

Shaping media development

with UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)



Thanks to the active support of UNESCO's Member States over the past four decades, this unique initiative in the UN has a proud record of impact in developing countries.

Former president of Ghana, H.E. John Kufour, as well as Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, both recognised the high value of IPDC in the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of IPDC in November 2020.¹

The need for information during the pandemic and its "long tail" underlines the contribution that a strong professional media sector makes to society.

Journalism shares life-saving information and knowledge, keeps an eye on corruption, and provides a curated platform for political debate.

But times are tough. Media institutions need new business models to survive, and journalists' skills are being overtaken by events. Increasing numbers of media workers are intimidated by attacks. Media and Internet policies are sub-optimum. Journalism education institutions face new challenges.

This is why IPDC continues to be a major mechanism for strengthening media's role in development, democracy and the 2030 Development Agenda.

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/news/eminent-persons-salute-ipdc-40-years-media-development>



The International
Programme for
the Development
of Communication

Donors to IPDC

Voluntary contributions to IPDC over four decades have had positive concrete outcomes for journalism in developing countries through training, research, law reform and more. The results have strengthened media for democracy and development, and enhanced country resilience to crises. The COVID-19 setback, however, has intensified old challenges and created new ones.

Each year, the IPDC considers funding a fresh round of media development proposals coming from grassroots groups. These requests for support have been checked by UNESCO field offices who help the submitters shape their ideas to have maximum potential impact and complementarity with UNESCO's wider programme.

IPDC's "secret sauce"

Here's how the IPDC makes its impact: it synergises normative work and developmental work.

Media development outputs by IPDC

- More than 2,000 grassroots projects supported over 40 years.
- Donations attracted of more than 120 million USD from 1980 to 2020.
- Support to media systems in 140 developing countries to date.

Normative outputs by IPDC

- The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
- A suite of indicators for assessing country level gaps in Media Development, Journalism Safety and Internet Universality.
- The UNESCO Director General's report on safety and impunity, based upon voluntary responses by Member States.
- Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism Education.

Gender equality in and by media is a strong component of all IPDC's work.

100 women journalists impacted by changes



IPDC in 2020 supported women journalists during the pandemic in nine countries in eastern Africa. A grassroots project mapped how more than 100 women journalists were impacted by changes: more

than half were put on unpaid leave and one in ten retrenched. Evidence-based recommendations from the study advocated for gender-sensitive policies in media houses and broadcast licensing bodies, covering, for example, the need to provide women journalists with specialised training, protective equipment and psycho-social support.

A parallel activity provided special training for almost 300 female journalists in health reporting in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.



“The course was intense but awesome. I know 2020 is not a good year to many but thank you so much for making it a great year with all the knowledge which I also have started to share with my trainees who are junior journalists working in radio and online. I am paying it forward and I see the good result.”

Leah Mushi, Tanzania



“I used the knowledge I gained here to produce a seven minutes’ radio feature story in Swahili. I learnt several scientific terminologies during this insightful online training; these terminologies have since boosted my understanding on the jargons scientists use in various press briefings.”

Tebby Otieno, Kenya

The bigger picture

IPDC’s projects are grouped into four categories, whose results reinforce UNESCO’s wider work on information and communication:

1. Reinforcing national capacities for media and internet policies through research and recommendations based on IPDC indicators.
2. Mobilising country capacities to monitor and report on Sustainable Development Goal indicators which cover safety of journalists and access to information.
3. Empowering journalism education institutions towards achieving excellence.
4. Strengthening capacities of local media institutions, and promoting international consensus on media development.

Unique transparency

Governing the IPDC is an Intergovernmental Council of 39 Member States, elected by the UNESCO General Conference. The Council elects a Bureau of 8 of these Member States whose national experts then choose the best projects to be supported.

Uniquely in the wider field of media development funding, meetings and decisions of the IPDC are open to all Member States and observers. Full details of each supported project are transparently reflected on the IPDC website and its database.

Each year, reports on spending and on impact of each project are presented to the IPDC governing bodies as well as posted online.

Learn more about IPDC’s Intergovernmental Council and Bureau, visit:

<https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc>

“I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to share my love for journalism. Not only did I share my knowledge but I learnt a great deal too. I am optimistic about the future of African women media practitioners and the stories we will all tell while writing our truth.”

Sumeya Gasa

Media trainer about her role in a 2020 IPDC project.



Make a contribution

The work accomplished by the IPDC has been constantly underlined by the resolutions adopted annually by the United Nations General Assembly on “Information in the service of humanity”. These resolutions invite all countries to provide support through the IPDC to strengthen the public and private media.

To make a difference through making a donation, contact:

IPDC Secretariat
ipdc.secretariat@unesco.org

Website: <https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc>