder that favours sections of them.
ITP 2	Uganda Media Sector Working Group	Regular and structured engagements and dialogue on legal and regulatory reforms as well as professionalising Uganda journalism. The conversation on legal and regulatory reforms is ongoing and UMSWG is part of it. Greater collaboration among state regulatory agencies, media associations, academic/training institutions, etc., on issues relating to media practice, safety, etc. UMSWG has for the last four years been the umbrella body organising the annual World Press Freedom Day. UMSWG was formed at the sector level, involving all stakeholders, to spearhead reform and development of the media industry. It has organised conversations on media sector reforms including the controversial Computer Misuse Act.	Hybrid regulation, accountable journalism, safety, professionalism, continuous engagement with all stakeholders.	Part of the government agencies have been reluctant to cede space and allow evolution/transition to the envisaged hybrid regulatory system. Resource and time constraints to fund and drive the necessary tasks. The sector was eager for an organised forum to advance conversation on media. However, two key constituencies remain on the sidelines; media owners and sections of journalists. Government and media can engage to make the sector better for everyone – especially the public for which they both profess to act on behalf.
ITP 3	News Literacy Campaign	Equipping citizens to become knowledgeable, critical, and active consumers of news and information about current and public affairs is an essential enabler for accountable journalism. News consumers who are informed, discerning, and empowered to demand accountable journalism in the digital age.	Professionalism, media ethics and code of conduct	Due to growing dependence on social media, the need for news literacy is growing, while news sources that are traditional continue to struggle. News literacy is not achievable through a few institutions but should be taken up by media houses to ensure citizens understand the news process and why it matters to have credible news. A robust news literacy campaign by ITP 3 can only complement efforts by the media houses and should target getting government on board to educate citizens on news as part of their regulatory agenda. While in Sweden, we saw that the regulatory bodies had media literacy as a major agenda.

ITP 4	Media On The Go	One-stop curated resource centre for easy access to information on media laws, regulations, editorial standards and on best practices with regard to gender, digital rights as well as safety and security of journalists.	Gender and best practices on safety and security of journalists.	Adoption and support are realised with inclusive involvement of key change actors. The objective of Media On The Go would never have been achieved without the collective input from the practitioners, media, civil society, innovators and development actors. This was critical in developing an app as an end product. Teamwork is fundamental in actualisation of the ITP initiatives. Through teamwork we have been able to lobby several development actors for partnerships in creating the app.
ITP 5	Editorial Guidelines and Editorial Standards Committee	Review and compilation of editorial guidelines. Establishment of an Editorial Standards Committee under the Uganda Editors' Guild.		Media rights violations and mistrust of the system among media practitioners. Little confidence that awareness of the laws, regulations and best practices will lead to a reduction in media rights violations.



Case studies

Story 1: Media on the Go: A regulatory companion for journalists

Media on the Go is a product of ITP4 Uganda. It is a curated one-stop knowledge resource on digital rights, media rights, regulation, gender and best practices on safety and security. It is intended to create awareness and convenient access to knowledge of the laws, policies, standards, guidelines and recommendations for media practitioners to facilitate media independence and responsible journalism as well as uphold freedom of expression and access to information. The tool provides this information in a personalised and simple manner for every media practitioner - reporter, editor, producer, manager, presenter, regulator, advocate and public.

This product, which is geared towards the realisation of self-regulation in Uganda, was born out of the realisation that most media practitioners in Uganda are struggling with professional conduct, while the majority of newsrooms are operating without editorial policies and are hiring untrained people with no knowledge of media ethics and best practices. This has seen many violate the laws on media and face sanctions. Weaknesses in self-regulation have left the sector very fragmented and without a shield against state interference.

The media has the ability to enable participation in public life, hold the powerful to account, serve as platforms for dialogue and protect the rights of individuals. But if media is supposed to fulfill its potential role, knowledge on available and updated regulatory requirements and expectations needs to be in place as an enabler of the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, freedom of the press and access to information.

Despite Uganda having a strong media legal and regulatory framework of domestic and international laws on press, digital, gender rights and best practices, guidelines and recommendations, there is a wide knowledge gap on these resources by media practitioners, civil society, policy makers and enforcers and the general public.

This lack of knowledge is attributed to random and scattered placement of these resources, ignorance of where to access the legislations, bulkiness and technical presentation. Consequently, because of the knowledge gap, there has been self-censorship and unethical conduct through irresponsible and insensitive exercise of freedom of expression by media practitioners, including online interactions. This has over time invited statutory regulation to deal with the breach of broadcasting standards, computer misuse and politically controlled opinion expression both online and offline.

Media on the Go was designed as a regulatory companion to try and address this knowledge gap by giving easy access to highly summarised and curated documents that speak to different areas of media practice, self-regulation and regulation in general. Hosted on a digital platform, *Media on the Go* can give specific information as requested by the user such as the dos and don'ts for a talk show host. It is available as a chatbot on Telegram and as an app for Android.

The product is still under development, but once completed, it will be hosted on WhatsApp, Facebook and a dedicated website as a chatbot, as well as on Playstore and Appstore as an app for Android and iOS users respectively. The app will require only one-time internet access to download and install, hence making it more accessible even without the internet. It shall integrate audio-visual components to cater for persons with disabilities and make it easy for a user to just listen to the content instead of reading text.

Making *Media on the Go* platform-neutral requires some investment to pay for subscription across the different platforms and hosting on digital platforms. Once that is done, the product will be launched and disseminated to the different stakeholders. The initial consultations and piloting were done and the reception was very good. The feedback from the consultations has helped build the product up to where it is now.

Story 2: Engendering the media: Transforming ITP knowledge into gender advocacy

Having gained knowledge and skills in influencing regulatory mechanisms/initiatives that target a media industry-centred approach to freedom of expression through self/co-regulation systems, ITP4 alumna Brenda Namata applied the knowledge and skills to her institutional work. This was by influencing programmes that target gender mainstreaming in the media regulatory framework through advocacy into the proposed national media reforms.

In March 2022, the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), where Brenda works as the Communications and Advocacy Officer, organised a meeting with key stakeholders from the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and the Media Council of Uganda (MCU), who are the two industry regulators, as well as the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, media support organisations, civil society, media professional bodies, academia and journalists. This was aimed at generating dialogue and reflections on how gender can be mainstreamed into the regulatory

structures available from statutory to the self-regulation but also at the development actors' level.

From this engagement, there were key learnings that the challenge of gender mainstreaming in media regulation paused at the level of the legal framework, thus leading to gender gaps in legal implementation by the regulators but also giving room to the industry to demonstrate gender insensitivity and irresponsiveness in their output and operations.

Consequently, in September 2022 (upon return from Sweden), with enhanced understanding of the co-regulatory framework and how gender can have a buy-in from relevant actors, strong networking developed with media civil society, MCU and UCC, Brenda shared her knowledge and skills with her colleagues at UMWA. The institution strategised in terms of unpacking the gender gaps at the legal framework level through intensive research and brainstorming internally. This was in comparison of the international protocols on gender and media and the gaps at the national level.

Henceforth, a high stakeholder dialogue of government agencies, media CSOs, academia, media managers and practitioners and development partners were engaged on the status of the Beijing Platform for Action 1995. The platform speaks for women visibility in media and the role of the state and relevant actors among other UN resolutions, and how these have been realised in Uganda as a signatory.

Key to discussion were the strategies to mainstream gender in the media legal framework for regulation adoption. In this engagement, there were key recommendations and commitment from actors to cooperate in the process of advocacy around legal amendments on the gender agenda.

UMWA henceforth lobbied with different development actors and thus, effective March 2023, it kick-started a gender analysis process on the proposed draft principles of the Information and Communications Bill 2022, in which the government seeks to amend some media laws among other regulatory actions, including merging of the regulatory functions of UCC, MCU and the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (NITA-U) into a new regulatory body.

Several key stakeholder engagements have been held within the past seven months of 2023, and a gender analysis report reflecting gender gaps in the proposed media reforms and media laws has been developed and key recommendations made. The last activity to

this advocacy is engaging parliamentary committees to ensure awareness creation on the relevance of gender mainstreaming in the media sector and what can be done since the proposed media reforms present an opportunity for action.

Brenda's contribution to the progress and advocacy described above on engendering the media legal and regulatory framework would have been impossible without the knowledge, skills and networks she acquired through her participation in the ITP Media programme in 2021.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The ITP approach of bringing together stakeholders without prescribing solutions ultimately produced solutions and ignited reforms owned by all concerned and affected. By bringing together different stakeholders from across the sector, the previous silo approach to industry issues has been replaced by a strategic and collective approach. ITP has been a huge catalyst for change by bringing together different stakeholders who have hitherto operated in their own cocoons but now hold get together regularly to engage in conversations on what each has been complaining about in their separate space. ITP provided the knowledge, network and opportunities to learn from different systems and places what has worked there and what has not. For example, the idea of the UMSWG was adopted from Kenya and modified for the Ugandan context.



Bonus results related to ITP

UMSWG is alive to the convergence of media and the eminence of citizen journalism and has therefore brought onboard non-traditional online media to be part of the conversation. UMSWG has its foot firmly in ongoing legal/regulatory reform processes.

When the Prime Minister spoke about the UMSWG in Parliament and emphasised that the government supported its objectives, it was proof that ITP had inspired change in attitudes towards media engagement and even regulation. What needs to be done moving forward is to keep self-regulation as an important part of the media development agenda. As government moots a new media and information law, the resources for a focused and relevant engagement are

right here within ITP. The network should deliberately seek to influence legislation in a manner that favours the industry by producing sufficient evidence, through benchmarking examples, to support legislation.

The *Media on the Go* app promises to play an instrumental role in showcasing the relevance of capacity building for media practitioners on legal and regulatory frameworks to instill and promote self-regulatory practices. For example, it is through this initiative that the Uganda Media Women Association is training female journalists within its different programmes on gender-related laws and their accessibility. This initiative led to collaboration under the "Future of Work Project" by Pollicy, which provided funding to support the development of the app and the training of journalists on digital rights, gender laws and best practices.



Lessons learned

- (i) Collaboration must be deliberately cultivated. It is not to be taken for granted just because one is in the media sector. Once we reached out to the concerned parties, we were able to get attention even from the most unexpected quarters in government.
- (ii) Clarity of the issues at hand and the approach are very critical because people resist anything perceived as a threat to their survival or livelihood.
- (iii) Individuals and groups taking advantage of the current chaos in the industry need to be identified and reined in or isolated.
- (iv) Impact of new (especially digital) technologies and their effect on the media landscape including regulation.
- (v) Infiltration of the media industry by unqualified practitioners.
- (vi) New legislation with ramifications for media freedom i.e., Computer Misuse Amendment Act, 2022.



Steps to success

(i) Conviction and commitment of media practitioners, especially ITP alumni.

(ii) Rigorous and well-informed problem analysis that resulted in the formulation of a relevant and feasible solution.

(iii) Goodwill and support from the ITP participants' respective institutions and organisations.

(iv) The initiative was multi-layered with step-by-step gains that eventually translated into the envisaged change.

(v) Change has happened to the extent that the institutions in which the individuals work have engaged in their respective spaces. Using their spheres of influence was a great thing.



Sustainability of the project

ITP groups need to have a kind of project framework to continue their initiatives or to join in with other institutionalised frameworks for execution. Once a year or two passes, which is often quick, then there is little to keep the change initiative on everyone's radar. With time, the public will fully appreciate media freedom as part of their own freedom of expression. At such a time, the debate on self-regulation will resonate with greater relevance for citizens. Many conversations about self-regulation are now happening, even supported by the government. Self-regulation is more acceptable now even within the government side, if what representatives of government say during various events mean something. There have also been sustained efforts to involve stakeholders in discussions of a regulatory nature. ITP fellows get many invitations to such discussions. These should ultimately translate into sustained public debate about self-regulation.



1.3 Tanzania



National Facilitators



Fausta Musoke
(2018- 2019)



Pili Mtambalike
(2020- 2023)

Reporting Period

From 2018 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Tanzania has a long history of self-regulation of the media in the East and southern parts of Africa following the establishment of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) in 1995. As such it has been a catalyst for the establishment of self-regulatory mechanisms in the region. MCT, an independent and voluntary self-regulatory mechanism, was established by the media fraternity to oversee the professionalism and ethical conduct of the media. Over the years, it has led a coalition of media and human rights organisations under the Coalition for the Right to Information (CoRI) to advocate for changes in the legal and regulatory framework of the media.

When Tanzania joined the ITP Programme in 2018, the late President John Pombe Magufuli (2015-2021) was in power. Dubbed the “Bulldozer,” during his six years of reign, Tanzania’s media was operating under a very hostile political atmosphere and an oppressive legal framework. During the Magufuli regime there were increased incidents of the government banning or suspending newspapers and radio stations, crippling fines imposed on the media for publishing or broadcasting content deemed critical of the government, increased media violations, excessive self-censorship, arresting and prosecution of journalists, an increase in cyber-attacks and diminishing of critical reporting. However, matters have taken a turn for the better in the last three years under President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Bans and suspensions of media outlets have



been lifted, and there have been moves to amend the notorious Media Services Act, 2016. Despite these positive moves, the current legal framework still consists of restrictive laws, including restrictive and punitive legislative frameworks on the cyber spaces. The Access to Information Act, 2016 has very expansive provisions on access to government and public information, but the implementation has been problematic. Together, these restrictions constrain media plurality, diversity and growth.

The President’s promise to boost democratic values, including a free media, has indeed triggered notable changes in the political and legal framework. Currently, there is a conducive political environment, government has opened doors for constructive dialogue, top government officials are now accessible and polarisation among media stakeholders is diminishing. Furthermore, the process to review oppressive policies, laws and regulations is on course and conditions for online media registration has been lessened. Engagement between media and government has increased, critical and analytical reporting has resumed and, more importantly, press freedom has been increasing by day.

The existence of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), which has successfully operated for 27 years overseeing the ethical conduct and accountability of the media industry, is being threatened by the Media Services Act, 2016, under which the Government intends to start a statutory council of its own. MCT has mediated hundreds of cases since its inception in 1995, some of them involving very high-profile figures in Government, including the Vice President and Ministers.

It is with this in mind that all five cohorts have worked towards the consolidation of the culture of media self-regulation in Tanzania, with more actors understanding, advocating for and supporting the media self-regulatory mechanism in place so as to enhance a professional, strong and vibrant media essential for a democratic society.

ITP change initiatives

ITP 1

Change Project: Increase actors to support and advocate for media self-regulation

Objectives:

- Support peer oversight mechanisms within media houses.
- Entrench self-regulation in journalism training.

Participants of ITP 1 shaped the vision for all the participating teams in that they wanted to increase actors in the promotion of self-regulation in the country so that the media could have more supporters advocating for media self-regulation that would enhance a strong, professional and independent media.

The participants of ITP 1 did not have a singular change project, and this is mostly due to the polarisation of media stakeholders at the time. Notable engagements in the cohort were that of the Media Council of Tanzania participant who made a number of interventions including:

- a) Organise consultative meetings with heads of journalism departments of seven universities³⁷ on entrenching self-regulation in journalism training;
- b) Use of the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Editorial Freedom, Independence and Responsibility (DEFIR), by training institutions when teaching media ethics;
- c) Drafting of a course outline to include DEFIR in journalism training;
- d) Consultative meetings with editors on establishing peer oversight mechanisms within media houses like public editors and a code of ethics;

- e) Online media including TV, Radio, news sites and bloggers were accepted to join MCT membership and thus submitting to the codes of ethics and their self-regulation.

Output: To galvanise media stakeholders to support media self-regulation, which is being threatened by the government which intends to form a statutory body mostly to further control the media.

ITP 2

Change Project: Produce self-regulation guidelines for online content producers

Objectives:

1. Establish a common understanding of ethical principles, values and norms related to news gathering and dissemination, hence improving quality content among online content producers
2. Foster a behavioural change among online content producers by adhering to ethical conduct
3. Assist content producers in coping with harsh laws by enabling them to check their content so that they do not in fall foul of the laws.

Outcomes: The guidelines were adopted by MCT as part of the Code of Ethics for Media Professionals, which before lacked ethical codes for online media content producers. The Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) has also included the guidelines in its Code of Ethics.

ITP 3

Change Project: Produce an interactive digital media business module

Objectives:

1. To assist media outlets, explore and exploit new and IT responsive financial streams for the media.
2. It could also be used by media training institutions as part of their curricula on media management.

³⁵ Muslim University of Morogoro(MUM), Open University of Tanzania(OUT), Tumaini University – Dar College (TUDARCO), University of Dodoma (UDOM), St Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), School of Journalism and Mass Communication of the University of Dar es Salaam (SJMCM) and Iringa University College (IUCO).

Outcome: The ITP 3 Cohort were able to build the interactive Digital Business module that is now being tested by some media outlets. The Tanzania Digital Media Awards, now in their third year, is an offshoot of the Change Project.

- 1) **ITP participants as agents of change:** ITP Cohort 3 alumni have emerged as influential figures in driving innovation in Tanzania's media landscape focusing on the media business.
- 2) They were able to garner tangible initiatives such as business model development and the Tanzania Digital Awards, which are an offshoot of their change initiative.
- 3) A platform for the validation of ideas about media viability.

ITP 4

Change Project: Strengthening efficacy of the Access to Information Act, 2016

Objectives:

- 1) To strengthen knowledge and skills of information holders in the government, public and private sectors to pro-actively provide information to the public;
- 2) To promote utilisation of the Access to Information Act, 2016 by the media and the public;
- 3) Write a guide on ATI for information holders.

During implementation of their change project, a number of activities were done around their change project including:

- Producing the ATI guide in collaboration with the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT);
- Engagement with Tanzania Editor's Forum (TEF), Public Relations Society of Tanzania (PRST), Tanzania Association of Government Communication Officers (TAGCO) and INTERNEWS on understanding the ATI Act, 2016;
- Engagement with the Tanzania Information Department in organising the First National Media Stakeholders Forum which is an offshoot of the change project;
- Taking part in 20 media talk shows on TV and radio (both national and community) on the importance of ATI;
- Taking part in the World Press Freedom Day commemorations;
- Engaging in the TAGCO annual forums (350 pax from all government institutions, including

- ministries, Regional Secretariat, local government authorities, independent departments, security and armed forces and executive agencies) on understanding the ATI Act, 2016;
- Conducting ATI training to the government information officers and journalists (in partnership with MCT, INTERNEWS and East African Lawyers Society);
- Taking part in organising and attending the Regional Africa Public Relations Association annual forum;
- Training journalism students at UDSM, TUDARCO and SAUT on ATI;
- Participating in meetings with the Ministry of Information and the Parliament on amendments of ATI, Media Services Act and Data Protection Act.

All these are activities which emanated from the implementation of the Change Project that also gave off shoots such as the **National Media Stakeholders Forum** which was held for the first time in December 2022.

ITP 5

Change Project: Strengthening the journalism curricula to include issues of Media Accountability and Resolution of Media Disputes

Objectives:

1. To entrench media accountability and self-regulation in journalism curricula;
2. To enable journalism students to internalise the importance of self-regulation of the media at the onset of their career;
3. To make the work of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) more visible by using its case studies in the mediation of media disputes.

Outcomes:

1. Following discussions with stakeholders, the team eventually came up with two course outlines: one on **Media Accountability Systems and Oversight Mechanisms**, and the other on **Mediation of Media Disputes**. The course outlines have been shared with several universities.
2. The University of Dar es Salaam has already begun to incorporate them in the Ethics Course for the Undergraduate degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism.



Case studies

Story of Change 1: Interactive Digital Business module

This is a story of resilience, commitment and a passion to make change. It is a story of how ITP 3 Cohort addressed the problem of economic media challenges by building an Interactive Digital Business Module. The media in Tanzania is going through economic challenges due to the reliance of old business models that relied solely on revenue from advertising. However, a large number of advertisers are now going online or developing their in-house advertisements departments and agencies. Many of them are developing online marketing strategies and use digital platforms to market their business. They have opted to go online because it is cheaper, more efficient and much more effective.

The ITP 3 Cohort faced a number of difficult challenges. Three of its members dropped out of the programme along the way due to new work opportunities and health challenges, and the COVID-19 pandemic happened, curtailing most of their work. The 2020 Presidential and General Elections in Tanzania further impeded their work as the Internet was shut down for some time. By the end of the programme cycle only two participants remained. The duo believe that a financially stable media is good for press freedom and accountability. It can afford to hire trained staff who are more likely to be ethical and responsible and also pay them well. This augurs well with professionalism and media accountability through self-regulation.

The two worked diligently, with passion and great commitment even beyond the time of their cohort to build the interactive module and test its efficacy in one community radio station.



“It is notable that as alumni from the ITP programme, we are actively engaged in instigating and participating in discussions focused on the sustainability and viability of media, as well as the exploration of new business models within the unique context of Tanzania.”

Micheal Mallya (ITP 3 participant)

“Change is an incremental process, but it is possible. It is not easy for ITP to affect the whole media landscape but our change project has triggered the conversations and acted as an eye opener to some of the media outlets on how they can utilise the digital space as revenue streams”

Baraka Kiranga (ITP 3 participant)

The Change Project's focus on homegrown solutions, solving locally defined problems and challenges is in line with the principles of ITP.

Story of Change 2: Strengthening the journalism curricula to include issues of Media Accountability and Resolution of Media Disputes.

ITP5 team members wanted to entrench the issues of self-regulation in the journalism curricula in schools of journalism. A situational analysis showed that although journalism students were taught media ethics, in all the curricula they looked through, aspects of self-regulation were absent. Writing curricula is a specialised skill, and none of the team members (except one and the National Facilitator) had any expertise in writing curricula. So one of the first tasks was to do some action learning so that members could understand the salient points in curriculum development.

The team felt that it is important for students of journalism to study issues of media responsibility, self-regulation and resolution of media disputes as part of the Ethics so that they may from the onset of their professional life be aware of the importance of these issues and be committed to ensuring that ethical transgressions are dealt with in an amicable, fast and transparent manner.

Following the contextual analysis and discussions with stakeholders, the team eventually came up with two course outlines: one on **Media Accountability Systems and Oversight Mechanisms**, and the other on **Mediation of Media Disputes**.

It is very encouraging that the School of Journalism of the University of Dar es Salaam has adopted the two courses in the Ethics Curriculum.

- **Media Ethics and Accountability** (combined with media ethics contents) to be taught at undergraduate level;
- **Media Law and Ethics** (to be taught at postgraduate diploma level), which will include modules on media accountability, self-regulation and mediating media disputes.

"I have learned quite a lot about media self-regulation and the importance it has in having a credible media which is responsible and accountable"

Marko Shekalaghe

"I have acquired another skill of writing course outlines. It is something that I never could have acquired if I had not participated in the ITP Programme"

Juma Juma



Key changes thanks to the ITP

Promotion and support of Media Self-Regulation:

The overarching theme of all the change programmes in the past five years has been the consolidation of the culture of self-regulation in Tanzania, with more actors understanding, advocating, supporting and implementing, media self-regulatory mechanisms that enhance a professional, strong and vibrant media essential for a democratic society.

While MCT has been successfully operating for almost three decades, working as an arbiter between the media and the public, there have been attempts by the government to destabilise this voluntary council by installing a statutory council that would further control the media. The ITP programme has played a crucial role in re-assessing, reaffirming and in seeking ways of promoting the concept of self-regulation and ensuring that more actors and action is taken to safeguard the professionalism and ethical conduct of the media so as to promote a journalism that is independent, responsible and inclusive.

Team Building and Networking. The programme has resulted in the formation of a strong team of professionals (journalists, lawyers, bureaucrats, sociologists etc.) from the media, civil society, and government who are willing to work together to disseminate knowledge about media self-regulation. Participants from the five cohorts have benefited from the knowledge gained and have, for the most part, become promoters of collaboration and networking within the framework of media self-regulation. The situational analysis conducted by all cohorts to establish the context of the Change Programmes has provided much needed body of knowledge and have discerning gaps related to media regulation, viability and training. Hence, interventions that have been pursued by all the cohorts have aimed at filling those gaps.

Innovation and Creativity: The programme has led to innovation and creativity in finding solutions for challenges the media is facing such as media viability, making use of laws that can promote access to information, freedom of the media and expression.

A space for reflection and collaboration: The programme has also provided space for reflection and collaboration and formation of partnerships of diverse partners in media, civil society, and government. ITP participants have been requested to provide expertise in various spaces such as government ministries, training institutions and other gatherings on issues of laws on access to information, self-regulation of on-line spaces and media viability.



Bonus results related to ITP

1. Change in media perception about viability and sustainability

Media outlets are championing the change of business models (Mwananchi Communications, Clouds Media, Azam Media). Media outlets are embracing digital innovations as part of business expansion.

2. ITP as a platform for dialogue and interaction:

The ITP has evolved into a platform for dialogue, meeting and influence on the topic of self-regulation in the country. It has facilitated interactions among representatives of organisations that usually don't work together. Contacts have been established between participants from the different cohorts (and between their organisations) that did not

exist previously. Contacts have also been made between participants from different countries in the region benefiting from the programme.

For example, the Ministry of Information is now working with media and civil societies in various issues such as review of media laws and policies and organising conferences on media development. The first National Information Sector Development Conference which took place in December 2022 was organised by the Ministry, and ITP alumni presented several papers at the conference. This has become possible because of the participation of the mix of people with various expertise in the various cohorts that included government officials.

3. Alumni recognised for their expertise:

ITP alumni gaining influence in the media industry as they are called to share their expertise and knowledge on issues such as ATI, media viability and self-regulation of online spaces. Participants from various cohorts of the programme, as well as the National Facilitator, are being invited to various forums, meetings, academic dialogues and committees to share their knowledge on issues of media self-regulation, access to information and media viability. The ITP has served as a platform to sensitise over three hundred government information officers on their role in providing access to information to the public in accordance with the law.

4. ITP participants as agents of change:

ITP alumni have emerged as influential figures in driving innovation in Tanzania's media landscape focusing on the media business. It is notable that alumni from the ITP programme are actively engaged in instigating and participating in innovations focused on the sustainability and viability of media, as well as the exploration of new business models within the unique context of Tanzania.



5. Regional integration and networking:

Participants from various countries in the region know each other and they know who to reach in various countries according to skills and needs. ITP has the potential to become a think tank for media development in Tanzania and the region. The diversity of knowledge brought by different practitioners and stakeholders is very useful to participants and the media sector as a whole.

6. Tanzania Digital Awards

The awards are one of the intriguing unintended results of the ITP and are an offshoot of the ITP3 Change Initiative. The awards were started in 2020 and seek to recognise individuals and organisations who make effective use of digital technologies to creatively and innovatively inspire actions, bring change and foster lasting impact through digital platforms and technology. Among other things, the initiative has a category on Digital Media that recognises media outlets and media practitioners who are disrupting the media landscape through innovations and finding relevant solutions to critical challenges in the media sector in Tanzania.

These unintended impacts demonstrate the far-reaching influence of the ITP programme beyond its initial objectives, creating a network of informed professionals and fostering positive changes in the media landscape.



Lessons learned

- 1) Change is an incremental process, but it is possible to make it happen. It is not easy for ITP to affect the whole media landscape, but the project triggered the conversations and acted as an eye opener to some of the media practitioners on the issues at stake, especially in media regulation and self-regulation.
- 2) The exposure gained from interacting with participants within the country and from other countries is very instrumental for participants and the media sector in general to instigate and validate the direction for change. Learning from each other's challenges and experiences has been very beneficial.
- 3) The media landscape of Tanzania is in its infancy stage subject to growth. ITP alumni can be the agents of that change in collaboration with other actors.



Sustainability of the project

The Tanzania alumni have started a process to put into action an organisation/formal coalition that would carry forward the work done under the ITP. The Swedish Embassy in Tanzania has put some funds into Jamii Forums to assist the alumni through the transition to sustain the principles and spirit of ITP. The objectives are as follows:

- To create a community of practice to document experiences, lessons, best practices in the country;
- To promote innovation and sustainability of the media (politics, economics, community, technology and content);
- To work with other stakeholders such as Jamii Forums, MCT, CoRI and others to promote media self-regulation, independence of the media, freedom of expression and access to information;
- To act as a bridge between different actors (capacity building of media, government, CSOs and the private

sector on issues of self-regulation, press freedom, access to information and freedom of expression);

- To create a One-Stop Centre/Knowledge Hub on media issues;
- To build institutional capacity (HR, resource mobilisation, planning).

To accomplish the above, the alumni plan to do the following activities:

- Establish a Community of Practice (CoP);
- Convene annual CoP forums (local & regional);
- Document and publish best practices and experiences on media issues;
- Engagement meetings with various institutions (Parliamentary Committees, government etc.) on media issues;
- Capacity building for media organisations on media self-regulation/sustainability;
- Conduct operational research and surveys;
- Public engagement activities.



1.4 Zambia



National Facilitator
Oliver Kanene



Reporting Period

From 2018 to 2023.

Background/ Context

During the period of the programme in Zambia, the context as noted at its beginning did not change much. In 2021, a new political party ascended to power against a promise of overhauling the legal framework, particularly as it related to freedom of expression. Although the overhaul is yet to be seen in practice, the new government has initiated efforts towards repealing and replacing some of the laws that impinge on civil freedoms. Specifically, the government has removed the law on defamation of the President and Cabinet and has approved the Access to Information Bill, to be tabled before Parliament.

The Zambian legal framework does not provide strong guarantees for the fundamental right to freedom of expression and freedom of information, and therefore challenges the prosperity of media self-regulation. For instance, it criminalises defamation. The absence of an Access to Information Law contributes to a difficult environment for the practice of free and independent journalism that holds elected officials to account. There does not exist any distinct media laws. Therefore, journalism practice and media regulation of any form are subjected to a web of mostly bad laws scattered across the national legal framework. To add to these and other challenges, the Zambian media faces serious financial sustainability challenges that contribute to journalists' non-compliance to recognised professional standards, leading to poor quality journalism in general.

The overall vision of the ITP Zambia teams has been to achieve **a united, professional and sustainable media sector that is committed to ethical journalism**. The ITP Zambia teams set out to achieve a functional media self-regulatory mechanism as the key factor in attaining this vision.

The Zambian teams essentially aimed to achieve, and contributed to stimulating debate, increasing knowl-

edge and sharing their international programme experiences among those engaged in developing media self-regulation. The teams encouraged Zambian media to reflect on how they could contribute to preserving freedoms through better adherence to standards and commitment to the principle of accountability.

ITP change initiatives

Among the challenges identified at the beginning of the ITP Media programme in Zambia were the stalled movement for a media self-regulation mechanism, limited knowledge about media regulation and self-regulation, and the absence of strong media associations. The Zambia teams worked towards resolving the challenges in an incremental manner from one cohort to the next. In short, all cohorts contributed to the following in their change projects:

- (a) *Re-igniting and sustaining conversations on media self-regulation;*
- (b) *Increasing knowledge and urgency on media self-regulation;*
- (c) *Strengthening media associations;*
- (d) *Developing a media development hub.*

Programme outcomes

The ITP teams in Zambia contributed to re-igniting conversations and debate on media self-regulation. In 2018, the ITP Media Zambia pioneering cohort re-ignited the more than 20-year-old debate on media self-regulation, contributing to an active and constructive dialogue among the stakeholders. The ITP team, together with the Media Liaison Committee (MLC), contributed to thwarting threats by government to institute state regulation of the media in the absence of a collectively agreed self-regulation framework. The team contributed to an all-media conference where about 300 journalists unanimously resolved to pursue a statutory self-regulatory mechanism. As part of the programme's cross-learning approach, the ITP Africa Zambia team, with facilitation by BBC Media Action, invited Kenya ITP National Facilitator, Dr. Haron Mwangi, to share experiences and history of media co-regulation in Kenya.

The ITP team was part of the technical working group established during the conference with the task of drafting the Zambia Media Council (ZAMEC) self-regulation bill for submission to the Ministry of Information and Media. The draft bill has undergone several reviews by the technical working group and stakeholders. The Ministry of Information and Media and the Ministry of Justice have assisted in finalising the bill in readiness for its presentation in Parliament.

The ITP teams helped increase knowledge and rendered urgency to the media self-regulation debate. The ITP Media Zambia teams organised and facilitated a series of interactive meetings for journalists to assist in increasing understanding of different media regulation models. The teams also attended and made presentations at meetings organised by other media organisations. The Stockholm based Programme Director, Annicka Flovin, and Thematic Mentor, Joan Barata Mir, made presentations at stakeholder meetings in Lusaka on topics related to media regulation and self-regulation. These interactions introduced and sustained advocacy and a sense of urgency towards achieving a self-regulation mechanism. It helped to push for meaningful change by encouraging inclusive engagement and cooperation of all affected stakeholders. It created understanding of the importance and the urgency to build momentum for the change process. Apart from sharing knowledge, the meetings created a compelling narrative that created awareness among stakeholders of the dangers of staying in the status quo.

The awareness raised during the knowledge sharing meetings contributed to an increased participation of media owners and the private sector in the debate. The heightened participation led to the creation of the Associations for Media Self-regulation – an association led mainly by media owners and supported by some international media development organisations. The association has since established a Complaints Committee and is in the process of recruiting an Ombudsman.

The ITP Media Zambia teams triggered efforts to strengthen media associations. As identified in the programme start-up situational analysis,

Zambian media associations were not strong enough to defend press freedom when it was threatened and to create an effective force for change.

There did not exist an identifiable lead organisation or individual in Zambia's media sector. This lack of leadership rendered the media weak. It adversely affected momentum and engagement in the process of establishing a self-regulation mechanism. The ITP Media Zambia team helped to create leadership and to strengthen media associations by organising a multi-stakeholder meeting at which the MLC was recognised as the mother body of media associations in Zambia. The team further assisted the MLC to draft its constitution. The constitution provided a framework for a code of conduct for Zambian journalists. The code of ethics is part of the proposed Zambia Media Council bill. The strategy was that after the MLC was identified as the lead media organisation in Zambia, it would begin to formally establish itself as such and consequently help strengthen member-associations.

The Zambian team began the process to establish a media development hub. The ITP Media Zambia teams recognised that there was need to have a central repository of information to support media reforms and development.

The COVID-19 disruption required that the third and fourth cohorts work together. During a joint meeting that included presentations from stakeholders including the University of Zambia and the Free Press Initiative, the two cohorts identified low knowledge levels and absence of a well-managed information source as some of the challenges that the media suffered. The ITP teams were assigned to lead the establishment of a Media Development hub. The fifth and last ITP Media Zambia cohort adopted the development of the hub as its Change Project. Panos Institute Southern Africa and the ITP team hosted a meeting at which stakeholders adopted the project as an important part of the media development initiatives in the country. The ITP team has continued to work toward establishing the hub and has launched a Facebook page where some materials have already been posted.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The programme had impact at organisational and personal level. ITP Media Zambia participant Brighton Phiri says participation in the programme enabled his newspaper The Globe to work with and benefit from journalists with varying backgrounds. He says the programme was “incredibly resourceful to me as a journalist and the Globe newspaper as a media outlet”.

“Through ITP, I learned the art of consensus building and collective resolve. I learned the importance of respecting and appreciating divergent views for the common good. The success of formulating a regulatory framework for the media in Zambia cannot be saluted without acknowledging the ITP’s immense contribution,” Brighton says. Although informally, the Globe Newspaper is applying self-regulation principles at the media house level.

Andrew Miti, a Cohort 4 participant and a Senior Editor at one of Zambia’s top dailies, says, “the vast knowledge from the physical and virtual training sessions has continued to influence my work as a journalist. From time to time, I am able to fall back on that knowledge particularly to improve the quality of journalism as a prerequisite for media self-regulation. In this way my subordinates too are benefiting from the programme”.



Lessons learned

Zambian media has always recognised that media regulation and self-regulation are two sides of the same coin, and that the former protects democracy by regulating content that is supposed to be free in a democracy, while the latter focuses on building democratic practices through regulation by the media sector itself. The ITP Media Zambia team worked with colleagues to enhance this understanding. The teams identified and began to work at influencing ingredients required to achieve a fair regulatory framework to foster self-regulation. They included a government democratic framework that facilitates a free and independent media. Another was the need to remove laws that impinge on the practice of free and independent journalism. The third was the willingness of the media practitioners to have a voluntary joint endeavour to establish and abide by goals, guidelines and ethical principles. It also required good quality journalism and economically sustainable media.

To address these issues, the ITP Zambia teams applied a multi-stakeholder approach built on cooperation. This approach proved to be a valuable step towards achieving consensus among media players on self-regulation. In this approach, it was inevitable for the ITP teams and like-minded media organisations and associations to engage with government on issues relating to media self-regulation and independence. Further, the teams endeavoured to invite as many key media stakeholders as possible at every meeting that it organised, to challenge the polarisation of and divisions in the media.

There were several lessons learned during the programme. Key among them were:

- There is a need for a recognised and respected organisation to take leadership of a movement toward a collective objective.
- Lack of unity among journalists and other media actors gives an opportunity for external forces to infiltrate the media.
- Unhealthy competition among media development organisations contributes to the polarisation of the media.
- Failure to recognise and fully understand existing national cultural, political and economic environments can lead to differences in the interpretation and application of international standards.
- Weak media associations cannot stand up against threats to press freedom.
- Negative attitudes and fear toward engagement with the government can raise suspicions about the intentions of media reforms.



Sustainability of the project

Collaboration, support, advice and guidance on all aspects of programme delivery among programme management staff, national facilitators, thematic mentors and participants contributed to the success of the ITP programme in the Zambian context. The extensive learning and application of new change management and media regulation knowledge contributed immensely to the programme being extended twice beyond the original contract time. The programme was agile enough to innovate ways to continue its work in the midst of a disruptive COVID-19 pandemic. It produced a network of experts whose expertise can be tapped into for successful media development at regional and national levels.



Considering the resources spent on the programme, the wealth of learning acquired by participants and innovations from the COVID-19 disruption, the need to sustain and promote the change initiatives spurred by the ITP is imperative. Moving forward, the momentum of the programme to inspire and catalyse change should be maintained and the ITP network at national and regional levels retained. The lessons learned from the programme should set the base for this continuation.

The Zambia team endeavoured to capture achievements and lessons learned from across all participating countries as an ongoing effort throughout the life of the programme to bring together insights gained during specific activities, which can be usefully applied in future local projects. Local lessons and initiatives will be priority.

To continue with the programme initiatives, the ITP Media Zambia alumni have agreed to continue participating in and supporting the establishment of the Media Development Hub – the last change project led by the fifth cohort. The hub will be hosted at an organisation which was initiated by an ITP Media Zambia alumnus – Bloggers of Zambia.

The Media Development Hub aims to build a more inclusive, knowledgeable and representative journalism sector. To ensure a healthy future for the journalism and media industry in Zambia, the hub will endeavour to build a knowledgeable critical mass of people to help drive the transformation needed in the industry. It will contain general information on journalism and the media, research papers, papers presented at different fora, materials collected in the ITP base camp and others.

The hub is expected to result in an independent, sustainable media ecosystem with strong ethical and professional standards of journalism and a network of people working towards a better media future, as envisaged at the beginning of the ITP Media programme.

To retain the alumni network, the ITP Media Zambia alumni have agreed to hold monthly meetings to exchange professional knowledge and information, organise technical conferences, seminars and workshops.

It is critical that local and international media development organisations and donors recognise the continued work of the ITP media programme as part of the aggregate effort toward media reform and development. An unhealthy competition environment will stifle the extension of the work the ITP teams have achieved. It is also important that Embassies of Sweden in the participating countries support activities of the ITP Media alumni in order to ensure that the media and nation full benefit from the resources spent over the five years of the programme.

Media development organisations and associations can attach ITP alumni as mentors at media houses to share the knowledge they have acquired from the programme. Most importantly, the alumni could help media houses to establish in-house self-regulation systems. The programme exposed participants to a myriad of skills which can be shared in media houses. They include skills that can help build sustainability, formulating strategic plans, optimising organisational structures and improving newsroom management.

1.5 Zimbabwe



National Facilitators



Abigail Gamanya
(2018 –
October 2023)



Nigel Nyamutumbu
(November 2022 –
September 2023)

Reporting Period

From 2018 to 2023.

Background/ Context

The regulation of the media has been at the centre of contestations in Zimbabwe, especially since 2003 when the government introduced the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) to entrench statutory regulation of the media. Prior dialogues and attempts at establishing a self-regulatory council in the mid-90s had suffered stillbirths. AIPPA was introduced by the Zimbabwean government as a tool to silence dissenting voices and to shut down critical media. Independent publications including the Daily News and the Tribune were closed, while several journalists were arrested on account of AIPPA. In 2007, as part of efforts to push back against statutory regulation, media

stakeholders established the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) as a self-regulatory mechanism, with a binding code of conduct and a complaints mechanism that covered most privately owned media organisations. State-controlled media, however, did not subscribe to the Council and the Code.

In 2013, the country adopted a new Constitution with an expansive Bill of Rights and guaranteed freedoms for journalists. Though progressive, with an expansive Bill of Rights the new Constitution further entrenched statutory regulation of the media by making the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) a constitutional body. The ZMC had been created under AIPPA to regulate the media. There was, however, a window of opportunity to not only address concerns around the regulation of the media but also to broadly discuss how the country could implement constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression and access to information. The ITP Media programme thus provided the necessary momentum and drive in media reform agenda, as it coincided with the entry of a new administration in 2018. ITP 1's thrust was to engineer the reform agenda and to critically mobilise stakeholders for reform. As part of this mobilisation, subsequent ITP teams successfully influenced the inclusion of media reforms on the legislative agenda, which became a critical step towards realising reforms and getting government to acknowledge the need for the industry to self-regulate. A critical result of the effort being the repeal of AIPPA and adoption of co-regulation of the media.



ITP change initiatives

Vision of ITP Team Zimbabwe

The expressed long-term goal of the Zimbabwean team is to have contributed to, and seen the enactment of a media regulatory framework that supports an independent, plural and diverse media structure.

Mission

To actively engage in the government of Zimbabwe-led media reform process and to ensure that there is development and implementation of legislation that provides for democratic regulation of the media.

The objectives of the various ITP cohorts have been identified as:

ITP 1

- 1. To mobilise media stakeholders for collective action in defence of a democratic media regulatory framework;*
- 2. To influence anticipated media law and policy reforms;*

ITP 2

- 3. To enact new media laws by June 2020;*

ITP 3

- 4. To continue building momentum by stakeholders in defence of freedom of expression;*

ITP 4

- 5. To track and influence the implementation of reformed laws (FOIA and ZMC Act);*
- 6. To create platforms for media stakeholders engagement on the co-regulation of the media;*

ITP 5

- 7. To create platforms for policy makers and public awareness raising of the existing self-regulatory platforms;*
- 8. To build the capacity of journalists and media workers on electoral reporting to enhance the quality of media.*

To positively influence the media law reform process in ensuring the strengthening of self-regulation in Zimbabwe.



Changes as a result of ITP

The below table describes the institutional (systematic) changes as a result of the ITP and references the thematic area in the reference book.

Cohort	Change project	Outcome, effect and impact	Cross-cutting issues	Lessons learned
ITP 1	Mobilising stakeholders for reforms	Through ITP interventions, media law reforms were introduced on the legislative agenda	Raised awareness of the Media Council of Kenya and its role in handling of complaints and in promoting independent journalism	Media reforms require a multi-stakeholder approach
ITP 2	Enacting reformed laws in Parliament	Through ITP interventions, a draconian law entrenching statutory regulation was repealed and replaced by the Freedom of Information Act	External self-regulation: Oversight by peers and the public Co-regulation: A partnership model	Consensus building among media stakeholders is a key drivers in the law reform process
ITP 3	Building momentum for reforms in defence of free expression	Through the influence of ITP participants, Zimbabwe's broadcasting sector was opened up with television and community radio stations licenced	External self-regulation: Oversight by peers and the public Co-regulation: A partnership model	Operating and advocacy under health and environmental challenges such as Covid 19 and climate change requires innovation and resilience
ITP 4	From law development to implementation	Through interventions by ITP participants, Cabinet began publicising key decisions of their meetings as part of enhancing transparency and implementation of the Freedom of Information Act	External self-regulation: Oversight by peers and the public Co-regulation: A partnership model	Enhanced government transparency is key in driving of journalistic freedoms and creating a culture of accountability
ITP 5	Creating a safe operating environment through strengthening self-regulatory mechanisms for the media	Media organisations are strengthening internal self-regulatory systems while the government of Zimbabwe has approved the principle of co-regulation	Internal self-regulation, newsroom ethics and accountability External self-regulation: Oversight by peers and the public Co-regulation: A partnership model	If political actors utilise self-regulatory mechanisms and there is trust in media accountability, there will be a safe operating environment for the media



Case studies

Repeal of AIPPA and enactment of the Freedom of Information Act

Zimbabwe in 2020 successfully repealed the Access to Information and Protection to Privacy Act (AIPPA) through the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act. This significant change story was a giant step towards the implementation of the country's constitutional provisions on freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information. The law benchmarked on the African Union Commission on Human and People's Rights

(ACHPR) model law set the tone for the recognition of self-regulation of the media in Zimbabwe.

The first two cohorts of the Zimbabwean team dealt with the "hardware" side of the law reform process i.e. the development of democratic media legislation. Part of the tasks of these teams were to ensure that the country dealt with the dark past in which the law was used to stifle freedom of expression and access to information. This change was realised incrementally with the first step being the creation of a platform for dialogue between government and media stakeholders set in motion by ITP 1 and 2. Previously the two sectors were working in silos.

Through these platforms for engagement, the government invited media civic society and some ITP participants to take part in the law development process that led to the replacement of a repressive law with a more democratic one.

Kindness Paradza, a former journalist who was an ITP 2 participant as a legislator in the media committee and later appointed into government, said the ITP programme equipped him in the law and policy making process. “The ITP programme got us legislators from different political parties under one roof in pursuit of a single goal. We became a united front in parliament and were able to lead the media reform process outside our political parties whipping system. We had our change initiative at the back of our heads and that encouraged us to make the necessary strides in the reform process.”

Story 2: State acknowledgement of self-regulation and consensus on co-regulation

The government of Zimbabwe in 2023 approved principles to the Media Practitioners Bill to give effect to the formal recognition of self-regulation. Previously, government were firm supporters of statutory regulation. Through the Media Practitioners Bill, the statutory Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) will delegate its regulatory powers to self-regulatory mechanisms. The statutory commission will then be an appellant body in a co-regulatory framework.

The journey towards arriving at this compromise position of co-regulation was challenging and was a result of sustained engagements, many of which were created through the ITP platform. ITP cohorts 3-5 were particularly seized with the “software” side of the media reform process i.e. the implementation of enacted democratic media legislation. As part of the interventions to promote the implementation of laws from “development” to “implementation”, there was recognition that reform is a process of dialogue and negotiation. Through this dialogue and negotiation, there is general consensus that as Zimbabwe breaks away from statutory regulation to self-regulation, there is need to implement co-regulation – a partnership model of the two.

Theresa Takafuma, an editor with a local Zimbabwean newspaper and participant in the ITP 4 cohort said the programme, was instrumental in forging partnerships for the implementation of democratic laws and the principle of co-regulation. “Our change initiative was centered on the practicalities of the reformed laws. We wanted to popularise the law and ensure it is im-

plemented. Getting government to formally acknowledge self-regulation was a key stride in dealing with entrenchment of statutory regulation through AIPPA.”



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The ITP programme niche has been the ability to serve as a platform for both state and non-state actors to develop and implement joint projects with one goal and objective. All ITP participants play a leading role in the demand and supply side of the implementation of reforms and are best placed to influence the processes directly and indirectly. The documented successes in the media reform trajectory in Zimbabwe will not be sufficient without mentioning the various roles and support of past and current ITP participants.



Bonus results related to ITP

- The Zimbabwe Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services has adopted an open-door policy where the Ministry is open to engage with any stakeholder, breaking with the polarisation of the past
- The opening up of the broadcasting sector with the licencing of television and community radio stations as a result of the reform process
- The United States of America aid agency USAID for the first time explicitly supported a media programme in Zimbabwe in recognition of the momentum built around reforming and strengthening the media sector



Lessons learned

The results in Zimbabwe were attainable as a result of being adaptable and open-minded in respect of negotiating the reform process. The first step was to establish working relationships across the teams even if they were drawn from different sectors. There was investment towards understanding each sector’s expectations and fears. Through this process, there was trust built over the period that each participant had a role towards the shared goal. Making the participants co-create the project also ensured ownership of the process. When participants owned the process, it enhanced political will across the board, prompting change.



Sustainability of the project

It is important for ITP alumni platforms for engagement and networking, such as the social media groups, to be kept alive. There is a need for the ITP alumni to take advantage of their sphere of influence to periodically co-opt other participants in interventions that sustain momentum for reform. International commemorative days such as World Press Freedom Day, World Radio Day and the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists should also be taken advantage of by ITP alumni to reassert the democratic principles that they learned and affirmed to as part of the programme. There will be need to utilise social

media platforms for information sharing on the sustained successes of the ITP participants at a national and regional level. Having for example a Facebook page with updates on upcoming activities, progress on areas that were initiated by the ITP and highlighting key emerging issues will also keep the work of ITP sustained. Annual ITP alumni networking meetings to review and assess the environment will also keep media regulation discourses alive and the learning and sharing could also be enhanced between participating countries. In addition, other key stakeholders can also be identified to sustain the work of ITP at a national level. The focus areas should be informed with the new thematic areas around media sustainability, ethics in the age of artificial intelligence and countering disinformation online.



2. Asia

Country Sheet

2.1 Bangladesh



National Facilitators



Hasibur Rahman



Aktarun Naher

Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Over the past three decades, the Bangladeshi media has experienced significant growth, with the launching of many newspapers, television channels, radio stations and online platforms, creating a diverse and vibrant media atmosphere. The industry benefits from a large audience that demands news. However, this growth has also brought its own set of struggles and limitations.

According to two separate Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) publications, one of the key challenges is the declining trust in the media among the audience and a decline in advertisement revenue, along with political, legal and self-imposed censorship that limit the media's ability to produce impactful journalism. These challenges highlight the need for self-regulation and the pursuit of sustainable journalism, which emphasises constructive, ethical and financially viable practices.

Mushroom growth of media outlets has led to weak professionalism and deteriorating standards in the media sector, with more and more declining trust among audience. According to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the number of daily, weekly and monthly newspapers published only in Dhaka is 1141,

including 509 daily newspapers and 345 weekly newspapers. There are 45 registered televisions and 346 online newspapers – 162 online news portals, 169 online portals of daily newspapers and 15 online portals of TV channels – registered with the ministry. While the idea of self-regulation is still absent in mainstream media, the numerous IPTVs, hundreds of newspapers from outside of Dhaka and thousands of online portals remain a major challenge for trust as they largely do not have any policies, and often publish content that does not maintain the parameters of ethical and responsible journalism.

Bangladesh ranked 163rd out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index 2023 prepared by Reporters Without Borders. A self-regulation mechanism will help prevent excessive state intervention in news media affairs. It will help newsrooms address issues internally and reduce the pressure from external interference.

Ultimately, the vision and mission for Bangladesh teams were to develop a group of professionals with intensive knowledge and understanding on regional and global media self-regulatory framework to play the role of change agents at their organisational and sectoral levels on media self-regulatory framework and work towards establishing a sustainable media sector that contributes to a sustainable society.



ITP change initiatives

Batch 1- 2020-21: Advocacy for media self-regulation in Bangladesh

This change initiative was taken with the focus on developing an understanding of the available media laws, its use and misuse in media sector. One research has been conducted that not only reflected the existing scenario but also recommended the way out to uphold the situation. Research findings have also been handed over to the Chair of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Information and Broadcast and the Chair of Bangladesh Press Council for taking future steps.

Batch 2- 2021-22: Towards sustainable journalism in Bangladesh

This change initiative included conceptualising what “sustainable journalism and media self-regulation” could be in the context of Bangladesh. The vision of this change initiative was that leading media outlets will gain knowledge about the concept of sustainable journalism (SJ), and at least three news outlets will practice it within the next three to five years. Through this initiative, an evidence-based desk review was carried out, which found a few newspapers have their own editorial guidelines but they are not publicly available. There is a strong urge from media leaders and practitioners to develop functional media codes of conduct and improving self-regulations, which will ultimately contribute to regaining the public trust and bring business sustainability.

Batch 3- 2022-23: Promoting self-regulation in digital news platforms

The digital media landscape in Bangladesh is relatively underdeveloped and faces plenty of challenges. The rise of social media has added to these challenges, as fake news and propaganda dominate the digital space. The lack of investment in the distribution of quality online news content makes them more vulnerable and exacerbates the disconnect between these platforms and their audiences. This situation demands immediate consideration, given the widespread accessibility of digital platforms to the general public.

To address these challenges, a study was conducted with the objective of “advancing self-regulation in digital platforms to enhance credibility of news content” in mind. The study portrayed the existing scenario as well as offered recommendations to address the issues.

The findings from the study were shared with stakeholders during a consultation that included members of the press council, the joint secretary of the Editors Guild, trustees of the Broadcast Journalist Centre, editors, and newsroom managers. Through the discussion and dissemination of the research findings, the significance of introducing media self-regulation is now being actively discussed. This changing mindset of the media professionals underscores the need for immediate support on research and capacity building programmes.



Case studies

Story 1

Mir Attaqui Masruruzzaman
Director, SoMaSHTe and ITP
alumni

My participation in the ITP has made the advocacy work of my organisation much more methodical than before. We can now analyse problems, set priorities and select the right stakeholders much more precisely. We now place much more emphasis on evidence-based advocacy than before. In the meantime, we have taken several initiatives regarding freedom of media and journalism. In all initiatives, we generated evidence through research. Research topics included journalists' experiences of legal complications, particularly lawsuits or harassment in most of the cases as a result

of Digital Security Act; various pressures including legal complications, self-censorship of mass media, index of sustainability of civil society in Bangladesh etc. After the research, we have shared the results and recommendations with the relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders include media policy-makers, leaders of journalist organisations, relevant government department officials and legislators. After sharing, we documented the commitments made by stakeholders including policymakers on how to overcome the situation, publicise it in the media and follow up on progress.

As a result of systematic work on media self-regulation at the ITP, these issues are becoming a high priority in the SoMaSHTe's work. We consider it crucial to implement media self-regulation to not only promote journalistic freedom but also to foster an accountable and transparent democratic system.

One of the biggest differences between ITP and other trainings I have participated before is the development of change initiatives. Developing change initiatives systematically and experientially creates learning-by-doing experiences. As a result, the knowledge and skills obtained from the training are being used effectively in the work of our organisation. Another major difference between ITP and other trainings is ITP has created the opportunity to work together with representatives of various organisations and institutions. It provides exposure to a variety of experiences as well as a good networking opportunity to connect with a functional network nationally, regionally and even internationally.

Without participating in the ITP, we would not have done the comprehensive analysis of the media related laws and regulations of Bangladesh with emphasis on the issue of media self-regulation. The commitments to improve the situation could not have been obtained by presenting these analyses and recommendations to journalists' organisations, media-related government agencies and legislators. That is, without the ITP, the evidence-based advocacy strategy would not have taken place so well. If not for ITP, linking into an effective national and regional as well as global network would not have happened too.

Story 2

Professor Md. Mashihur Rahman

University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh and ITP alumni

Rajshahi University, a leading public university in Bangladesh, has received a novel suggestion to introduce a course on media self-regulation in its journalism curriculum apparently for the first time. The discussions during the ITP journey played a pivotal role in making this idea feasible. My participation in the conference equipped me with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for media self-regulation in Bangladesh, a direct outcome of the ITP programme. I am now more adept at persuasively presenting the case for media self-regulation and effectively articulating its benefits to others.

As a result of these insights, I proposed the inclusion of the concept of media self-regulation within the curriculum of our department, specifically as part of the Media Ethics and Laws course. My objective is to foster high-quality journalism through self-regulation, and I actively promote this concept in various settings, including classrooms, training sessions, and seminars. It has increased my awareness of the significance of media self-regulation that serves as a critical mechanism in many countries. It enables the media to hold

itself accountable and to ensure that it is upholding high standards of ethics and professionalism. I now understand that media self-regulation aims to ensure that the media upholds high standards of ethics and professionalism, in addition to safeguarding it from government meddling.

The ITP programme has given me a better understanding of the different approaches to media self-regulation. I now know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to media self-regulation and that the best approach will vary depending on the specific context.

In comparison to other trainings I've taken, the ITP model offered by NIRAS and its partners stands out for several reasons:

- It is more comprehensive, covering a broader range of topics and providing a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.
- It is more interactive, allowing participants to share their experiences and learn from each other. This made the learning process more engaging and effective.
- It is more practical, allowing participants the chance to apply what they've learned to their own work.

Without the ITP, I would not have gained knowledge regarding media self-regulation and its significance, including the various models in place. Additionally, I have learned the necessary skills to encourage media self-regulation in Bangladesh. I feel thankful for the chance to have been a part of the ITP programme. I strongly believe that the skills and knowledge I have acquired during the programme will benefit me greatly in my professional endeavours.

Overall, I had a very positive experience with the ITP programme.

Story 3

Talat Mamun

Executive Director, Channel 24 and ITP alumni

The ITP has opened up new avenues for thinking and understanding, particularly regarding how journalism can be integrated into a new framework of self-regulation.

The training, discussions, and group-work have played a role in refining the understanding of self-regulation within the media sector through facilitating participants to rethink their understanding of self-regulation. From the perspective of Bangladesh, discussions have begun, and there are promising opportunities for future progress regarding self-regulation practices.

Implementing the knowledge gained from the ITP can be challenging, but its successful application can greatly contribute to ensuring accountability and transparency in journalism for the future.

Bangladesh has a pressing concern in the journalism landscape: trust, distrust and mistrust. In the current reality, there is a strong demand for accurate and unbiased journalism from all quarters. ITP helped explore different issues associated with it. The programme has provided a platform for participants to actively think and engage with these critical concerns surrounding trust in journalism.

This model has a unique emphasis on a pro-work environment. Unlike other trainings, the ITP creates a setting where participants have the opportunity to engage in comprehensive discussions on troubleshooting real-time scenarios. It combines field experience with interactive training, allowing for active participation and collaboration among participants. The programme structure encourages participants to discuss and collectively make informed decisions. This interactive and participatory approach sets ITP apart from other training programmes.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

One of the key values offered by ITP is building bridges among professionals from various stakeholders, including media, academia, civil society, government and the private sector. By providing informal sessions where participants can freely express their views, it inspires collaboration and the formation of coalitions to drive change collectively.

Unlike short-term fellowships or training, ITP follows a long-term strategy. It plants the seed for sustainable change. It ensures that the impact of the programme extends beyond its duration.

ITP promotes regional networking, allowing participants from different countries to exchange experiences, share best practices and establish professional relationships. This network becomes a valuable opportunity for future collaborations, contributing to the development of a regional perspective on media self-regulation.

The activity of ITP serves as a foundation for the future by fostering constructive dialogue and building allian-

ces within academia, media and civil society in countries like Bangladesh. The discussions and advocacy efforts initiated by ITP teams will create a lasting impact promoting self-regulation and sustainable journalism. This ensures that even in the absence of ITP, the reflection of knowledge gained, its utilisation within the organisation and advocacy initiated by programme participants will continue for years to come.

ITP plays a pivotal role in developing change-makers. It empowers individuals to take small steps towards change through inspiring future initiatives.

The research documents produced as part of ITP initiatives in Bangladesh will not only serve as a tool to facilitate media managers in implementing self-regulation and sustainable journalism practices, but also remain as a valuable reference for future studies.



Bonus results related to ITP

The findings resulting from three change initiative research conducted under the ITP programme have spurred immediate demands. News outlets have requested support in establishing in-house capacity building programmes focused on media law and regulation to prevent unwarranted harassment of journalists and media entities. Also, the Editors Council and union leaders have requested a comprehensive analysis of media laws and regulations to aid their discussions with policymakers, aiming to facilitate the promotion of quality journalism.

As part of the effort to implement media self-regulation, three news outlets have requested support in developing their editorial strategy and devising new plans for the sustainable operation of their legacy and digital platforms and one leading newspaper has shown interest in introducing an ombudsperson within the organisation and has requested support in developing the scope of work for this role. Furthermore, a television channel has requested capacity building in digital optimisation from an external expert, aiming to enhance their revenue growth.

Most importantly, a news outlet is considering scrapping their clickbait or pageview model and introducing a subscription-based approach, gradually transitioning through phases while emphasising quality journalism. This strategic shift aims to pave the way for long-term sustainability.

Media professionals and journalists' professional bodies are now positive about the idea of industry-wide self-regulation guideline.



Lessons learned

ITP facilitates national and regional networking by creating opportunities for participants from different countries to exchange experiences, share best practices, and establish professional connections. This network becomes an opportunity for future collaborations and contributes to the development of a regional perspective on media self-regulation.

The programme's interactive workshops, where participants collaborate in small groups to address specific challenges related to media regulation, foster dialogue and the exchange of ideas. Through these workshops, the Bangladesh team gained insights into the perspectives and regulations of other countries. It provided them with an understanding of self-regulation practices within the Asian regional context.

The sessions led by various experts, both online and in-person, allowed participants to directly engage with the field of media regulation. These sessions provided opportunities for participants to ask questions, promoting active dialogue and knowledge exchange. The study visits organised under the programme also facilitated Bangladeshi teams to enrich their knowledge level with positive inspiration to contribute more on enhancing country's media self-regulation and compare with the other countries.

In addition to structured sessions, ITP offered informal settings that encouraged participants to engage in casual conversations, build relationships and discuss their perspectives on media regulation in a relaxed atmosphere. These informal interactions fostered ongoing dialogue, both personally and professionally, even after the programme concluded.



Sustainability of the project

ITP country team, developed with well mixed professionals including academics, journalists and local and international development workers with intensive knowledge, can play the role of change agent at their organisational and sectoral levels on media regulatory framework.

Academics in the team will significantly contribute towards developing the mindset of young learners on the issue at the very early stage to act as a new generation of responsible media professionals. Journalists in the team perceived the concept that will facilitate the management of the news outlet to develop the mechanism for promoting self-regulation. Together with other stakeholders, the debate on the importance of self-regulatory system in the newsroom will facilitate quality journalism that will gain the trust of the audience, thus contributing to business sustainability.

The impact of the initiatives has started getting visible. As part of the Media Ethics and Laws course, academics in the team have already suggested adding the concept of media self-regulation to their curriculum.

Newsroom leaders in the team and targeted news outlet got the utmost opportunity to apply the knowledge to introduce a mechanism of self-regulation and improve the ethical standard at the workplaces. Association leaders in the team are frequently bringing the importance of introducing self-regulation mechanisms in front of discussion at different forums and emphasis on its benefits of getting trustworthy journalism when the level of trust in news media is eroding fast. It will definitely create impact on changing the scenario and mindset of the newsroom and the stakeholders.

Evidence based research on journalists' experiences of legal complications (particularly lawsuits or harassment in most of the cases as a result of Digital Security Act) was conducted by the team members, and the results and recommendations were shared with the relevant stakeholders, including media policy-makers, leaders of journalist organisations, relevant government department officials and legislators to overcome the situation and publicise it in the media.

Team members in development organisations are emphasising the need to uphold the present situation of media regulation and contribute to promoting self-regulation in their future development projects. Additionally, as a National Facilitator of Bangladesh, MRDI will prioritise the issue while designing new projects and implementing existing initiatives. The strategic programmatic objectives of the organisation – to contribute to a free and diverse media environment in Bangladesh – is focused on media self-regulation to ensure safety of the press.

2.2 Cambodia



**National Facilitator
Sun Narin**



Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Press freedom and freedom of expression in Cambodia have been deteriorating since the crackdown of the opposition party, the now-banned Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), and the shutdown of two main media outlets, the 25 year-old Cambodia Daily and the impactful Radio Free Asia's Phnom Penh bureau in 2017, in the lead up to 2018 national elections.

At the start of this year, the government further shut down Voice of Democracy, one of the last few remaining independent media outlets in the country.

The Cambodian government has arbitrary power to shut down the media outlets due to its influence on the judiciary system. The Ministry of Information has withdrawn licences from media outlets which the government claims fail to follow their ethics and fail to run corrections as advised by the government. However, the decision is criticised by media experts and journalists since it is not made by an independent body.

This clearly suggests that Cambodia needs to set up an effective and independent mechanism to replace the government-led tools. The Press Council, like some other countries in Southeast Asia established, can function to oversee ethical conducts of journalists and receive and address complaints in the news reports. The ITP cohorts have conducted a Change Initiative related to the Press Council, aiming to see the establishment of the mechanism in the future.

As part of the efforts to strengthen journalistic ethics in Cambodia, UNESCO, in collaboration with ITP Cohort 4, organised a series of consultations on "Paving the Way Toward Establishment of the Press Council of Cambodia" with publishers, senior editors and journalists' associations to discuss possible models of self- and co-regulation for Cambodian media. The meeting was conducted in September, aiming to discuss strategies to design a roadmap for establishing Cam-

bodia's Press/Media Council. This redress mechanism will allow upholding media houses and journalists to meet the highest ethical and professional standards.

Cambodia ITP fellows have the vision is to foster a free, open, and healthy media environment in accordance with the framework of democracy, and also enhance journalism quality through accountability and professionalism with respect to core journalistic principles and the rule of law.

To achieve this, ITP fellows have a mission to further promote media self-regulatory mechanisms in Cambodia and initiate national, regional and international collaboration. Our objective is to raise awareness about media self-regulation and create dialogue between relevant media stakeholders and civil society on the establishment of the Press Council.

ITP change initiatives

Batch 2 2020/21: Gender sensitive reporting guidelines

As part of their Change Initiative project, the 2020 batch produced Gender Sensitive Reporting Guidelines in both Khmer and English, which aimed at helping Cambodian journalists to improve gender reporting. The guidelines have been developed to support the media in their efforts to depict Cambodian news content in a more gender-sensitive and gender-responsive manner, thus contributing to more inclusive and equal reporting of the experiences and the needs of women, girls, boys, men and others in neglected groups.

The fellows also aimed to see more positive and empowered women representation in all forms of news media in Cambodia. Therefore, these guidelines can contribute to tackling inequality and women's marginalisation in Cambodia's society.

These guidelines have been used by the journalist community and presented in a number of workshops related to gender reporting. The guidelines have been published online where professional and citizen journalists can access them.

Batch 3 2021/22: Press Council Awareness and Policy Paper

The ITP 2021 fellows initiated the ideas related to the Press Council and studied different models of self-regulation in the world to raise awareness in Cambodia. The batch produced a policy paper brief related to the Press Council and conducted a workshop in September 2022 in order to raise awareness and collect inputs related to the establishment of the Press Council. This was the first workshop.

Batch 4 2022/23: Further discussion on Press Council

Cohort 4 have done more discussions on the Press Council. ITP fellows have met a number of stakeholders and conducted two consultative workshops to collect inputs on the Press Council, with financial support from UNESCO. The group will produce a result paper and draft a roadmap of activities in order to establish the Press Council.

Generally speaking, ITP has contributed greatly for participants including on the individual, organisational and national levels.

Individual level

On the individual level, the fellows have gained knowledge and a deeper understanding of media issues such as self-regulation through lectures from experts and study tours in Sweden as well as in the other fellow's regions. They have also become more confident in talking about the crucial role of media's role in democracy and the situation in Cambodia. Additionally, the fellows have formed a network of media professionals in the country as well as in the broader region. In particular, the Sweden trip has connected Cambodian participants with international experts and allowed them to be exposed to the media environment under Swedish democracy.

Organisational level

On the organisational level, the fellows' respective organisations fully supported their staff not only for their participation in the programme but also for their change initiative implementation. For instance, Transparency International Cambodia and the Cambodian Center for Independent Media, where two fellows of Batch 3 are from,

financially contributed to the project to raise awareness and collect inputs on the possibility of establishing a Press Council in Cambodia. Other national key players like the Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association and UNESCO Cambodia also supported the ITP fellows' Change Initiative. Additionally, the fact that ITP has participants from the Senate and Ministry of Information has benefited the projects since we are able to mainstream the concept of media self-regulation and its importance to high-ranking officials in the government body and Senate.

National level

ITP fellows have also contributed to positive change on a national level. They conducted the first ever consultative workshop in September 2022 to provoke discussion on the importance of media self-regulation. In addition, the team also produced a policy brief paper on different models of the Press Council in the region, which provides ideas and information for those interested in learning about the Press Council.

Building on the results of the consultative workshop, the new batch (Batch 4) is continuing the project with financial support from UNESCO Cambodia by conducting in-depth small discussions with publishers, editors-in-chief, editors, senior journalists and media association leaders. The results from the discussion will be presented in the second National Media Development Conference to be organised by UNESCO and media organisations in September 2023.

In Cohort 3, Vinh Socheata, a former lecturer at the Department of Media and Communication of Royal University of Phnom Penh said that before joining the ITP programme she did not know about the concept of media self-regulation as a system to maintain quality of journalism and ensure press freedom at the same time. Through this programme, she had the chance to learn from experts, professionals and academia who are working to support media self-regulation in Sweden.

"Having understood the media system in Sweden, I gained a deep understanding about the institutions and legislation structures that contribute to an environment of media freedom. Although it is difficult to apply or adapt the system in Sweden to Cambodia, I have also learned

from other country teams about challenges in their nations which are similar to those in Cambodia,” she added.

By consolidating all the knowledge she gained from online seminars and field visits with the experience exchanges with other country teams, she and the team members in her cohort started the first step towards establishing media self-regulation in Cambodia, which is composing a concept note on the idea of establishing a Press Council. Due to the political situation in Cambodia, we decided to take a baby step by utilising this paper as a conversation-starter among journalists, media, academia and press associations.

Ms. Chan Sokmeng from Cohort 4 is a lecturer at the department of Media and Communication, Royal University of Phnom Penh. ITP has been an eye-opening experience for him: “The programme has provided me with many great opportunities to engage with world-renowned experts on media regulation, as well as expand my network of professionals and academia within the Asian region and beyond.”

“I am grateful for all the lectures, seminars, and recommendations my team and I have received throughout the fellowship programme, which have proven to be effective not only within the context of the programme, but also my personal and career development,” he said.

Sokmeng also added the ideas of media self-regulation into his lessons to students at the Department of Media and Communication.



Bonus results related to ITP

ITP fellows have brought the ideas of setting up a Press Council into discussion among stakeholders and government related bodies.

Early this year, we noticed that the biggest journalists club called Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ), which is closed to the Ministry of Information, announced that they would meet with relevant stakeholders to discuss the establishment of an “Ethics Council” to oversee journalistic conduct in Cambodia. Having heard that information, the ITP Batch 4 fellows discussed with Puy Kea, the president of CCJ, to better understand their plan, and we will continue to further engage in our future dialogue.

Subsequently, UNESCO also conducted a workshop on “Self and Co-regulation” in March 2023 by having renowned experts on media- and information-related legislation from the Center for Law and Democracy, in which the ITP fellows also participated. The workshop aimed to deepen the understanding and knowledge of the rules and the importance of a professional complaints systems for the media to promote freedom of expression both online and offline. In addition, the workshop mainly focused on how these systems work and what is needed to set one up.

CamboJA has now engaged ITP alumni, and in their four-year plan from 2024, they have mentioned the ITP group and laid out the promotion of the Press Council. CamboJA will get ITP to be involved in discus-



Key changes thanks to the ITP

ITP has a mixture of various people from different organisations, including the Ministry of Information’s official and the Senate. This is a really good group of people. In addition, ITP has a good network from other countries and experts who can share about good examples from their countries. The study visit opportunity is also a good thing that make participants obtain knowledge and can implement something as part of their Change Initiative.

sion on the Press Council and financially support us for alumni meetings twice per year and any future activities where we may need support from them.



Lessons learned

The documents and lessons provided and lectured by organisers, experts, speakers and mentors become very important for the participants to absorb knowledge related to media, journalism and important mechanisms to ensure a free press and a healthy environment for media.

ITP has become a network locally and regionally. Cambodian participants have a chance to connect with fellows from other participating countries and various experts in the media and Press Council. The final alumni was a really good chance for participants to network and keep further discussion on Change Initiative.

ITP fellows get to know how write policy papers and concept notes to financial supporters including UNESCO. The participants get to know how to work in teams and delegate their work.



Sustainability of the project

Due to the fact that I am a professional journalist, I would like to see the independent mechanisms set up in order to ensure free press and journalism in Cambodia. I am committed to being involved in the process of establishing a Press Council and working with ITP cohort fellows.

ITP cohorts have set up “Cambodia ITP Alumni” where I coordinate a number of meetings. We agreed to meet in person twice per year and in two online meetings starting from March 2024.

On the positive side, UNESCO and CamboJA, the journalist-based organisation, agreed to financially support ITP fellows for all meetings and any activities related to the Press Council. These activities will keep me and other fellows together in the upcoming years.

The alumni have also agreed to meet and discuss with Minister of Information later in 2023 about the Press Council.



2.3 Vietnam



National Facilitator
Ta Quynh Hoa



Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Vietnam is a one-party state, and the media is considered a propaganda tool of the party and it is always considered state-owned. The rise of social media has only made the government's hold on mainstream media stronger. The loss of traffic throughout the sector due to social networking sites means that news organisations struggle with financial independence as well as limited power over their own content.

Being under the tight control of the government has had detrimental consequences on the morale of journalists, resulting in a decline in their motivation to uncover the truth. As a result, they inadvertently engage in practices that bypass legal boundaries and evade regulatory agencies for personal gain, rather than upholding their obligations to maintain objectivity and responsibility towards their readers. The fact that reporters have to bear financial responsibility for the media house by enticing advertising contracts undermines the profession, and reports of journalists being arrested for blackmailing businesses and citizens have become common.



Due to the sharp decline in ethics among media practitioners, the need to improve the awareness on responsibilities of journalists and media houses is hailed by both the industry and the government. In 2023, Vietnam dropped to 178th out of 180 in the World Press Freedom Index, just above China and North Korea, down from 174th in the previous year. Promoting and spreading awareness of self-regulation from within the media sector itself and among future media workers is the way to move forward in building trust and teaching people what it means to have a unified self-regulation system.

ITP change initiatives

It is obvious that the concept of self-regulation has been unknown to the media sector in Vietnam. It is even misinterpreted as self-censorship, something that almost all journalists and media managers in Vietnam understand and do very well. Joining in the programme has opened a new direction of thinking for participants. After discussing and considering their reality back home, each cohort has come up with different initiatives. However, the main goal in all of the initiatives are the investment in young generations, the future of the country.

Batch 1 2019-20: Fake news syllabus

Within their own power and capabilities, the first batch of 2019-2020 chose to raise awareness of fake news among journalism students to prevent them from being the disseminators of fake news on social networks. To achieve this goal, the team conducted a survey of nearly 1000 students at the Academy of Journalism and Communication. The survey was echoed to two other universities in the central and south region that brought the sample size up to 1620 students. One of the key findings has shown that up to 91% of students have once been fooled by fake news.

Following the result, a syllabus on how to detect fake news have been built and used in the training programme for undergraduate students and in postgraduate school as well. During their tenure, a series of webinars were created to provide tools in detecting fake news. These tools

are still being used and updated in the work of lecturers and trainers of team members at different universities.

Batch 2 2020-21: Translation of organisation for security and cooperation in Europe (OSCE)'s self-regulation model

The group realised that there was a language barrier in disseminating the knowledge provided in ITP's training programmes, so decided to translate a book by OSCE's self-regulation model and added how this model applied in some media houses and training agencies in Vietnam. The book would function as a reference book for journalism students and reporters. Members of the group also participated in webinars under a variety of topics and used the book as a form of material to introduce the operating model of the self-regulation mechanism.

Batch 3 2021-22: Collaboration with UNESCO on violence against women and girls

A participant in the previous year made contact with UNESCO to create a project on a campaign to raise awareness on violence against women and girls. The participants in batch 3 decided to build upon this and secured funding with UNESCO to organise a training for 50 journalists from

different media organisations on violence against women and girls. This was incorporated into the "code of ethics" in two of the leading media houses in the country, VN Express and Thanh Nien. In the online edition of VN Express Newspaper, a sub-column was created that connects lawyers and experts dealing with the issues. The paper has traffic upwards of 43 million visits a day. In addition, the team held another two webinars for 40 young journalists and journalism students, in which they invited a lawyer and a veteran international journalist to share their knowledge and experience of reporting on the topic with the group.

Batch 4 2022-23: F.I.K.A media club

During the visit to Sweden, the group was inspired to set up their own "media club" in Vietnam, a place where journalism students, young journalists, KOLs and content creators can debate on current affairs. Here self-regulation is embedded in responsibilities and ethics of information workers. F.I.K.A (Fun, Interactive, Kool and Active) was inspired by Swedish fika, the social custom of meeting for a coffee and cake. The club aims to create a forum for youngsters to discuss social affairs in Vietnam, and the club is intended to introduce the ideas of media self-regulation and responsibility so that prospective journalists can bring it into their future careers. The debate is held monthly on a variety of current affairs.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

- Without ITP, participants would not be able to understand self-regulation is completely different from self-censorship
- Without ITP, participants would still think their jobs were to function as a mouthpiece for the government rather than going after facts and serving the public interest.
- Without ITP, independent media workers such as Youtubers and content creators would never sit down with "state-owned" media workers and academics to agree on how terrible the government is controlling media as their own tool of propaganda and look for a solution together to change the situation.



Lessons learned

The results came about thanks to the determination and great concern of the returning participants, who were inspired by the field trips in Sweden. From the process of learning basic concepts, to having discussions with experts and guest speakers and participants from different countries, people can exchange openly about the current situation of journalism in their countries. From there, they get a very objective and complete comparison of their position in the region and in the world.

In fact, all Vietnamese participants, after being walked through the process of self-regulation in Sweden, admitted it was a far-fetched dream that they would not think to be able to see in Vietnam in their lifetime.

However, it was that thought which urged them to start doing something.

They all have certain power and influence in the organisations they work for. It was an advantage when they came back and cooperated with each other. The follow-up to offer help by the project staff was itself another example of self-regulation that created a determination and a pressure that forced them to think and find a new direction to work with their team, themselves and their own organisation.

Before joining the ITP, some participants knew each other through work, while some were unfamiliar with each other. In the process of discussing and analysing issues of the country's media and the working mechanisms of the domestic press, disagreements arose just as they would at home. There is a fear from the independent bloc that speaking out would get them into trouble or reported by those from the state-owned bloc. However, the platform ITP created for dialogue, by spending time together, discovering a new place and sharing their personal lives with each other, created more trust between participants. By being forced to sit together both sides learned to accept their differences and realised that they could cooperate to make a change together.



Sustainability of the project

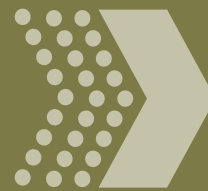
One thing is quite clear: ITP's initiatives in Vietnam are doing a great job targeting young people and raising awareness about self-regulation among media houses and younger generations. Maintaining a network of like-minded people with an understanding of a self-regulation system will serve as a soft reminder of the knowledge they have gleaned from the programme and help generate new ideas.

In the discussions at Vietnam Alumni Meeting, some ideas have been put forward to discuss the feasibility of implementation. Maintaining a network of experts with similar understanding and ready to support each other was the first to be mentioned. A wish that all ITP members shared was to spread the idea

of self-regulation in their communities and networks. What they lack is a focal point that connects, encourages, motivates and connects ideas together. One suggestion on a syllabus of self-regulation and internet security with hands-on tools for teenagers from universities and schools was also thrown out.

Another suggestion was that the group could work together on building a handbook on promoting human right in the media, a topic the Vietnamese government wants to improve on and wish to improve in the public understanding.

Steps to success



The results came about thanks to the students learning deeply about the overall landscape of an effective self-regulation system. This is a form of encouragement and inspiration for a dream towards a better freedom and living standards in their home society. The programme created opportunities and pressure for participants to think deeper on the work they are doing and its impact on the future of young generations.

In addition, encouragement and follow ups throughout the process of implementing the initiative of the participants also helps them to patiently pursue the initiative after returning to their busy daily lives.

The most important thing was to give everyone the opportunity to sit down and discuss initiatives they think would be feasible for their conditions after returning to the country. This gives them a concrete goal to reach for.

After having a plan and a specific goal, it is also important to consider and utilise available resources to implement the idea. Implementing and seeing the positive changes their initiatives bring to the target audience is also a great encouragement for the practitioners' change-making efforts.

2.4 Philippines



National Facilitator
Gary Mariano



Reporting Period

From 2021 to 2023.

Background/ Context

In the Philippines, press freedom is constitutionally guaranteed (Article 3, Section 4), yet we see active and persistent attempts by state actors to regulate and sometimes harass the media, either through prior restraint or subsequent punishment. Up until the ITP was introduced in the Philippines, and with the exception of the Cebu Citizens-Press Council established in 2005, self-regulation was practically non-existent.

The past few years have seen an unpleasant mix of diminishing press freedom - as evidenced by the RSF rankings, the weaponisation of libel (especially its cyber-variant) against journalists, violence against the news media and other forms of harassment and unfriendly legislative bills - low public trust, news avoidance and dipping revenues.

We believe that community-based media-citizen councils would be effective in deterring libel cases, and bringing on positive effects: higher public trust, reduced media killings and harassment, greater public trust, more news consumption, higher revenues and improved press freedom.



ITP change initiatives

The 2021-2022 cohort assisted (also informed, inspired, encouraged, guided and facilitated) in the creation of community-based media councils. As of August 2023, six such bodies were in various developmental stages in Central Luzon, Batangas, Aklan, Iloilo, Samar-Leyte, and Davao. The team is scheduled to visit Surigao, General Santos and BARMM (the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) before the end of the year.



External/Formal

The 2022-2023 cohort decided that their initiative would address the low public awareness of these councils. For purposes of delineating their scope and limitation, they are conducting conferences for three existing councils to introduce these to important stakeholders in their communities. These communities are Iloilo (held September 16th), Cebu and Baguio (the Cordilleras).

Our combined vision (for both cohorts) is that there will be media-citizen councils in key Philippines cities and that crucial and critical publics in these communities are well-informed about and holding a positive attitude toward these councils as an alternative grievance mechanism in lieu of court litigation.



Case studies

Story 1 (2021-2022)

The creation of local media-citizen councils.

Batch No. 1 consisted of representatives from the Asian Center for Journalism, Cebu Citizens-Press Council, Center for International Law, Commission on Human Rights, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, *Mindanao Times*, Philippine Press Institute and VERA Files.

The first batch from the Philippines identified a media scenario characterised by legal struggles (libel and cyberlibel cases); harassment, intimidation and sometimes actual violence against the media and individual journalists, low public trust and diminishing revenues. Through various analytic tools provided by the programme, and with the advice of the programme director and the thematic mentor, the team advanced the idea that a credible mechanism of media accountability might help.

The Philippine experience with a national press council, founded in 1965, suspended in 1972 (during martial law which lasted until 1981 although dictatorial power was exercised until 1986), revived in 1988, going into full swing in the early 2000s, but then fizzling out before the first decade was over, has been described as a “miserable failure”.

(The PH NF was press council chairman from 2004 to 2008.)

But the Philippine Press Institute, which championed the idea of self-regulation, persisted with the idea of community-based media-citizen councils. The 2021 Team PH was inspired by the success story of the Cebu council, which boasted, accurately, of having zero libel cases since its inception in 2005, largely because the mere existence of a council inspired newsrooms to faithfully observe the right of reply in the first place, not to mention silently pressuring local journalists to double-check their claims, making it unnecessary to bring cases to the council or to the courts for that matter.

Through the Integrated Bar and CenterLaw, the team learned more about the government’s commitment to pursue alternative dispute resolution and that future media councils could be trained and accredited as ADR providers.

Of course, they also benefited from the thematic webinars, most notably the ones given by Swedish Media Ombudsman Caspar Obitz. While it was impossible to totally adopt the Swedish model (or in fact many of the successful models adopted in countries that ranked high in the RSF world press freedom index) they were convinced that a non-state body that would hold the local media accountable could succeed in key Philippine cities.

In fact, the conceptual model they would adopt for their change project would not be, strictly speaking, called self-regulation, which implied regulation only by the media themselves. Remember the low public trust in Philippine media. Instead, they adopted an idea introduced in South Africa, that of independent co-regulation, that involved the greater participation of public members, and none by the state. Hence, the Philippine media-citizen councils, which can be classified as forms of *community-based independent co-regulation*.

The transition from a press (which gave a bias to printed newspapers) to media opened involvement not only to traditional electronic media of radio and television, but also signaled the willingness to engage practitioners in the highly popular social media, many of whom did not have the educational or professional background of traditional journalists.

For years, the Press Institute had been in touch with various local press groups, as most of its members were outside of Manila. There had been efforts to set up local councils, but with the exception of Cebu, and later Baguio in 2021 (see the Kordilyera council in Story No. 2), they were rewarded with little or no success.

It is an understatement to say that the ITP was a catalyst for the local councils. The programme galvanised the necessary forces that suddenly made it easy to launch the councils. Within a month of the completion of the programme in 2022, the Press Institute, now supported by other institutions represented in the team, was able to conduct orientations in three cities (Batangas, Iloilo and Davao). These sessions led to further activities leading to the actual establishment of the councils.

Even after the conclusion of the 2021-2022 programme, the batch continued their work. In 2023, they held orientations in Angeles, Kalibo and Tacloban. As of this writing, three more orientations are in the pipeline: Surigao (Oct. 18), General Santos (November) and Cotabato (December or January). Other prospective councils not yet named are already in touch with the Press Institute.

These media-citizen councils can be at the level of a city or municipality, province (consisting of various municipalities), or even a political region consisting of several provinces.

Here are the councils, identified by the cities in which the orientations were held, and their respective scopes:

Orientation held in	Name	Scope
Batangas city, June 2022	Batangas Media-Citizen Council	Batangas province
Iloilo city, June 2022	Iloilo Media-Citizen Council	Iloilo province
Davao city, June 2022	Davao Media-Citizen Council	Greater Davao area
Angeles city, March 2023	Central Luzon Media-Citizen Council	All the provinces in Region 3: Zambales, Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Aurora, Quezon, Nueva Ecija
Kalibo, June 2023	Aklan Media-Citizen Council	Aklan province
Tacloban city, August 2023	Region 8 Media-Citizen Council	The provinces of Biliran, Eastern Samar, Samar, Northern Samar, Leyte, Southern Leyte

The “ITP provided the entry point that motivated us to make this change. It is possible... We own the [change initiative] project. It is not imposed on us... Compared to other fellowships that are short-term, ITP really works! It is a lifetime initiative.”

**Amy Cabusao
Mindanao Times**



“The opportunity for sustained dialogue and collaboration is the strength of the ITP model provided by NIRAS and its partners. As one of the non-journalists in my cohort, I genuinely appreciate the opportunity provided by ITP Media to engage co-fellows both on a professional and personal level-which, to me, are both important facets of partnerships because you get to honour their experiences and understand their motivations for pursuing a cause. Sustained engagements also give faces to ideas, concepts, and struggles. They make you care more and motivate you to do better in your own advocacies. Today, when I hear and speak of press councils and media self-regulation, I think of Gary, Amy, Burt, Gee-pee, Luz, Chin, Ariel and Joseph. I also think of the cohort that came after us, as well as the representatives from other ITP Media countries. I think of the causes they believe in and continuing work that I now partake in as an alumnus of ITP 295-2021.”

**Marc Siapno
Commission on Human Rights**

“The ITP motivated me to work with the team members to achieve a 20-year-old dream to create community-based media councils after an earlier attempt at a national press council had failed.”

**Ariel Sebellino
Philippine Press Institute**

Story 2 (2022-2023)

Strengthening the existing media-citizen councils, set up before and after the ITP.

Batch No. 2 consisted of representatives from ABS-CBN News, Kordilyera Media-Citizen Council, Manila Times, the National Union of Journalists, *Philippine STAR*, University of the Philippines Cebu, (Iloilo) *Daily Guardian*, and *Rappler*.

“Unlike other training programmes that I attended, the ITP activities are mainly anchored on having a change initiative implemented at the latter phase of the programme. By encouraging the implementation and supporting these change initiatives, the ITP model ensured that the knowledge and skills that we learned are translated into actual projects that would benefit various stakeholders. In our case, it enabled us to work with local media-citizens councils to achieve our ultimate objective of strengthening self-regulatory mechanisms in the Philippines.”

**Janvic Mateo
Philippine STAR**

The second cohort did not have to go far for their change project. Aware that the councils set up earlier needed nurturing, the 2022-2023 batch embraced the goal of promoting public awareness and knowledge of a sampling of media-citizen councils. They chose Cebu, Baguio and Iloilo, as they had participants from these councils.

“The mix of hands-on and experiential modes of training is what set the ITP model apart from other trainings and fellowships. Some trainings are more confined to a particular venue while others sometimes end up as tours. But the ITP model has a good balance of theory, practice and experience.”

**Francis Angelo
(Iloilo) Daily Guardian**

Their output was a conference, the aim of which was to introduce the new council to the community, the first of which was held in Iloilo on Sept. 16, 2023. The Baguio and Cebu conferences will be held in the first quarter of 2024.

Prior to the conference, the team held separate consultation meetings, online, with the three councils to determine their needs. All agreed that it was creating awareness among their key publics.

“The ITP is very unique and efficient. Being able to work with other Asian journalists and being friends with them along the way is such an honour. Getting the most credible speakers to discuss and interact with during the ITP was not just very educational but awe inspiring as well. The study visits were also my favorite, as we were exposed to Sweden’s media and academe. This made me realise how far the Philippines’ situation is, but it would be helpful to use Sweden as a benchmark.

“What is most unique and new about ITP is the conceptualisation, organisation and implementation of a Change Initiative per country. This action is both the effect and the feedback for both ITP organisers and fellows as well on the programme. This would need hard work for the fellows, but we are doing this because we all aspire towards an improved, empowered and ethical Philippine media.”

**Mia Mateo
University of the Philippines Cebu**



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The ITP brought together key players that each have an interest and will benefit from having a free and self-regulating media environment, so much so that it was not difficult to achieve positive and quick initial results. Before the 2021 ITP was over, Team Philippines, led by the Press Institute, was already in touch with at least three communities that had expressed an interest in setting up their own media-citizen councils. Hence, barely a month after our return from Stockholm, on May 27, 2022, the 2021 cohort was conducting on-site orientations for prospective councils in Batangas (June 9, 2022), Iloilo (June 16, 2022) and Davao (June 28, 2022). In these sessions, we already put into practice learnings derived during the programme, particularly involving local representatives of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Commission on Human Rights. In addition, the presenting team involved members of the first cohort and the National Facilitator himself.

Our exposure to the programme's excellent pool of resource persons gave us concrete eureka! ideas that we were able to adopt locally. Particularly, we were able to strengthen our resolve to pursue media accountability and self-regulation, although no longer on a national level.



Bonus results related to ITP

The 2021-2022 cohort attracted the attention of potential collaborators, which has resulted in funding from the Dutch government to help set up five more such councils in 2023. The group also secured supplemental funding from the local IMS (International Media Support) representative for supplemental funding. The 2022-2023 team met last August with Internews representatives who were positive about funding future collaboration. Likewise, the United States and Swedish embassies in Manila have committed to projects for implementation in 2024.

While most of these funds come from overseas, it is worth noting that the Iloilo conference of September 16th also enjoyed substantial financing by the local community.

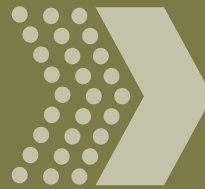
Another offshoot was the presentation by two 2022 fellows (Janvic Mateo of UP Diliman and Mia Mateo of UP Cebu) of a research paper titled "From National to Local: Media-Citizen Councils as 'Self-Regulation' at the Community Level" at the 29th AMIC (Asian Media Information & Communication Center) conference on Sept. 30, 2023 in Indonesia. Their other co-authors were Ariel Sebellino (2021 fellow of the Philippine Press Institute) and Gary Mariano (National Facilitator). Their paper presented the key features of the nascent media-citizen councils sprouting in the Philippines. In the title, we placed the term self-regulation in quotation marks to signify that there was another, more nuanced, conceptual description for the newly emerging Philippine councils, that is, community-based independent co-regulation.



Lessons learned

Our main learning from the ITP process was, well, procedural. We followed the suggested problem-determination approach using the provided analytical tools. From this, we were able to formulate our vision, mission and strategies. We also benefited from comments from the fellows from other participat-

ing countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia and Vietnam), as well as the programme director (Helena Thorfinn) and, of course, our thematic mentor (Anette Novak).



Key steps to success

The creation of the councils seems to have been the easier part. Many media communities outside Manila were practically waiting to be organised.

They represent a beleaguered sector: dwindling revenues, shrinking papers, lower public trust, increased legal and physical harassment. Having a council alone does not solve these problems. The bigger challenge will be how in good faith to project these councils as authentic alternatives for dispute resolution.

Phase one: Organising the councils (2021-22 cohort)

The Philippine Press Institute (PPI), with Ariel's initiative, took the lead in organising the effort to create community media-citizen councils.

Step 1. Contacting the communities. PPI got positive feedback from Batangas, Iloilo, Davao, Central Luzon, Kalibo, Tacloban and Surigao. In turn, persons in these cities got in touch with other key stakeholders, some of whom would be excluded from the regular, professional press council: business, law, academe, the Commission on Human Rights, the clergy, social media (the vloggers), agriculture, LGBTQ.

Step 2. Organising a team that would conduct orientation sessions in these places. Aside from talking about the standard topic of media accountability and self-regulation, topics we learned from the programme were added, specifically alternative dispute resolution. The orientation was aimed at both media and those sectors that usually raise grievances against the media.

Step 3. Funding. PPI has the legal personality and mechanism to ask for grants, deposit them in a bank account and disburse them. The major cost items would be flights, accommodation and a modest honorarium for the presenting team; venue rental, meals and documentation. The funding would come from three sources. The Hanns Seidel Foundation (Germany) fi-

nanced the 2022 events. The Dutch embassy and International Media Support bankrolled this year's.

Step 4. Implementation. As of this writing the following councils have been set up: Batangas, Iloilo, Davao, Central Luzon and Kalibo. In the schedule are Tacloban (end-August), Surigao (October) and a final destination at least for this year in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Phase two: Mainstreaming the councils (2022-23 cohort)

Even a seemingly successful council like that of Cebu cites limitations such as low public awareness. For their change-initiative project, the second Philippines ITP cohort sought, through a conference, to raise the awareness that a credible council exists to handle complaints against the media, and the mental state of readiness for those sectors who normally resorted to court cases, if not physical violence and other forms of harassment, to turn to these councils first. For practical purposes, they limited themselves to three councils, which were represented in this cohort: Cebu, Kordilyera and Iloilo. The first of these conferences will happen in Iloilo, in September 2023; the other two after the programme ends.

Step 1. Consulting the councils. The team met separately with representatives from the three councils to identify their needs and how the team might be able to address these.

Step 2. Organising a team, consisting mainly of members of the second ITP cohort, to handle key tasks: programme, logistics, finance, publicity, documentation. Since the ITP fellows represented different media companies, it was decided that PPI (the 2021 cohort) would be the point organisation for practical and legal purposes. Ariel accepted on behalf of PPI.

Step 3. Identifying local partners. For the first conference, Francis Angelo was able to contact partners in media, schools and other sectors. UP Iloilo will provide the venue.

Step 4. Funding was obtained from agencies like IMS (International Media Support) as well as local sponsors.

Step 5. Implementation. The 2022-23 team was able to execute plans for the Sept. 16 conference in Iloilo. On Oct. 20, the team will regroup, assess the gains and point out shortcomings and move on to the next conferences (in Baguio/Kordilyera and Cebu).



Sustainability of the project

- The role of the ITP Media Asia-PH alumni will be to inform, advise, inspire, encourage, facilitate, support and guide the media-citizen councils which they, through the Philippine Press Institute, have established.
- Sign MOUs or MOAs among the Philippines ITP alumni institutions signifying their intent to continue collaborating to support independent co-regulation of media.
- Spread some more, especially in those communities where an urgent need has been expressed.
- Help the councils organise.
- Encourage and facilitate their training and accreditation as ADR providers with the Department of Justice.
- Actively support legislation to decriminalise libel.



ITP Media Asia Alumni and Stakeholder Meeting in Manila, October 2023.

3. Eastern Europe Country Sheet

3.1 Armenia



**National Facilitator
Boris Navasardian**



Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

It is commonly known that Armenian media is strongly polarised. This is consequence of societal polarisation. Internal political tension, which became especially severe after the “velvet revolution” of 2018, is one of the bases of this phenomenon. The confrontation deepened extremely as a result of the crisis caused by COVID-19 and the 44-day war with Azerbaijan. Armenia has passed through huge economic challenges, stresses of defeat in the war and human losses, continuing military escalations in Nagorno-Karabagh and the border with Azerbaijan, influx of Armenians from NK as well as Russians and Ukrainians since the RF aggression in February 2022 and the information war with Azerbaijan during the last three+ decades and with Russia since 2020. All this has had negative implications for the standards of media, incitement of hate speech and decrease of public trust towards journalism.

The Armenian government made some unsuccessful attempts in 2020-2022 to resolve the problem through restrictive legislation; however, advocacy efforts of the quality segment of the media and civil society, supported by initiatives like ITP EE “Media regulation in a democratic framework” helped to promote self-regulation as the main tool to improve the situation. Eventually, it is widely recognised that various forms of media accountability systems contribute to both freedom of expression and a decrease of confrontational content in the media.



ITP change initiatives

Formal and Organisational

- *The general **Code of Ethics** adopted in 2007 within the national Initiative on media self-regulation has been subject of thorough discussions and has been amended twice – in 2021 and 2023. Eight newsrooms whose representatives took part in ITP EE have additionally started the process of adoption of in-house Code of Ethics.*
- *Several media, including Public broadcasting company has been considering the establishment of **in-house news ombudsman position**. The Council of PBC has started publishing in its website feedback pieces to the suggestions and criticism from the public regarding the performance of the Public TV and Public radio. This is the first step to the appointment of the ombudsman (“viewers editor”). One of the members of the Council was a participant of ITP EE.*
- *At the same time, through the consensus within the media community, which was reached in the course of ITP EE, external self-regulation practices have been rejected. Thus, the Codes of Ethics and respective commissions of the media associations refer to their individual members only (none of the existing professional associations in Armenia have other than individual/physical persons membership).*

Formal and Institutional

- **The Media Ethics Observatory (self-regulation body/media complaints commission in Armenia) whose operation is facilitated by eight media NGOs (representatives of five of them were participants of ITP EE) has grown impressively: having 47 media – signatories of the common Code of Ethics – in 2019, when the ITP EE started, reached the number of 76 signatories by the end of the programme. Out of 14 current members of the MEO, five took part in different editions of ITP EE, as well as one more former member. The MEO as an organ of national self-regulation initiative has highest level of independence, its operation is no way influenced by the government, all decisions (including election of the MEO members) are made exclusively by the delegated representatives of the media organisations which signed the Code of Ethics. To avoid conflict of interest, the NGOs facilitating the operation of MEO have no voting rights.**



Case studies

In June 2020, a new law “On Audio-Visual Media” was adopted in Armenia. In the initial stage of the law drafting excessively big portion of regulatory mechanisms was given to the “authorised state body”. This included even direct interference to the editorial policies of the broadcasters and ethical aspects of the content. After a series of tough discussions between the government officials and media experts’ community the approach was changed, and respective functions in the final version of the law were delegated to the self-regulation bodies. Being part of the self-regulation system (upon the choice of the broadcasters themselves, the form of which they find appropriate) became mandatory for those who claim to get a slot in the public multiplex. It was the first time that the definition “self-regulation” appeared in the media legislation in Armenia.

The actualisation of the media self-regulation phenomenon became the reason for high attention of the decision-makers. After the snap Parliamentary election in June 2021, a new five-year programme of the Armenian Government (2021-2026) was adopted, and one of its provisions was the potential adoption of the Concept promoting self/co-regulation of media. In December 2021 the RA Ministry of Justice introduced

the first draft of the Concept which envisaged a decisive role of the state in the establishment and operation of a hypothetical “Press Council”. The preparation process of the draft did not include any independent expertise, and this raised strong criticism from the media community. Media NGOs provided their critical assessment of the draft, mentioning also that its authors took as a basis Danish model of self/co-regulation and misinterpreted the principles of the latter. Upon demand of the critics the draft was sent for assessment to the Council of Europe. Parallel to that, the Media Ethics Observatory started to work on an alternative draft, which was published in April 2022. It appeared that the assessment of the CoE experts mostly coincided with the approach of the MEO. This helped the media expert community take a lead in the process of the work on the Concept. Other international organisations, namely Freedom House, also joined the process of promoting the independent status of media self-regulation in Armenia. The tense political situation has not allowed to move forward with the draft Concept fast, however, the whole process could be assessed currently as positive, and during 2023 there has been quite constructive cooperation on the matter between the government and the media community. Proper adoption of the Concept will be a decisive factor for the reformation of regulatory framework for Armenian media in line with European standards.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The negotiations with the government on the draft law “On Audio-Visual Media” was led by a group of experts headed by two persons involved in ITP EE 2019. One of the authors of the draft was an MP who was also selected as a participant of ITP EE 2019, while another MP who participated in the same 2019 group was later also engaged in the work on the draft. This factor, as well as the knowledge gained by the two MPs, media community and civil society representatives during study-visits to Sweden and Denmark, the discussions in the group made their positions regarding the draft law closer and resulted eventually in introduction into the law the mechanisms of promoting self-regulation (instead) of excessive state interference in the sphere of broadcast media.

The participation of Armenia in ITP EE “Media regulation in a democratic framework” was one of the factors ensuring actualisation of the issue of media self-regulation and, thus, initiation by the Government of the Concept promoting self/co-regulation of the media. The knowledge about the operation of me-

Media self-regulation systems in Sweden and Denmark hugely helped the ITP participants of 2021 and 2022 to be efficiently engaged in the discussions on the draft Concept and present strong arguments. They also contributed to the competent coverage of the issue in the media and create certain level of public awareness and public support. The growing number of stakeholders of the process of promoting media-self regulation and the principles of quality journalism has made the efforts of few long-time enthusiasts much more strongly supported.



Bonus results related to ITP

The solidarity of participants of ITP EE from different countries and close contacts between them has become one of the factors which helps currently to overcome the conflict in the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe. The issue raised in 2022 by the Ukrainian Commission of Journalism Ethics (several members of it took part in the programme) on suspending the membership of Russia in the Alliance until this country stops the war in Ukraine was not initially supported by the majority of the AIPCE (only 14 out of 32, including all four countries participating in ITP EE voted for the suspension of the membership of the Russian self-regulation body in the extraordinary online poll). As a sign of protest CJE decided to withdraw from the Alliance. Nine other AIPCE members, self-regulation bodies of Armenia, Georgia and Moldova among them, demanded that the issue be included in the agenda of the 2022 Annual Assembly of AIPCE, in the absence of freedom of media in Russia and the inability of Russian Public Colleague of Press Complaints (the self-regulation body) to consider cases of war propaganda and other similar breaches of journalistic ethics. The issue was discussed, and partially due to inappropriate conduct of the Coordination Committee, the fair solution did not receive the necessary quantity of votes. The nine protesting members – Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Belgium (French part), Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Norway and Sweden – suspended their membership in the AIPCE. Thus, 6 out of 10 (9+Ukraine) countries committed to the principles of independence and integrity of the self-regulation organisation were those where ITP EE was implemented. Negotiation about reunion with the AIPCE lasted until September 2023, and finally the remaining members of the Alliance accepted the demands of the suspended ones to expel Russia and to stop the function of the current Coordination Committee. This was great victory of the principles of free and responsible journalism.

Actualisation of the issue of media self-regulation in Armenia raised the interest of international donors. USAID dedicated a big part of its Media Support Programme in Armenia for 2023-2028 (with a cost of USD 15 million) to the development of media policy in Armenia based on harmonisation of regulatory and self-regulation mechanisms. Heads of all local members of the implementing consortium participated in different editions of ITP EE. The new call of EU for the projects supporting Armenian media for the next four years contained the same priorities, and a consortium of three organisations which were represented in ITP EE plus IMS were preselected as implementers of this project. The majority of donors providing grants to Armenian media put as one of the criteria the adherence to the principles of media ethics and engagement with self-regulation systems.



Lessons learned

The learning within ITP EE “Media regulation in a democratic framework” was took place on four levels. The first level was ensured through the study-visits to Sweden and Denmark. Particularly, Armenian participants learned from the meetings and discussions in Sweden how the media industry can be consolidated around the idea of quality journalism and adherence to the norms of professional ethics. Having respective motivation, the Armenian groups tried to utilise the obtained knowledge in their environment. The Danish experience was valuable as a model of harmonising the regulatory framework with self-regulation. The practices learned from there served for the work on the Concept promoting self/co-regulation of media and the negotiations with the government on the matter.

The second level was ensured by the engagement of experts on contemporary European regulatory systems in the seminars and webinars within ITP EE. Their contributions helped to gain deeper knowledge on wider EU standards on media regulation as well as volunteer accountability systems.

The third level was result of extensive interaction and communication between the participants from 3+1 (Georgia joined the programme in the later stage). In the discussions and presentation both in Sweden and in the regional seminars, the best initiatives from other countries were included in the later projects of Armenian groups. That is how the idea of a “White list” for the media committed to the principles of accountability before the public was taken from Ukrainian colleagues, and the idea of “Quality marker” distribution among the media adhering to ethical journalism from Moldova.



The fourth level of learning was achieved among Armenian participants themselves. The best specific experiences and initiatives of separate organisations became common knowledge for the four generations and broader. This was ensured through the regular communication within the groups and between the groups, as well as national events which were an added value of the programme. The ideas of editorial and thematic guidelines, in-house ombudsman and new forms of raising public awareness about media self-regulation were generated.

The four years of ITP EE “Media regulation in a democratic framework” coincided with the three major developments in the media regulation sphere of Armenia. In 2019-2020 the reformation of broadcast legislation was on the agenda. In 2020-2022 the initiatives to combat disinformation, fake news, intolerance and hate speech in the media became widely discussed in the context of COVID-19, the 44-day war with Azerbaijan, post-war political crisis and challenges for Armenians in Nagorno-Karabagh. In 2022-2023

the work on the Concept promoting self/co-regulation system in Armenia has dominated the sphere of developing public policy on media.

The cooperation between the participants of ITP EE representing the governmental structures, expert community/civil society and media industry resulted in the introduction of mechanisms encouraging the broadcasters to develop self-regulation mechanisms. The trend to resolve the problem of harmful content through restrictive legislation prioritised for a certain period by Armenian government was opposed by the media community, including participants of ITP EE. The advocacy efforts allowed the modification of the paradigm and turned policy emphasis towards promotion of self-regulation. At the same time the model of self/co-regulation initially chosen by the government envisaged excessive interference of the government in the formation and functioning of a self-regulation system contained a threat to discredit the idea itself. And again advocacy efforts of the media community led by the organisations and personalities engaged in ITP EE resulted in essential correction of the whole process and creation of the perspective to have a document (the Concept) which would be good ground for developing the self-regulation system in line with best European practices.



Sustainability of the project

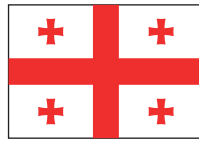
The widening of the group of stakeholders, engaging the circles of decision makers who are still pushing for restrictive methods of media regulation, as well as sceptical segments of the industry would help to overcome still existing resistance to consistent change. Another priority should be attracting the resources of international donors to the projects developed by the participants of the ITP EE.

The final seminar in Armenia demonstrated that the alumni of different years are very much interested in linking the key deliverables of the four national projects and ensuring synergy between the efforts made since 2019. This interest, as well as the fact that there was a certain level of continuity in the projects of all four participants’ generations, allows us to see the perspective of developing comprehensive national policy in the sphere of media where self-regulation would be given a leading role. This process will certainly continue uniting the majority of alumni and through their joint efforts catalyse substantial change.

3.2 Georgia



National Facilitator
Tamar Kikacheishvili



Reporting Period

From 2022 to 2023.

Background/ Context

The ITP regional programme in Georgia has been running for only one year. However, within this one year, it has tackled some main contextual challenges in media and civil society. Awareness about media self-regulation was very low among the media community. While Georgia has gone through a very severe phase of political polarisation, which is also reflected in the media, it is important to have self-regulation mechanisms, which with all its positive effects on media quality would also make regulation from the state less likely. The state agency Communications Commission has often tried to expand its legal mandate which considers regulation of the technical parameters apart from content, and has tried to interfere in content as well. If media had strong self-regulation mechanisms, those issues would be solved in the self-regulation body, thus decreasing the possibility of the interference of the authorities in this context.

The cohort of this first programme consisted of media representatives from the regional media outlets, from civil society that works on media ethics and self-regulation issues as well as from the state agency Communications Commission. The cohort worked on the Change Project which it also tested in those two media outlets.



ITP change initiatives

According to the ITP Media Regulation Reference Book, there is some form of self-regulatory system based on national legislation on how media can operate in many countries. This self-regulatory system can be divided into internal and external forms of self-regulatory policies and practices and formalised and informal.

Organisational and Formal/Informal

*With this direction, one of the media organisations Kakhedis Khma established an **editorial board with a focus on ethical standards**. It also trained the staff about the issues of ethical journalism as well as about media self-regulation mechanisms.*

After one year, Georgian regional media outlet Radio NOR voluntarily appointed a Media Ombudsman, responsible for editing and evaluating the media outlet's content. It was the very first time the media outlet implemented this practice, and it created also an awareness among the media community on the role of the media ombudsman.

Georgia has the Charter of Journalistic Ethics, which is a non-governmental media organisation and has the role of the Press Council. The executive Director of this organisation Mariam Gogosashvili was a participant in this first cohort of the programme in Georgia, and actively participated in work on the Change Project. The Charter of Journalistic Ethics of Georgia used its platforms to promote and disseminate the knowledge and practices that it got within one year of participation in the ITP programme.



Case studies

For the first-time, the state regulatory agency, media community, and civil society organisations managed to work together, which can be noted as a success and system-level change in Georgia, where there is a high polarisation. According to the 12 recommendations that Georgia got from the EU to receive candidacy status at the end of 2023, depolar-

isation and the media environment were parts of the recommendation package. This programme ensured successful communications among the different parties that reflected different political agendas in the country at other times.

Within the Change Project participants worked on media-self regulation documents for online media, which is unregulated currently, and tested these documents within two media outlets Radio Nor and Kakhetis Khma. In addition to this, both media organisations decided to have a self-regulatory body, but they selected different approaches to this. Radio NOR established a voluntary position of Media Ombudsman while Kakhetis Khma appointed 3 people from its editorial team to focus on ethical issues and act as a self-regulatory body.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The added value for the Georgian team was to get regional experience and knowledge about media self-regulation in Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine, where this regional programme has been running for several years. It was very interesting to get the experiences that those countries accumulated over the years and see the long-term perspectives for Georgia as well.

Create and Strengthen Self-Regulatory Mechanisms in Online Media Outlets

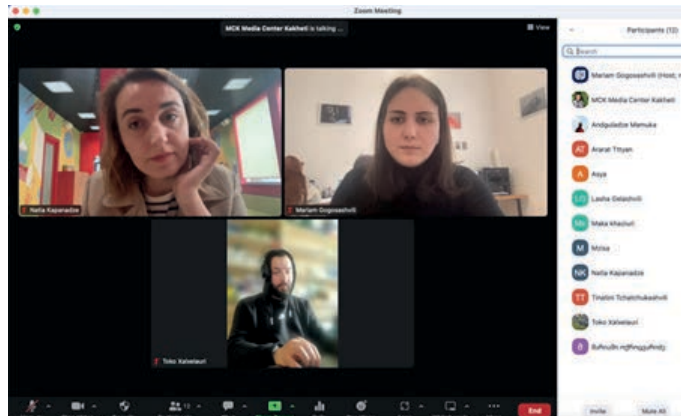
- ▶ Created a draft of the Code of Conduct for Online Media
- ▶ Presented the document to the representatives of 2 online media outlets
- ▶ Started implementing the document principles in day-to-day activities of 2 media outlets
 - ▶ Radio Nor appointed a Media Ombudsman
 - ▶ Knews.ge elected 3 team members responsible for complaints

The key results



Bonus results related to ITP

Unexpected within this one year was the fact that radio NOR started to establish the media ombudsman's institute and also conducted audience research to understand the level of knowledge of media self-regulation among its audience.

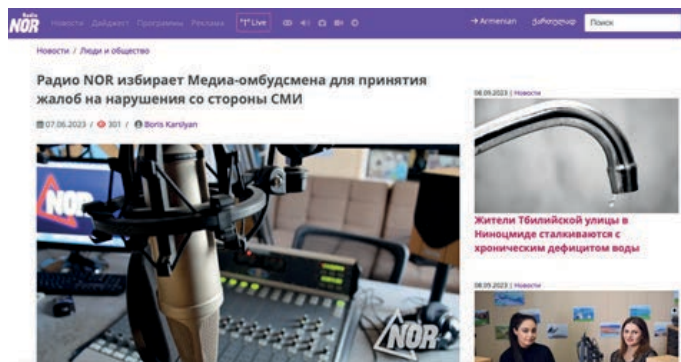


Work of the ITP team with a regional media outlet in Tbilisi, giving an online training.



Lessons learned

The main learning from ITP for the participants was that to avoid the state regulation, it is important to strengthen self-regulation mechanisms. Likewise, the participants had the possibility to visit various organisations in Sweden and Denmark and learn about the Scandinavian approach to media and self-regulation as well as the legal framework. Even though the models of media self-regulation work in Denmark and Sweden, Georgia needs different, more adapted models considering the political system that country currently has. Under current authorities, any type of legal changes related to the media can end with attempts of censorship from the authorities that are oppressive towards the media.



Radio NOR makes it public to elect a media ombudsman for self regulation.

The main result is that team created a document of recommendations about self-regulation of online media. This model was tested in two online media outlets Kakhetis Khma and Radio Nor. Though the media outlets decided on different approaches to self-regulate



their content, they both claimed this initiative was very welcome among their media staff. Radio Nor made an audience research that showed the low level of awareness among the public related to the knowledge of self-regulation. After this, the participants started to use all their platforms to increase awareness on media self-regulation issues.

The presentation of the Change Project in Kalmar in 2022.



Sustainability of the project

It is important to continue ITP network meetings, where alumni will have a possibility to speak about the updates and impacts in their countries in long-run and about the impacts of ITP.



3.3 Moldova



**National Facilitator
Dumitru Lazur**



Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, the refugee crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic as well as political “battles” characterised 2020-2023 in Moldova. This had an impact on the media community in general as well as on the ITP project’s activities and the participants’ agenda. The teams decided to adapt the project activities to the new context, focusing on countering disinformation and promoting ethical and quality journalism.

Even though there are challenges, great opportunities exist in promoting self-/co-/statutory regulation in Moldova. The Press Council is operational and tries to react promptly to cases of violation of the Journalist’s Code of Ethics; however, there is a general belief that the Press Council should be more active in promoting ethical journalism and establishing better communication with media consumers. The new composition of broadcasting regulator is much more active than the previous one; it systematically monitors the audiovisual content and fines the media outlets breaking the laws. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Media finalised in October 2023 the drafting of Law on the Media Subsidy Fund; to benefit from the subventions, media outlets shall comply with a series of criteria, including observance of the Journalist’s Code of Ethics.

The Moldovan civil society sector in the media field is well-developed and structured with different organisations complementing each other rather than competing. Despite the market and political challenges, there are several independent online media with quality engaging content, some of which, like diez.md, for example, have also managed to establish a sustainable business model (though still not fully stable); young journalists seem to be committed, ethical, well-educated and with a better sense of market opportunities.

ITP Change initiatives in the media self-regulatory framework

The long-term vision of the “change project” of Moldovan teams is a better-informed society by means of quality and ethical journalism. In the current avalanche of fake news and disinformation and inaccurate, misleading and biased reporting, the promotion of quality journalism and a stable legal framework is more important than ever. The media outlets often forget about their social role in society and the vital role quality reporting plays in public life. The “change project” aims to “awaken” the media community: first, motivate the outlets to observe the Journalist’s Code of Ethics (revised and updated in 2019) in their everyday activity; second, contribute to the development of a stable and predictable regulatory framework relevant to freedom of expression and media pluralism.

Informal and Institutional:

In 2020, ITP team was able to influence and convince the faculties and schools of journalism (key stakeholders) to promote quality journalism in Moldova. Since 2020, upon graduation, students from the most prominent universities and schools have solemnly signed the Journalist’s Code of Ethics, pledging to adhere to its provisions in their future journalistic activity. This might contribute to achieving the project’s long-term goal: a better-informed society. This progress is directly related to the ITP programme.

*In 2022, the team members developed **two training courses for journalism students:** i) best practices on the coverage of refugees’ crisis and; ii) ethical guidelines for reporting on children. The participants discussed these topics with students at Chisinau Journalism School, the State University of Moldova and Free International University during face-to-face training sessions. Moreover, four trainings session were provided in the Transnistrian region to high school students and ordinary people on ethical journalism and journalism as a profession.*

In 2022, the team members organised a series of activities aimed to promote media literacy as

antidote to Russian disinformation: training sessions for Russian-language teachers, especially in Gagauzia, production and dissemination of animated clips in Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian languages, production of fact-checking online video programmes and podcasts, production of a thematic talk-show on public television etc.

Formal and Organisational:

In 2020-2022, the team implemented an awareness raising campaign targeting, first of all, the signees of the Journalist's Code of Ethics. The team elaborated the logo "We've signed the Journalist's Code of Ethics" and encouraged the signees to publish this logo on their websites or, in the case of newspapers and magazines, in the printed publications. This logo is a sign of quality journalism and a reminder for media outlets and their consumers that the Journalist's Code of Ethics must be observed every day. By now, around 70% of signees of the Journalist's Code of Ethics have published the logo, including the public broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova, popular news portals Diez.md, TV8.md, etc. In addition, the Press Council decided to invite journalists to adhere to and sign the Journalist's Code of Ethics. Before, only newsrooms and media associations (legal entities) were entitled to sign the Code. This decision was grounded in particular by the increased number of freelance journalists operating in Moldova.

In 2022-2023, the ITP team promoted the idea of setting up a Media Ombudsman within the regional public broadcaster Teleradio-Gagauzia via direct negotiations, regional webinars and conferences. The team managed to discuss this issue with the key stakeholders from Gagauzia and received the support of local MPs; further efforts are needed in the process of setting up the ombudsman institution. In addition, the team contributed to strengthening the Media Ombudsman service within the national public broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova. A number of workshops and training seminars have been organised with participation of key stakeholders.

Formal and Institutional

In 2021-2022, the ITP team prepared the final version of three normative documents (draft Media Development Programme, draft Media Development Action Plan, and draft Advertising Law) following the discussions in a public-private working group with participation of representatives of Moldovan Parliament, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education etc. The final documents were submitted to the Parliament and Government. The draft Advertising Law was registered as a legislative initiative in the Parliament, and it was adopted in 2022. The draft Media Development Programme and draft Media Development Action Plan were adopted in 2023.



Case studies

Story 1

Faculties and schools of journalism, promoters of quality journalism in

Moldova. In 2020, the ITP alumni and Press Council decided to closely work with the faculties and schools of journalism to promote quality journalism in Moldova, focusing attention on young or future journalists. It was agreed that the students upon graduation to solemnly sign the Journalist's Code of Ethics and swear to observe the provisions of the Code in their future journalistic activity. Thus, journalism graduates were better informed about the provision of the Code and about their crucial role in promoting quality journalism. In June-July 2020, the graduates from key faculties and school of journalism have signed for the first time ever the Journalist's Code of Ethics. The tradition initiated by the first batch was continued by the

next IPT teams. In addition, the ITP alumni (preeminent journalists and media experts) decided to provide thematic trainings to journalism students and young people interested in doing journalism. Up to 20 training session have been organised by ITP alumni in 2021-2023. The data collected by the 4th ITP team indicates that circa 40% of journalism graduates are pursuing a career in journalism, and 90% of them are hired by media outlets which signed the Journalist's Code of Ethics.

Story 2

Stable and predictable regulatory framework, prerequisite of freedom of expression and media pluralism. In 2021, the ITP team decided to assist the lawmakers and policymakers in drafting amendments to existing draft media-related legislation in line with European standards. In particular, the team discussed with key stakeholders and proposed adjustments

to four draft normative documents: draft Media Development Programme, draft Media Development Action Plan, draft Advertising Law, and draft amendments to Competition Law. The team members participated in five joint meetings of a working group by the Parliament, Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education. The team collected and analysed circa 50 amendments to draft Media Development Programme, draft Media Development Action Plan, and draft Advertising Law. In 2021, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Media officially created a working group composed of MPs, national media experts (in particular ITP alumni), members of Broadcasting Council, etc. aimed to align the media legislation to international standards. The activity of the working group is supported by International Media Support (IMS). As a result, the draft Advertising Law was registered as a legislative initiative in the Parliament, and it was adopted in 2022; the draft Media Development Programme and draft Media Development Action Plan were registered in the Parliament and were adopted in 2023. Now, the main draft law on working group agenda is the Law on the Media Subsidy Fund. It intends to create an institutionally autonomous fund partially financed from the state budget for financially supporting the projects and products developed by the media. To benefit from the subventions, media outlets shall comply with a series of criteria, including observance of the Journalist's Code of Ethics. In October 2023, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Media approve the draft, and it might be adopted by the Parliament by December 2023.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

All ITP teams were well-organised and managed to work together in order to achieve the project's objectives. The distribution of tasks among members, constant communication, and cooperation with previous "batches" ensured the smooth planning of activities and, in the end, visible results. The participants stressed that they never thought that with limited or no funds provided by organisers it would be possible to implement a change project in Moldova. They succeeded because i) the initially set objectives were realistic, and ii) the tasks among team members were fairly distributed (nobody was excluded or overwhelmed by tasks).

First, the team has been able to influence and convince the faculties and schools of journalism to start and continue promoting quality journalism in Moldova. The students of the most important universities and schools upon graduation solemnly signed the Journalist's Code of Ethics, promising to observe the provisions of the Code in their future journalistic activity. This might contribute to achieving project's long-term goal: a better-informed society. This progress is directly related to the ITP programme.

Second, the team promoted media literacy as antidote to Russian disinformation in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the refugee crisis in Moldova. The participants implemented a wide range of activities, i.e. trainings for young journalists, students and vulnerable people, fact-checking video and TV programmes and podcasts etc. The IPT team efforts were directed to counterbalance the existing inaccurate, misleading and biased reporting.



Bonus results related to ITP

In spring 2021, ITP alumni had the ambition to assist the lawmakers and policymakers in drafting amendments to existing draft media-related legislation in line with European standards. The political conjuncture in the country made this process problematic; nevertheless, the team managed to influence key stakeholders to discuss important draft laws. In July 2021, the pro-Western Action and Solidarity Party won the parliamentary elections and promised to reform the media sector. In fall 2021, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Media officially created a working group composed of

MPs, national media experts (in particular ITP alumni), members of Broadcasting Council etc. aimed to align the media legislation to international standards. The activity of the working group is supported by International Media Support (IMS).



Lessons learned

The process facilitated by the International Training Programme (ITP) in Moldova is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it brought together various stakeholders from different organisations who share a common goal. This collaborative effort allowed for the exchange of information and best practices regarding self-regulation in diverse contexts. Such a comprehensive and inclusive approach is uncommon in the Moldovan context.



Sustainability of the project

The solemn signature of the Journalist's Code of Ethics by journalism graduates – an initiative by ITP alumni – is already a tradition in key universities and schools of journalism in Moldova. In addition, the universities took over the practice of inviting guest speakers (respected media experts and journalists) during journalistic ethics classes. This is a process that cannot be stopped.

The activity of the working group aimed to align media legislation to international standards, set up by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Media, continues as well. It is composed of MPs, national media experts (in particular ITP alumni), members of Broadcasting Council etc.



Key to success

The first ITP team had the most difficult mission: to realise how to apply in the local context the ITP philosophy. The “change project” approach and platform for dialogue sounded impossible at the beginning for participants. During the study visit, the team had a long discussion about different project ideas based on Swedish or Danish experience. We managed to set realistic goals and focus on implementation of feasible actions anchored in local realities and contexts. The success of ITP Moldova is that all four batches shared the same long-term vision of the “change project”: a better-informed society by means of quality and ethical journalism. The next batches added new elements or improved the previous ones, but never contested the logic and vision of the “change project”. The ITP alumni were actively involved in supporting and advising the newcomers or in facilitating communication with key stakeholders: a genuine platform of dialogue.



3.4 Ukraine



National Facilitators



Maria Varenikova
(2019-2022)



Roman Kifliuk
(2021-2022)



Olena Demchenko
(2022-2023)

Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

When the ITP programme started, Ukraine was experiencing the 5th year of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war (since 2014, Crimea was occupied by Russia; till 24 February, 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian war was going on in eastern part of Ukraine, and from that day, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine started). Ukrainian state institutions and national NGOs began to debunk Russian propaganda more actively, as it was one of Russia's effective tools for spreading the lie about Ukraine around the world. Many successful Ukrainian projects have appeared (StopFake, Behind the News, national media literacy project "Filter", On the other side of Putin's Lie etc.). Nevertheless, the Ukrainian media landscape continued to face many negative practices. For example, large media holdings remained under the control of their owners (oligarchs who strongly influenced the media policy, and that is why pro-Russian narratives were disseminated in Ukraine without any prohibitions). Thus, almost every national TV channel was performing the function of influencing its audience by following the policy of its owner, rather than professional standards. For instance, NewsOne, ZIK, 112

channel (they were closed in 2021) belonged to Viktor Medvedchuk, a pro-Russian politician from Ukraine. One of the strategic goals of the harmful propaganda content of the mentioned channels was the division of Ukrainians into ours (pro-USSR supporters, "brothers" of Russia) and theirs (affected by the American influence that is harmful for "brothers"). As a result, these channels helped pro-Russian political parties in Ukraine win the 2019 parliamentary elections, and their representatives were elected to the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine. Ukrainian NGOs, such as Detector Media, Institute of Mass Information and Pylyp Orlyk Institute of Democracy proceeded with an evaluation of national and local media content (TV and online) in accordance with professional standards and the principles of the Code of Ethics of the Ukrainian Journalist. The analysed data evidenced that many Ukrainian media did not follow them, and their journalists very often deliberately ignored journalistic standards. Wartime conditions leave their mark on the media's dependence on the government. Due to security measures, some of which are clear and transparent, and some of which are situational, content is restricted, and journalists become more dependent on central and local administrations, military structures for access to the scene of events and especially to the front line, and the risk that the Ukrainian media market may be under state control in the future.



Maria Varenikova
(National Facilitator
2019-2022)

Taking the abovementioned into account, the mechanism of media self-regulation as an accountable tool for the formation of independent and professional media (in particular, on the example of the media landscape of Sweden and Denmark) could be an alternative for self-regulation among newsrooms and a marker of reputation gains or losses among the media. This topic has never been popular in Ukraine for many reasons, and it was the ITP programme that brought it to the priority level of discussion and united around this idea many actors of the Ukrainian media market. Thanks to the ITP programme, Ukrainian actors of changes selected for the 1-4 ITP groups succeeded to implement elements of media self-regulation at various levels (institutional, external, internal, local, inter-organisational), although much remains to be done.



ITP Change initiatives

National legislation (Formal and Institutional):

As an EU candidate state, Ukraine has to meet the standards set by the EU, particularly in alignment of Ukraine's framework on media, freedom of expression and freedom of access to information in line with European legislation. On 13 December 2022, **the law "On media" was signed by the President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy and on 31 March 2023, it came into force.** Many Ukrainian participants of ITP programme **have been involved as external experts during the development of this law.** Under the law, the Ukrainian media regulator (National Council of Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine (NCTRB)) has gained more influence on the media market, so much more responsibilities, and many media actors are in common about the effectiveness and feasibility of methods of harmonisation of media co-regulation and regulation defined by law and supplemented by by-laws.

A new law on "Electronic Communications", the new version of the Law of Ukraine "On Consumer Protection", "On Advertising" have been adopted. Integration into the EU's single digital market continues through development of the draft laws on DMA, DSA which is providing under Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine with the support of the Council of Europe expertise.

Self-regulatory system:

The inward codes of ethics/conduct for the specific journalist (organisational/formal) – at hyperlocal and local levels Ukrainian media continue to violate journalistic standards, though editorial policies or rules are implemented by newsrooms more often compared to the last 5 years. The 3rd and 4th Ukrainian ITP groups support the desire of local mass media to implement internal editorial rules in parallel with regular internal evaluation of their content. Such a practice will help distinguish the real media from the information garbage among the uncontrolled online information flow.

Ombudsman functions at the media houses (organisational / formal) – the attempt to implement this idea was made by Alisa Yurchenko, participant of the 2nd ITP year, in her newsroom "Bihus.Info". Together with her colleagues, she managed to elaborate a detailed plan, but the budget for this purpose was not realistic for the "Bihus.Info" team, and they failed to do it. The same experience with media ombudsman implementation had Public Broadcaster, which intentions on that period remained declarative. Participants of the 3rd and 4th year spread the information among Ukrainian journalists and some representatives of state institutions about media ombudsmen on the examples of Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands (this process consisted of a fruitful cooperation among officials from different institutions, journalists, journalistic unions/NGOs and audience). Unfortunately, Ukrainian

officials were not interested in such an idea. Currently, the Commission on Journalistic Ethics and Independent Media Council (their representatives were among participants of the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian ITP groups) perform some functions of ombudsmen institutions (handle and consider complaints from readers and viewers), though their revisions and recommendations on complaints are often ignored by media.

External self-regulatory policies and practices

- the Code of Ethics of the Ukrainian Journalist (the document adopted and approved by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine and Independent Media Council in 2013) is being criticised for its inefficiency, generalisation and in many ways underdevelopment of provisions, lack of differentiation by genres and areas of journalism and inconsistency with the realities of war. Moreover, the violation of the Code does not provide for effective sanctions other than a general reprimand or warning. The participants of the 4th Ukrainian ITP group are planning to initiate discussion of its update.

Media/press council (formal/institutional) – the 3rd group applied the self-regulation method within its team of nine people and managed

to unite under the single idea of creating the Ukrainian Media Council. One of their missions was to involve participants of the previous ITP teams and journalists from local and hyperlocal media. The 3rd group members successfully developed the action plan and vision of its implementation and presented it online and offline in Kyiv a week before a Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, having invited in advance all the participants from previous ITP Ukrainian groups. The idea was accepted in different way among key Ukrainian media actors. Moreover, big criticism from some media actors does not mean that the common idea could not have been successful in the future. Though this idea required support, large human resources and additional time, and wide-spread communication strategy for the state authorities. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine postponed the teamwork until April 2022. Unfortunately, the 3rd group did not cope with all planned activities till the end of the project. Still, the 4th group carefully worked out their heritage and borrowed a lot for their work. In particular, thanks to the developed documents and communication with the 3rd group at various stages of the formation of the 4th group, the latter successfully implemented its idea.



Case studies

The common thought in Ukraine is almost all media are breaking journalistic standards, the 1st year ITP group promoting the idea of positive support, proposed to implement the idea of a **Whitelist of trusted media**. This idea was realised with the support of the Institute of Mass Information, which starting in 2019 provides monitoring of online media in Ukraine to define credible media outlets known as the Whitelist. The monitoring consists of two stages. In the first stage of the study, 50 popular Ukrainian online media, selected based on previous monitoring held by IMI, SimilarWeb and Gemius, were evaluated for the presence of manipulation, fake news, and black PR. In the second stage of the study, the media that passed the first stage were analyzed according to the following criteria: standards of balance, credibility and separation of facts from comments, the presence of sexism and hate speech, as well as transparency - in other words, the availability of contacts, editorial policies and financial transparency.

This monitoring has still been provided by IMI, and more and more Ukrainian online media outlets declared to be monitored as they recognised their activity as ethical. This issue needs more funding to cover much more media under monitoring, because from that time until now the number of online media has increased significantly.

The 1st ITP group participant Tetiana Lebedeva describes the value of the programme and how the idea of the Whitelist was invented: "We were not given instructions and we were not trained as students. We were given a unique opportunity to understand how it feels like when self-regulation is well-coordinated in the countries which have realised the importance of this process. We changed every day, each of us, our attitude to self-regulation changed. And then we felt that we have transformed as a team, in the atmosphere, created by management team, into a real team. The biggest achievement of the programme was that we learnt to cooperate, communicate and support each other in different areas. That is why we managed to do

a lot, as with the development of the methodology of the “Whitelist”, we joined the process and enlarged it with our collective experience and energy.

The information received by the 4th ITP group participants during their study phase abroad about the regulation, co-regulation, and self-regulation mechanisms in Sweden and Denmark was crucial for the 4th group to reflect on drawbacks of these processes in Ukraine. New knowledge inspired them to elaborate some rules in their newsrooms and organisations based on best practices they can implement by their own efforts.

During the project, the 4th Ukrainian ITP group has done the following:

- A logo, a shared e-mail, a Facebook group were developed in order to make this group visible;
- Research was conducted to identify the awareness of Ukrainian journalists, media actors in issues of self-regulation in the field of media. 103 representatives of Ukrainian media market participated. The main finding was that many of the respondents do not correctly understand the self-regulation media mechanisms and associate them with the functions of the co-regulation bodies.
- Eight online meetings-discussions in terms of the RMC on urgent media issues were held and 146 media actors participated (journalists, editors, lecturers, experts, representatives of state institutions, ministries and NGOs).
- Rules of membership, statutes, strategic goals and a preliminary plan of NGO RMC development were elaborated and adopted by most of the 4th group team.
- Popularisation of RMC activities to a potential target audience was carried out on a regular basis by each member of the 4th group during round tables, conferences, meetings with donors and in editorial offices.
- The NGO RMC is planned to be registered till the end of 2023.

The results achieved by the 4th group evidenced that the idea of the RMC should be continued. Therefore, the 4th group, with the support of the 3rd group, decided to register the NGO RMC and continue its work after the end of the ITP programme.



Bonus results related to ITP

The Council of Europe is currently realising in Ukraine the project “Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine”, with a focus on supporting effective and efficient communication strategies for law enforcement and balanced media coverage while preventing information disorder. In particular, it anticipates effective implementation of legislation on ethics, safety and protection of journalists in accordance with the standards of the Council of Europe and the case law of the ECHR.

In 2021 OSCE, under the project “Strengthening Self-Regulation in Ukrainian Media”, supported the publication on introduction of models of Press Ombudsman/Media Ethics Focal Point, elaborated by experts engaged by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. The models were based on analysis of international practices of self- and co-regulation and on the specifics of Ukraine’s media environment. This publication and training were realised by graduate of the 1st year ITP participant Liudmyla Pankratova and future ITP participant Nina Kuryata.

After 2019, more and more issues on self-regulation were included in different media events: conferences, seminars, discussions etc., and ITP graduates and current participants could share their experience and ideas.



Lessons learned

The curriculum was intensive, interesting and relevant, with many practical examples. The overwhelming majority of lecturers provided useful information that the programme participants were able to apply to a certain extent in their newsrooms, NGOs and universities. Moreover, during conferences and round tables related to the media sphere, Ukrainian ITP participants recalled the experience they gained thanks to the ITP programme and explained why it was crucial for Ukraine to adopt it.

The ITP training programme has enriched the Ukrainian media environment with the help of new knowledge received by participants and international professionals they got acquainted with. From time to time, ITP participants invited lecturers who taught them in Sweden and Denmark to join various professional discussions online.

During the COVID period, many events were provided in an online format, which had a negative effect in some way. Not all participants could accept information in such a way, that objectively decreases the efficiency of the learning process. Besides, it was almost impossible to provide team-building actions offline that also influenced success of the teamwork in the country.

It was crucial to increase awareness about self-regulation, forms, instruments and mechanisms. That is why it was very important to mention self-regulation in media legislation. Providing a multi-stakeholder approach in promoting the idea of self-regulation, it took a long way from the idea of ignoring the definition in the law, and finally in fact it is anticipated in the law responsibility for journalist to follow journalistic standards, and separate chapter on media co-regulation implementation. This was possible due to project of change theory which led to create the critical mass of supporters the idea, huge increasement of awareness on it, and understanding of basic theory and practice aspects of media self-regulation. ITP graduates and participants became the real ambassadors of the media self-regulation ideology, which accompanied by systematic work done by them as participation in working groups, public councils under state institutions, conferences, seminars, TV and radio programmes, providing lectures, meetings etc. The key conditions to create an efficient community which could provide systemic changes are to get a team of like-minded people, with similar interests, vision on development of the area, which get a necessary knowledge to operate, different experience from other countries and organisations, skills to work in crisis with rapid changing environment, with strategic approach, with acceptance of other point of view, and ability to find joint decision and follow the agreed obligations taken.

ITP groups gained Scandinavian experience in media self-regulation development. All the knowledge is helpful to implement own system in Ukraine. However, even the best system from other country could not simply be adopted, there is a need to pass all evolution steps to develop a national system with the participation of all interested stakeholders. It is a long way to pass, and all participants should have patience, willingness to study and promote gained knowledge to media community. All ITP participants should be greatly motivated to study and implement changes.



Sustainability of the project

- It is very important to have long-term assistance and partnerships with independent media in Moldova, Armenia and other ITP countries to provide viability and support sustainability of the independent media. As in all countries, the role of government is still huge on the media market only real independent media could create a balance and provide good journalism to the audience. There is a huge need in all countries to increase the awareness of authority, media specialists, journalists and audience in general about the nature of self-regulation and its advantages for all stakeholders.
- ITP EE alumni of 1-4 editions have been realising many interesting and useful initiatives, as in media self-regulation area, so in media environment in general. The creation of an Alumni Club or Alumni Platform would increase the influence of these initiatives and help to upgrade and promote the current system of self-regulation in the region.
- During 4 years of the ITP programme, the base of the expert community, which has a strong understanding of instruments and mechanisms of media self-regulation, has been created in each country. Unfortunately, it is impossible to promote the issue only with its own resources. There is a huge need for support, financial as well as as expert and methodological. It would be one more motivation point for current ITP participants if they could know that the best projects, or even some elements of the projects, could be potentially supported in future.
- There is a need to launch an annual regional conference on media self-regulation.
- It would be helpful to have a professional test for participants to understand their level of knowledge of the topic. This could help to focus more attention to those parts which are less known to participants. This could be helpful in estimating the average level of awareness about self-regulation in the media environment. This also could help to improve the efficiency of study tours for current participants.
- Alumni platform could be helpful to share experience between former ITP participants from different countries, to get expertise for new projects, to provide analysis on what is working and what is not and to make lessons from this. Some best projects should have the opportunity to get funding.
- Incredibly important to increase the awareness of authority, media specialists, journalists and audience in general about the nature of self-regulation.

4. Latin America

Country Sheet

4.1 Bolivia



National Facilitator
Juan Manuel Espinoza Benza



Reporting Period

From 2020 to 2023.

Background/ Context

We know that political polarisation, economic hardships, the pandemic, the emergence of the post-truth era, the rise of populist governments and the difficulties in keeping up with the social media phenomenon are problems that have impacted journalism not only in Bolivia but across the region and the world. These challenges are widespread; hence, there is no need to give detailed introductions or to present them as if they were particular Bolivian situations. However, a vital question arises: How do these challenges affect Bolivia, given its unique context and reality?

Bolivia long been characterised as a country with intense political polarisation, with a highly politicised society. Since the year 2002 and the rise of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), an “us vs them” scenario has been prevalent, where both political fronts have ostracised, marginalised and silenced all positions that have not aligned with either the governmental or oppositional dogmas. Journalist institutions have followed suit and aligned with one of these fronts, thus adopting their version of the truth and further exacerbating polarisation.

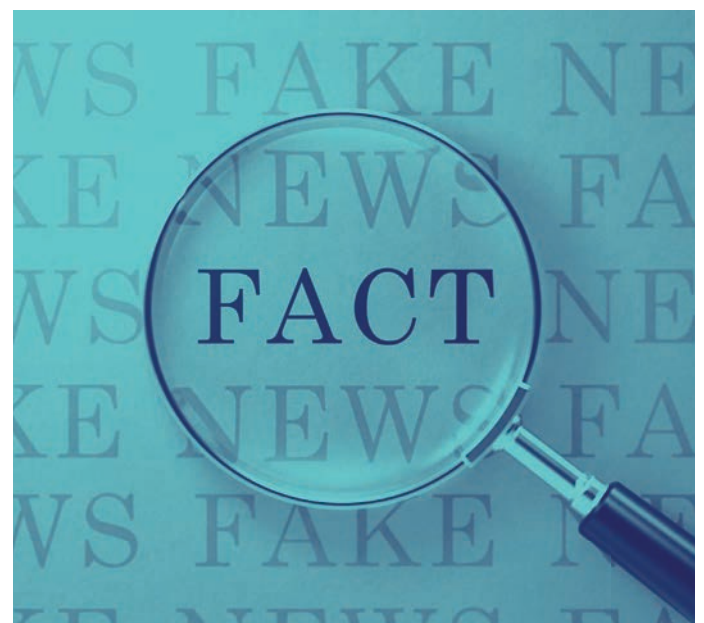
Journalists striving for objectivity and impartiality have faced economic, judicial, psychological and physical aggressions from national and regional administrations, the private sector and from the population at large. Within the journalistic community, a prevailing sentiment of vulnerability and constant danger exists. This feeling intensifies among journalists who refrain from aligning with any particular power. Con-

sequently, numerous media entities and individuals have been forced to shut down due to financial distress, judicial harassment, or simply out of fear.

Understanding the pervasive polarisation in Bolivia provides insights into how politicians have used and abused any other contextual problem in order to curtail journalists’ rights. These factors include inherent economic instability, pandemic-induced uncertainty, a lack of public credibility, and the internal fragmentation and severe division within the journalistic community.

Acknowledging these challenges, all Bolivian participants and allies engaged in critical discussions during our contextual analysis, focusing on the protection of media freedom. However, in most cases, the emphasis leaned towards identifying issues to eliminate rather than envisioning what to construct. **Delving into self-regulation led us to reflect on this latter aspect. Establishing a theoretical and practical framework encouraged all participants to contemplate what needed to be created in order to set up a realistic baseline that could foster an environment where self-regulation could thrive.**

This became the primary vision for all Bolivian cohorts: utilising the self-regulation framework to initiate discussions about proactive actions toward building, rather than opposing, something.



Proposals ranged from normative aspects regarding economics and institutional advocacy, to educational topics regarding press freedom, gender issues, the normalisation of violence, and the formulation of security protocols and regulations. While the projects achieved manifold success in their implementation, discussions on analysis and perspectives for change have continued among all participants, their respective cohorts, and their institutions.

ITP change initiatives

Cohort ITP-2

The Change Initiative of the so called “Pandemic cohort” (the second in the region but first in Bolivia) addresses the economic dependence of Bolivia’s media institutions on the government. For most media institutions in Bolivia, at least half of their budget relies on the allocation of governmental advertisements, granting the government substantial censorship power, which is exploited for political interests. The cohort emphasised that as long as this dependence continues, the journalist guild’s receptiveness to self-regulation would be severely limited.

The cohort’s Change Initiative proposed the establishment of a self-regulatory body, structured as an **Economically Independent Competitive Fund**. This fund would administer and allocate the budget that the government is mandated to distribute among media institutions. Although the government initially received the proposal with openness, it was later put on standby due to political confrontations in other areas. Subsequently, the National Journalist Association incorporated it into its national agenda, and it is currently under construction.

Cohort ITP-3:

Bolivia’s second cohort had the longest-lasting and most extensively implemented programme. Their closing event took place about six months after the official programme ended, maintaining an active and prolonged follow-up process that motivated them to solidify their project’s implementation.

Participants in this cohort sought to move away from institutional wants related to the government and therefore decided to address the widespread lack of knowledge and awareness

among journalists regarding their legal rights, national and international instruments for their protection and the fundamental principles of self-regulation. Consequently, their Change Initiative moved towards training and promoting good practices for media organisations.

The outcome of Bolivia’s ITP-3 cohort was a **Training Programme** comprising six workshops, which were successfully conducted in various cities. Additionally, they created six **Information Booklets** distributed in both physical and digital formats to numerous journalist associations across the country. The group continues to collaborate within the framework of their Change Initiative, delivering their training programme (or parts of it) at conferences, university lectures, workshops, and institutional consultancies.

Cohort ITP-4 :

The primary concern of this cohort was the lack of institutions capable of uniting all national journalists within the framework of self-regulation. While there certainly are national journalist associations, they often experience internal divisions mirroring the political polarisations in the country and tend to focus on denunciations.

To address this, the cohort proposed the creation of a **self-regulated Media Observatory** to establish ethical guidelines for free and responsible journalistic practice. The idea was to create an institutional body that transcends political disputes and fosters ethical consensus among all Bolivian journalists and communicators.

As part of their Change Initiative, the cohort laid the groundwork for this Media Observatory, which has been embraced by the Bolivian National Journalist Association (with one of the cohort’s members now serving as its president). Additionally, it has been incorporated into the curricula for Communication studies at the national San Andres University.

Cohort ITP-5:

The most recent Bolivian cohort expressed particular concern about the surge in aggressions against journalists since 2019, escalating from one registered aggression every six days in 2018 to one every three days in 2022. According

to their contextual analysis, one of the most pressing concerns among journalists in Bolivia today is the insecurity and relentless bullying and direct aggressions they endure. Despite inducing fear and self-censorship, these aggressions are often considered “occupational hazards”, thus normalising violence against journalists.

*Their main diagnosis is that advancing any form of self-regulatory initiatives would be challenging unless journalists recognise their rights, the existing institutions and mechanisms already set up for their protection, and the fact that those rights and institutions are there for the protection of every journalist, regardless of their political allegiances. Consequently, the cohort’s Change Initiative focuses on implementing a **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Security Protocols and Codes of Ethics**, coupled with an **Awareness Campaign** to emphasise the importance and nonpartisan nature of the MOOC’s themes and composition.*

It is essential to highlight two core guidelines for the Initiative: first, the entire project must work towards denaturalising violence against journalists; second, the project must instigate changes at the grassroots level and progress upwards from there.

As a result, the team has forged alliances enabling them to conduct a pilot MOOC in December and secure funding for the full project’s implementation in 2024. The pilot has provided valuable insights for the cohort to grasp the amount of work and detail involved in their MOOC.

FPP. During ITP-3, FPP became a platform for seminars and conferences organised by the participants. The first implementation of their training programme was also hosted by FPP, incorporating it into FPP’s newly founded Network for Support and Protection of Journalists (RAPP). Coincidentally, FPP hired one of the ITP-3 participants, Isabel Mercado, as the director of their RAPP network.

For the ITP-4 cohort, one of its members, Tania Frank, served as the academic director of FPP, strengthening the collaboration between the ITP programme and FPP. Although FPP was not heavily involved in that year’s Media Observatory project, they drew inspiration from it and integrated a journalistic observatory into their RAPP initiative. Concurrently, FPP secured funding from the Swedish Embassy to finance their “MediaLab for Journalistic Innovation” project, which incorporated a self-regulatory framework from the outset.

Lastly, FPP played a crucial role in advancing the ITP-5 Change Initiative. As the cohort participants work towards implementing their full training programme in 2024, FPP has invited them to implement one of their modules as part of the MediaLab’s fourteen-module training programme. FPP allowed them to use the MOOC format from the cohort’s project, effectively turning the experience into a real pilot for the ITP participants.

The ITP programme consistently encourages the formation of strong institutional alliances, which was successfully achieved with FPP. FPP’s involvement with the ITP programme in Bolivia has organically facilitated inter-cohort collaboration and alliance formations. No cohort is dependent on FPP’s support, but they know it’s available. This alliance has also allowed FPP to institutionally endorse the ITP’s programme and premises, potentially contributing to the sustainability of at least some Change Initiatives beyond the programme’s timeline.

The collaboration with Fundación Para el Periodismo (FPP) stands as a beacon of sustained partnership for the ITP programme in Bolivia. Beyond individual cohorts, this alliance signifies a dynamic interplay between journalism education, institutional support, and self-regulation initiatives. The organic evolution of this relationship showcases a model of collaboration that not only aids in the immediate realisation of Change Initiatives but also echoes the potential for long-term impact. The FPP’s diverse involvement, from hosting training programmes to incorporating



Case studies

Case 1: Fundación Para el Periodismo and their sustained alliance with ITP

Among the participants of the first Bolivian cohort (ITP-2) was Renán Estenssoro, the director of the Fundación para el Periodismo (FPP). At the time, FPP was not directly involved in their Change Initiative as an institution. However, the lasting connection the programme maintained with its alumni allowed subsequent cohorts to sustain a significant alliance with

self-regulation frameworks, underscores the versatility of partnerships in fostering a culture of responsible journalism, offering an invaluable roadmap for similar future endeavours.

Case 2: ITP-3 Change Initiative and the strengthening of the ERBOL network

The initial implementation of Bolivia's ITP-3 training programme on journalist rights came about in alliance with the ERBOL, led by Inés Gonzales, a participant in that same cohort. ERBOL is a network encompassing at least 170 radio stations, including rural, urban, communitarian, large and small stations across the country. That first implementation was monumental and highly successful, enabling the cohort to continue executing it with other partners and audiences.

Moreover, the ITP programme in general and the cohort's training particularly influenced the network's management. In the words of Inés, "it inspired us to do things we would not have otherwise, such as a thorough revision of our institutional Code of Ethics, consolidating it with all rural radio stations in the network." They even organised a series of seminars on ethics and self-regulation, inviting two ITP mentors and Colombia's National Facilitator.



This is a clear example of the reciprocal and mutually beneficial nature of meaningful alliances: an alliance enables the implementation of a Change Initiative, and simultaneously, the initiative might catalyse significant changes within the ally's internal structure and operation.

In conclusion, the partnership between ITP-3 and ERBOL not only marks a successful collaboration in implementing a training programme but also demonstrates the transformative potential of inter-organisational alliances spurred by the programme. By strengthening ERBOL's ethical foundations and engaging its vast network of radio stations, this initiative extended the impact of the ITP programme to diverse corners of Bolivia. The ensuing seminars on ethics and self-regulation illustrate how an alliance, beyond the immediate goals, can influence a network's ethos, emphasising the ripple effect of impactful partnerships in the realm of journalism and media.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

- **Emphasis on change:** The push to create a Change Initiative led to a shift in mindset among participants. Initially focused on denunciation, they transformed into seekers of alternatives and solutions.
- **Focus on long-term changes:** In the words of a participant, while engaged in developing their Change Initiative for a whole year, they "recognised the importance of establishing a project that could have short- and long-term impacts". Hence, all Bolivian projects exhibited a vision that extended beyond the programme's duration.
- **Continuity:** The programme consistently encouraged collaboration between cohorts. This fostered a sense of community, shared expertise, complemented context analyses, and facilitated active cooperation.
- **Collective construction:** There is a long history of individualism and mistrust among journalists. Some participants said that they were taught to conduct their practice in this manner and that most collaborations were just collages. Since the advocates collective construction, participants learned to practice tolerance, engage in debate, and cultivate respect for one another.
- **High quality of mentoring:** Participants commended the exceptional quality of mentoring, considering it not only a source of learning but also an incentive for optimising their change initiatives.



- **Support and accompaniment structure:** The constant presence of a facilitator, mentors, and programme director and manager became proved instrumental in motivating and supporting the participants.
- **National and international networks:** Immediate integration into a vast and proficient network of national and international peers instilled a sense of belonging and motivation for all cohorts' engagement in the topic and their Change Initiatives. It also facilitated present and future collaborations.
- **Symposiums in Colombia and Sweden:** In-person meetings with the broader network during symposiums provided a significant boost to engagement with the programme. More importantly, this facilitated easier connections among participants, paving the way for future alliances and strengthening the network.
- **Time to reflect, not just action:** The programme's provision of time for reflection, rather than immediate action, was highly appreciated. In an industry often focused on immediate action, participants valued the opportunity to step back, reflect, propose, experiment, redefine, evaluate, and propose again. Some participants implemented this methodology in their own institutions.



Bonus results related to ITP

- **Discussion around economic dependence:** The ITP-2 Change Initiative sparked discussions about media dependence on the government when it was introduced at San Andrés University in La Paz. This discourse has now become a part of the communication faculty's syllabus, stimulating the production of numerous graduate dissertations on the subject.
- **Self-regulation and the National Journalist Association (ANPB):** Zulema Alanes, a participant of the ITP-4 cohort, assumed the role of president at ANPB. In this position, Zulema successfully included self-regulation on ANPB's agenda, initiating crucial debates within the association for the first time.
- **New debates on norms and legislation for journalists:** Following the ITP-3 training programme, a fresh wave of discussions emerged, advocating not only for a review of existing norms and legislation but also for improved socialisation methods. Various newsrooms and editorial offices have embraced these discussions, seeking expert advice, many from ITP alumni.
- **Erbol Network code of ethics review:** After participation in the programme, ERBOL's director, Inés

Gonzales, representing a network of over 170 radio stations, advocated for a comprehensive review and update of the network's code of ethics. This initiative involved active participation from all radio stations within the network, resulting in revisions and the creation of new internal codes of ethics.

- **Fundación Para el Periodismo (FPP) implementation of MediaLab network:** FPP, inspired by its engagement with the ITP programme, secured funding from the Swedish embassy to implement this year's MediaLab. The lab prominently featured topics related to self-regulation and security, and it involved inviting alumni and the entire ITP-5 cohort to participate as facilitators and lecturers.
- **Broadening of the spectrum of alliances:** Several participant institutions have broadened their alliance networks, establishing links with institutions overseas. For instance, La Prensa, a digital medium directed by Rocío Lloret (ITP-3), incorporated and adapted the decalogue developed by El Salvador's ITP-3 cohort.
- **Formation of national experts in self-regulation:** Following their participation in the programme, several alumni have been recognised as national experts in self-regulation, receiving invitations to conferences and seminars to share their insights and expertise.



Lessons learned

- **Constant revision:** The methodology of continuously revisiting and refining concepts, objectives, areas of impact and alliances played a vital role in constructing Change Initiatives that were deeply connected with Bolivian reality and responsive to its specific needs.
- **Early Consideration of Funding:** Cohorts that delved into funding considerations at an early stage of the process demonstrated greater capability in implementing their Change Initiatives.
- **“Down to earth” perspectives:** While envisioning grand initiatives is easy, the constant reminder to focus on achievable goals based on participants' abilities and areas of influence was crucial for their success.
- **Grassroots-up approach:** Cohorts that concentrated their strategy on starting from grassroots levels and working their way up proved to be more effective in implementation.
- **Strong interpersonal bonds:** The stronger the friendships among participants, the higher the likelihood of success. Evidently, participants who were friends were more inclined to support each other and step in when needed, fostering a supportive environment.

- **Conceptual clarity:** Constantly reviewing and clarifying concepts significantly contributed to the construction of clear foundations for the Change Initiatives. This clarity strengthened presentations when engaging with potential allies.



Sustainability of the project

- **Platforms for collaboration:** Maintaining an ITP collaboration platform and information bank is essential, where alumni can continuously share news, projects, initiatives, and products. This platform could be in the form of a WhatsApp or Signal alumni group, Basecamp, or a collective drive, actively managed by the alumni themselves.
- **Annual conferences:** Establish an annual conference dedicated to self-regulation and journalism. Alumni can present their projects, research findings, and experiences, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing and networking.
- **Engagement through social media:** Maintain active social media groups or channels specifically for alumni, where they can share updates, seek advice, and engage in discussions related to self-regulation and media ethics.
- **www.auto-regulacion.org:** The webpage created by the first cohort should be regularly updated and maintained as a collaborative resource for all ITP alumni. Exploring sustainable methods to reorganise and manage it is necessary.
- **Follow up:** Based on the experiences of most ITP-3 cohorts, any form of follow-up beyond the programme's timeline incentivises project sustainability. Implementing mechanisms for periodic monitoring sessions, online seminars and debates at national or regional levels, is crucial.
- **Keep the topic current:** Continuously discussing self-regulation and ensuring it remains a mainstream topic will naturally drive the necessity to sustain the projects and keep the network active.
- **Publications and journals:** Encourage alumni to contribute articles, case studies, or research papers to journals or publications related to media and journalism. Creating a platform for alumni to showcase their work helps maintain the programme's visibility and impact.
- **Awards and Recognitions:** Institute annual awards or recognitions for outstanding projects, research, or initiatives related to self-regulation. This incentivises alumni to continue their efforts and strive for excellence.

4.2 Colombia



National Facilitator
Marisol Cano Busquets

Reporting Period

From 2020 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Colombia is one of the countries with one of the highest risks for journalists in the world: 167 journalists have been killed for reasons related to their profession between 1977 and 2022. Despite the signing of peace agreements with the FARC guerrillas in 2016, a context of violence is perpetuated in the country with the presence of criminal groups associated with drug trafficking, armed actors and paramilitary groups. The Truth Commission, which originated from these agreements, delivered its report in mid-2022, opening a horizon to address the consequences of the armed conflict on journalism in terms of memory, reparation and non-repetition.

The five-year period of ITP implementation has seen a deepening of political polarisation, with its corresponding effects on the practice of journalism; electoral periods in which disinformation and citizen questioning of the media increase; governments with friend-enemy strategies with the press and a *post-pandemic economic outlook that is discouraging for the sustainability of the media, which adds to the already worrying situation resulting from the major transformations in the media sector over the last two decades.*

Figures confirm an increase in the loss of trust in the media, clashes between media and journalists adding further damage and a context in which new media are emerging. The spectrum of content generators is transforming and diversifying and technological platforms are strengthening, widening inequalities and regulatory asymmetries. The first left-wing government in the history of Colombia came to power in 2022.

At the beginning of the ITP programme, there was a lack of awareness of the benefits of self-regulation with regard to audiences, the strengthening of democratic principles and the health of journalism; there was also a reluctance to establish it as a mechanism for transpar-

ency and sustainability, and a lack of interest in implementing it due to fear of self-censorship, as if this ethical framework were contrary to freedom of expression. The ITP's mission in Colombia has been to contribute significantly to the understanding of the benefits of self-regulation and the appropriation of systematic self-regulation practices through the creation and strengthening of training mechanisms and professional networks.

ITP change initiatives

ITP 1: Study “Characterisation of media self-regulation in Colombia: two approaches, one reality” and “Toolbox for self-regulation”.

The study “Caracterización de la autorregulación de medios informativos en Colombia: dos aproximaciones una realidad” (2021) presents an x-ray of the notions of self-regulation in Colombia. The work is based on 78 interviews with professionals from the Colombian media sector (private, public, institutional, community media; television, press, radio, digital; journalists, editors, managers; audience advocates; academics and NGOs).

https://www.auto-regulacion.org/files/ugd/33826a_6e3c13ffa9aa4266aece482bf5dc4e46.pdf

The “Self-Regulation Toolkit” was developed as an input for Colombia’s regional media and their journalists, providing practical elements for the implementation of self-regulation in the specific contexts and characteristics of each community.

<https://www.auto-regulacion.org/caja-de-herramientas>

The results are a baseline reference for those interested in the topic of self-regulation and for the other ITP cohorts in Colombia, a wake-up call on the lack of awareness of the benefits of self-regulation and the growing use of the Toolkit by media, journalists, and training centres.

ITP 2: Transparentometer

Self-regulation instrument that invites newsrooms and media to adopt the ethical standards necessary to regain the trust of audiences

in quality information. It consists of 10 points based on established standards to ensure media transparency in the production and dissemination of content. It is aimed at media outlets and journalists, with the objective to enhance a way of reporting that is more transparent with their audiences. The Transparentómetro has been piloted and has a communication strategy for its socialisation and appropriation.

https://www.auto-regulacion.org/files/ugd/33826a_6a533860c38e4188babd0eb4b32694dd.pdf

The Transparentómetro gave rise to a series of high-level dialogues with the directors, owners, editors, lawyers, and commercial and marketing managers of a significant group of Colombia's main national and regional private media outlets. The instrument has been shared in different scenarios of debate on media transparency and in training processes for journalists. It has been a driving force for critical analysis of media information management in Colombia. It is considered a benchmark in the field, and it is hoped that mechanisms can be found to ensure that media and journalists subscribe to the 10 points of this instrument.

ITP 3: Alliance for the Encouragement of Self-Regulation (ALDEA)

The alliance is a civil initiative that promotes self-regulation systems that integrate and are applicable to all actors in the country's content ecosystem. It is a strategy that seeks to motivate, from an appreciative and voluntary perspective, the formulation and implementation of self-regulation mechanisms by the actors of the ecosystem. This strategy includes the subscription of a manifesto, the development of an informative and pedagogical landing page and a public relations line to present the alliance and provide details. By voluntarily subscribing to the manifesto of the alliance, the signatories acquire a series of commitments to establish their own clear and explicit rules of the game, which ensure the exercise of their activity in an independent and responsible manner, guaranteeing the fulfilment of social goals, human rights and ethics, based on legality, truthfulness and transparency. All this as a tool to help overcome the reluctance of content creators to establish self-regulation as a mechanism for transparency and sustainability.

<https://malteaolimpica.wixsite.com/autoregulacion>

Aldea was considered at the ITP Alumni meeting in Sweden as a possible mechanism for the continuity of the programme in Colombia and for strengthening the network of professionals and content-generating organisations interested in and committed to self-regulation and as a coordinating body for change initiatives. Despite this, progress has not been made on the issue for various reasons related to human and economic resources and the establishment of agreements and commitments.

ITP 4: "Implementation Guide on Self-Regulatory Strategies for Election Reporting"

The guide aims to provide media and journalists with mechanisms that make it feasible and easy to implement self-regulation strategies in one of the most sensitive, important, and controversial fields of journalistic work: the coverage of political issues in times of electoral processes. The content of the guide is based on conversations, individual interviews and focus groups with journalists, editors, media managers and experts on communication issues. It is an infographic product with clear guidelines related to manuals and guidelines; scenarios for reflection and analysis in media editorial boards; training, updating and accompaniment; and strategies for verifying information, data, and sources.

https://www.auto-regulacion.org/files/ugd/33826a_d59a2061cb71460e86b8cff70d39f60d.pdf

The project provided a compilation of regulations governing electoral communication in Colombia and an analysis of jurisprudence on the subject. It has had an impact on the generation of self-regulatory mechanisms on the subject in regional public media.

ITP 5: Massive Online Course (MOOC) on Self-Regulation

ICT tool (Massive Open Online Course, MOOC) for training in self-regulation for media, professionals, students, social organisations and, in general, all actors in the communications ecosystem. It is currently in production. Accessible online to anyone, with no limit to the number of participants; valuable resource for journalists, communicators, human rights defenders and anyone interested in the production of quality content and

ethical treatment of information; provides key concepts and tools to qualify the work of the media; contributes to raising the standards of information, messages and content received by audiences, thereby contributing to public deliberation and democracy in Latin America; offers a complete and up-to-date guide to international and national standards on freedom of expression, as well as the challenges and opportunities for their application in the region; is hosted on the Open edX Platform (Harvard, MIT), recognised for innovating relevant learning for professional development.

It has also contributed to a better understanding of the benefits of self-regulation and to mitigating the widespread reluctance to establish self-regulatory mechanisms.

Two testimonies bear witness to this:

“My participation in ITP allowed my organisation to internalise and raise the profile of the need for self-regulation as an important mechanism for media outlets to connect more with their audiences and to be accountable for the content they provide. In the past, the term self-regulation was not well received by the media as it was mistakenly seen as a form of self-censorship. However, with the socialisation of the work done by the ITP, there has been a change in the perception of the representatives of the media affiliated to the union, and that is a big step towards a paradigm shift.

“I think it is a long and tortuous process in which a programme like this one helps to come out of the darkness and indifference to start airing the different aspects that the situation determines”.

Case 2: An expanded vision

Open the focus of the changes to the content ecosystem, expanding it beyond journalistic content. With the evolution of the ITP's work and the mixed and transdisciplinary conformation of the cohorts, a way is opened to comprehensively address channels, media, platforms, and independent and citizen initiatives, in response to the logic of interdependence and the permanent relationship of the current times. The industry is already 60% digital, and therefore, the media are not the only ones that reign in the universe of content. Social networks, channels and platforms are decisive, as well as professionals who, like the creators of commercial content or non-journalistic content, have a lot to say and a lot to commit to. This provides a more holistic view of the challenges and opportunities facing the content industry.

The Alliance for the Encouragement of Self-Regulation (ALDEA) was proposed as a strategy that invites the actors of the content ecosystem to take action in the promotion and appropriation of self-regulation.

Two testimonies are evidence of the expansion of the vision:

“The most significant thing is that I am aware of that I can be a subject of change, that I can be an agent for the promotion of self-regulation, both for my organisation and for other actors in the content ecosystem”.



Case studies

Case 1: Platform for dialogue on self-regulation, ethics and content quality

Leading professionals and representatives of the communications sector are part of an unprecedented experience of dialogue, meeting point and establishment of communicating exchange between actors of the same sector who did not usually lead together experiences of change around media self-regulation in the country before the implementation of the ITP in Colombia.

The interesting thing about the experience is that representatives of associations and associations of media owners, investigative journalists, freedom of expression promoters, advertisers and commercial communication companies; state regulatory bodies; national and regional public media; the most relevant and traditional national and regional private media (press, radio, television) in the country converged in the common goal of contributing to free, reliable, independent and inclusive journalism and a professional content ecosystem through the ITP platform.

Journalists, lawyers, publicists, communicators and audio-visual communication professionals have promoted a platform for dialogue that has contributed significantly to promoting an ecosystem governed by the principles of self-regulation, understood as the voluntary commitment of the media and the people who make up and represent them to establish their own clear and explicit rules of the game in order to develop a free, independent and responsible journalistic and content production exercise, guaranteeing compliance with social goals, human rights, democracy and ethics.

“Thanks to the ITP, it was possible to identify the importance of involving different types of actors, not only to generate commitment and credibility, but also to effectively and concretely advance the benefits of self-regulation in the country. The success of self-regulation lies in its ability to convene not only those it governs but also those it inspires. This is what makes the difference, the way in which articulated work generates positive change, and in the development of common agendas that not only facilitate the progress and success of the initiatives that are put forward, but also generate empathy between people with different experiences and capacities.”



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The impact of the ITP programme in Colombia is clearly linked to evidence in terms of:

- Increased knowledge and awareness of key communication actors about the difficulties and opportunities of developing self-regulated journalistic and content work.
- Promotion of the concept of self-regulation in the reflection on journalistic practice and content. It has contributed to keeping alive the reflection on the importance for society of free, reliable, independent, and inclusive professional journalism.
- A network of informed and trained professionals, willing to capitalise on and disseminate the knowledge of self-regulation and act accordingly. The participants of the 5 cohorts have benefited from the knowledge gained, and have been, for the most part, promoters of networks within the field of media regulation and self-regulation framework and in state institutions related to issues of regulation and promotion of the communications sector.



- A diagnosis of media and content self-regulation in Colombia.
- Increased and growing willingness of some media to address the issues and discussions on self-regulation in Colombia.
- Various spaces for dissemination and reflection, both face-to-face and virtual, in specific activities and specialised forums in the sector.



Bonus results related to ITP

a. Unintended or unexpected effects or impacts related to ITP

- The ITP has become a platform for dialogue, meetings and advocacy on the issue of self-regulation in the country, and has allowed for the promotion and consolidation of interactions between representatives of organisations that, due to their profiles, do not usually work together. Contacts have been made between participants of the different cohorts (and between their organisations) that did not exist before. In turn, there have been contacts between participants from the different Latin American countries that have benefited from the programme. An example of this is the transformation of relations between a regulatory body such as the Communications Regulation Commission (CRC) and the National Media Association (Asomedios).
- Advocacy in the corporate areas of media companies. This is evidenced by how the National Media Association, Asomedios (the largest media association in Colombia) has strengthened its work on self-regulation and advocacy at national level with its affiliated media. It created the “Vera” project, with which all radio stations in the country are associated to fight disinformation.
- Participants have been responsible for sharing knowledge, lessons learned and the importance of self-regulation for strengthening democratic frameworks. Among others: Legal Committee of the Colombian Media Association (AMI), National Association of Advertisers, Assembly of the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), Board of Directors of the National Media Association (Asomedios), meeting of the International Association of Broadcasting (AIR), among many others.
- Participants from the different cohorts of the Programme, as well as the National Facilitator, are systematically invited to forums, meetings, academic dialogues and committees due to their knowledge on self-regulation issues and because they are part of this ITP (list of events can be provided).

- The ITP has raised awareness of the issue of self-regulation among almost three hundred people linked to the Colombian media sector, the commercial content sector, some state bodies responsible for self-regulation issues and academia. This would not have been possible without Sida's initiative. Before ITP, the issue of self-regulation in Colombia was stuck with audience ombudsmen who received complaints about channel programming, or in media ethics manuals that were anachronistic and outdated for today's convergent times.
- The issue of self-regulation is now part of the country's regulatory agenda, based on the active and real promotion of actions in the public media, through training and reflection processes.
- Incorporation of ITP content and reflections in viewer advocacy programmes on public television channels such as Canal Capital, Teleislas, TRO, TeleAntioquia and TelePacífico and private channels such as Caracol Televisión and RCN Televisión.
- Creation of the TeleAntioquia regional public channel's Viewer's Defence Committee.
- Approval at the Foundation for Press Freedom of a pilot project to implement a self-regulation system for digital native media.
- A regulatory body such as the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC) now includes in its reflections, processes and practices thinking about self-regulation and the value it has for the communications sector. From monitoring, sanctioning and control, doors are opening to honest dialogue. The Commission has lost its fear of not regulating, of learning to look at the other side.
- ITP helped to promote sectoral processes that otherwise would not have been possible to expand and deepen in other actors in the sector. An example of this is "Autocontrol" promoted by Asomedios and the Asociación Nacional de Anunciantes.
- The project has strengthened and projected figures such as the Ombudsman of the Viewer in national and regional television channels. ITP affirmed the value of always including in the programmes a thought and reflection on self-regulation. An example of this is what has happened in the viewers' ombudsmen's offices of private channels such as Caracol Televisión and RCN Televisión, or public channels such as TRO, TeleAntioquia and Canal Capital. In addition, an increase in the audiences of these programmes has been observed.
- The ITP facilitated work between lawyers and journalists, which has been very fruitful for mutual understanding.

Key steps to success

The key conditions identified for structuring and advancing change processes can be summarised as follows:

- **Include organisations and professionals from various disciplines of the content ecosystem.**
 - **Reiterate ethics training and its application.**
 - **Formulate clear strategies for project implementation.**
 - **Self-regulation is successful to the extent that it involves all actors in the content ecosystem.**
 - **Strengthen the network of self-regulation both between individuals and between organisations.**
 - **The processes of co-creation of self-regulation initiatives are enriched by different experiences and disciplines.**
 - **Self-regulation is an exercise of independence and commitment to society. It is not a response to regulation.**
 - **Awareness of all participants of the importance of developing strategies to cope with: a) The multiple occupations of members, which limits the synchronisation of time; b) The identification and management of funding sources, resources and contacts for the implementation of change initiatives; c) The lack of certainty about the extent of institutional commitment of the organisations, companies and media to which ITP participants belong; d) The resistance of some managers, leaders and media professionals to the implementation of self-regulation.**
 - **ITP contributed to building respect for differences.**
 - **The ITP introduced a battery of concepts that greatly contributes to achieving results because of the clarity of the conceptual framework within which projects are set. This, in turn, enables conversations with stakeholders, partners, organisations, individuals and companies.**
- There is now, as many of the participants say, a "collective awareness" of the importance of the issue for society, democracy and the media and communications sector. It has also contributed to a broader and more open outlook among the participating professionals and their organisations.
 - To have achieved a regional conversation in Latin America.

- The ITP brought hope to the journalism sector. And trust between diverse and traditionally conflicting actors.
- Without the ITP, it is likely that regulations would intensify.



Sustainability of the project

- Identify and manage funding sources, resources, and contacts for the continuity of ITP's change initiatives and international network.
- Design a strategy to continue to raise awareness of the benefits of self-regulation among actors in the content ecosystem.
- Establish effective mechanisms to consolidate the national network of ITP members and their organisations.
- Promote self-regulation in Colombia in multiple cross-sectoral and academic spaces.
- Promote a national self-regulatory roundtable, which addresses current issues.
- Define a strategy to promote the Self-Regulation Stimulus Alliance (Aldea).
- Ensure the functioning of Basecamp as a knowledge management strategy on self-regulation, with the corresponding content curation. Basecamp should have an updated database of all ITP participants with a short biography, contact details, topics of interest and in which they are specialists. This could broaden the interactions between members from different countries and thus further enhance networking, exchange and collaboration.
- Find mechanisms for ITP Latin America to find alternatives to ensure the redesign, strengthening and sustainability of the Self-Regulation website created in the first cohort. This space has great potential to be a meeting point for the network, to collect, systematise and socialise the experiences, findings, developments and results produced by the various ITP teams (www.auto-regulacion.org).
- Ensure the creation of a map of ITP participants with a short biography and topics of interest and expertise. This could broaden interactions between members from different countries and thus further enhance networking, exchange, and collaboration.
- Develop strategies for a partnership between the ITP Network and Unesco taking into account that "to safeguard the role of journalism as a common good, urgent action is required by governments, civil society and the private sector to promote credible journalism and create a more enabling environment for media viability, respecting standards of editorial independence and freedom of expression" ("Journalism is a Common Good: Global Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, World Report 2021/2022").



4.3 El Salvador



**National Facilitator
Cristina Algarra**



Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Over the years, the ITP programme in El Salvador has faced a number of significant contextual challenges. These challenges include the weakening of democracy in the country, marked by a lack of separation of powers, the absence of effective mechanisms of control of public authorities or transparency tools, as well as an increase in attacks on journalists and the discrediting of the profession. There has also been a setback in the self-regulatory mechanisms in the media system, aggravated by institutional changes, which has had a significant impact on the evolution of strategies for change of the different cohorts that have had to adapt their work to the changing political situation. The context, characterised by government attacks on the media, has hindered dialogue with any government institution and weakened the credibility of the media. However, this situation has also led to discussions and editorial differences or approaches in most media outlets being put aside, uniting in response to the continuous attacks by the executive, legislative and judicial branches, promoting a collaborative approach that brings together institutions that traditionally do not work together, fostering diversity of profiles and overcoming ideological challenges.

Self-regulation has become an important method to protect press freedom and journalism in El Salvador in this challenging context. Although the term self-regulation was initially little known and was often linked to self-censorship, self-regulation tools and proposals have been developed, such as codes of ethics, conversations and toolboxes, which serve to reflect on the practice of journalism and the importance of working rigorously.

The common mission of the different cohorts, although with different nuances, can be summarised

as promoting self-regulation in the media and citizen education about the journalistic profession, its ethical principles, methodologies and existing self-regulation tools to strengthen credibility and trust in journalistic practice. The vision is to build a media environment in which self-regulation in the media and citizens' knowledge of these tools translate into an informed and critical society that analyses the information it consumes, thus contributing to strengthening democracy and informed decision-making.

ITP change initiatives

ITP 1

In the first cohort, a proliferation of disinformation media in favour of then-presidential candidate Nayib Bukele was observed, which led to a project focused on promoting public trust and verification of information. The objective of the ITP 1 change project was to build public confidence as to which media outlets are serious and produce informative content based on journalistic methodology and ethics, while informing them about the processes for verifying information. To this end, [an online template](#) was generated and made available in the media that were part of the cohort, in which the public could consult on any of the news items so that it could be verified and explain the process that had been carried out to publish it. The civil society institutions that were part of the cohort would be the guarantors to monitor the process. In addition, a communication campaign would be carried out to warn about fake news. The template was incorporated into two media outlets, focus groups were held and the communication campaign was designed, but implementation was hampered by lack of funding and the pandemic. This first cohort began to position the issue of media self-regulation in the country.

ITP 2

*The second cohort started during the pandemic, in a political context where the executive sought to monopolise information and attacks on independent journalists intensified. The project focused on **media literacy for young***

people so that they could identify journalistic ethics and self-regulatory mechanisms. Youth surveys were carried out to identify the best way to reach this population and specific content was created for them, such as podcasts, videos and virtual conversations that address different topics related to how to identify disinformation and how to deal with it.

ITP 3

The third cohort was affected by the removal of one participant from her position and her subsequent departure from the country due to government threats, in a context in which the regime considered journalists, organisations and individuals not aligned with the regime as “opposition”. The aim was to regain the credibility of audiences, and an ethical decalogue was created and adopted at the time by a Bolivian and a Salvadorian media outlet.

ITP 4

The fourth cohort identified the influence and high reach of government propaganda on social media as opposed to the low impact of journalistic content. The project focused on inspiring the media to use social media ethically and effectively to reach a wider audience. It collected success stories and reflected on ethics in digital journalism.

ITP 5

The fifth cohort sought to recover the work of previous cohorts by following up and disseminating the products of previous years. In this sense, they took up the ethical decalogue of cohort 3 by carrying out a campaign among the media and the Press Association of El Salvador, getting a dozen media outlets to adopt the document and disseminating it in university spaces. In addition, they also took up the document created by cohort 4, generating podcasts and videos for social networks in order to disseminate the content and achieve greater reach.

Each cohort responded to their context with specific change projects, addressing challenges related to misinformation, ethics, media literacy and social media outreach.



Case studies

Thanks to the ITP programme, the communications degree programme at the Gerardo Barrios University incorporated self-regulation issues as part of the new curriculum of these studies, incorporated in the second cycle subject “journalistic ethics”. Lucinda Quintanilla, a lecturer in communications at the UGB and a journalist with several years of experience at the national level, participated in Cohort 3 in El Salvador, which was working on the construction of an ethical decalogue that aimed to synthesise 10 basic principles of journalism to be present in all media and to serve as a tool for audiences to evaluate whether the journalism they consume complies with these simple steps.

Cohort 3 had a hybrid training in which numerous virtual webinars were held with experts, sharing manuals, experiences and bibliography related to journalistic ethics and self-regulation. During this time, the communications degree was updating its syllabus and the teacher took advantage of much of what was shared to incorporate basic content for future journalists and communicators. The timing of this curriculum update, the support and recognition of the university and its capacity for action and influence were key to this change. Something similar happened with the school for broadcasters of ASDER: Asociación Salvadoreña de Radiodifusores, which offers the “Diplomado y Certificación de Locutores”, the only school at national level certified by the Ministry of the Interior to be able to issue a broadcaster’s licence. Its executive director, Ana María de Urrutia, a participant in Cohort 1, incorporated a subject on self-regulation and the tools and ethical principles of journalism. In addition, as part of the continuing education of its students, it incorporated discussions with participants from other international cohorts.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The main added value of the ITP programme lies in the selection of participants at both national and regional levels, as few programmes incorporate participants from civil society, journalists, media owners, as well as public and private sector workers in the same joint workspace. Despite the risky nature of these spaces and the inevitable conflicts, it was possible to generate dialogues and exchanges of ideas that otherwise would not have been possible.



Bonus results related to ITP

One of the unintended impacts is that for many of the participants this programme was not only a way to learn what self-regulation is and what it is for, but also a way to learn how to draft change projects and present initiatives to international organisations and cooperation organisations both individually and for collaborative projects, which helped them in later initiatives.

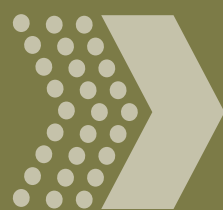
Initiatives have emerged such as **“El Filtro”**, an initiative that brought together five digital media to talk about the problem of disinformation in El Salvador. The five media included participants of the ITP programme or people very close to it who in some way had been aware of or had collaborated in the change projects of the different cohorts.

The Alfabeta media project of the UCA and the Mónica Herrera School also drew on the work of the change projects. When designing media literacy training processes, they were guided by the results of the surveys and focus groups carried out during the programme. We can also see how some media have incorporated spaces in which they publicly reflect on the work of the editorial staff, talking about journalistic methodology and ethics. This is the case of Revista Factum’s podcast **“Sobre la mesa”** in which every week part of the editorial staff meets to talk about the research process that

the magazine has carried out to publish some of the important issues of that week. It is worth mentioning that Jessica Ávalos, host of the programme, was part of Cohort 3.



Key steps to success



After five years of the programme, the term self-regulation is no longer unknown to part of the media system in El Salvador. However, although its importance and the need for tools and mechanisms to ensure quality journalism is understood, the term is still considered unattractive to audiences in the current context. Teamwork and dialogue between cohorts was key to generating change. Although each cohort had a considerable amount of training and working time (almost a year), this was not enough to assimilate the content on self-regulation, identify the common problem and design and implement the change project. Therefore, those initiatives that were able to build on the previous work of the previous cohorts fostered greater change and impact.

The willingness of the participants, the coordination of the programme and the political context strongly influence the success of the programme and whether changes are generated. The dynamics of the journalistic environment mean that the external context sometimes prevents the full dedication of the participants; political uncertainty, pandemics, electoral or crisis periods force many participants to redirect their time and efforts towards other more “urgent” and immediate issues, as opposed to “important” or substantive ones such as projects for change, without forgetting the fear of possible attacks or repercussions that the participants’ actions may have for promoting freedom of expression and human rights.



Lessons learned

The methodology of the change project, although initially somewhat confusing, proved useful in reflecting on the national media context, rethinking the root causes of the problems identified by the participants and realistically addressing those aspects that could be influenced. It was also useful to recognise each institution's own internal structures and their respective authorisers, knowledge that was useful for participants in other contexts and situations. Learning about the experiences of other countries and sharing with participants from other places was also enriching, although the larger the group became, the more confusing it became to identify and remember the projects of each cohort and country. Although virtual meetings, face-to-face meetings and a digital platform were created to bring together the projects, participants continually expressed their surprise at finding certain content or initiatives. Undoubtedly, the face-to-face spaces were the key to addressing these difficulties.



Sustainability of the project

Maintain active and regular communication highlighting not only the achievements and change projects of alumni, but also the ways in which other colleagues can be incorporated into these initiatives or contribute in a meaningful way. They could be encouraged to organise regular meetings, both online and face-to-face, with a clear agenda and content of interest and relevance to participants. As long as the content is useful to them, the initiatives will remain sustainable, but it requires continuous effort and commitment from the participants to make this possible.

The first step would be to have all the programme's resources accessible for consultation and to establish clear communication dynamics, with actions and responsibilities. In the case of El Salvador, support will be given to the organisation of a first post-ITP meeting in which a work agenda or a calendar of actions and meetings that the participants themselves can coordinate and carry out will be drawn up.

It would be good to know the final results of each country and to have a clear document that summarises and summarises the efforts that have been made in each of the cohorts and countries with specific requests from the groups on what they might need from the rest of the partners or how the others could contribute to promote the sustainability of the change projects. For example, in the case of El Salvador, invite participating media to join the Decalogue or support the dissemination of the inspiration box.



How to keep the ITP network alive?

Allowing access to materials and information is important, perhaps by making a selection of the most relevant or significant content, it would be good to create a contact space or a list with the profile of all the programme participants that can be shared and their trajectories can be followed, as these tend to be quite changeable, as we have seen throughout the programme. The creation of the LinkedIn group is interesting and very positive, although several participants do not use this social network. In El Salvador, efforts are being made to incorporate the projects for change into the work of already established organisations such as APES or the Central American Journalists' Network, but these organisations are exclusively for journalists and therefore leave aside those civil society institutions or academia that have also been part of the programme, and which contribute different and innovative perspectives and approaches. Funding support is being sought, led by academia, to maintain the network around issues related to the ethical tools of journalism and media literacy for citizens.

4.4 Guatemala



National Facilitators



Alejandra Gutiérrez-Valdizán
(2019-2020)



Marielos Monzón
(2020-2022)



Gerson Ortiz
(2022-2023 current)

Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

The “Media Self-Regulation Programme in a Democratic Framework” was launched in Guatemala in 2019, a year in which the institutional and human rights crisis in the country was already showing some signs of deterioration, as one of the participants was denounced by a presidential candidate for the media’s publications about her.

The first challenge faced by the members of the first cohort was that the concept of “self-regulation” was not only “new” in the country, but also non-existent, so the project for change started without any basis, which the cohort called “below zero”. That is, there was nothing, and the conditions had to be created. That year, the first cohort created a Code of Ethics, the elaboration of which involved journalists and the media in a debate that, until before the ITP Programme, did not exist in Guatemala. The media began to gather around initiatives that allowed for dialogue on self-regulation, which was approached pragmatically so that it would not be confused with “self-censorship”.

In 2020 everything was different: the Covid-19 pandemic destabilised the world and everything went virtual. From that modality, cohort 2 created a digital tool that allowed journalists to explore concepts related to “access to public information”, i.e. this project was designed to strengthen journalism in Guatemala. Self-regulation continued to be approached pragmatically.

With virtuality still as a premise, Cohort 3 focused on one of the main axes of the ITP programme: the gender approach. On that basis, it created the manual for gender coverage. The context at that time was not as adverse for Guatemala as it is today, but everything changed in the following project.

Cohort 4 began to notice some backsliding on human rights in the country. Certain abuses of power by the government were beginning to occur and access to information was being closed. In response to this context, the cohort created a podcast series called “Let’s talk about rights”, where they talk about self-regulation, freedom of expression, access to information and violence against journalists.

By 2022, the criminalisation of journalists had escalated considerably: journalists were in exile, others were in prison and elPeriódico, one of the most important media outlets in the country, was closed down. In this context, discussions on self-regulation became vital. The last cohort created an interactive document with concepts and interviews that aims to address self-regulation directly and create a dialogue about how self-regulation can protect journalists and the media in contexts of authoritarianism such as the one currently experienced in Guatemala.

The great contribution of the ITP programme to Guatemala is that it has generated dialogues that did not exist before the programme. Journalists from different media and other actors from state institutions and civil society were brought together to discuss the importance of ethics and self-regulation in the exercise of freedom of expression.

The work of all cohorts of the ITP Programme added to the building of a dialogue and to the idea that self-regulation is important to protect the exercise of press freedom and journalism, especially in an urgent context that requires ethical responses to abuses of power.

ITP change initiatives

Vision of the ITP cohort

Keep the idea of self-regulation alive through ethical action and healthy debate about its importance in journalism.

Mission of the ITP cohort

To improve the quality of journalism and contribute to the full exercise of freedom of expression for journalists and media through constant updating on ethics and self-regulation.

Formal Organisational:

- a) **Framework code of ethics for the media in Guatemala** is the project of Cohort 1, which consists of a general code of ethics that addresses 18 points focused on strengthening the practice of journalism. Its results include the implementation in three media outlets (Ocate, Ojo con mi pisto, Radio Ixchel). In addition, this year it was re-launched so that other media outlets could read it and try to subscribe to it.
- b) **The Practical Guide for Journalists “How to cover violence against women”** is a document produced by Cohort 3 whose main objective is to contribute to gender-relevant coverage so that society understands that violence against women is a profound social problem that does not only concern women and needs to be eradicated. The guide is used by journalists from different media and has been presented in different forums on self-regulation.

Informal Institutional:

- a) **Acceso.gt** is a website developed by Cohort 2 focused on the Guatemalan Law on Access to Public Information with tools for journalists. This website provides theoretical and practical information for journalists and media to make proper use of this regulation (co-regulation tool). The results were the promotion of processes of exchange of experiences, the resolution of problems related to requests for information and interaction with those who practice journalism in the country. Unfortunately, the site is no longer available on the web.

b) **Let's talk about rights** is a series of podcasts produced by Cohort 4 that address four central themes: self-regulation, freedom of expression and press freedom, access to information and violence against journalists. These podcasts were recorded at the beginning of the state crackdown on journalists and media. The podcasts were presented in Guatemala City, Chiquimula and Quetzaltenango in events attended by dozens of journalists from different media in the country and have been listened to in different countries in Latin America and Europe.

- c) **Self-regulation basics** is a document produced by Cohort 5 that presents an “a, b, c” on self-regulation. It is a practical guide for those who want to enter the world of journalistic self-regulation and features interviews with experts such as Martín Becerra, Germán Rey, Dora Montero and Jonathan Bock. The document was presented in a room with more than 30 journalists and was validated by people such as Joan Barata, Alejandra Gutiérrez-Valdizán, Ana Carolina Alpírez, Haroldo Shetemul, Miguel González Moraga and Silvio Gramajo.



Case studies

Story 1: More than a code of ethics

Before the discussions to assess the need to create a general code of ethics that would work for all Guatemalan media outlets that needed it, I had not seen or attended a meeting that brought together more than a dozen journalists and media outlets to discuss ethics and journalism. That is the big change in the ITP programme.

It was 2019 and the first cohort was returning from Sweden, where the team approached people from three other countries linked to the media sector. The enthusiasm for the construction of a code of ethics was undeniable, but so was the reaction of the journalists we would convene to address a topic that was new to everyone in Guatemala: self-regulation. The first reaction was at the same time the most natural one: self-regulation meant self-censorship. But that was not the case and time proved us right.

Elsa Amanda Chiquitó, a community journalist and member of Cohort 1, says the content of the ITP programme, “allowed us to open up a dialogue about what we need to improve as media, journalists or communicators. It allowed us to come closer together, to network, to think about collective improvements and to continue defending the work of journalism.”

The code of ethics was built on the basis of focus groups, surveys, discussions and meetings between journalists. The ITP Programme opened that window, the possibility of collectively creating tools that improve journalism, that make journalism safe for audiences and journalists.

“Cohort 1 contributed to the creation of a code of ethics that allowed two renowned digital media to adopt them in their editorial offices, and also generated dialogue in community media to create and think about their own codes of ethics,” adds Amanda.

For Silvio Gramajo, who participated in the elaboration of the ethical code of Cohort 1 and later became a student of the programme, one of the main changes of the ITP was “to open the discussion on self-regulation in the public agenda”.

Alex Rojas, a student of Cohort 5, adds that “the ITP allowed many initiatives and particular interests to come together and the sounding board to expand with the exchange of experiences, contributions, reflections and efforts for common goals that can reach more people”.

Today, the code of ethics is implemented and consulted by three media outlets, two of them among the most important in Guatemala. It has also been implemented at the School of Communication Sciences of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala, where journalism students do their internships in order to go out to the media. Thanks to this tool, future journalists have an additional weapon for the defence of press freedom. In addition, other media have already shown interest. Despite being a project of 2019, the first ITP project in Guatemala is still in force, and this is only possible thanks to the quality of the project and the academic, ethical and journalistic support that sustains it.



Story 2: Self-regulation, human rights, and podcasting

The year was 2022 and the situation for journalism was getting irreversibly worse in Guatemala. Some journalists were already in exile and in July of that year the founder of elPeriódico, José Rubén Zamora, was arrested, becoming the first journalist to be considered a political prisoner of the regime. In this context, ITP Cohort 4 tried to broaden the discussion on self-regulation, but without neglecting the crisis in journalism and the human rights approach. This is when the podcast series “Let’s talk about rights” was created.

It was the first time that the ITP project was on a global streaming platform such as Spotify, among others. But it was also the first time that the audio format was worked into the programme with the idea of reaching other audiences.

“Our project focused on the recognition of rights, which we believe has been achieved, because the journalists we work with, especially the community journalists, now no longer see journalistic work only as the transmission of information they gather from elsewhere, but from the perspective that they have the right to inform, they have the right to obtain information and that the population also has the right to be informed,” says Ruth Del Valle, a member of Cohort 4.



This story also tells a story: the third podcast of the special tells the story of Maraxcó, an indigenous community where women implemented development projects based on knowledge of the Access to Public Information Law. This detail made the podcast, which talks about human rights, freedom of expression, co-regulation, and women’s empowerment, attractive.

“It is reflected in a more proactive and proactive action in community life, in the exercise of these rights as citizens,” adds Ruth del Valle.



Simon Antonio, a member of Cohort 5 of the ITP programme, says: “Since the change projects, the discussion on self-regulation in the media agenda is more constant, which strengthens both journalism and the media.”

“The ITP programme worked because of the approach taken by each cohort, which worked according to the country context, and each team prepared the process until the main theme, self-regulation, was addressed,” said Antonia Banito, a member of Cohort 5.

Change lies in the analysis of the context and the capacity to create from it. The ITP provides the necessary tools to respond to the current context of each country and, based on this, to propose a change project that responds to latent needs. The human rights approach has not been addressed by any cohort before and is a fundamental added value in the implementation of these changes.

ITP change initiatives

Heterogeneity

Although ITP focuses on journalism, the courts have been selected with the added value of being multidisciplinary. This has allowed the work of the projects and the focus of the programme to be broadened and discussions to take place from multiple points of view. In the case of Guatemala, the result of this added value is that the discussions and projects have moved towards the academic sphere and social organisations, that is, they have not remained in the media alone.

Learning in action

*Many of the programme's students have never worked in change project management before. Many are journalists who are exclusively dedicated to journalism and have no idea how to undertake a collective and multidisciplinary project that will help them reach more people. Thanks to the **Action learning philosophy**, these students can put into practice their management, leadership and stakeholder recognition skills, among other aspects.*

Lifetime network

Unlike other programmes, the ITP has managed to keep its network active through regional meetings and opening seminars, where alumni are always invited to speak on topics of interest to the new cohorts. All networks are in constant communication, and this is only possible because the ITP Programme maintains its working platforms, such as Basecamp, the programme website www.auto-regulacion.com and the constant communication of both the programme directors Silvia Montano and David Isaksson, as well as the national facilitators.

about the ombudsman model applied by Sweden as part of its self-regulation process. After that meeting, the Guatemalan ombudsman decided to add journalists to an ombudsman's office he was about to create, which led to the creation of the PDH's Office for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, directed by Ruth del Valle, an ITP alumna.

Self-regulation in academia

Two of the ITP alumni are professors at San Carlos University and Rafael Landívar University, two of the country's most prestigious universities. Both have implemented modules in their journalism courses in which they talk about self-regulation, the ITP Programme and the change projects that have been worked on in the programme. One of them even applies the Code of Ethics that ITP Cohort 1 developed so that journalism students know how to respond ethically to conflicts. Both of these effects were not foreseen or planned in the change projects but are alumni initiatives to continue discussions on self-regulation in the country.



Lessons learned

Self-regulation as a defence of journalism

In Guatemala, the different cohorts moved from the idea that self-regulation was synonymous with self-censorship to implementing it as a way of defending journalism. The key to making this change possible lies in the length of the programme, as students have a whole year to review the concepts and think of ways to implement self-regulation. Also key to this process is the fact that the thematic mentors such as Martin Becerra and Joan Barata know the Latin American reality so well. Antonia Benito, a student in Cohort 5, said: *"The ITP helps us to be more cautious when dealing with risky topics and in consulting sources of information. We regulate ourselves."*

Ethics on paper

Cohort 1's diagnosis of the lack of application of codes of ethics in Guatemalan newsrooms was accurate. However, as the ITP programme progressed, curiosity about the creation and implementation of codes of ethics as a minimum level of self-regulation also grew in the newsrooms where the students work, as well as in other media newsrooms that did not participate in the programme. Thanks to the ITP programme, Guatemala now has a generally applicable code of ethics that is open for consultation and application.



Bonus results related to ITP

Ombudsman for journalists

The biggest, unexpected impact of the ITP in Guatemala came right at the start. In 2019, while Cohort 1 was identifying its stakeholders, it proposed a meeting with the then Human Rights Ombudsman, Jordán Rodas (now in exile), to talk to him



Alliances

Bringing diverse media together around a programme or a concept is something that had not been achieved in Guatemala. The media and journalists came closer to the debates on ethics that the ITP promoted. These spaces led the media to work in alliances to work towards a more ethical and self-regulated journalism. At this point, the change projects were key, as the public presentations opened up spaces for discussion that were previously non-existent in the country.

Stakeholders

Guatemala is a country where maintaining continuity is complicated by the changing context. However, the ITP Programme has allowed the creation of a network of stakeholders who have been complementing each other to “evangelise” about self-regulation.

Organisations such as Centro Civitas, the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Centre for Human Rights Legal Action, the Association of Journalists of Guatemala and community radio stations such as Ixchel, Nacoj and Qawinaqel have sat at the table with media outlets such as elPeriódico, Prensa Comunitaria and Prensa Libre and engaged in a dialogue on journalism and ethics with different perspectives.

Without the alliances between these media and organisations, the dialogue would not have expanded into part of the ITP and they have been key to the expansion of the ITP. For example, the Association of Journalists of Guatemala will implement a module on

self-regulation for journalists next year and the Universities of San Carlos and Rafael Landívar include self-regulation in their academic content. The dialogue has not remained in Sweden or Colombia, or within the four walls of the cohorts, but has transcended to other spaces thanks to the alliances with stakeholders that each cohort has implemented.



Sustainability of the project

Sustainability is key in programmes such as the ITP, as it guarantees that the projects will not be ephemeral but that there will be continuity in the implementation and in the dynamics of knowledge exchange on self-regulation. The key for the initiatives to be self-sustainable is that they form part of platforms that are managed in the long term, as in the case of the podcasts of Cohort 4 of the ITP Programme, these were included in the Spotify platform and are still there, they can be consulted at any other time without the intervention of any author. The same is true for the Code of Ethics, the manual on gender-based violence coverage and the document with basic concepts, all of which are products that can be consulted in the long term, openly and free of charge for the journalistic community, and which did not generate major costs for the authors.

Shared below are some suggestions from the alumni team to keep the network alive and maintain momentum as a catalyst for change:

- Convene forums or conservatories to keep the discussion on self-regulation in line with the changing needs of the country’s journalistic environment.
- Convene meetings by video call where a thematic mentor can be invited to present a masterclass or clinic on a particular ethical issue, where alumni can participate.
- To maintain this network with intercultural and intergenerational exchanges that allow us to be more empathetic in our work.
- Promote ongoing action on trends in journalism.
- To have spaces together, not to lose sight of existing projects and to continue to promote them.
- Design a strategy with people who can coordinate the momentum, time available from cohort members and material resources to reach out to other parts of the country.

4.5 Honduras



National Facilitator
Thelma Mejía López



Reporting Period

From 2019 to 2023.

Background/ Context

The ITP programme started in Honduras in 2019 in a context of multi-crisis, deepened by the 2009 coup d'état. This multi-crisis of an economic, migration, climate, security, corruption, organised crime and drug trafficking nature has continued over the last five years and has accentuated political and social polarisation with ups and downs. The crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic has also highlighted this multi-crisis in the health sector (collapsed structures) and in the economy in terms of slow growth and job losses. Lack of employment, violence and insecurity, migration and corruption are the country's main problems. With a population of 9.7 million people, Honduras has the second highest poverty rate in Latin America, at around 59 percent.

This is the context in which the ITP was inserted and developed over the last five years: it began in a multi-crisis context and is closing in a multi-crisis context. In terms of freedom of expression, the ITP has entered a climate of high risk for the practice of journalism, with almost a hundred journalists and social communicators murdered, with threats, intimidation, lawsuits and restrictive laws on the exercise of freedom of expression. Most of the crimes go unpunished. Reporters Without Borders ranked Honduras 165th out of 180 (2022) in the ranking of freedom of expression. In 2023 the country moved to the position of 169th out of 180 countries, a drop of four points. Honduras – according to RSF – is a “partially free” country and a high-risk country for the exercise of journalism and freedom of expression.

Media self-regulation in societies in democratic contexts was not an issue on the agenda of public debate, media and journalists in Honduras when the programme started. The ITP's commitment in this

regard was propitious in the country's political and social situation, as the levels of polarisation and confrontation also questioned the role of the press in the handling of information.

A perception survey on freedom of expression and self-regulation conducted by the second ITP group (2020) revealed that 40% of journalists and social communicators associated self-regulation with censorship, 34% with models related to responsible media management, 16% with self-censorship and the rest with journalist protection mechanisms. The main challenge of ITP in Honduras has been to demystify the association of the expression self-regulation with censorship and self-censorship. This has been part of the work of the change projects of the different cohorts.

The steps taken have been substantial: today the issue of self-regulation is higher on the agenda of traditional, community, digital and alternative media. The issue of self-regulation has been seen and perceived as a viable option for continuous improvement in the professionalism of the press, journalists and the rest of the actors that make up the communication value chain. Self-regulation has gained strength and will continue to do so in the future because it has also been seen as one of the most viable and solid alternatives in the face of the infodemic that disinformation is unleashing.

In Honduras, the ITP's work over five years has generated debate, knowledge and experiences of change by promoting codes of ethics, a manual on self-regulation, practical guides and a podcast on disinformation, as well as generating a community of alumni and strategic allies with identified priorities around the promotion and encouragement of self-regulation as an important mechanism for freedom of expression.

The contribution of Swedish cooperation and the consortium of institutions that formed and promoted this initiative has been substantial in placing the importance of self-regulation in strengthening freedom of expression and societies in democratic contexts on the agenda of the media, academia, and society in general.

ITP change initiatives

ITP 1

Cohort I was the driving force behind the Initiatives of Change in Honduras. In this first initiative, a comprehensive proposal for self-regulation in community media was developed and adopted as a policy of the Association of Community Media of Honduras (AMCH). Seven codes of ethics were drawn up in an equal number of community media in the western, northern, southern, and central regions of the country. The community media are Radio Odeco (north), La Exclusiva (centre), La Voz de Marcala (centre), Zacate Grande (south); Radio Morazanista (west), Radio Play FM (west), Radio Suyuguaré, La Paz (centre). The first code of ethics for a digital media in Honduras, Proceso Digital, one of the most influential native-digital media in the country, was also drafted.

This Cohort brought the decriminalisation of crimes against honour into the public debate in alliance with the Honduran Journalists' Association and a citizens' alliance against corruption and in defence of freedom of expression. The issue is still on the media's agenda and advocacy has been sustained in the Honduran parliament until the aim of decriminalising of these crimes against freedom of expression has been achieved.

ITP 2

The second initiative for change was carried out by Cohort II (known as the "pandemic" Cohort), which produced the ABC of Self-Regulation: an ethical approach for journalists and communicators in Honduras, as well as a proposal for an "Advocacy School for the Media and Community Media in Honduras", which is being promoted by the partner organisation Red de Desarrollo Sostenible (RDS) in association with AMCH. This advocacy school has generated training spaces for more than 30 community and regional media. Since then, these media have decided to take and embrace self-regulation by developing new formats. By disseminating information and educating the population from modern themes and platforms that adapt to the messages; they offer a counterweight and open space for communities to have a voice in these media.

ITP 3

The third initiative for change was Cohort III, which developed a self-regulation portal called

FOCA (Strengthening Capacities) and an advocacy programme for key actors: media and justice operators. The self-regulation portal contains national and international laws, conventions, as well as all the change initiatives of the last 4 cohorts: videos, among other information of interest. For the sustainability of the FOCA portal, an agreement was signed with the partner organisation and member of the first cohort, the Association for Democracy and Human Rights in Honduras (Asopodehu).

As part of the advocacy work, lectures on self-regulation and freedom of expression were given to media outlets such as El Heraldito, with national circulation and wide political influence, as well as to judges and magistrates of courts of appeals and students at the School of Journalism of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH). The lectures were given by ITP mentors Joan Barata and Karin Elfving, as well as of representatives of UNESCO in association with the Training School of the Supreme Court of Justice of Honduras.

ITP 4

Cohort IV promoted the other change initiative: a diagnostic entitled "Creating the Defender of Freedom of Expression in Honduras", for which they developed surveys and interviews with key actors, focus groups and dissemination of results. The diagnosis is the first of its kind in the country and includes a broad overview of the creation of the institution independence, autonomy, scope and institutional relations and relations with society. The initiative will be taken up by the organisation Asopodehu of Cohort I to promote, from civil society, the creation of this institute in view of the situation of vulnerability of freedom of expression and journalists.

ITP 5

Cohort V promoted the fifth initiative for change through its project entitled: "Counteracting disinformation through self-regulation", which had the following results: a diagnosis on the perception of the media and journalists on disinformation in Honduras, a communication strategy to disseminate the results of the diagnosis; elaboration of two protocols or practical guides to detect and denounce disinformation, a podcast on disinformation and self-regulation; dissemination of notes to the media to publish the designed guides or protocols on their portals, media coverage.



Case studies

The two stories of change generated by the ITP in Honduras that generate a thread of sustainability and continuity focus on the process initiated in community radio through AMCH; and on the diagnosis generated around the perception of disinformation and self-regulation as an alternative to counteract this type of practices related to infodemics in the media.

Case 1: Community media, the footprint of the ITP

In Honduras, the practice of communication in community radio stations was, until before 2019, quite empirical, without the minimum techniques to practice journalism. Lawsuits and complaints against rural and community communicators were constant. So were the confiscation of equipment and threats to their integrity from political sectors, local governments and organised crime groups, especially those involved in drug trafficking and corruption. Self-regulation did not exist then among the community media and the Association of Community Media in Honduras (AMCH).

The ITP programme laid the groundwork for media self-regulation to be seen as the way to better structure communication, to safeguard the lives of people and their work (e.g. against equipment seizures).

“Community communication has made very satisfactory progress in the last six years; communicators have structures for regulating information in order to provide communities with information of public interest without risking their lives so much. Now they do more research and contrast information, they are no longer the media that are dedicated to replicating agendas, they now construct their own agendas”.

Salvador Zúniga, president of AMCH, director of the community radio Morazanista, alumnus of ITP-Cohort I

Since the first Cohort where this initiative for change was drawn up, this process has been continued as part of an institutional policy of the AMCH, which has registered a decrease of almost 30% of threats against its affiliated radio stations (around 50). There are codes of ethics in seven community media which, in turn, have

designed protocols to apply these codes, adapted to the reality of their communities, as well as a protocol to create the figure of the Audience Ombudsman.

Self-regulation has been conceived by the community media as one of the strengths that will allow the so-called “Third sector of communication: community media” to be considered within the media ecosystem as a communication model open to diverse voices, especially from the most vulnerable groups that are not part of the media agenda of the country’s large social communication.

“I congratulate ITP Honduras for its great work and for the contributions that it shares with me, as a result of its programme of accompaniment and training of young generations of journalists. Please be assured that we will take all the information you send me into account and we will apply it in our professional practices at Radio Progreso and ERIC.

Father German Rosa, Head of communication of the Jesuits in Honduras. Director of Radio Progreso and head of the team for Reflection Investigation and Communication (ERIC)

The process of change sown by the ITP has left its mark and throughout the five years of the programme, the AMCH has been a strategic ally of the programme and within its limitations – economic and human resources, as it relies heavily on volunteers – it promotes self-regulation as a key policy that has even allowed it to open doors to other sources of cooperation, such as the German GIZ.

Case 2: Countering disinformation through self-regulation

Eight out of ten journalists in Honduras have been victims of disinformation. According to a perception survey carried out by Cohort V as part of its change project, the pandemic, the 2021 electoral process and the information currently generated by government bodies has been the three major moments of disinformation.

On the question “Has the media outlet where you work reported erroneous information in the last two years” 82.60 percent said yes, 17.39 percent said no. The dissemination of this diagnosis had a strong impact on the media and journalists, as well as wide media cov-

erage because it was placing on the agenda of public debate an issue that few want to talk about: disinformation and its impact on democracy and freedom of expression.

“This tool that ITP-Honduras is giving us is of great relevance for the country and for our work as journalists, in the digital media Pasos de Animal Grande we have hosted on our site these practices and from Asopodehu we will replicate these guides in our workshops with journalists and rural communicators”.

Dina Meza, human rights defender, journalist, director of Asopodehu and the digital media Pasos de Animal Grande, alumna of ITP Cohort 1. <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/pag/index.php>

As part of this diagnosis, some of the proposals identified by the journalists, social communicators, community, digital, traditional, and alternative media consulted revolved around the need to promote self-regulation practices to avoid falling victim to disinformation networks. Codes of ethics, steps to detect and counteract disinformation, training and knowledge generation on this issue and how self-regulation can be one of the most viable mechanisms for the media and the strengthening of freedom of the press and expression.

“As director of Radio Cadena Voces, I would like to congratulate the V Cohort of the V Cohort of Journalists, I want to congratulate the V Cohort and ITP-Honduras for these products that you are giving us, they will be useful to us because we are going to give a workshop on disinformation to our journalists who manage social networks and we will start with these tools that you are giving us”.

Dagoberto Rodríguez, former president of the College of Journalists of Honduras, currently director of Radio Cadena Voces during the closing ceremony of Cohort V, 30 September 2023, in Tegucigalpa

Cohort V chose to develop the 10/10 practical steps to identify, counter and denounce disinformation, a practical guide that allows media and journalists to orient themselves on the issue and on the simplest ways to identify disinformation. A podcast on disinformation and self-regulation was developed to disseminate

examples and explanations of this phenomenon in the age of infodemics. These products were sent with personalised letters to editors of allied media and others in the process of building alliances to be posted on their digital platforms and socialised in their newsrooms.

The ITP's contribution on how self-regulation can contribute to counteracting disinformation has aroused widespread interest in society. The media have opened their spaces for coverage and debate on the issue, and the academy has announced that it is working with a group of ITP alumni on a project to link the UNAH University with society, with self-regulation, freedom of expression and disinformation as its central axis. This linkage includes not only the main university campus in Tegucigalpa, the capital, but also the campus in Valle de Sula, in the north of the country.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

The ITP has allowed diverse groups with different visions to come together to work on an issue that affects individual participants, the media, and organisations they represent, and society in general around the theme of self-regulation and its approach, breaking initial myths.

The ITP has been a programme based on experiences in Sweden that have been adapted for implementation in Latin America. It has made available a valuable digital platform in terms of content, promoting online courses, highlighting a team of high-profile mentors, and bringing to the field of knowledge the experiences on self-regulation with the seminars in Sweden and Colombia. The contribution of the Swedish cooperation and its alliance partners in this initiative allowed the debate on self-regulation to be placed on the media and academic agenda.

The ITP has given the cohorts tools to generate processes of change that are having an impact and are highly useful in polarised and politically tense contexts such as the Honduran one. One of the greatest added values of the ITP in Honduras has been to demonstrate that spaces for dialogue, reflection and collective analysis around democracy and freedom of expression are possible, that dialogue continues to be a good tool for finding common ground amidst the complexity of problems.



Bonus results related to ITP

The ITP experience has attracted the interest of other donors interested in self-regulation, freedom of expression and disinformation. One impact-effect of the change processes initiated in Honduras has been the interest of **German GIZ cooperation** in funding protocols for community and regional radio stations to implement their codes of ethics and to move towards the creation of the figure of the Audience Ombudsman.

Training in self-regulation and techniques for better journalism in community media has been promoted and financed by the US organisation Internews, thanks to the efforts of ITP's partner organisation, the Sustainable Development Network, and the Community Media Association.

Another unexpected impact is the interest shown by the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** in promoting and financing a project on self-regulation, disinformation, and freedom of expression, based on the results generated by the diagnosis carried out by the 5th Cohort of the ITP Programme in Honduras. Initial contacts have been established with several alumni and civil society organisations that have benefited from the contributions and knowledge of the ITP.

Another impact has been the receptiveness with which ITP proposals have been received in the press and media sector, not only in terms of media coverage when this support has been needed as part of the strategies of the different change projects, but also in terms of interest in training, capacity building and learning more about self-regulation mechanisms.



The ITP has enabled a broad sector of the press – polarised as well as the country – to discuss and debate common problems and build trust on the scope of self-regulation. Initially, the ITP began with a low profile due to the context of polarisation and this allowed for the strengthening of ties and the creation of community; but in the current situation, the media, particularly the mainstream media, which have been reluctant to this type of initiative, are now showing a high level of interest in learning about self-regulation and how it can generate greater credibility and trust with their audiences, readers, and society in general. This has been an unexpected factor, which puts the work of the ITP in its five years in Honduras in a positive perspective, as it is conceived as a highly reliable, credible, and positioned training programme.



Lessons learned

Bringing together the experiences of this journey that began five years ago from the individuality of the different members of the five cohorts, now converted into a community committed to continue adding actors in the bid to have tools for self-regulation and improvement of content that manage to improve journalistic work in the country and strengthen freedom of expression in democratic contexts.

Building strategic alliances in polarised contexts. The ITP was able to build trust and credibility among the members of the different cohorts and partner organisations in order to design, implement and promote their projects for change. These gradual change processes have taken place in traditional media, community media, digital media, parliamentary debate, prosecution and the court of justice.

To bring together in three cohorts the participation of parliamentarians who, thanks to the programme, changed their views on the importance of freedom of expression and the role that self-regulation plays in it; moving from an approach of criminalisation of the press to one of protection of freedoms and guarantees for a more professional development of journalism by learning about the experiences of the public media in Sweden and Colombia, as well as the role of the Swedish Ombudsman.

To develop among the cohorts a community of co-existence, respect, solidarity and tolerance in the midst of diversity. The ITP has been a motivating programme, generating hope and optimism that change is possible.

The management of the context and the political situation of the country allowed ITP and its cohorts to develop timely and pragmatic advocacy strategies so as not to fall into polarisation and the loss of the objectives of the different change projects initiated.

The traditional and digital media are willing to promote these types of practices and debates in their spaces, but it will be necessary to create a kind of follow-up so that these initiatives continue and are strengthened. One way that alumni have proposed is to give shape to the community they have built through a national network to promote these initiatives. Some organisations plan to draw up projects to be presented to donors and thus achieve some kind of sustainability for their initiatives.

The search for resources will be a constraint to sustainability, but also a driving force in the search for creative ways of attracting cooperation in a country like Honduras, where polarisation does not seem to be easing and where journalism and freedom of expression will continue to bear the brunt. They have also proposed to systematise the ITP experience in Honduras in a publication that records the five-year journey and the role of the ITP Programme in fostering and promoting self-regulation and good practices in the country based on the experiences and change projects of the five Cohorts.



Sustainability of the project

The sustainability of the change projects that the ITP has promoted over five years, with an equal number of cohorts, will depend on the individual and institutional commitment of the alumni; some organisations such as AMCH, the Sustainable Development Network and Asopodehu, have adopted self-regulation as a policy in their institutions and promote spaces for training and advocacy; Meanwhile, in academia, the alumni who have participated in this process have designed a programme of engagement with society that will come into force in 2024 and which includes the issues of self-regulation, freedom of expression and disinformation.



5. MENA

Country Sheet

5.1 Lebanon



National Facilitator
Rouba El Helou



Reporting Period

From 2021 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Three major external factors affected the Lebanese team: the economic collapse that also led security unrest in the country, with electricity and internet cut; working during Covid-19; and finally trying to establish a concept, which was never introduced before to the Lebanese media workers.

According to the Reporters without Borders Index Lebanon now ranks 119th of 180 countries, up 11 places in 2022.³⁸

Lebanon held parliamentary elections on 15 May 2022 and elected 128 members to represent the country for the next four years. For the first time in the history of Lebanon, out of country voting (OCV) was allowed.

This democratic indicator, despite its significance, doesn't reflect however the situation on the ground. Since October 2019, Lebanon has been facing many significant challenges with enormous developmental and infrastructure problems within a severe economic crisis³⁹ characterised by an exceptionally high inflation rate and significant currency devaluation (95 per cent compared to the USD value). This led to a drastic rise in prices for goods and services, widespread unemployment, political instability (e.g. with no President since 30 October 2022⁴⁰), and a caretaker government with limited power. Even though Lebanon ratified the Inter-

INDEX 2023		INDEX 2022	
119 / 180	Score : 50.46	130 / 180	Score : 46.58
POLITICAL INDICATOR	108 51.63	POLITICAL INDICATOR	111 50.91
ECONOMIC INDICATOR	147 35.69	ECONOMIC INDICATOR	111 38.27
LEGISLATIVE INDICATOR	130 48.11	LEGISLATIVE INDICATOR	137 50.22
SOCIAL INDICATOR	106 58.86	SOCIAL INDICATOR	117 60.50
SECURITY INDICATOR	108 58.00	SECURITY INDICATOR	148 33.02

national Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1972, which included that everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression (FoE), assembly and association without discrimination, not to mention that the Lebanese Constitution also guarantees these freedoms; Lebanon's media landscape has been facing challenges in terms of economic capacity, independence and press freedom for many years. Journalists have encountered more restrictions on their freedom of expression, censorship and self-censorship as well as jobs security alerts, and are forced to work in two to three different jobs to make ends meet and live up to financial obligations for their families. These threats and restrictions influenced the quality of reporters' workplace conditions and journalistic content.

A veteran photojournalist (Ibrahim Tawil) died because he didn't have private medical insurance to be hospitalised and treated for pneumonia. In June 2023, the Minister of Culture attempted to ban the movie "Barbie" because, according to the minister, "it goes against

³⁸ SOURCE [HTTPS://RSE.ORG/EN/COUNTRY/LEBANON](https://rse.org/en/country/lebanon) LAST VISITED ON OCTOBER 25, 2023.

³⁹ <https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/300367-imf-warns-lebanon-that-the-country-is-still-facing-enormous-challenges>.

⁴⁰ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230619-lebanon-is-without-a-president-or-government/>

moral and religious values in Lebanon". Attacks on the LGBT community and campaigns against them intensified during the past three years. The anti-refugee discourse reached a high level of animosity even in legacy media. On 30 September 2023, 24 civil society organisations organised a freedom march in Beirut. The peaceful protesters were assaulted, attacked and many participants were beaten⁴¹.

Another challenge is the internet access and price gauging. The already limited internet service is slower than previous years with frequent outages. The internet prices have skyrocketed, and the rate of internet packages became a high commodity for many, affecting their daily businesses. Ogero, the Lebanon national telecommunications provider, announced a 700 per cent increase in internet prices in August 2023.⁴²

The security issue faced a lot of challenges; however, the situation is still relatively contained at the time of writing this report, despite all the above-mentioned challenges. One demand has been raised time and again, and it is a cause by many other members of civil society: i.e., social reform and investment in infrastructure needs to be taken seriously so media institutions can function properly.



There is no formal media co-regulation or self-regulatory body in Lebanon that either co-regulate or self-regulate media, i.e., media council. Further, there is no formal or informal community-of-practice for media outlets that allows this sector to protect and promote their interests and rights. The Press Editors Syndicate only represents journalists who are members of the Syndicate and not all other media profes-

sionals, which has led to the creation of an informal movement of media professionals and journalist organised informally under what is known as Assembly of the Alternative Press Union.

Amid all this turmoil and increased lack of freedom, the media self-regulation discussion was recently launched. This occurred simultaneously with the campaign for a new media law. The Lebanese Cohorts of the ITP programme and the National Facilitator (NF) were present in many meetings held during the past one year and a half to discuss a new draft media bill by the Information Ministry in collaboration with the UNESCO Beirut office. As part of this discussion around the media bill, the ITP Media Cohorts and NF met with the UNESCO expert Toby Mendel, a human rights lawyer who heads the Centre for Law and Democracy, who was tasked to review the new proposed law. The ITP media Cohorts and NF recommended that the legal framework should create the enabling environment that bolsters media self-regulation and, in case of co-regulation, such legal frameworks should be included in the proposed law.

About the cohorts:

1st cohort

- Press Editors Syndicate
- The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International – LBCI
- Annahar Daily Newspaper
- Samir Kassir Foundation – SKF
- Seeds for Legal Initiatives
- Maharat Foundation
- Assembly of the Alternative Press Union

The team which, started meeting in the digital sphere because of the COVI-19 implications on one hand and gas shortages in Lebanon, initially struggled to understand the concept, implications, and practical application of the media self-regulation in a Lebanese context. Despite the fact that team members needed time to grasp the entire media self-regulation agenda at the beginning, they all agreed that many elements of media self-regulation are important to achieve on the individual and collective level and can be used to systematically work on internal governance, which has been relatively weak in the Lebanese formal media for decades. Furthermore, they found it important

⁴¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/lebanon-investigate-assault-on-freedom-march-protesters/>

⁴² <https://www.newarab.com/news/lebanon-raises-internet-prices-seven-fold>

to apply rule of law, policies, and a transparent due process in media organisation to facilitate a dialogue and accountability to their public. Therefore, the focus was on establishing a working definition and internal culture of what media self-regulation (MSR) is; what it means in the Lebanese context; how it can be mainstreamed to the mutual benefit of all. It was essential to collaborate within workshops, create awareness videos and map existing laws on protection of sources and understand how MSR tools of application can be implemented.

It was vital in the first cohort to include players who are pillars for the success of the change project and who belong to key media institutions. It also included two of the main representatives of journalists who were in fact at odds when it comes to representation of the media professionals in Lebanon. Further, it was deemed essential to have media outlets. In addition to LBCI, i.e., the first private TV in Lebanon with a high reach in the Arab speaking countries, to also bring in the online media outlet, and AlNahar. This decision to include two key media institutions proved, as time passed, to be very timely indeed. It showed that the institutional approach, both in theory and practice, was key to the success of the project despite the fact that the situation in Lebanon continues to be highly unstable for the aforementioned reasons at the beginning of this report.

2nd cohort (2022)

- The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International – LBCI
- Seeds for Legal Initiatives
- Al-Modon Online Newspaper
- Social Media Exchange – SMEX
- Fe-Male feminist collective
- The Lebanese Centre for Human Rights

The second cohort carried the baton from cohort one and continued implementing sessions and training workshops on MSR and human rights, as well as MSR and sensitive gender media coverage. All organisations also worked on their internal policies and started this debate among each other. At the same time, meetings among institutions in the cohort and discussions with the media workers tackled precisely the way a code of conduct should reflect the culture of an institution. Two big players in the Lebanese media sphere, mentioned above, found that it was of essence to start working together on a formalised approach of cooperation and shared code of ethics. See case study below.



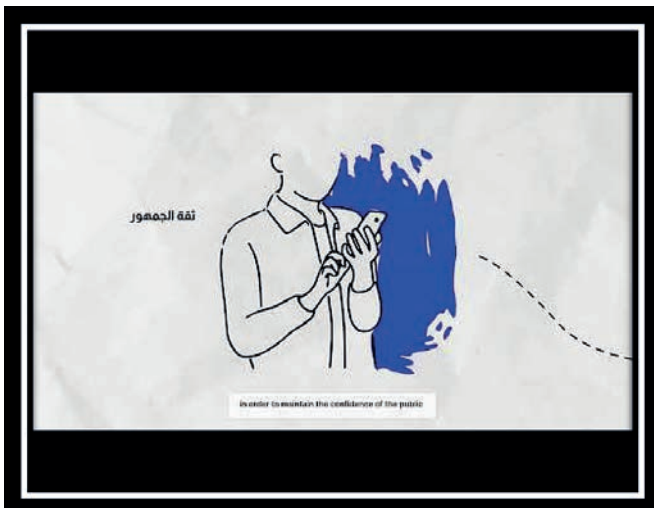
3rd cohort (2023)

- The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International – LBCI
- Al-Modon Online Newspaper
- The Lebanese Centre for Human Rights
- Maharat Foundation
- Transparency International
- Lebanon Chapter
- Lebanese television network, OTV.

The last group decided to also continue in the spirit of dialogue among media institutions in Lebanon through regular meetings and visits. Their project was to lobby for a joint code of conduct among a bigger coalition and to draft a ToR towards implementing a complaint mechanism aspect in these organisations. This idea was not welcomed across the board by all media owners in Lebanon, many of whom think the discussion process MSR is still at the beginning and such a purportedly premature process should come organically once they are all ready to implement it. However, the participants all agreed that since they feel the threat of the shrinking public space, more meetings should be organised and that finding ways to protect journalists should always be on their agenda.

ITP change initiatives

The debate on formalising the media system, which had never been archived previously, was new for all the teams and the institutions. The process of creating a transparent governing system and sharing a code of conduct with the public had never been discussed before. The three ITP cohorts' mission and vision was respectively, and ultimately collectively, to draft policies and codes of conduct in a Lebanese context and to create a coalition of organisations working together on MSR guidelines based on accountability to cover the news while promoting freedom of expression and press independence on one hand, and to give a way for the public to follow up on any mistakes or misrepresentation by journalists on the other, thus facilitating discussion and trust while fostering democracy.

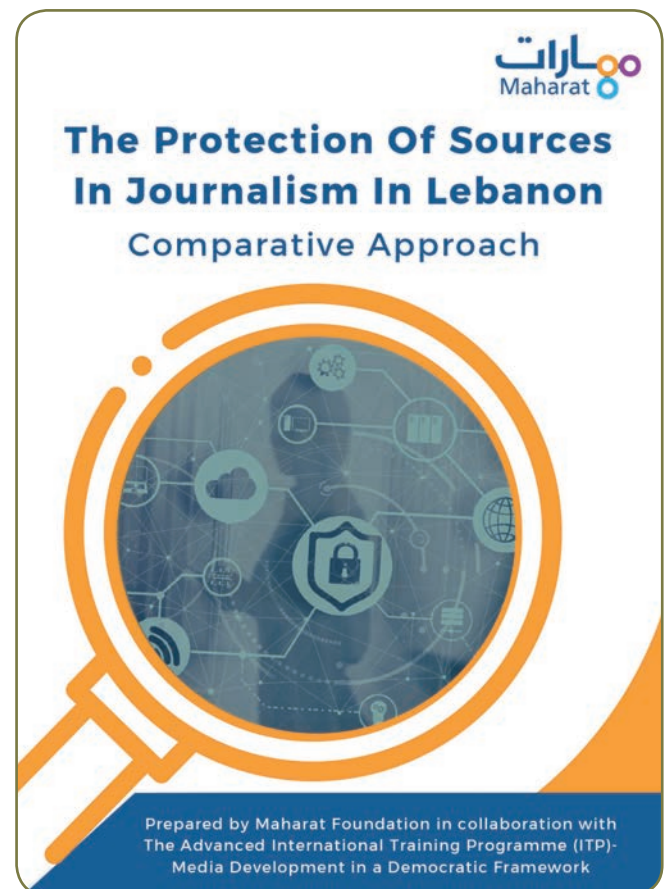


Video explaining MSR and what it means in the Lebanese context by Seeds for Legal Initiatives

Key outcomes included the following: The first ITP cohort project is a case study. The team was able to not only face the challenges of the economic collapse and COVID-19, but also to establish a discussion around MSR on the institutional level and among colleagues. This was possible through the creation of an educational video, designed, created, and funded by Seeds for Legal Initiatives. This was followed by a mapping of the existing international laws and principles in the field of source protection worldwide and in Lebanon. This study followed a comparative approach, highlighting case studies in comparing the principles in France, Denmark, the United

Kingdom, Sweden and the US. The first draft of the study was reviewed and commented on by the Thematic Mentor (TM) of the ITP programme Joan Barata and the regional TM Rana Saghie.

In coordination with the NF, Maharat Foundation published the study titled "The Protection of Sources in Journalism in Lebanon" which is expected to be debated in an upcoming public panel discussion and sent to Parliament for review. Meanwhile, LBCI worked on a source protection policy which was drafted and shared with the entire staff at LBCI. The policy was openly discussed and followed by a training for the journalists on the importance of source protection, that the new draft law in Lebanon does not include any kind of protection in this regard. These three steps characterised the beginning of a change in the Lebanese media system by the beginning of the year 2022 and created an experience and a bridge which helped Cohort 2 to realise their change project.



The Protection of Sources in Journalism in Lebanon by Maharat Foundation in collaboration with the ITP Lebanon Program



Case studies

Two media outlet in Lebanon - the Lebanese Broadcasting Service and Al-Modon Media signed an MOU where by both parties have agreed to adhere to a joint code of conduct on media work and process for cooperation on implementation of this agreement.

Why it is significant: this is the first agreement between media outlets in Lebanon on a joint code of conduct, and a first step to cooperate and collaborate on protecting media ethical codes. LBC is the most-watched TV station in Lebanon, and Al-Modon is one of most influential online audio-visual outlets. This community of practice has the potential to include other media outlets. Other Lebanese media outlets including MTV and Al Akhbar have expressed to the ITP team that they are interested in cooperating with these two outlets, and both LBC and Al Modon welcomed this interest. This is a change of behaviour that has the potential to significantly affect the landscape of media self-regulation in Lebanon.

How: both LBC and Al-Modon sent two of their influential employees to take part in the ITP programme. Both employees participated in all of the activities of the programme and managed to convince their respective leadership about the need to sign this MOU. The MOU also paved the way for a joint ombudsman for these media outlets. The concept of a media ombudsman has also been welcomed by MTV.

Based on the success of the first cohort, the 2nd cohort had two objectives: an internal one, which includes policies and regulations in a code of conduct format within the respective institutions, and an external one, which is characterised by transparency and series of meetings with other colleagues and heads of sections in different media outlets. During these meetings, like-minded organisations were encouraged to start cooperating on creating media content, covering certain cases, or supporting each other as a network. This type of dialogue led to a ground-breaking, some might say historical, achievement, i.e. a draft series of regulations and policies shared between LBCI and Al Modon. This achievement was characterised by this written MoU and the first code of conduct created by two Lebanese media outlets and founded on the concept of MSR, transparency, independence and their own needs and not copied from the western culture. Building on the experience of Cohort 1, and based on the practical work of Cohort 2, Cohort 3 is now further developing the institutional approach to lay a solid

foundation for MSR in Lebanon going forward after the completion of the three-year project.

These case studies were chosen to reflect a value driven approach to content and following an evidence-based understanding of project realisation. The ITP programme provided a hub, a shared place for journalists and civil society activists to meet and work together on projects that can improve and protect professionals. These projects were totally self-funded from each organisation despite the economic situation.



Lessons learned

Dialogue: Journalists, civil society members and relevant stakeholders had the chance to be involved in a journey and process seeking development, change and application of values and ethics. This process was never linear or based on simple tasks. It was a self-discovery process, full of dynamics, adaptabilities and problem-solving skills. It proved to be a real learning curve during this journey for everyone who completed it. ITP provided the space to meet, engage and dream of a better media system in Lebanon while staying aware of the unique structural challenges and the severe obstacles in the crisis-ridden Lebanese context.

Networking: The ITP also provided an unprecedented Arab collaboration in media. Outside this programme, journalists and relevant stakeholders would rarely meet, and if they do so it would be during conferences. Every team has now an understanding of the media system in each country. Having a strong team from the Arab world is such a significant matter that can help not only in sharing lessons but on the sustainability level to promote values, transparency and accountability. Together, each team can advocate for social issues. Journalists are now linked to a bigger network of influence; they are better informed about each other's countries while working on values like truth and justice. The best way to move forward is to work on collaborative stories, share solidarity with each other and keep the alumni active by meeting once a year to discuss and apply perspectives of MSR and keep updated on changes happening in the media sphere worldwide.

It is important to mention that this programme taught us the following:

- Media professionals working together, whether in a formal setting like in a union or informally in a press club, can have a strong influence on the media system in their countries.



- Change can happen through media discourse, and it can promote solidarity in each country.
- The complaint mechanisms in practice is hard to accept for media professionals. This approach needs more time to start being implemented or approached in Lebanon.
- Change is a long process, and to ultimately reach real MSR one needs self-purification, reflecting on motives and personal goals, a process common in change projects throughout their history.
- The media experience in Lebanon is not archived properly and there is a need to work on this legacy in Lebanon.
- Building the institutional approach, capacity and perceptiveness is key to success with policies, regulations and rules and the necessity to follow up on these regulations and update them.



Sustainability of the project

In conclusion, the overall goals of the MSR ITP MENA project have been achieved in principle and largely in practical application. The three cohorts, after having established a strong working relationship, are now looking forward to next steps in the implementation process.

The institutional approach, bringing in not only individual journalists and media activists but also key media outlets, has laid the foundation for future collaboration with legacy media including print, broadcast, and online media outlets in the coming years. The change process, including personal change on the part of the participants, also proved to be a vital part of the mix in providing for sustainable commitment in Lebanon.

This is the case despite the ongoing economic and political crises, now made more acute by the regional conflict in neighbouring countries.

The MSR now stands on its own feet in Lebanon but would profit from future support from international partners to help it cope with the systemic challenges in the region.

5.2 Palestine



National Facilitator
Nibal Thawabteh



Reporting Period

From 2021 to 2023.

ITP Organisations for the year 2021- 2022

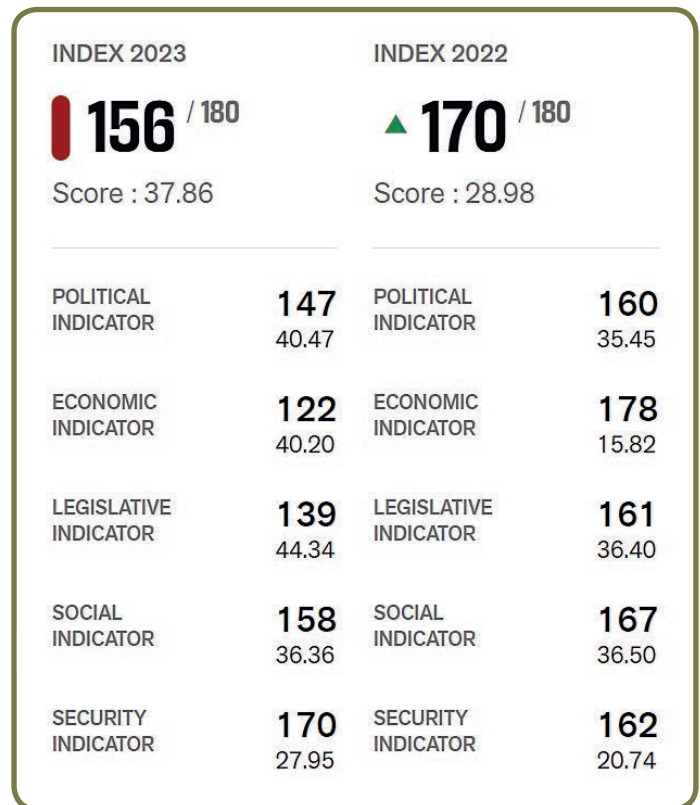
1. Birzeit University, the media development centre
2. The press syndicate,
3. Maan News agency,
4. The independent commission for human rights
5. The Palestinian Institute for communication and development in Gaza
6. The legal advisor Linda Safarini
7. The journalist Naela Khalil

ITP Organisations for the year 2022-2023

1. Palestinian Journalists Syndicate
2. Independent Commission for Human Rights
3. Media Center at Birzeit University
4. Public Authority for Radio and Television
5. The Palestinian Observatory for Verification and Media Education (Kashef)
6. Department of Digital Media at Al-Quds University
7. Fourth Radio
8. Dooz for community media

Background/ Context

In Palestine, the turbulent political and security situation, lack of proper regulatory framework for freedom of expression, lack of media self-regulation and economic difficulties facing media institutions are among the most prominent obstacles for their professional and administrative development and reform. However, the media sector is diverse, has a great potential for development and human capital that can fulfil the right to freedom of expression and access to information.



Media Regulation

Article 19 of the Palestinian Basic Law guarantees freedom of expression and opinion. However, there are many laws in force in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip that restrict freedom of expression and opinion, such as the Press and Publications Law, which allows for sanctions on journalists, including imprisonment. The Palestinian Press and Publications Law includes a clear guarantee of journalists' right to protect their sources. Nonetheless, many journalists have been pressured to reveal them.

There is no enforceable law on the right to information. A draft law was developed in 2005, but it has been put on hold because of the halt of the Palestinian Legislative Council since 2007 due to the political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Contrary to international standards, there is currently no independent system for regulating broadcasting in Palestine. The authority to grant TV and radio licenses is entrusted to governmental bodies. There have been attempts to establish a media council, but they were hampered by the above political and regulatory stagnation.

The Palestinian Journalist Syndicate is established by law as a syndicate for journalists and does not represent all media professionals in Palestine, nor does it represent media outlets.

Additionally, the print media is affected by government interference in the definition and application of rules of practice through statutory regulations. The Palestinian Press and Publications Law provides mandatory guidelines on editorial policy for the press and professional lapses are criminalised, contrary to international standards.

Media self-regulation

Palestinian media does not have an established media self-regulation or co-regulation systems to manage adherence to a code of conduct(s) or a self-regulation system. Despite several civil society-led initiatives for the last two decades to develop codes of conducts for media outlet, these were not adopted by the editorial boards of media outlets. Questions of adherence to professional ethics principles are handled at the level of the individual media outlets, which overall do not demonstrate a strong culture of self-regulation, or by the Palestinian Journalist Syndicate in the case of individual members.

There is no clear or elaborated policy promoting a diverse mix of private, public and community media. Both public service broadcasting and community media are largely absent from the country's media landscape. Public media is favoured in terms of access to information. There is however a small presence of publications and radio stations that cater to the needs of marginalised groups. There are a growing number of private media outlets; especially, online in all governorates, which provide diverse focus, such as on education, health, and social issues. However, media content in Palestine appears to be characterised by an overemphasis on political power issues.

In the West Bank and Gaza, journalists are the victims of press freedom violations by both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli occupation forces. In 2022, two female journalists were killed by Israeli law enforcement, including *Al Jazeera* reporter Shireen Abu Akleh. Since 1 January 2023, nine Palestinian journalists were killed and two were detained, and the number is on a sharp rise due to the current war on Gaza in October 2023.⁴³

ITP change initiatives

The formation of the Palestinian team is in itself a success story and the achievement of one of the most important goals of work in the media professional sector, specifically self-regulation, for the following reasons:

- *The formation of the team included participants from the West Bank and Gaza, despite the political division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Having them working together in a safe space is a major achievement.*
- *The team included representative of high-level senior figures with diverse and opposing views. The team consisted of representatives of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and included media professionals who have opposing political views. The ITP project provided them with a safe space to work as peers to overcome difficult challenges, exchange views and opinions, and hear one another, and to work on a joint project. The team continues to be highly cooperative compared to when the project started, and they continue to work together as a nucleus for more future cooperation.*

The ITP programme has accomplished the following significant changes:

- *Formed groups of Palestinian journalists and improved their expertise and ignited their interest in media self-regulation; a memo of understanding is signed between key stakeholders.*

" One media professor in the second ITP in Palestine shared during a webinar that he learned about self-organisation for the first time in this project."

Member of the ITP Palestine

- *Established two projects on self-regulation in Palestine in collaboration with 12 of the strongest Palestinian media institutions, which marks a strong beginning for self-regulation in Palestine.*
- *As a result of the project, occupied Palestine already has one ombudsperson established in one of the biggest media outlets in Palestine;*

⁴³ <https://rsf.org/en/country/palestine>

and another media ombudsman is being established (inspired by the Swedish model) representing 31 media outlets in Southern West Bank.

- Media self-regulation in being taught in three universities as elective course for Media students. Currently, work is underway to include media self-regulation as part of a mandatory course for media students at the national level, spearheaded by one of the members of Cohort 2.
- Developed a memorandum of understanding that urges the government to encourage and support the development of a media environment that incorporates self-regulation.

Cohort 1. The First Change Project Initiative in Palestine:

As mentioned above, the concept of media self-regulation was not widely known among media stakeholders, even though Birzeit University had been carrying out some studies to inform about the importance of this concept and the need to establish a media council in Palestine. Therefore, Cohort 1 decided to work on demystifying the concept, raising awareness on the main approaches of this concept as a mean to stimulate more debate and cooperation on kick starting media self-regulation in Palestine. The chaos created by new media and digital media has been seen as an opportunity to kickstart this debate among media stakeholders.



Cohort 1 project was called: Self-regulation of the Palestinian media sector, rights, freedoms, and digital media chaos.

The most significant accomplishments of Cohort 1 are:

1. Signed a memorandum of understanding by all the participating organisations to work together on the media self-regulation all in their own organisations;



Presentation of the Change Project

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1md3q0flmwrw-3ji5tvuqaxm5jb-5wyr/r/view?Usp=gmail>

2. Organised a community workshop to launch the Change Project Initiative in Palestine, titled "Self-organisation Palestinian media, rights and freedoms, and media chaos" in July 2022 at Birzeit University;
3. Produced an infographic video and published it locally and on social networks;
4. Organised a TV talk show about the ITP MENA, with the participation of the ITP teams and NFs in Lebanon, Tunisia, and Palestine. See the episode here [\(2\) Video | Facebook](#);
5. Produced a specialised radio episode in partnership with Voice of the People in Gaza to shed light on media self-regulation and the work the ITP MENA is doing, its objectives, and outputs. The link to the episode is here [Episode on Media Self-Regulation in Gaza](#);
6. Published and shared the announcement about the ITP MENA project, helped in forming the Cohort 2 and encouraged participation.

Cohort 2. The second Change Project Initiative in Palestine

Cohort 2 decided to carry the baton from Cohort 1 and continue working on two paths, the first is to continue raising awareness and gaining more supporters for media self-regulation and at the same time applying what they have learned in their organisations.

آخر الأخبار



ما هو التنظيم الذاتي؟



صور، جانب من فعاليات برنامج الزمالة الدولي في المملكة المغربية



جانب من فعاليات برنامج الزمالة في ستوكهولم خلال يناير 2023

منتدى فلسطين للتنظيم الذاتي للإعلام



أخبارنا من نحن | مرحبوا الص يا

حساب جديد

الاسم

بريد إلكتروني

كلمة المرور (6 أحرف على الأقل)

تأكيد كلمة المرور

Log in

مؤسسة وادعوى الرابطة للمؤسسات وكونغرسو المعلومات
Azzam TTP

To raise more awareness, Cohort 2 decided to establish an online platform called the Palestine Forum for Media Self-Regulation (PFMSR). An inclusive platform for media self-regulation in Palestine that became a reference with comprehensive information on media self-regulation, and an essential step towards developing a correct understanding of media self-regulation in Palestine. The main objective of keeping it online is to ensure that it keeps pace with the changes and developments that are constantly taking place in the nature of the work of the media and the challenges facing media professionals.

Further the platform contains information on:

- Encouraging media professional to adhere to the highest standards of joint media work ethics and conviction of media professionals and those in charge of the media of the importance of organising media work.
- Contribute to reducing professional and ethical errors during the practice of media work.
- The platform contains opinion articles and specialised studies and introduces Arab and international experiences in the field of media self-regulation, media ethics, media laws in Palestine, and studies and reports.
- The platform is hosted by Kashif one of the media organisations specialised in fact checking for media outlets, and media ethical system, in collaboration with the Media Development Center at Birzeit University.

In addition to the platform, the participants of Cohort 2 have developed a joint statement, signed by the participating organisations of Cohorts 1 and 2, that will be used to advocate for adherence to elements of media self-regulation, including codes of ethics, cooperation and collaboration, and urging the government to provide the enabling environment for media self-regulation including the legal framework that does not hamper these efforts rather encourage media self-regulation. It also calls for political and economic support to media outlets and demanding the inclusion of media self-regulation in Palestinian legislation and collecting the signatures and support of the journalistic community for this document, which is considered the first of its kind in Palestine. See Annex 1 for the translation of this statement.

The Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists pledged during the closing ceremony of Cohort 2 to take this policy statement further, and to:

- *Invite more media outlets to meetings that will take place at the Syndicate and rotate in different governorates to further discuss how to continue bolstering media self-regulation;*
- *Engage in policy dialogue with the Palestinian authorities on any laws regulating media, freedom of expression, and access to information in Gaza and the West Bank.*

Ma'an has started receiving complaints and using the redress procedures, including publishing the results of media ombudspersons reports, and correcting content.

ITP Contribution to this case study: Mr. Raed Othman, the Editor in Chief of Ma'an Agency, was one of the participants of Cohort 1 of ITP MENA, in occupied Palestine. He took part in all of the activities of the programme, starting from the online course to all webinars and seminars that the ITP project had, including the regional meeting in Tunis, and trips to Denmark and Sweden. He attended the meetings the programme had in Denmark with the Danish Radio, and the Danish newspaper Politiken. He mentioned that both meetings inspired his decision, particularly how ombudsperson has provided the legitimacy and accountability towards their audience.



Case studies

First Case study: In Sep 2023, Ma'an Agency, announced the establishment their first internal ombudsperson, and announced on its website a complaints mechanism and procedures for complaints on the contents of the Agency that is transparent, yet protects privacy of the complainant.

Why it is important? Ma'an is considered one of the most important - if not the most important Palestinian news media. With the creation of the Ombudsperson Unit and position, it is also the first ever Palestinian media to create such post based on best practices and international standards. Ma'an has also a network of media outlets across all the West Bank that will follow suit and cooperate with Ma'an to test and adapt the procedures to the Palestinian context.

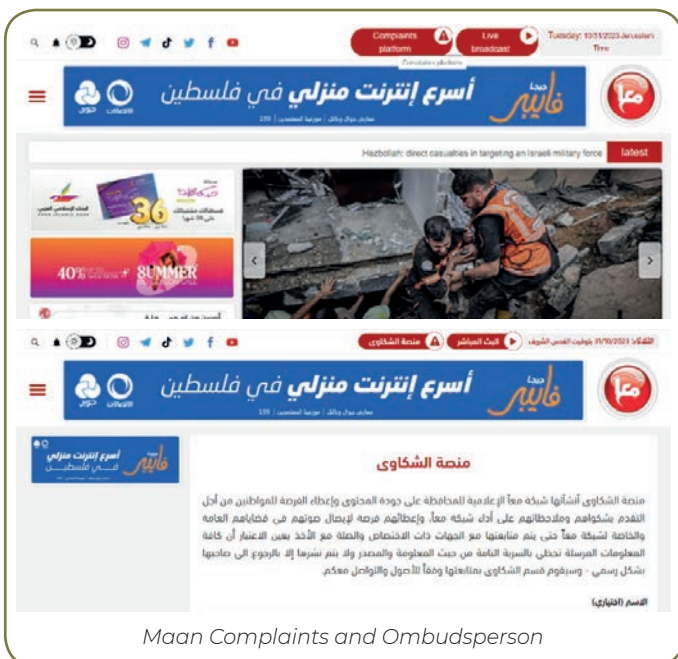
"When we started discussing the establishment of the Ombudsman Unit in Ma'an and announcing it, I was saying to myself, OK, we will establish it and I will receive whatever it takes, but I will sit without doing any work, because no one will submit any complaint or comment. However, I was surprised that the day after the announcement of the unit, letters and complaints began arriving one after another, to the point that I became completely busy following them up and trying to provide the correct information and advice".

**Mr. Bassam Khader,
Ma'an new Ombudsperson**

It is worth mentioning that this is an unexpected result of the programme, especially that this result happened one year after Cohort 1, of which Mr. Othman was a member had officially finished their work.

Second Case Study: In June 2023, a new NGO called Association for Radio and Television presented its registration documents to the Palestinian Ministry of Interior to register this NGO representing 31 media outlets working in Hebron and Bethlehem areas in Southern occupied Palestine. The NGO aims to protect the interests of these media outlets, manage collaboration and cooperation, represent the interests of its members and manage adherence to a code of ethics to protect and promote media.

Why it is important. This is the first ever formal cooperation between media outlets in Palestine, which paves the way for the establishment of their first ever formal (nonofficial) media self-regulation structure in Palestine.



Maan Complaints and Ombudsperson

There are plans to establish complaints mechanisms and a media ombudsperson like in the Swedish model.

What is the ITP contribution to this result. Mr. Reyad Khamis is the driving force behind this initiative; he is one of the members of Cohort 2 of ITP Media in Palestine who has taken part in all the activities of the programme, including webinars, seminar, the trip to Sweden and the regional meetings in Morocco. He attended meetings in Sweden with the Media Ombudsman, the Publisher Club and other media formal and informal coordination structures.



Bonus results related to ITP

Mr. Majeed Sawalha, member of Cohort 1, representing the Palestinian Commission for Human Rights, is also a teacher of media in Khadoorie and Jenin universities in Palestine. He has used the ITPs online course material to provide elective courses on media self-regulation at these two universities. He developed the course outline and material using the ITPs material.

Mr. Thaer Nasser, member of Cohort 2, is a media professor at Al Quds University and has also created an elective course for his students on media self-regulation using the material of the ITP programme. He is also a member of the Palestinian Curriculum Development at the national level that sets the education curricula for all universities, and he is now working on introducing a chapter on media self-regulation to one of the obligatory courses for media students.



Lessons learned

The safe meeting space that the ITP programme has provided for Palestinians to meet without a predetermined agenda, is a very effective approach to bring together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and interests. By taking them out of their normal working environment, they were able to wisely spend valuable time to discuss common problems and find creative solutions. Therefore, we believe that the formation of the Palestinian team is a success story and the achievement of one of the most important goals of work in the media professional sector.

Working at the regional level with countries that are more advanced in terms of media self-regulation has helped the Palestinian cohorts to be exposed to how other Arab countries have developed the media sector. Working at the regional level was not only an in-

centive for the participants but it is a key learning tool. Arab countries have so much in common, and it is easier to find synergies and be inspired and inspire one another. There have been many joint works between all the four countries.

The networks that have been established have all necessary conditions they need to thrive and sustain themselves beyond the programme. Many participants considered the closing ceremony as the real start of the work, not the closure of our work.



Sustainability of the project

Continuing to communicate on WhatsApp is an important tool for continued cooperation at the regional and local levels. We see signs that all three cohorts continue to share important documents, inspire one another, and also cooperate in activities using WhatsApp as mean. They also continue asking one another for interviews or be experts at the media productions. There are a number of these examples of working together.

Sustainability lies in the Palestine Forum for Media Self-Regulation (PFMSR) Sustainability through Platform Action. Kashif and Birziet University should be able to continue to populate the platform with information, manage content and inspire new users for the platform to achieve its main objective as an inclusive platform for media self-regulation in Palestine. The Independent Commission for Human Rights will provide the platform with relevant research, studies, and reports.

The ombudspersons at Ma'an and at the NGO for 31 media outlets already have the needed structures to sustain the work at the institutional levels.

1. The Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists will continue hosting meetings for the two cohorts, a step in the right direction to engagement of media outlets in their services.
2. WhatsApp groups will be maintained, and as mentioned above they are actively exchanging studies, tools, success stories, and requesting expert advice. There have been numerous cases of joint work and collaboration at the region and local levels.
3. All participants have pledged to use the Media Self-Regulation Online Course developed by the NFs from Palestine, Tunisia, and Lebanon in their organisation to train their staff. One of the authors of this course is the NF for Palestine, and she is a member of the ethical committee of the Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists.

5.3 Morocco



**National Facilitator
Karima Rhanem**



Reporting Period

From 2021 to 2023.

Cohort 1

Consists of 7 participants (5 women and 2 men) including journalists, media consultants and experts in communication as well as NGO's members.

Cohort 2

Consists of 6 participants (5 men and 1 woman) including 1 ombudsperson of the Morocco broadcasting Company, 1 Journalist, documentary production specialist at Medi 1 TV channel, 1 Executive Manager of the Moroccan Institute of Policy Analysis, 2 university assistant professors, and 1 Journalist at Ouad Adhoun Media

Cohort 3

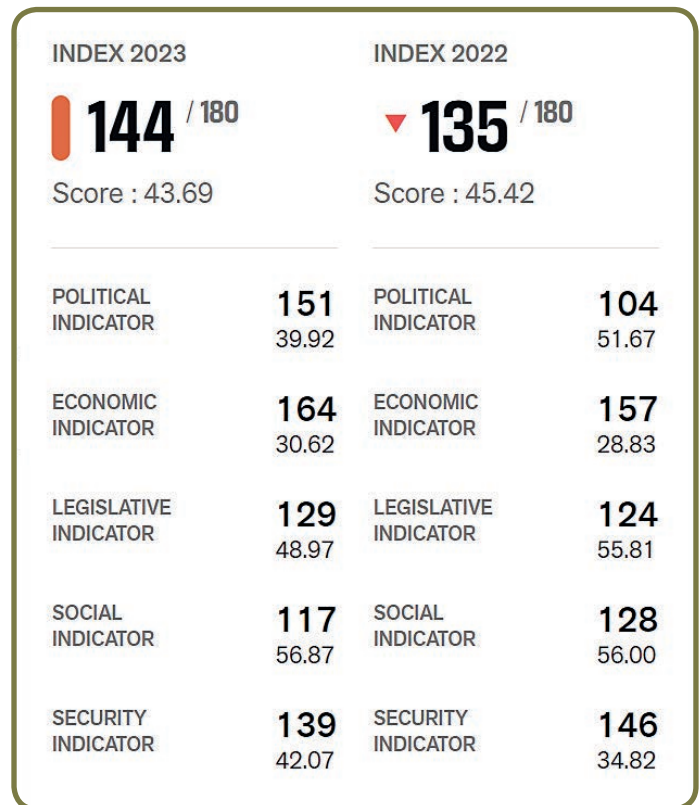
Consists of 5 participants (3 men and 2 women) including 1 journalist from Al Youm24, 1 journalist from Al Ayam weekly, 1 from Group Le Matin, 1 from SNRT Radio, and 1 Director of Publication of Chamal Post.

Background/ Context

Morocco has a complex media regulation landscape that includes both regulatory and self-regulatory frameworks. The country's Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press, but there are also laws in place that restrict certain types of content.

Morocco has adopted the 2016 Press and Publication Code, which is based on the 2011 Constitution, in particular the provisions of Chapter 25, which guarantees freedom of thought, opinion and expression, and the provisions of Chapter 28, which guarantees freedom of the press and the right of expression, and to disseminate news, ideas and opinions freely and without restriction, except as expressly provided for by law.

This code is considered a significant gain and an important achievement for media outlets and journalists in terms of providing better guarantees for the practice of journalism and promoting it to the level of



"self-regulation". This code includes three laws: 1) the press and publication law, 2) the law relating to the status of professional journalists and 3) and the law establishing the National Press Council.

The main regulatory body for the media in Morocco is the High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HACA), which was established in 2002. HACA is responsible for regulating all audio-visual media, including television and radio stations, as well as online media outlets. HACA issues licences to media outlets and monitors their compliance with regulations related to content, advertising, and ownership. It has also the power to impose fines or suspend licences for violations.

In addition to HACA, there are other government bodies that regulate specific aspects of the media. For example, the Ministry of Communication is responsible for regulating print, electronic and international media, while the National Agency for Telecommunications Regulation (ANRT) oversees telecommunications services.

Morocco also has a self-regulatory framework in place through the Moroccan Press Council (CPM). Created

in 2028, the CPM is an independent body made up of journalists and media professionals who are responsible for promoting ethical standards in journalism and resolving disputes between journalists and media outlets. The CPM provides press cards to national journalists and the Ministry of Communication to foreign press and correspondents. Overall, while

Morocco has made progress in recent years towards greater press freedom and openness, there are still concerns about government censorship and restrictions on certain types of content. According to the Reporters Without Borders index, Morocco assumes 144th place in 2023 related to freedom of press and access to information.

ITP change initiatives

Inspired by the Swedish and Danish experience, participants in ITP MENA 1,2,3 launched several initiatives on media self-regulations and ethics:

Cohort 1 has worked on media self-regulation and gender and launched an online course for the participants and other journalists due to the restrictions of COVID-19. They have signed a memorandum that guides their advocacy work on media ethics and for the fight against fake news called “For a media product protecting the dignity of citizens”. The memorandum was sent to the head of the government, head of Parliament and the Minister of Youth, Culture, and Communication. However, the initiative was limited to agreement to abide the principles set into their memorandum.

Cohort 2 launched a capacity building programme on media self-regulation and ethics, and published a guide for students, and is working on the institutionalisation of the self-regulation course on the curriculum in partnership with two media schools.

What. In June 2022, a **masterclass** to promote media self-regulation among students in two universities was carried out. Thanks to their capacity building programme in two higher education media institutions, 30 journalists and student journalists have been made aware about media regulation and media ethics code in Morocco. See the masterclass here. [ISJMA Beni mellal - إيري ص ب ل ا ي ع م س ل ا ن ه م و ة ف ا ح ص ل ا ي ف ص ص خ ت م ل ا د ه ع م ل ا - Posts | Facebook](#)

The group has produced a practical guide for student journalists on media self-regulation and is working on the institutionalisation of the course at the university level. Youness Meskine, journalist, media professor and ITP participant, has developed and published a *Manual of Media Ethics*

in the Digital World on Al Jazeera Publications, covering media self-regulation and ethics.

The group created a media self-regulation think-tank group among the six participating institutions to debate the evolution of media regulation in Morocco. The group is also working on an advocacy memorandum to be shared with stakeholders in the media landscape including the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Communication to ensure support is given to publish and share this guide to students and professionals and create synergies with other tools.

Due to issues related to COVID-19 and a severe accident of one of the team members as well as the ambiguity surrounding the National Press Council, the team couldn't continue their advocacy. However, they have prepared a strategy for resources mobilisations for the training curriculum they had developed. They also established a target list of institutions and universities for a future partnership to implement this programme.

Aware of the importance of regional partnerships, Cohort 2 have already entered discussion with other groups from Palestine, Lebanon, and Tunisia to establish a network to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned and are seeking strategic partnerships among the different media institutions in the MENA region, particularly in the participating countries.

Cohorts 3 has worked on a diagnosis of the situation of self-regulation in Morocco (in particular the feasibility of creating the ombudsman in media institutions), developed a memorandum including proposals of change in the functions and structure of the National Press Council and created an ombudsman for the northern electronic press in Morocco which is similar to the media ombudsman in Sweden; 22 media outlets in the Tangier area have already one ombudsman. Work is still in progress in developing similar constellations in two other governorates in Morocco.



Case studies

Creation of a regional Media Ombudsman in the north of Morocco

What has happened? On the 14th of June 2023, a conference was held at the Governorate Hall of Tangier in Morocco to announce the establishment of the first ever Media Ombudsperson in Morocco for 39 media outlets in this northern governorate. A MOU was also signed by these outlets that included procedures for the work of the ombudsperson, and a joint code of ethics was agreed to, upon which the 39 outlets agreed to raise the quality standards of their work.

Why it is significant? This is the first ever media ombudsperson in Morocco that is representing more than one outlet. It is a clear indicator of the interest of these 39 media outlets to work together to improve media quality and content, respect media ethics and set an accountability mechanism towards their audience. It is major step in the right direction. It also sets an example for other governorates that they can create similar constellations; especially, at times when HACA is running through a transitional period that affected its effectiveness to lead the co-regulations efforts. It also demonstrates that internal and external self-regulation can also coexist with co-regulation, and both do not contradict one another.

How did the ITP Contribute to this? Cohort 3 of ITP Media believed after going through all the activities of ITP Media in the MENA region, and inspired by the Swedish model, that creating an ombudsperson in media outlets is a must to improve media self-regulation. In this context, the Cohort realised that there is a need to diagnose and analyse the media landscape in relations to the establishment of a media Ombudsman within the Moroccan media institutions as a first step to launching a national debate of an official media ombudsman. Through this diagnosis, the participants were able to identify the most important problem facing the issue of self-regulation, and thus updating the vision and the direction of their change project that would contribute even in a small way to pushing forward the creation of a media Ombudsman in different media institutions other than the state media ones. In this regard, participants have shifted their objectives to focus on conducting a study on media self-regulation with a focus on the media Ombudsman and preparing a criterion for media institutions to establish an Ombudsman in their institutions.

One of the most influential figures for achieving this breakthrough in the northern governorate is one of participants of Cohort 3, the director of the publication Chamal Post, Mohamed Said Soussi. He guided the cohort work to create a network composed of 39 local and regional media institutions, which agreed to hold a regional meeting in May 2023 on media-self regulation in Morocco. This meeting resulted in creating for the first time a regional media Ombudsman in the northern region of Morocco. This experience contributed to unifying the understanding of media institutions in the north of Morocco of media self-regulation and of the importance of respecting media ethics. This also highlights the role of the ombudsman in mediation between the media and the public.

This is only the beginning, and there is still a long way of achieving the main purpose of creating sustainable media self-regulation as an external and formal manner. There is still a need for capacity building of the 39 institutions in additions to the ombudsman himself and in terms of learning from international experiences to enable the effective creation of the ombudsman in all these institutions in the future.

Despite technical and logistical challenges this new experience is facing, the cohort is still working together even after the end of the ITP project to increase communication among the journalists to improve the organisational structure of the network and improve the capacity of the Ombudsman through the organisation of periodic roundtables to discuss the evolution of the experience and to seek opportunities for exchange with other journalists from other regions and countries.



The team thinks it is important to promote awareness of the media ombudsman among readers, viewers, or listeners so that they know where to go if they have concerns about content produced by the media institution. They also think that guidelines should be developed that outline how complaints will be handled and what actions will be taken by the ombudsman. They also reiterate the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of the media ombudsman over time and adjust as needed to ensure that it continues to serve its intended purpose.

Creating a media ombudsman in small media institutions in Morocco can be a valuable step towards promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical journalism.

Currently, there are only three internal Ombudsman in two public TV's and the Official Press Agency

Ombudsman of MAP News Agency

<https://www.map.ma/Statut-du-mediateur-de-l-agence>

Ombudsman of SNRT

http://www.snrt.ma/mediateur_role.php?lang=fr

Ombudsman 2M TV

https://www.facebook.com/mediateur2m/?locale=fr_FR



- Increased awareness of human rights, gender equality and security for journalists and other media actors.
- Increased knowledge and capacity to initiate structured, long-term transformational work within and outside their respective organisations.
- They have also learned how to build a functional team and how to develop a change project to implement back home.
- They have increased their technical capacity on media and gender, artificial intelligence and the work of journalists, the role of the ombudsman and the justice framework related to the press.



Key changes thanks to the ITP

At the end of the training programme all Moroccan cohorts who participated in the programme agreed in regional seminar in Morocco, the participating individuals and organisations have:

On the personal level.

- Increased knowledge about media and freedom of expression in relation to media policy, journalism, and self-regulation of the media sector and on participants' capacity was raised on the legal enabling environment of self-regulation.
- Extended professional national, regional and international networks in the MENA and in the World that would not have happened with the ITP programme. They have been able to exchange best practices and lessons learned from their colleagues from Palestine, Tunisia and Lebanon more specifically on self-regulation, freedom of press and press syndicates' role.

Outcomes of the Programme on the institutional level

- Participants shared with their peers and institutions the Swedish and Danish regulation, co-regulation, and self-regulation systems they have learned.
- Used the first-hand practical experience of media institutions in Sweden and were able to contextualise and adapt in their work and their own realities.
- The informal network of a regional network of journalists active in self-regulation, including all participants in this programme, with a focus on gender equality and the fight against fake news (Cohort 2 are currently working to make it a formal network in Morocco). The programme's meetings also enabled them to enhance their network and exchange experiences, best practices and lessons learned with their counterparts from Palestine, Lebanon, and Tunisia, in addition to sharing Morocco's experience in media regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation. All three cohorts are very active in the WhatsApp groups in Morocco and across with the other four countries.

- Started the reflection on the main criteria for a media institution to have an ombudsman and created a regional ombudsman for 39 media institutions in the north of Morocco (group3) that will be used to establish other ombudsperson in other regions.



Sustainability of the project

The brainstorming of the groups on Thursday, June 15th 2023 in Rabat concluded by strengthening the ways and mechanisms of continuing networking between the three groups since the beginning of the programme:

1. Forming a body (forum) that includes all participants in the three groups ITP1, 2, 3 and other institutions specialised in media, human rights, and legal work. This body could play a monitoring and research role, and bring together journalists who support self-regulation.
2. Investing these media educational materials and studies and re-editing them to suit new media platforms.
3. Searching for funding sources that support self-organisation activities and maintain its sustainability.
4. Organising a regular meeting that everyone commits to.
5. Forming a nucleus of the forum consisting of a specific number of people who are committed to giving time and effort to ensure the sustainability of work (Members of the forum provide TOT in self-regulation for cascading model).
6. Celebrating the World Day for Media Self-Regulation through the organising a unified live broadcast that discusses problems related to self-regulation of the countries participating in the Programme and ways to solve them.
7. Holding an annual conference in one of the countries to discuss self-regulation and the outputs and recommendations of groups.
8. A Twitter campaign on social media to advocate for the right to self-regulation using a unified hashtag.
9. Providing a regional dimension to the experience of self-regulation through cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists.
10. Exchanging visits and experiences among the participants through the organisation of seminars and training courses and the exchange of scientific materials via the Internet and the writing of training manuals on the topics of self-organisation.
11. Exchanging student through visits of media professionals between the participating institutions.



5.4 Tunisia



National Facilitator
Ammar Sofien



Reporting Period

From 2021 to 2023.

Background/ Context

Since the Arab Spring in 2011, the country has undergone significant political and social changes, transitioning from a repressive regime to a fragile democracy. This transition brought about fluctuations in media freedom, marked by instances of censorship and legal restrictions on journalism, reflecting the ongoing struggle to establish a stable democratic environment. Moreover, the rise of digital media and the proliferation of online misinformation and hate speech have posed new challenges to journalism's integrity and credibility. Media professionals have realised for decades that self-regulation is a crucial method for protecting media freedom and journalism in Tunisia for several reasons. Firstly, it allowed some journalists and media outlets to uphold high ethical standards and maintain credibility, fostering public trust in the media. Secondly, in a transitional democracy like Tunisia after the Arab Spring, self-regulation was envisioned to help to counteract government interference or undue influence, ensuring a more independent and robust press. Many who embarked on self-regulation in Tunisia have been empowered to hold themselves accountable and address issues such as accuracy, ethics, and professionalism internally, ultimately contributing to the overall quality of journalism.

Unlike other Arab countries, Tunisia has been able to make progress in implementing the concept of self-regulation within the Tunisian media.

On 3 May 2013, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, the High Independent Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HAICA) was officially announced. This constitutional body has regulatory and advisory powers. It continued for a while to work to promote the culture of regulation and pluralism, and to establish a new mode of governance of the audio-visual sector. According to Article 16, HAICA must

INDEX 2023

121 / 180

Score : 50.11

INDEX 2022

94 / 180

Score : 58.49

POLITICAL INDICATOR	74 58.13	POLITICAL INDICATOR	67 61.82
ECONOMIC INDICATOR	150 34.97	ECONOMIC INDICATOR	92 41.84
LEGISLATIVE INDICATOR	128 49.06	LEGISLATIVE INDICATOR	84 67.19
SOCIAL INDICATOR	127 53.79	SOCIAL INDICATOR	82 70.20
SECURITY INDICATOR	114 54.60	SECURITY INDICATOR	121 51.42

“decide on applications for licencing relating to the creation and operation of non-profit radio stations or non-profit television stations for the benefit of Tunisian associations created in accordance with existing legislation, and this by exception to the provisions of Article 2 of the Code of Commerce.” In addition, on 5 March 2014, HAICA published the specifications setting out the conditions for granting a licence to create and operate an association radio station on Tunisian territory.



Today HAICA faces many obstacles that hinder its functioning and threaten its sustainability. This has been exacerbated by the current void at the institution's highest levels due to a void in the highest leadership.

ITP change initiatives

The ITP MENA in Tunisia has worked with three cohorts of ITP representing key stakeholder of the media sector, including the Independent High Authority of Audio-visual Communication (HAICA), the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT), national TV, other most influential media outlets, non-for-profit media outlets and academia. In light of drastic change of the enabling environment for media, human rights and freedoms in general the three cohorts have adapted their work to the changing needs, opportunities and priorities of the country. In 2019 Tunisia was ranked 72nd by Reporters Without Borders. The great momentum carried out after what was called the Arab Spring has however made an unfortunate U turn due to the deterioration of the enabling environment for human rights. Cohort 1 started working when the momentum was still high and therefore they decided to work on the national policy level and internally to strengthen quality at all levels. By contrast cohorts 2 and 3 decided, due to the deterioration of the enabling environment, to work more internally to strengthen their governance and regulate their work while keeping close contact with national

organisations that continued their efforts to protect and promote media freedoms. Such organisations include the SNJT and HAICA. Tunisia's ranking continued to plummet to 94 in 2022 and then 121 in 2023.

Despite this backdrop, there is reason to believe that the networks, the work that has been done as detailed below at the local and regional levels has contributed to making the sector more resilient to this global and local notions of shrinking space for freedoms, especially freedom of speech and access to reliable information. Sustainability of this work are further discussed at the end of this report.

The change initiatives

ITP Cohort 1

The problem:

How can an effective system be established within media institutions to ensure the quality of content and the extent of its respect for professional principles and ethical charters, specifically through the Quality Department mechanism?

The most significant activities carried out are:

A conference in partnership with the Independent High Authority of Audio-visual Communication (HAICA) on March 16 and 17, 2022. Experts (national and international) participated in this activity. A roundtable was dedicated to the participants of the ITP programme to talk about



their experiences. Several national institutions participated in this activity, such as the Institute of Press and Information Sciences (IPSI), the Union of Tunisian Journalists, the Press Council and representatives of Tunisian media companies. The conference made it possible to objectively inform the participants about the situation of regulation and self-regulation at the national level and the development of experiences at the international level, and consequently to raise awareness among the participants on the importance of setting up regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms within their media outlets, with particular focus on Quality Assurance Units within media outlets.

Several Tunisian media and international organizations have published the event: see below.

<https://haica.tn/ar/16657/>

<https://youtu.be/JaS3jAYtWgI>

<https://youtu.be/HCMnoSf-xMo>

<https://urlz.fr/innX>

<https://www.coe.int/fr/web/freedom-expression/-/tunis-patrick-penninckx-intervient-au-colloque-de-la-haica-sue-le-journalisme-de-qualite>

<https://marcaboflan.com/>

<https://urlz.fr/innM>

A workshop was organised at the Institute of Press and Information Sciences on April 20. This activity targeted journalism students. The activity was completely organised by the students (invitation of speakers, communication, logistics, media coverage etc.). The goal of this activity was to raise awareness among students about the theme of regulation and self-regulation. Four speakers participated in this workshop: the president of the Tunisian Journalists Union, a member of the Press Council, a journalist from the Tunisian public television and a journalist from the Tunisian national radio. <https://cutt.ly/mGNgQt8>

There have been a number of similar activities on media self-regulation carried out by each member of the team at their work including SNJT on May 12 and 13 together with International Syndicate of Journalists, UNESCO, Higher Representative of Human Rights, Article 19, and Reporters Without Borders.

HAICA carried out another session on 3 and 4 of June 2022 on the situation of media regulation and self-regulation after COVID-19.



ITP Cohort 2

The problem:

Cohort 2 on the other had decided to work collectively on one project related gender equality. They have worked to address how to improve the quality of media content, particularly in the presence of women (quantitatively and qualitatively).

As part of the second group, there have been three main outputs.

Activity 1:

Developed an evaluation grid that made it possible for media outlets to monitor, document and analyse level and quality of women participation in audio-visual media programmes. This grid has been developed by the participants with support from local experts on gender equality. This grid is the first of its kind in the Arab world and has been shared with all participants in the ITP MENA. It is currently used by all the participants of Tunisia cohorts and endorsed by media outlets such as the Union of the Community Media that has 25 five local radio stations in Tunisia.

جذاعة لتقييم مدى احترام النوع الاجتماعي في المضامين الإعلامية

تقديم

تهدف هذه الجذاعة إلى تجميع المؤشرات الكمية والكيفية لتمكين الصحفيات والصحفيين والمؤسسات الإعلامية والهياكل التعديلية والمجتمع المدني من رصد مدى حضور المرأة ومشاركتها لمناقشة القضايا المطروحة في المضامين الإعلامية.

1- تقديم المادة الإعلامية

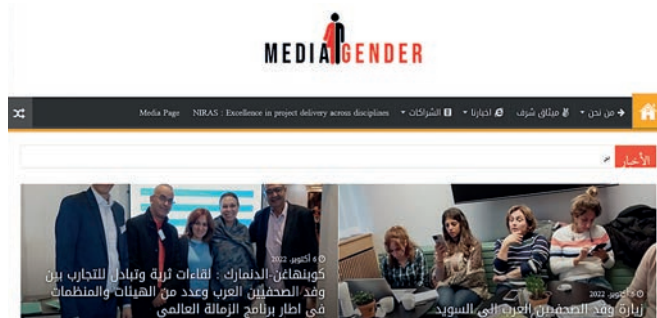
جدول رقم 1

المؤسسة الإعلامية	عنوان البرنامج	التاريخ	المدّة	التوقيت	نوع البرنامج وشكله

Activity 2:

A digital platform was designed by the members of the cohort group. This digital platform is entitled: Media Gender: <http://www.media-gender.com.tn/>

Its objective is to collect knowledge related to the gender approach and self-regulation. The grid has also been shared on this platform to ensure its widespread dissemination by participants of the ITP in the four MENA countries. Palestine has also developed a Palestinian platform to inform the media stakeholders about media self-regulation, and will include the link to the Tunisian platform.



Activity 3:

Using the grid and the platform, the participants also organised visits to some media companies to raise awareness of the concept of self-regulation among media actors and to promote the gender evaluation grid that has been developed and thus encourage journalists and producers to use it in their daily work. One of the main driving forces for this platform has become head of the Agence Tunis Afrique de Presse (TAP) and has institutionalised both the grid to analyses of their work.



ITP Cohort 3

The problem: Cohort 3 continued to work internally and focused on promoting the position of the ombudsman/mediator as a self-regulatory mechanism that will improve the quality of media content. It is important to note that according to HAICA, as also SNJT, each media outlet should have the role of ombudsperson, and should start. There is the institutional framework, but the mechanism of how to materialise this function has been challenging for many media outlets.

Activity 1: Organisation of a webinar by the alternative media AlQatiba in February 2023



The theme of the meeting was the importance of self-regulatory mechanisms, especially the role of the ombudsman in the independence of the media and the improvement of media content. Participants from Group 1 and Group 2 also participated in the webinar.

Activity 2: Design and production of a podcast to introduce the Ombudsmans role, and steps to introduce this function, and overcoming challenges.

This podcast was produced by the private radio station IFM and aimed to raise awareness and promote the position of ombudsman. The radio station has also committed to creating the position of ombudsman.

The duration of the podcast is 4 minutes and 40 seconds.

Activity 3: Design and production of a video to present the function of the Ombudsman

The purpose of the video is to introduce the Ombudsman's function. It was made in Arabic and lasts 2 minutes.

ing constructive discussions about the media's role in either perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes. It played a pivotal role in raising awareness and educating the public about media literacy and the importance of gender equality.

Case study 2

Activities were organised by the participants in the first group after the end of the programme. Both activities have not been scheduled. This shows the degree of awareness of the participants to the issue of self-regulation. During these activities, the participants also involved the participants of the second group. This initiative was carried out with the participation of many key actors in the Tunisian media landscape, such as HAICA and the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT).



Case studies

Case study 1



In a world where media plays a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions and narratives, the need for a platform addressing media and gender issues became increasingly apparent. As a result, Group 2 committed to developing a platform dedicated to highlighting gender issues within the media. This online platform serves as a central hub for educational resources, articles and discussions surrounding the portrayal of gender in the media. The primary challenge, however, was the lack of financial resources to fund the platform's development.

Fortunately, a member of Group 2 representing the "Journalists for Human Rights" (JHR) organisation successfully secured the necessary funding, allowing the platform to be developed as planned. The platform featured a rich array of content, including articles, pictures and educational resources covering topics such as gender representation in the media, media literacy and the influence of media on societal perceptions. This platform provided an invaluable space for foster-

Key changes thanks to the ITP

Raising awareness among participants on the topic of self-regulation.

For 3 years, the programme has allowed the dissemination and propagation of knowledge in the field of regulation and self-regulation. Webinars and programme visits further ensured that participants were more aware.

Although the issue of self-regulation has been addressed in Tunisia, especially after 2011, some media actors have not been sufficiently sensitised, and they do not have enough knowledge on this issue.

The programme also supported participants in the implementation of their projects and ideas for change.

National and regional networking. The programme facilitated networking among the various participants.



Many participants worked together for the first time at the national level. The programme has succeeded in bringing together actors from different media institutions and companies (public service media, commercial service and the voluntary sector as well as representative bodies such as HAICA and SNJT).

The programme also ensured networking between participants from different countries. This networking allowed for collaboration on several occasions between the different participants, especially in their journalistic work and during the coverage of events, such as the Palestinian crisis, the earthquake in Morocco, the events in Lebanon etc.

Innovative and creative thinking. The programme encouraged participants to adapt an innovative approach in analysing the situation of their media landscape, identifying problems and proposing solutions.

The various parties were able to overcome this challenge by setting up activities with almost non-existent financial means.



Bonus results related to ITP

Cohorts 1 and 2 are still working together - when someone is having an event on media self-regulation they invite other to workshop.

This collaboration has been seen even on a regional scale. For example, in October, the participant Chaker Besbes (Cohort 3) had a training in Libya and he asked the participant Thaer Nassar (from the Palestinian group) for an online intervention.

It is important to note that this type of collaboration is recurrent during the delivery of the programme.



Lessons learned

Through this programme, The three groups gained valuable insights and lessons on media self-regulation not only in Tunisia but in other countries in the MENA region and Sweden.

One of the key takeaways from the ITP was the importance of building a collaborative network of media professionals, regulators, and civil society advocates. Learning from the experiences of other countries and sharing best practices has been instrumental in enhancing our

understanding of self-regulation's intricacies. It was observed how successful self-regulatory bodies in various countries have managed to strike a balance between promoting media freedom and ensuring responsible journalism.

The ITP also emphasised the significance of public awareness and engagement in the self-regulation process. The group learned that involving the public in discussions about media ethics, accountability, and transparency is a powerful tool for building trust and support for self-regulation initiatives. This insight has encouraged them to develop outreach programmes and educational campaigns to connect with the audience and demonstrate the benefits of self-regulation.

Furthermore, the programme highlighted the need for adaptable and forward-thinking strategies in the face of evolving media landscapes. As the media environment in Tunisia continues to evolve with the digital era, the groups recognise the importance of staying agile and responsive to new challenges while upholding the core principles of self-regulation.

In conclusion, the International Training Programme on Media Self-Regulation has enriched their understanding of self-regulation and provided them with invaluable lessons on the path to strengthening media freedom and journalistic integrity in Tunisia.



Key steps to success



1. The involvement and commitment of the entire team is necessary for the success of the programme.
2. It is important to strengthen team spirit so that we can overcome various obstacles and challenges.
3. Have the time to build a culture of change within the team. Change is not happening in the short term. To do this, it is wise to establish this new culture mainly through regular contact with team members, for example the WhatsApp group and periodic meetings (professional and personal).



Sustainability of the project

The meeting organised in Tunisia on October 5 by bringing together the different participants was an opportunity to address the issue of sustainability. The participants proposed some activities that can be put in place and will therefore ensure the sustainability of the collaboration:

1. Radhia Saïdi of Group 1 and representative of HAICA committed to share and disseminate reports and studies on self-regulation on the Media Gender platform.
2. The president of UTMA, Mohamed Tayeb Chmen-gui (Group 2) has pledged to set up an Ombudsman who will work for the associative radio stations that are members of the Union (15 radio stations). They will soon begin work on identifying the Ombudsman's profile.
3. The organisation of informal meetings between participants. The organisations participating in the programme (JHR, SNJT, HAICA, etc.) have expressed their interest in organising these meetings.
4. Ensure meetings with the various parties involved and the various stakeholders in the Tunisian media landscape. It is a good idea for these meetings to be organised by recognised actors such as the SNJT, the HAICA, the UTMA, the IPSI, etc.
5. Chokri Ben Nssir (Group 1) has been promoted to the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of La Presse and Najeh Missaoui (Group 2) has been appointed CEO of Agence Tunis Afrique de Presse (TAP). These two participants in the programme have expressed their interest in facilitating the implementation of self-regulatory mechanisms within their media outlets. The latter has mentioned to us during the meeting that launching at the self-regulatory body within TAP in the final stages of insitutionalisation.

ANNEX

3

The ITP programme in relation to overall trends in the media sector

By Joan Barata

The emergence of new media formats and the abundance of distribution platforms has not changed the need for trustworthy information. On the contrary, such need is perhaps greater and more urgent than ever today. Over the last 30 years, the media sector has undergone tremendous changes that have altered many of the fundamental rules for the industry.

Debates about freedom of expression, its limits and the power of both states and private companies to frame its exercise have surpassed the boundaries of academia and the legal community⁴⁴. Hot political debates have put issues on freedom of expression and freedom of media at forefront of the agenda of many governments, international bodies, NGOs, civil society and informed citizens in general⁴⁵.

The question is not only where constraints to freedom of expression are to be put, but also who has the legitimacy (and the last word) regarding their definition and implementation, and where fundamental standards/criteria in this area are to be found.

Increased difficulties to balance international standards of freedom of expression and national regulation in the Digital Age

In Europe, the end of public monopolies in the field of broadcasting led to a period of liberalisation and increased media commercialisation, also fostered by the introduction of digital technologies. The progressive use of the Internet since the end of the 90s as a universal platform for the dissemination of information and ideas has been seen as an opportunity to increase media diversity and pluralism and to strengthen our democracies. However, it is also important to note that the original and utopian promise of the internet as an open, participatory space without borders, liberated from any interference by states or large private corporations, has ended up creating a completely different reality. Far from being a deregulated space, the Internet is probably the environment where the expression and dissemination of ideas, opinions and information is subject to a greater number of stand-

⁴⁴ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/12/04/evidence-is-growing-that-free-speech-is-declining/>

⁴⁵ Some recent events around the world are for example; the reaction by national authorities to the burning of Quran copies in Denmark and Sweden, the assassination attempt against the “blasphemous” writer Salman Rushdie, the acquisition of X (née Twitter) by the self-proclaimed “free speech absolutist” Elon Musk, the cancellation of social media accounts of the President of the United States, or discussions around a possible partial or total ban of the TikTok application based on a combination of geopolitics and national security concerns.

ards, rules and regulations established both by the state and by powerful private subjects⁴⁶. Issues that have triggered such an approach include the dissemination of disinformation, hate speech, perceived risks to election processes and the quality of democracy, as well as an expanding notion of cyber security and “cybercrime”⁴⁷.

From a global perspective, democracy and space for freedom of expression are gradually closing while intolerance and authoritarian tendencies are gaining ground in a growing number of countries. Autocratic regimes are feeling threatened by technological changes in the field of communication and have increased the number of restrictions applicable to speech with the adoption of new repressive laws, regulations and policies. These clear attacks against freedom of expression and the rule of law have only been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is probably the period where states’ decisions and rules regarding freedom of expression and freedom of information are framed by the highest number of and the most precisely formulated legal and soft-law standards on freedom of expression. These standards, at the same time, are established and monitored by a relevant number of accredited institutions and courts at the universal, regional and subregional level. However, the inevitable balance or even “tension” between international standards and national rules appears to be tipping, in several parts of the world, in favor of local authorities. In other words, national policy and rule makers tend to contemplate a broader leeway to mold the public sphere on the primary basis of local tradition, national security requirements, culture or even morals, including the feeling of imposition of “Western” values⁴⁸. In this context, even though international standards might be nominally accepted as a reference to follow, they end up being neglected when it comes to many of their most important features.

There is broad consensus regarding the decline in the protection of freedom of expression in most regions of the world. There is also a common understanding

that this trend is not expected to change in the short or mid-term. In the latest annual Joint Declaration adopted on 2 May 2023 by the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organisation of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, the mandate holders expressed and reiterated their concern already manifested in previous declarations regarding “the growing threats to democracy, freedom of opinion and expression and media freedom globally, and also the overall lack of understanding of the role of the media as an essential pillar of democracy, human rights and sustainable development”⁴⁹. Main factors noted in the document include “authoritarian trends, the growing co-optation of public power, erosion of judicial independence and backsliding of human rights”. It is important to note that such issues are not only reported vis-à-vis emerging democratic systems, but also consolidated ones.

The media landscape is changing fast under Digital Transformation

In recent years – and increasingly since the programme was designed – it has become clear that digital transformation, along with its many positive effects, has radically transformed the media ecosystem and thus brings major challenges, particularly for traditional media organisations and professionals. Large online platforms, particularly social media companies, have become gatekeepers or primary facilitators of access to news and information from media companies by their audiences and play a central position in the market for online advertising. Platforms enact, via their private terms and conditions, and enforce, using a combination of algorithmic instruments and human review systems, their own internal standards and rules regarding what kind of content is acceptable in their

⁴⁶ See the major trends regarding press freedom as highlighted in the latest UNESCO report (2021/2022) on “World trends in freedom of expression and media development”: <https://www.unesco.org/reports/world-media-trends/2021/en/global-trends>

⁴⁷ It is important to note the ongoing discussions and negotiations at the UN level regarding the adoption of a first global Cybercrime Treaty and the issues that it raises regarding possible impact on freedom of expression: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/08/what-un-cybercrime-treaty-and-why-does-it-matter>

⁴⁸ See the concerns expressed in this specific area in the Joint declaration by the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organisation of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information on Universality and the Right to Freedom of Expression (2014): <https://www.osce.org/fom/118298>

⁴⁹ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/2/542676.pdf>

respective spaces. Content moderation particularly focuses on dealing with legal-but-harmful speech, although at the same time decisions taken by intermediaries are inevitably commercially driven and follow ad-based business models. Pressure from investors and stakeholders may also be significant in this context. Other factors may be of equal, if not higher, significance: reputational concerns, pressure coming from parliaments, governments or regulatory bodies, behaviour of business rivals, or lobbying strategies vis-à-vis regulatory attempts or proposals. This has disrupted the existing business models of traditional media.

Content moderation policies by platforms have become a fundamental factor in the regulation of online speech. These policies are being promoted and pushed by State bodies and regulators to guarantee the proper management of “undesirable” speech, even beyond legality. Interactions between the exercise of editorial responsibility and platforms’ moderation decisions create tensions and possible power unbalances. These tensions are still not properly solved and may require new regulatory, self-regulatory and co-regulatory approaches.

In the European Union, the progressive adoption of a comprehensive package of new legislative instruments has been saluted as an interesting development, the Digital Services Act (DSA) being perhaps the most relevant landmark in these efforts. Platform regulation in the EU is particularly focused on tackling risks deriving from the use of social media as a tool to disseminate information by different types of actors, including malicious ones. Such risks tend to be defined in broad terms and encompass content that is not necessarily illegal but labelled as harmful vis-à-vis certain political and societal values. Therefore, EU legislation has brought a combination of delegation of private content regulatory measures to be decided by platforms themselves on the one hand, and oversight by agencies and regulatory bodies on the other hand, the latter still waiting to be properly identified and mandated in many cases.

Besides access to professional media content via online platforms, people increasingly rely on news and information from other online sources, some of which lack professional standards and ethics as well as accountability mechanisms that as a rule characterise the mainstream media. This has triggered an increase in the availability of certain types of harmful, yet not necessarily illegal speech, such as the dissemination of propaganda, hatred and disinformation, including gendered disinformation.

A professional and ethical media more important than ever

In these turbulent times, independent, professional, committed, ethical, responsible and gender-inclusive content is more important and central in societies than ever before. The media sector also needs to adapt to new formats, business models and distribution systems. A new understanding of journalism and media activities needs to be embraced instead of adopting a mere corporatist approach to protect traditional and existing media models. Free, independent and accountable media play a key role in a democratic society, as watchdogs and as providers of information and knowledge. Without a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration new digital platforms, the needs of a significant part of the audience would be ignored.

In this context, the establishment of proper self-regulation is still an ongoing process in many regions of the world. Statutory regulation remains a strong tool where self-regulation schemes need to find proper accommodation. In some scenarios, while accepting the existence of a certain degree of space for self-regulation, national authorities still use certain legal instruments to frame the use of such tools by the media community and to control and oversee the implementation of self-regulatory systems. The ITP programme has played a role in building a bridge between traditional statutory regulation and self-regulation, and supported efforts to introduce a balanced approach where both systems complement each other.

The ITP focuses on how to develop the capacity of local change agents who can push for media freedom through self-regulation, both on an institutional level and within the media organisations themselves.

It is important to underscore that self-regulation does not exclude per se statutory regulation. According to international human rights standards, states can, and in some cases must, introduce conditions and limitations to the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, provided that legality, legitimacy and necessity are respected. International treaties also oblige States to prohibit certain types of particularly dangerous speech, such as propaganda for war and hate speech. However, state measures should only target the most sensitive areas where serious public interest values and rights are at stake. In other areas, adequate statutory regulation (including constitutional protections) should be complemented with professional and ethical rules, as well as independent oversight mechanisms set by the media community and journalists

themselves in order to address issues of accountability, responsibility and quality beyond strictly legal obligations.⁵⁰

In this context, a major issue that different regional programmes have been encountering is the lack of a basic understanding of the notion of self-regulation (as understood in free speech-friendly contexts) and its linkages/role as a cornerstone in a democratic society. This also includes the lack of understanding, knowledge and acceptance of basic ethical and professional journalistic principles by the whole media community. Moreover, States themselves directly engage in anti-democratic communication practices including the control of public media, economic media capture practices, active dissemination of disinformation and the growing erosion of independence of oversight bodies, which makes the introduction of complementary self-regulatory mechanisms particularly challenging.

For this reason, one of the main areas of work for participants has precisely been to facilitate informed debates about the actual nature of self-regulation, its connection to the effective protection of freedom of expression and the democratic principle and the importance of self-regulation as a tool not to fully eliminate but to complement legal and regulatory approaches and facilitate a free but also responsible exercise of the right to freedom of expression and freedom of information. In other words, the programme has dedicated efforts to familiarise all relevant stakeholders (governments, legislators, regulators, civil society, media, journalists etc.) with the characteristics and different types of self-regulation and their relevance in the evolution and improvement of media law and policy.

Last but not least, while the programme closes debates about the intersection between freedom of expression and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) are emerging with forces. These debates focus on several remarkable areas, which can only be mentioned here: the use of AI to create and distribute “malicious” and illegal content particularly through online platforms, the use of AI as a tool to moderate content at scale also by online platforms, as well as the protections (including human right standards) that might or might apply to content partially or fully generated by AI systems.

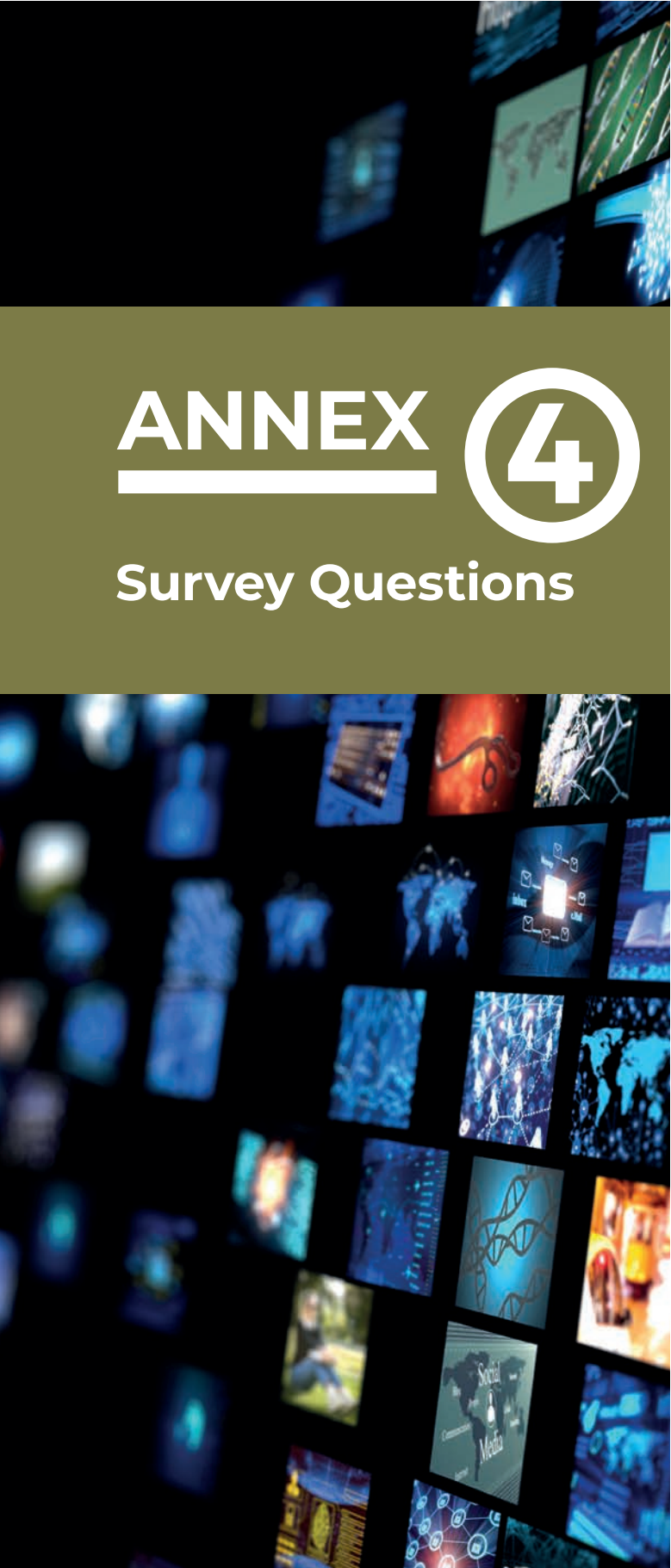


From the perspective of the programme, the central question could thus be formulated as follows: *How can statutory regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation exist and jointly contribute to the development of a sustainable, professional and independent journalism/media sector which in turn can reduce state and self-censorship as well as promote freedom of expression and public democratic debate.*

It can be said that the ITP has contributed to an improved relationship not only between the media and the general public but also among media professionals. In other words, ITP programme has facilitated the dialogue between journalists from “competing” outlets and supports and supported a better understanding of the media fraternity as a “community” with shared problems, interests and needs. The ITP has also fulfilled a fundamental mission associated with the main title of the programme: to promote a better understanding of self-regulation as an exercise of freedom and responsibility and not as a form of censorship or restriction orchestrated by public authorities.

More importantly, the programme has also contributed to a new understanding of the relationship between state authorities and individuals and societal organisations. In contexts where this relationship is essentially vertical and based on the idea of authority, self-regulation opens a channel for dialogue based on the embracement of common principles, the adoption of measures that respect the scope and boundaries of the right to freedom of expression and goes beyond conflict and imposition.

⁵⁰ These instruments may cover the media and journalist sector, totally or partially, as an external scheme, although in some cases they may also be complemented with the existence of internal professional and ethical preservation mechanisms within media outlets.



ANNEX **4**

Survey Questions

ITP Media - Whole Programme follow-up 2023 survey

1. Select your gender.
2. What year did you start the ITP training programme?
3. Which country do you represent in the programme?
4. In what type of organisation/institution do you work?
5. Was your ITP experience affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. Are you in contact with any of the participants you met during the ITP Media programme?
7. If yes, how often are you currently in contact with other participants?
8. Write three words that come to your mind summarising the ITP experience.
9. To what extent did you have an understanding towards media self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom before you attended the ITP programme?
10. What was your opinion towards media self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom before you attended the ITP programme?
11. To what extent do you have an understanding towards media self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom after you attended the ITP programme?
12. What is your opinion towards media self-regulation as a method to increase media freedom after you attended the ITP programme?
13. Did the programme contribute to your understanding of the linkage between gender equality and self/co/statutory regulation?
14. Did you include any gender equality and/or social inclusion aspects in the development of your change initiatives?
- 14a. Did you include any gender equality aspect in the development of your change initiatives?
- 14b. Did you include any social inclusion aspect in the development of your change initiatives?
15. To what extent does the ITP programme serve as a platform for dialogue between key stakeholders for discussion about media self-regulation?
16. To what extent do you use the knowledge, competencies, and tools acquired during the ITP Programme?

⁵¹ Full version of survey questions and answers options can be found here:
<https://public.3.basecamp.com/p/PnV2NcVu3ajlHpCVRsh9ySrh>

- 16a. To what extent do you use the knowledge you have gained from the programme?
- 16b. To what extent do you use your acquired competencies on change management?
- 16c. To what extent are your new competencies beneficial to your organisation?
- 16d. To what extent do you use the tools presented during the ITP programme?
17. Do you consider that the ITP Programme has contributed to any concrete change in your organisation?
18. To what extent has the ITP programme contributed to any concrete changes on the national level?
- 18a. To what extent has there been an increase in new initiatives for laws, rules, regulations, procedures on national level?
- 18b. To what extent has the public debate on self/co/statutory regulation increased in your country?
- 18c. To what extent has the attitudes and norms on self/co/statutory regulation changed in your country?
19. In your opinion, what is the most significant result or change that happened thanks to the ITP? (whether direct and indirect effect)
20. Please describe how the participation of the ITP contributed to the result/change you mentioned in Q19.
21. To what extent was/ is it workable to implement change initiatives driven by ITP?
- 21a. To what extent was/is it workable to implement change initiatives driven by ITP within your organisation?
- 21b. To what extent was/is it workable to implement change initiatives driven by ITP outside your organisation?
22. Have your change initiatives faced any fundamental challenges?
23. If yes, which among the options below would you consider to be the biggest challenge?
24. To what extent do you think AI (Artificial Intelligence) has an impact on self/co/statutory regulation?
25. Was your ITP experience different from other training programmes you have attended?
26. In your opinion what can you do to sustain and further develop the results from the ITP programme?
27. Do you have any final comments or suggestions you would like to share about the programme?



Programme	Call Off	Contract Status	Start-up Seminar	Final Seminar	No of participants ⁵²
1 Africa 1 - 2018 ⁵³	1	Completed	Jun 2018	June 2019	24
2 Latin America 1 - 2019 ⁵⁴	1	Completed	Mar 2019	Mar 2020	24
3 Africa 2 - 2019	1	Completed	June 2019	June 2020	24
4 Asia 1 - 2019 ⁵⁵	2	Completed	Sep 2019	Nov 2020	22
5 Eastern Europe 1 - 2019 ⁵⁶	2	Completed	Sep 2019	Sep 2020	24
6 Latin America 2 - 2020 ⁵⁷	1	Completed	Mar 2020	May 2021	22
7 Africa 3 - 2020	1	Completed	Jun 2020	Feb 2022	23
8 Eastern Europe 2 - 2020	3	Completed	Sep 2020	Sep 2021	25
9 Asia 2 - 2020 ⁵⁸	3	Completed	Oct 2020	May 2022	17
10 MENA 1 - 2020 ⁵⁹	4	Completed	Mar 2021	Feb 2022	24
11 Latin America 3 - 2021 a	3	Completed	Mar 2021	Sep 2022	24
12 Africa 4 - 2021	5	Completed	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	26
13 Eastern Europe 3 - 2021	4	Completed	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	25
14 Latin America 4 - 2021 b	4	Completed	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	25
15 Asia 3 - 2021 ⁶⁰	4	Completed	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	23
16 MENA 2 - 2021 ⁶¹	4	Completed	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	24
Alumni Conference 1 - Latin America	5	Completed	Stockholm, Sweden: Aug 2022		(64)
17 Eastern Europe 4 - 2021 ⁶²	6	Completed	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	25
18 MENA 3 - 2022	6	Completed	Oct 2022	Oct 2023	25
19 Africa 5 - 2022	6	Completed	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	25
20 Latin America 5 - 2022	6	Completed	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	25
Alumni Conference 2 - Africa	6	Completed	Nairobi, Kenya: May 2023		(60)
Alumni Conference 3 - Asia	6	Completed	Manilla, Philippines: Oct 2023		(58)
21 Asia 4 - 2022	7	Completed	Oct 2022	Oct 2023	25
22 Georgia - 2023	8	Ongoing	Sep 2023	Oct 2024	20
23 Armenia, Moldova & Ukraine - 2023	9	Ongoing	Dec 2023	Oct 2024	73

⁵² Number of participants that have complete the programme.

⁵³ Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The same countries participated 2018-2023.

⁵⁴ The programme started with Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras.

⁵⁵ The programme started with Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam.

⁵⁶ The Eastern Europe programme started with Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

⁵⁷ Bolivia joined the programme and Cuba had observers present during year 2.

⁵⁸ Laos left the programme.

⁵⁹ We started in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Algeria was supposed to be included in the MENA programme but the political situation made it impossible.

⁶⁰ Due to the military takeover Myanmar left the programme. Instead Philippines join the programme for Asia 3 and 4.

⁶¹ Palestine join the programme for year 2.

⁶² In Eastern Europe 4 Georgia joined the programme.

