

Support the Truth

&

THOSE

WHO

REPORT IT



“Internews’
equipment was
**THE FIRST THAT
CROSSED THE
UKRAINIAN BORDER**
and arrived in
occupied Kherson.”

Oksana Romaniuk

Director of the Institute of Mass Information, Ukraine

A Thriving Future for Independent Media

The media is changing at a pace faster than audiences can keep up.

This past year alone, the introduction of easily accessible AI technologies has revolutionized the industry and the culture around it, raising both hopes and fears. Prior to that, democratic backsliding, pervasive disinformation, and the failure of traditional business models had already put independent media on the back foot. Even the language used to describe this situation — **the global media extinction event** — is nothing short of apocalyptic.

At Internews, we share these concerns. And yet, **we are hopeful that a thriving future for independent media and trustworthy information is ahead** — and we are committed to helping it become a reality.

Hope is baked into our story as an organization. Our first program in 1982 was the Spacebridge, a two-way satellite link-up between Soviet and American youth, creating unprecedented connections across the heavy curtain of the Cold War. Then, in the early '90s, we supported the nascent independent media in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — and we saw the transformative power of **trustworthy information**, capable of doing so much good. Ever since, we have ensured the survival of thousands of news organizations across all continents.

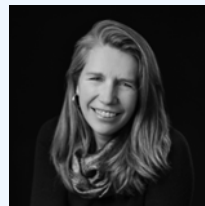
A lot has changed over the decades, but there is one thing that we know with absolute certainty: **our mission to support the truth and those who report it has never been more important than it is today.**

The evidence is all around us, all the time. We see it in the tragedy of Ukraine's war, where independent media is a target. We see it in Afghanistan, where brave local reporters work tirelessly to keep the Taliban government accountable, at immense risk to their safety. We see it in the United States, where local newspapers are shutting down at an alarming rate.

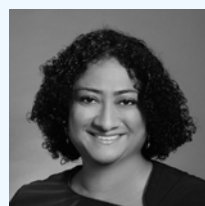
Internews is at the forefront of the fight for independent media in all these places — more than 100 countries around the world. Over more than four decades, we have made it possible for millions of people to receive information they can trust. In this report, you will see snippets of that work — and as an Internews supporter and partner, **I hope you will feel proud of the change you are helping create.**

The challenges ahead of us — the shrinking freedoms of speech, innumerable threats against reporters, expanding news deserts, increasing internet shutdowns, rampant misinformation — are mighty; but our community is mightier.

[Thank you for being a part of it.](#)



Jeanne Bourgault
President and CEO,
Internews



Meera Selva
CEO, Internews Europe

Our People

Executive Leadership

(01)

Jeanne Bourgault,
President & CEO
Meera Selva,
Chief Executive, Europe
Marjorie Rouse,
Chief Programs Officer
Deborah Ensor,
Senior Vice President,
Technical Leadership
Brian Kerr
Chief Operating Officer, Europe

1,150+

staff working in

91

countries

US Board of Directors

(02)

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24

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3

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(Washington DC, London, Paris)

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(03)

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Daisy McAndrew
Mary Trussell

78%

*of staff work in
their home country*

AFGHANISTAN ALBANIA ARMENIA AZERBAIJAN
BANGLADESH BELARUS BELIZE BOSNIA-
HERZEGOVINA BOTSWANA BURKINA FASO
BURUNDI CAMBODIA CAMEROON CANADA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CHAD COLOMBIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC EGYPT ESTONIA
EUROPEAN UNION FINLAND FRANCE GERMANY
GHANA GREECE GUATEMALA HUNGARY
INDONESIA JAPAN JORDAN KAZAKHSTAN
KOREA KYRGYZ REPUBLIC LATVIA
LITHUANIA MALAYSIA MALDIVES
MALI MALTA MEXICO MONACO MONTENEGRO MOROCCO
MYANMAR NETHERLANDS NORTH MACEDONIA
PAKISTAN PANAMA PHILIPPINES POLAND
PORTUGAL ROMANIA RWANDA SENEGAL SERBIA
SIERRA LEONE SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH SUDAN
SPAIN SRI LANKA SUDAN TAJIKISTAN
TANZANIA THAILAND TIMOR-LESTE
TUNISIA UGANDA UKRAINE UNITED KINGDOM
UNITED STATES UZBEKISTAN VIETNAM
ZAMBIA ZIMBABWE



History of Internews

1989 ⁽⁰³⁾
Internews moves to **Arcata, CA**



1994 ⁽⁰⁷⁾

With Sarajevo under siege by the Yugoslav National Army, Internews and the Soros Foundation run the **Balkan Media Network**, an early version of an electronic bulleting board and email system that connects 250 independent media organizations as well as ordinary citizens in the former Yugoslavia with the rest of the world.

2002 ⁽¹³⁾

Expansion in Thematic Journalism: Local Voices launches, to increase **accurate and effective coverage of HIV/AIDS**, with offices in Kenya, and Nigeria. The project later expands to Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, and India.

2008 ⁽¹⁷⁾

On the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights campaign, Internews and the Every Human Has Rights Campaign, supported by The Elders, held the **Every Human Has Right Media Awards**.

1990 ⁽⁰⁴⁾

Internews shifts its focus from producing international television programs to supporting the nascent non-governmental media in **Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union**.

1995 ⁽⁰⁸⁾

Internews Europe is founded in Paris

1997 ⁽⁰⁹⁾

Expansion in Africa: Internews begins providing daily news coverage of the **UN tribunal for Rwanda**.

2004 ⁽¹⁴⁾

Internews' **Earth Journalism Network** launches, to provide journalists in developing countries with the skills to cover the environment more effectively.

2009 ⁽¹⁸⁾

Internews launches the **Earth Journalism Awards for Climate Change Reporting**, designed to increase and improve media coverage of climate change around the world.

1982 ⁽⁰¹⁾

Internews is founded in San Francisco, and our first project, funded by the Kendall Foundation, is to compile archives of films, TV shows, and documentaries about nuclear war.

1992 ⁽⁰⁵⁾

Internews opens its **first field office** in Russia



1998 ⁽¹⁰⁾

Expansion in Asia: Internews conducts a comprehensive **survey of the broadcast media in Indonesia**, and subsequently launches an extensive program that provides training, support, and programming to independent radio stations.

2005 ⁽¹⁵⁾

With emergency funding from the Knight Foundation, Internews supports humanitarian information radio programs for populations affected by the **Indian Ocean tsunami**, in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

2010 ⁽¹⁹⁾

Humanitarian media programs prove ever more needed and effective, as Internews responds to the **Haiti earthquake** with daily humanitarian programming.

1982 ⁽⁰²⁾

Internews creates the first "**Space-bridge**," a two-way satellite link-up between Soviet youth in Moscow and Americans. Our production era culminates with "Capital to Capital," linking the US Congress via satellite with Deputies in the Supreme Soviet, on ABC news and throughout the Soviet Union. The series earns Internews an **Emmy Award**.

1993 ⁽⁰⁶⁾

Internews and the Jerusalem Film Institute launch a project to develop **Palestinian television**, including training in news production and election coverage and a conference on Palestinian broadcasting.

2001 ⁽¹¹⁾

Internews launches the privately funded **Global Internet Policy Initiative**.

2002 ⁽¹²⁾

The Post-9/11 Era: Internews establishes an office in **Kabul, Afghanistan** to help establish local, professional media.

2005 ⁽¹⁶⁾

The **Global Forum for Media Development**, organized by Internews and 17 other organizations, meets in Amman, Jordan, uniting hundreds of media support NGOs, journalists, broadcasters and activists from 97 countries.





2011 (20)
 The **Arab Spring** brings focus and promise to the cause of free media in the Middle East, while long-standing Internews programs support emerging independent media makers.

2012 (21)
 Internews further expands work in response to the 'Arab Spring' with a program to support new, **independent media in Libya**.

2014 (22)
 Internews wins largest single grant award in its history – 5-year project in **South Sudan**.



2014 (23)
 Internews' emergency response to **Typhoon Haiyan** in the Philippines is singled out by the UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact "for highly cost effective, disproportionately positive impacts."

2015 (24)
 Internews launches a five-year **Women's Initiative** to ensure access to information for women and girls in some of the world's most challenging places.

2016 (25)
 Internews mounts another emergency response in Haiti, this time in response to Hurricane Matthew.

2017 (26)
News That Moves, a project to provide vital information to refugees in Mediterranean countries, secures a finalist position at the BOND International Development Awards.



(27)
 Internews expands its US programs beyond New Orleans with the establishment of the **Listening Post Collective**.

2018 (28)
 Internews launches its first UK program – **supporting community media**. This landmark initiative is designed to cement the vital social role of grassroots, volunteer-led media in the UK.



2020 (29)
 When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Internews quickly transitioned to an entirely remote workforce and pivoted its projects to **serve the health information needs** of communities worldwide within the 100 countries in which we work. We provided small grants to help media outlets stay alive and assembled a diverse group of media advisors, with experience in more than 20 countries across five regions and collectively speaking 20 languages, to provide mentoring and training to Internews partners, including journalists and other content creators.

2020 (30)
 Internews launches **Reflect Reality**, a manual to help newsrooms include more authoritative female and diverse voices in their stories; led by Internews in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

2021 (33)
 As the COVID-19 pandemic continues around the world, Internews trains journalists and media outlets to **fight disinformation and misinformation** about the virus and the vaccines.

2021 (34)
 Internews publishes an **opinion piece in the New York Times** advocating to protect independent media in Afghanistan

(31)
 Internews acquires **FilmAid**, an organization that harnesses the power of film to educate, inspire and empower refugees and other vulnerable communities around the world.

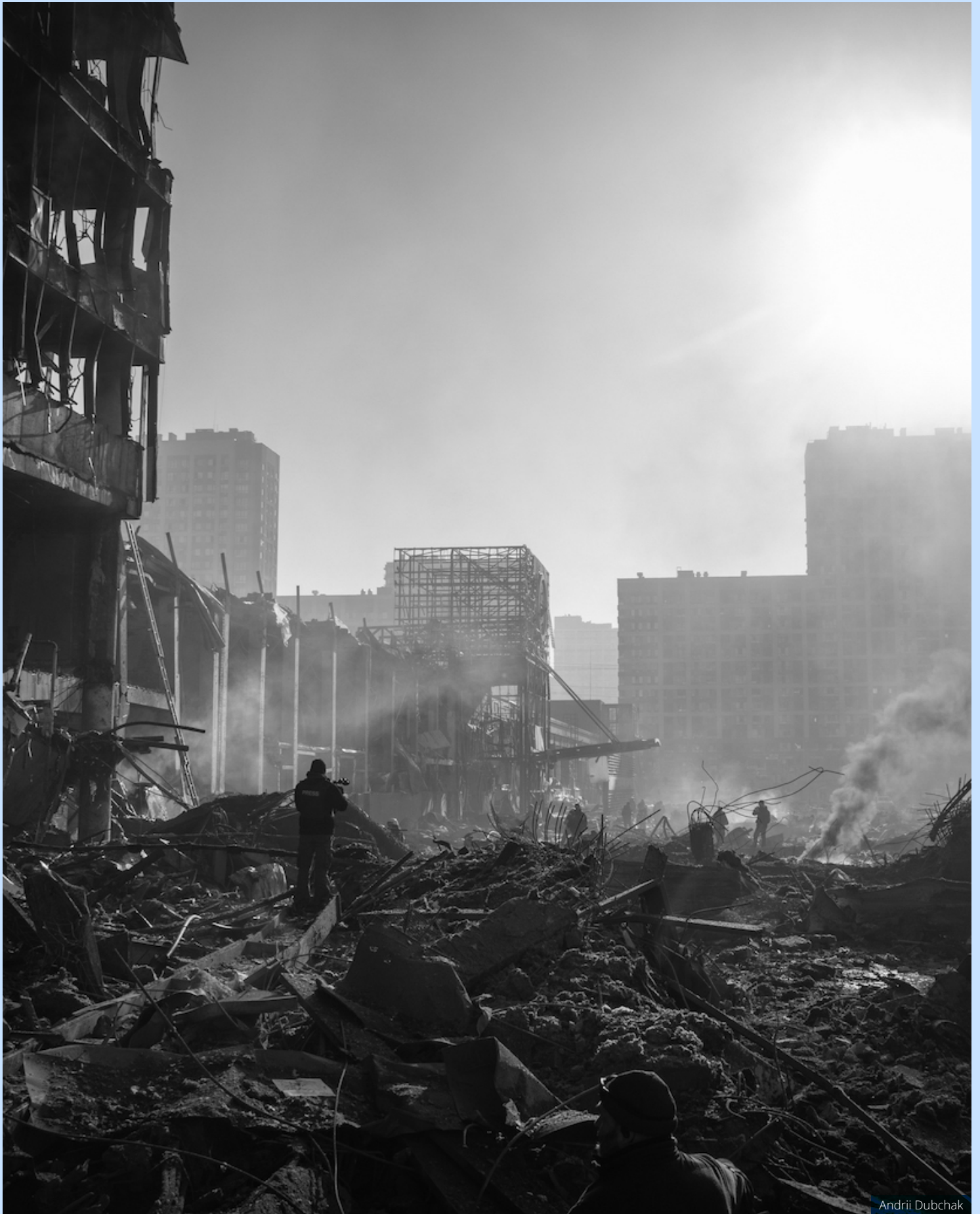
(32)
 Internews acquires **NewsGain**, a leading consultancy that provides business expertise to help news organizations become financially sustainable.

2022 (35)
 Internews reacts to the **invasion of Ukraine** by moving local journalists to safer locations, procuring 100+ flak jackets for reporters, and helping media organizations defend themselves from cyber-attacks.

2023 (36)
 Alongside Microsoft and USAID, Internews announces the **Media Viability Accelerator** – a digital platform to help independent media become more financially sustainable.

2023 (37)
 At the Clinton Global Initiative meeting, Internews launches an ambitious effort to raise \$10M, building upon its **Emergency Fund** – a pioneering effort to support journalists and media outlets under existential threat.





Andrii Dubchak

Supporting Ukrainian Journalists on the Frontlines of the War

Internews has been working to bolster independent media in Ukraine since 1994. We have supported investigative reporting, the introduction of media literacy in schools, crucial media reforms, and efforts to improve the long-term sustainability of some of the country's most vital media institutions.

We have been there through Ukraine's recent history — from the transformation into a democracy to the Maidan Square protests and the illegal occupation of Crimea and areas of Donbas. **We are there now:** on the frontlines of the brutal war against Russia and **alongside Ukrainian reporters who are fighting to provide lifesaving information to millions of people.**

In this war, independent media are a target. Invading forces kidnap and kill journalists, destroy broadcast towers, and block Internet access, committing hundreds of crimes against Ukrainian media. Despite the decreasing amount of coverage in international media, these ongoing crimes continue to deprive Ukrainian civilians of vital information for their safety and future. **Independent media in Ukraine still need crucial support — and Internews is there to help.**

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, and alongside brave Ukrainian partner organizations, **we have provided material, logistical, and technical support to local media outlets.** We are facilitating access to safety equipment and first aid kits, including beyond enemy lines and into occupied

territories: according to our partner Oksana Romaniuk, the Director of Ukraine's Institute of Mass Information, **flak jackets provided by Internews were the first to arrive in occupied Kherson in March 2022.** We are procuring secure technology and VPNs and providing cybersecurity training to local reporters — all of which are difficult to obtain and do during the fighting. Additionally, we are supporting Ukrainian partners who track Russian disinformation online and are working with local media outlets to ensure their financial survival.

As the fighting continues, we will keep standing by Ukrainian journalists under threat — until their country can once again celebrate its liberty.



Andrii Dubchak

Since February 2022, we have:

Assisted **150** regional and national media outlets

to produce vital reporting, including “news you can use” on the war (info on bomb shelters, fact-checking, etc.). Some of these outlets are in temporarily occupied territories.

Assisted **292** schools

across Ukraine in adopting a media literacy curriculum.

Covered relocation costs for **200** journalists.

Provided stipends to **258** local journalists

from **88** local and hyperlocal media companies, as well as grants to **55** local media for increasing their sustainability.

4 Provided grants to local NGOs that contributed to the adoption of public policies

including the new Law on Media and Law on Advertising.

Supported the monitoring of violations of journalists’ rights and the provision of legal assistance for **1,106** journalists.

Repurposed our offices in Moldova and Lithuania to support refugee communication efforts and journalists operating remotely.

Assisted **74** civil society organizations working to strengthen independent media or support journalists.

(09)

Allocated

\$1M+

in new grant support
for regional and hyperlocal media outlets.

Provided Emergency safety grant support for staff, equipment, mentoring/consultancy to

93

regional and local media outlets.

(10)

(11)

Allocated

\$250k+

in emergency funds

for 14 outlets in hard-hit areas, including Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Odesa, Donetsk, and Luhansk, and \$130k to provide comprehensive psychological support to journalists and newsrooms in Ukraine.

Supported Ukrainian organizations that offered trainings to

1,987 journalists

across Ukraine on war reporting, ethical standards, solutions journalism, physical safety, tactical first aid, digital hygiene, and cybersecurity.

(12)

Funded the procurement of thousands of pieces of equipment, including:

215 medical kits and supplies**307** bulletproof vests**707** power banks**304** laptops**25** generators**47** power stations**34** video cameras**45** microphones**170** studio supplies**160** mobile phones**50** sleeping bags**20** Starlinks

(13)

Hope for Afghan Journalists

Following the Taliban's sweep to power two years ago, [Afghanistan's rapidly growing independent media sector has entered a new crisis](#). Harsh restrictions, physical and psychological abuses, arbitrary arrests of journalists, and limited access to donor funds have dealt a terrible blow to local independent media and severed Afghan citizens' access to trustworthy information.

Despite these grim challenges, **many news outlets remain operational** — both in-country and in-exile — and are fighting for Afghanistan's media freedom.

[We too are taking part in this effort.](#)

Internews will continue supporting independent Afghan radio, TV, and online media outlets inside and outside of the country to stay open, protect staff, adapt their business models, and access additional funding.

Here is what we are doing to help:

Digital safety support (01)

We are offering remote mentoring and training to media outlets and journalists to assess and mitigate risks in digital spaces, use devices and platforms safely, detect malware, and access quality uncensored information. This includes digital security mentoring provided online to media partners, asynchronous online training, and self-learning digital security materials that journalists can access safely from inside Afghanistan.

Media content production (02)

Internews is providing grants to independent media outlets in-country and in-exile to produce content on radio, TV, and digital platforms. We give direct support to women journalists and women-led media organizations to ensure that women's voices continue to be heard.

Countering mis- and disinformation (03)

Internews is helping counter mis- and disinformation through online fact-checking training for journalists. We also work remotely to increase accountability for mis- and disinformation generators and directly engage with platforms to limit mis- and disinformation.

Journalist safety and media violation tracking (04)

Internews has provided crisis funds to Afghan journalists and grants to initiatives such as journalist safe houses. In addition, we are partnering with other media support organizations to track media violations across the country.

Internews has been in Afghanistan for two decades, working alongside Afghan journalists, media entrepreneurs, and technologists as they fostered a media sector that, at its height, employed thousands of women, reached every province, and became one of the most trusted institutions in the country.

[As ever, we will stand by independent Afghan media](#) as they face today's new — and increasingly difficult — challenges.



Delivering Lifesaving Information to Sudanese Refugees

Imagine needing to make life-or-death decisions based on third-hand information from social media. That's what millions of Sudanese have had to do since civil war erupted in their country in April 2023.



More than two million people were displaced internally and nearly 2.32 million refugees fled to neighboring countries. With few options to access verified information they can trust, they must determine whether to cross borders, how to seek shelter, or where to find reliable health care.

Information is everywhere, but people struggle to determine what is true, false, or potentially fatal.

That's why Internews' work is vital. We are ensuring that timely news about how to access humanitarian assistance and border crossing procedures is reaching those who need it; tracking and debunking harmful mis- and dis-information; elevating the needs of affected communities to humanitarian agencies; and supporting local media to report accurately and responsibly on the conflict.

At the start of the war, **our humanitarian team rapidly established a presence in Renk**, the main border crossing between Sudan and South Sudan. Since April, more than 325,000 refugees and returnees have crossed into South Sudan, the majority streaming through this transit center in a small northern town. People arrive needing information — on how to contact their families, where to find a health clinic, vaccine availability, how to get food, and more.

Working with our partner the Community Engagement Network, we engaged local correspondents. Consistent with our core method, **we made sure these correspondents are from the community itself** — people who understand local dynamics, speak local languages, and are more quickly trusted by others. **These correspondents speak to new arrivals at border crossings, collect their questions**



Isaac Billy/UNMISS

and concerns, and elevate them to responding humanitarian agencies through regular bulletins, so that these agencies can adjust their services. For example, if there are consistent complaints that people don't know how to register for food assistance, that message is sent to the agency responsible for registration; if people have questions about the safety of a measles vaccination, that goes to the health services.

We also support the creation of audio programs in local language responding to specific information needs identified by the community — on health care practices, transportation logistics, and procedures to access humanitarian services. These programs are played at key areas, including the transit sites where displaced people stay.

In addition, **Internews is providing financial assistance where needed.** We were one of the very first, and continue to be one of the only, international organizations to routinely get financial resources into Sudan to evacuate staff and local media partners to safer communities. In neighboring Chad, we are using emergency funds to support Association La Voix Du Ouaddaï, a community radio station we established in 2005 when responding to the influx of refugees from Darfur, to serve the information needs of Sudanese refugees there.

As rumors turn rampant and connectivity becomes increasingly scarce in Sudan, **fact-checked, relevant, and reliable information can be a lifeline.** We are there — among the most impacted communities — to ensure that they, too, get access to it.



Isaac Billy/UNMISS

Creating Sustainable Business Models for Media Worldwide

The digital revolution of the early 21st century has changed every aspect of the media sector — bringing with it both valuable opportunities and potentially fatal threats. Among the latter is the [collapse of the traditional business models that sustained the industry](#) for decades.

Small, independent outlets are suffering the most. Even as digital advertising revenue increases overall, very little of it reaches the local newspapers that often break the most important stories. As a result, **news organizations across the world are shutting down at a vertiginous rate** — and ordinary people are losing access to information that protects their lives and livelihoods.

At Internews, we're leading the charge on developing new and creative business models that keep news outlets operational, journalists employed, and citizens informed.

As part of our programs worldwide, we offer resources and peer-to-peer support for media professionals to revitalize local news, improve the financial sustainability of local media partners, and increase the quality of local journalism. With the acquisition of Newsgain in 2020, we are employing cutting-edge audience analytics and expertise in business models and digital advertising.

We are also advancing multi-year special initiatives in support of thousands of small independent outlets — [and with the potential to blaze new trails for media financial sustainability everywhere.](#)

Back to News

(01)

Back to News is an initiative to support the **re-investment of media budgets in credible news publishers** and responsible, fact-based journalism. It launched in February 2023 as a **partnership between Internews and GroupM**, a global leader in advertising responsible for more than \$60 billion in annual media investments.

Advertising can seem like an unconventional avenue to fight mis- and disinformation — but it's incredibly effective. By helping brands and agencies invest their ad budgets in trusted local media outlets, Back to News is creating a win-win: **reputable news sources have more resources** to continue doing their work and create better information environments, while investors can maximize their profits — both socially and in terms of their bottom line. The research backs it up: as evidenced by the Interactive Advertising Bureau, ads seen on high quality news sites are perceived as 74% more likeable and receive 20% higher engagement than the same ads on lower quality sites.

Back to News is underpinned by Internews' **Ads for News program, helping brands and agencies reach audiences on more than 10,000 vetted local news websites** from 50+ countries.

Media Viability Accelerator

(02)

The Media Viability Accelerator is a **pioneering web-based platform to help independent media outlets become more financially sustainable**. It enables media organizations to compete more effectively for audiences and revenues by learning from the performance of peers globally. Through the MVA, local outlets can track business and audience data relevant to their own markets and tap into financial and technical support.

The MVA is the result of a **unique public-private partnership announced in March 2023 between Internews, Microsoft Corp. and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**. Internews is providing technical expertise and relationships with hundreds of independent media outlets globally; Microsoft is supporting the technology build-out under its Democracy Forward initiative; and USAID is providing financial support.

“The Media Viability Accelerator is a model public-private partnership that will help keep independent media outlets around the world financially sustainable so they can continue their vital work.”

— **Samantha Power**,
USAID Administrator



The online tool is scheduled to launch in early 2024. More than 1000 journalists, editors, content producers, and other media makers have already registered interest in the MVA, and hundreds have participated in surveys, consultations, and user experience testing with Internews and Microsoft to develop the platform.

“Our hope is that this AI-powered data aggregation and visualization tool will offer media outlets the kind of market intelligence they need to be financially successful.”



— **Brad Smith**,
Vice Chair and
President, Microsoft

Alongside the web platform, the broader MVA Forward project will provide **millions in small grants targeted to independent media outlets** addressing financial sustainability challenges and a Flexible Response Fund designed to address emergent needs.

Join the network of MVA users at

[internews.org/
media-viability-accelerator](https://internews.org/media-viability-accelerator)
or follow the QR code.



The Listening Post Collective

In today's American news and information industry, people often talk about the local news crisis.

According to research by Northwestern University, **an average of more than two American newspapers are disappearing every week** without getting a digital or print replacement. Changing business models caused a 70% drop in U.S. newsroom employment over the last two decades. And **more than 1 in 5 Americans live in a news desert** or a community at risk of becoming one.

The well-documented shrinking and, in some cases, total loss of local newsrooms across the U.S. is a real problem, with **millions of Americans now living in so-called “news deserts.”** And yet, many U.S. communities — especially BIPOC and immigrant communities — have never been well-served by legacy media. Their stories are too often misrepresented or altogether ignored.

For true democracy to thrive, the goal can't just be to save legacy local news but to build a more equitable information ecosystem where everyone has access to high-quality, culturally relevant civic information in the languages they speak. We call these **information gardens**.



Enter the **Listening Post Collective** — Internews' very own contribution to transforming the news and information landscape in the United States.

The Listening Post Collective partners with people and organizations to **develop local news and information solutions that help communities thrive**. We do this through our targeted civic media design partnerships, guided DIY Civic Media Playbook, and peer network.

Resources should flow to the communities that can benefit the most. To locate places where our work can have the most significant impact, we've developed a civic media opportunity mapping process that takes a holistic view of the factors influencing a community's access to reliable, relevant civic information. By looking at population demographics, voter turnout, existing information resources, and more, we can focus funding and effort on the immigrant and BIPOC communities where our work can do the greatest good.

Once we establish a community partnership, we implement our three-step Civic Media Design process (**Listen, Seed, Cultivate**):

We start by **listening** — Listening is in our name for a reason: It's the most important piece of our work. Over several months to a year, we help communities conduct an Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) that identifies information assets, gaps, and opportunities to fill them.

Next, we **seed** by soliciting proposals and making microgrants to civic media startups or helping partners advocate for local funding.

And finally, we **cultivate** — we provide coaching and support to our civic media partners for three years so they can establish themselves as an essential community asset.

With the LPC, we are bringing to the United States the tried and tested methodology, tools, and knowledge that Internews has developed over 40 years of supporting independent media across the world.

Since the LPC's launch in 2013, we have **mapped information needs** in communities across the U.S., **seed-funded local civic-minded startups**, and **partnered with hundreds of civic information sharers**, especially those serving BIPOC and immigrant communities.

With the help of new supporters, we are writing another chapter of the Listening Post Collective. We have recently launched an ambitious five-year strategy calling for a \$20 million investment to strengthen local information ecosystems in the most vulnerable regions across the United States. Among our goals are distributing 230 micro-grants for civic media projects, supporting the creation of 70 community-led IEAs, and engaging nine communities in our targeted approach to civic media design.

In 2024 and beyond, we hope to expand to numerous new communities nationwide — **turning them from information deserts into information gardens.**



The LPC Playbook

With the right support, civic media projects can thrive in any community. Our Civic Media Playbook is a free, self-paced, online platform that walks users step-by-step through the process of identifying and addressing information gaps. We also offer tools, financial support, and establish a peer network to help community members identify gaps and launch civic media projects.



Find the Playbook at
listeningpostcollective.org/playbook
 or follow the QR code.

LISTENING POST'S REACH

\$1M

*in subgrants to 85 people
and organizations*

19

*detailed information
ecosystem analyses*

250+

Playbook users

A Global Battle Against Mis- And Disinformation

Mis- and disinformation are not new — but their speed and reach are. In seconds, a malicious actor can reach millions of people with disinformation designed to distort public debate, incite violence, or undermine public health. Along with new technologies, **new forms of disinformation are also emerging**, requiring new responses to detect, contain, and counter them.

At Internews, we believe that good information is the primary line of defense — backed up by tech platforms and educated citizens able to detect and defend against bad information. When people can access trustworthy, independent news sources, they are equipped with the tools they need to make informed decisions about their lives. To this end, **we run programs all over the world to increase the supply of trusted information**, bolster the capacity of local media, deviate funds away from bad actors towards reputable ones, keep platforms accountable, and improve people's media literacy skills.

Check out some highlights of **global and local, traditional and unconventional initiatives** that are making a difference across the world in the battle against mis- and disinformation.

Rooted in Trust

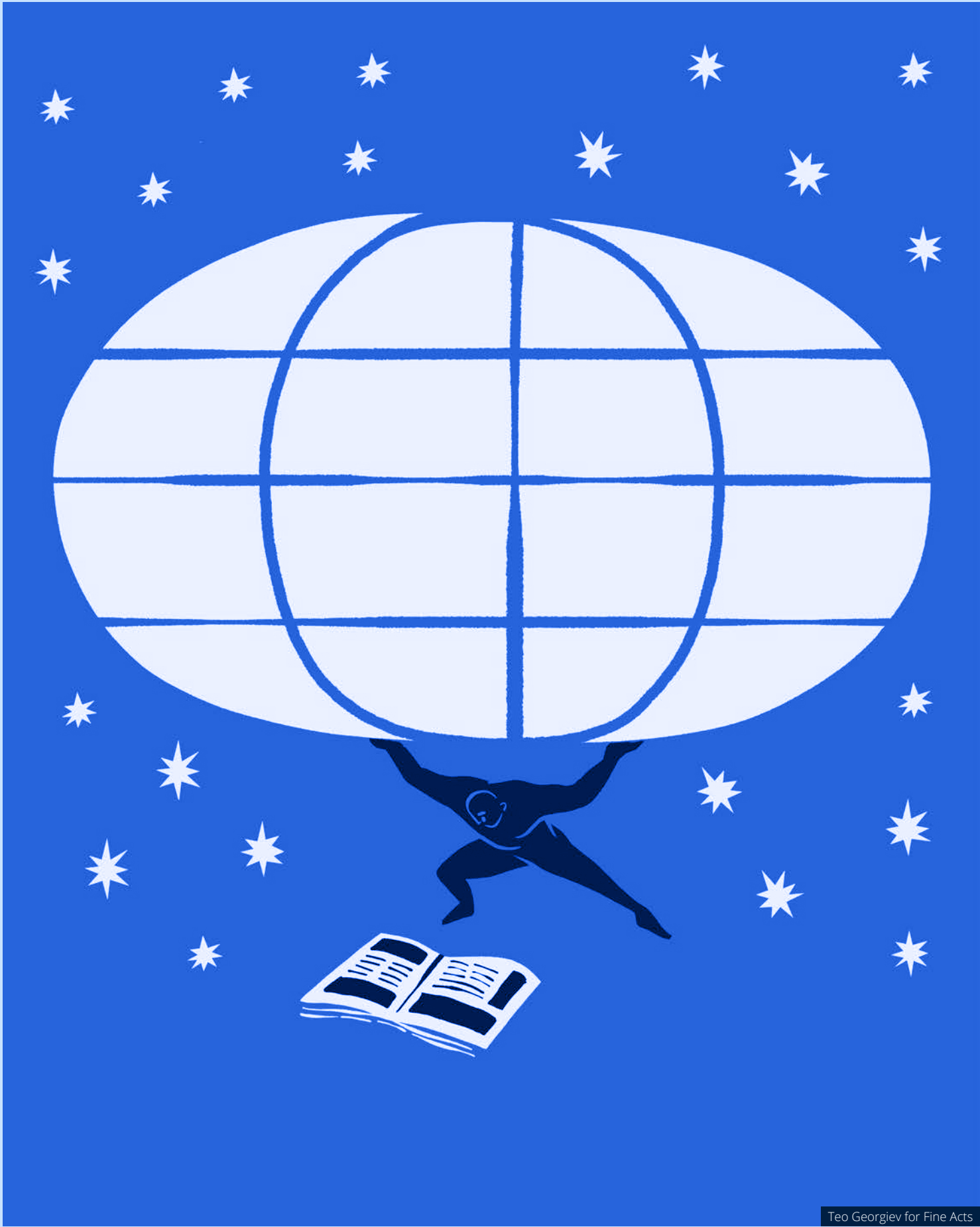
(01)

Rooted in Trust (RiT) is a global initiative funded by USAID and aimed at tackling the unprecedented wave of rumors and misinformation that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RiT tracked over 55,000 rumors, questions, and concerns from local communities in 15 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. It disseminated 750 bulletins tailored to healthcare workers, humanitarian actors, and media professionals, so that they could respond to local information needs. Based on this data and on our Information Ecosystem Assessments, *RiT* partners created 6,400+ pieces of health-related content in 60 languages, distributed through radio, TV, social media, and in person.

Over its three years of operation, *RiT* ensured communities were listened to and had access to accurate, lifesaving information about COVID-19 and other health issues.





Teo Georgiev for Fine Acts

Keeping Global Platforms Accountable

(02)

Our report *Safety at Stake: How to Save Meta's Trusted Partner Program* investigated Meta's flagship initiative to report mis- and disinformation and protect users from harm. Through dozens of interviews with some of Meta's closest partners, we found several operational failures in the program, including significant understaffing and long response times even on issues related to imminent harm. The report offered recommendations on how to bolster this vital initiative to protect user safety.

Over ninety news articles about *Safety at Stake*, including by *The Verge* and *The Financial Times*, reached an estimated readership of 214 million people.

A TV Show in Tunisia

(03)

We supported the production of the comedy miniseries *Familia Grande*, which portrays the daily life of a Tunisian family. Through the eyes of relatable characters, it shows how misinformation reaches ordinary citizens, how it affects their behaviors, and how it can be identified and countered. *Familia Grande* is available on Artify, a popular local streaming platform.

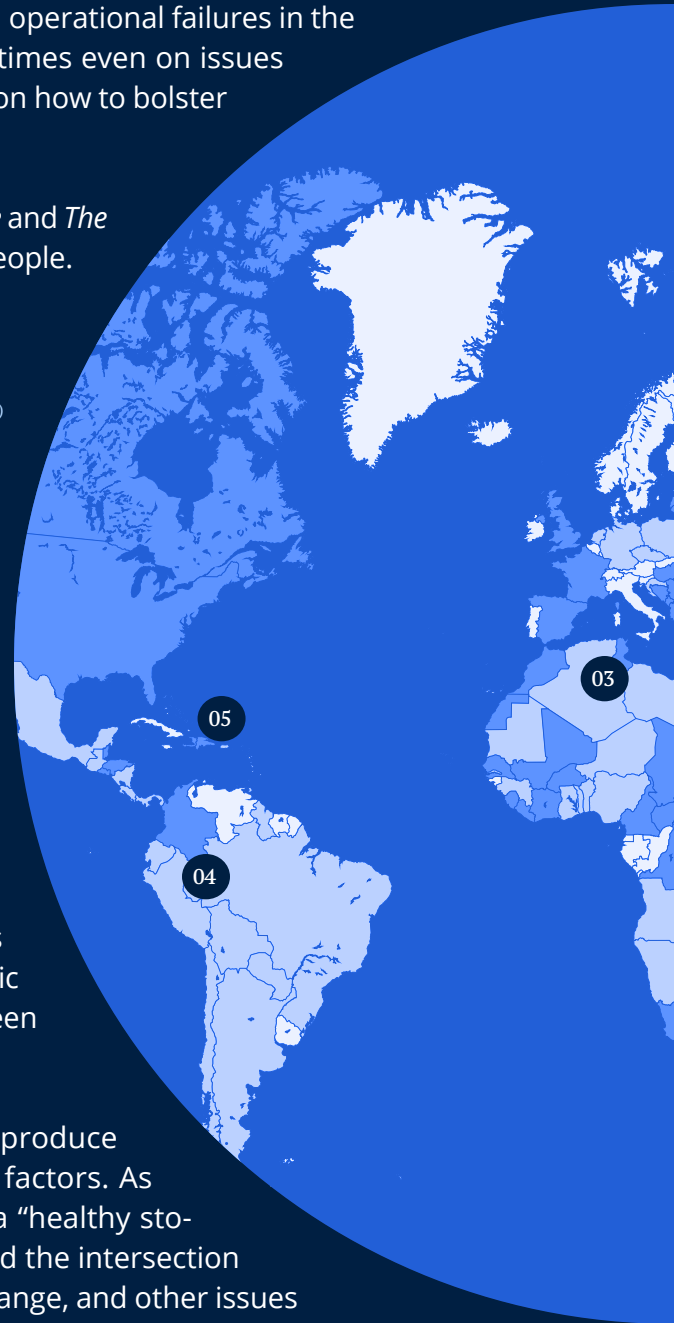
One Health in South America

(04)

The One Health approach understands the wellbeing of humans as inextricably linked to the health of wildlife and ecosystems. As communities navigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, our programs adopting this approach have been instrumental in dispelling rumors about both.

In Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, we have trained journalists to produce reporting that connects public health issues to environmental factors. As part of this work, our Peruvian partner *Salud con Lupa* started a "healthy stories" series, offering fellowships to local journalists who examined the intersection between the impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous group, climate change, and other issues affecting the local community.

Our *Health Journalism Network's* online courses helped communicators across South America cover the long-term consequences of COVID-19 and future health emergencies with a One Health approach, and connected global health experts with Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and last-mile local information responders.



Innovative Approaches in the Caribbean

(05)

In the Caribbean, we are adopting a human-centered approach to rumor tracking. Rather than focusing exclusively on data scraping or other automated means of data collection, our methodology is based on creating an organic network of individuals who submit rumors they come across in their day-to-day lives. We define these rumors as *unverified information*: the goal of the methodology is not to “fact-check” the rumors, but to identify how unverified information is spread and what kind of information people tend to share. In this way, we are able to identify common trends and gain insight into what issues are most salient locally.

Dispelling Rumors in Serbia

(06)

After the Serbian government mandated the use of electronic fiscal cash registers, vast amounts of misinformation started circulating in the country, spreading confusion among businesses, retailers, and the public about the new rules. That’s when *Nova Ekonomija*, a prominent media outlet in Serbia and our partner under the CLIMB project (*Cultivating Local Independent Media in the Balkans*, funded by the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor), stepped in.

Using data analytics tools provided by the North Macedonian company Pikasa and with support from CLIMB, *Nova Ekonomija* analyzed information patterns in the country, gained a deeper understanding of the citizens’ information needs, and produced a compelling series of ten news articles. These gained remarkable traction, attracting over 100,000 readers and being republished by other national media. The articles dispelled misinformation, brought clarity about the Serbian government’s new policy, and cemented *Nova Ekonomija*’s role in Serbia as a trusted source in the fight against misinformation.

Supporting Media in the Philippines

(07)

In partnership with a consortium of twenty organizations, including Rappler, the Asian Center for Journalism, and EngageMedia, we are running the *Initiative for Media Freedom (IMF)* — a five-year USAID-funded project to advance media independence, democratic governance, and social stability.

IMF is having transformative impact in the Philippines — from facilitating the approval of local ordinances on media freedom to bolstering journalists’ safety and the public’s ability to spot misinformation. Among its many achievements, *IMF* has trained more than 1,400 journalists and media professionals, analyzed and reported 17,000+ instances of disinformation, trained 5,300+ people on media literacy and fact-checking, and reached 8 million citizens with posts about responsible social media use.

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