Media development tools and political contexts

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INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT

A broad media sector approach

A well-functioning media sector comprises a number of building blocks which must be addressed to achieve a sustainable foundation for free and independent media: from media laws that protect the rights and freedom of journalists to strong national journalist associations and technical equipment that make up the media infrastructure to the professionalisation of media which helps to ensure accurate, fair and balanced media content.

Our tools for media development are grouped into three clusters: Media Freedom, (Infra)Structure and Content. Together they form our broad media sector approach, and are deployed according to the political context of a country.

The below diagram illustrates the relationship between the two, where Safety and Protection for instance is an important tool to deploy in Conflict and Post-conflict countries, while work to improve the legal frameworks of a country's media sector is more often deployed in Post-conflict, Transitional and Democratic development countries.

	Conflict Countries and Failed States	Immediate Post-Conflict and Transitional Countries	Democratic Development Countries	Authoritarian Countries and Repressive Democracies
Media Freedom				
Safety and protection	●	●		●
Monitoring, research and advocacy	●	●	●	●
Media policy and professional environments		●	●	
Media (Infra)structure				
Alternative media (including community and exiled media)	●	●	●	●
Technical capacity and capacity building	●	●	●	
Digital Communications and Technologies	●	●	●	●
Media Content				
Specialised training		●	●	●
Media content monitoring		●	●	
Production of diverse and professional content	●	●	●	

Intervention types

According to the political context of the country we work in, we employ different types of interventions to improve the situation for the local media. The political contexts should be seen as fluid. Most of the countries we work in will match a combination of the below descriptions, and may at times transition from one context to another:

Conflict Countries and Failed States

These are countries suffering armed and/or socio-political conflict, where there is severe human insecurity as a result. This includes failed states where state institutions have ceased to operate and are supplanted by non-elected groups. Media have a crucial role to play by channelling objective, peace-brokering or life-saving information.

Here we engage in short-term rapid interventions aimed at alleviating immediate threats against the media and supporting the role of media in resolving conflict including providing humanitarian and reliable information using alternative/exile & new digital media.

Immediate Post-Conflict and Transition Countries

Post-conflict countries are countries emerging from armed and socio-political conflict, where a fluid and dynamic environment exists including the potential for both positive and negative rapid transformation of the environment. Media can play either a role in promoting transition from conflict to peace. Transition countries are countries in which political transition where new democratic regulatory institutions must be established within the media sector to ensure that an independent and pluralistic media sector is developed.

Here we engage in short-term rapid & medium-term interventions aimed at supporting the work of national partners to comprehensively reconstruct the media sector, promote press freedoms, conflict reconciliation, nation building and democratization. In transitions broader constitutional and legal reform issues related to press freedom must be addressed.

Democratic Development Countries

These are countries engaged in longer-term democratization process, often after prolonged period of authoritarian governance. Once an initial transition period is over and democratically held elections have been convened there is a need to consolidate media reform. It is important that a link is established between an adequate legal framework and the implementation of these legal provisions. Institution-building is a crucial element in the media efforts and prospects for Public Service Broadcasting must be applied.

Here we engage in long-term interventions aimed at supporting the development of the media as a fourth estate, able to reinforce democratic processes and secure the state against non-democratic tendencies and forces.

Authoritarian Countries and Repressive Democracies

Authoritarian regimes do not make an effort to appear democratic. There are no formal constitutional provisions safeguarding press freedom. Repressive democracies are countries that practice the veneer of democratic processes, such as elections and independent judiciary, but where authoritarian governments ignore the rule of law.

Here, interventions can be based on engaging with state and public bodies to support pro-reform groups, and providing direct support to professional independent media to circumvent state harassment and restrictions. This may include support to 'illegal' and exiled media outlets.

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