

YOUTH AND DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

Module 10: Media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)¹



USAID

Access to information and an open and independent media are among the hallmarks of a sustainable democracy. The development of independent, professional media and an open, enabling environment for journalism can foster more transparent and accountable governance, increase public awareness of governance processes, promote civic engagement, and provide the information citizens need to participate in improving their lives and communities.

Today's youth are growing up in an era of technological advancement in which social and online media are widely available. As a result, they are the leading producers and consumers of this type of media and therefore have the opportunity to take a leading role in building a vibrant media sector. Young people can also use social media and other ICT tools to improve the outreach and operations of civil society groups, political parties, and other political organizations. It is important to note, however, that young people's access to and ability to utilize ICT varies across different identity groups and communities. For example, young people with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, racial and ethnic minorities, and those living in poverty may not have the same opportunities to learn about ICT as those from urban, elite

¹ The terms "media and ICT" and "media organizations" are used in this module to describe the wide-ranging variety of professional, volunteer, full-time, and part-time organizations and individuals engaged in traditional media, new and social media, and ICT endeavors.

communities. In many places, gender norms do not allow women the same opportunities to utilize ICT tools. Young women who are active online often face intimidation and threats. Media professionals and social media activists from other marginalized groups may also face increased intimidation, harassment, and violence, as well as heightened risk of identity-based violence. Further, during a time when mass access to online media may foster problems of disinformation about political processes and government, it is important that young people and other groups have the skills to properly assess the credibility of media sources.

Finally, the manner and frequency with which media sources portray youth and issues important to them can have serious implications for how they are viewed within society. In democratic societies, media must strive to represent all segments of society equally and fairly. The attraction of youth as niche markets for the media industry may incentivize media organizations to engage and properly portray diverse young people in their work. Taking steps to strengthen independent media and create more inclusive means of media production and consumption represents an important action in promoting youth, inclusion, and equality, and furthering inclusive and transparent democracy in support of USAID's DRG Strategy.



INTERMEDIATE RESULTS AND ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

INTERMEDIATE RESULT	PYD FEATURES AND ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES	
A legal framework that supports a media sector that is free and fair is established.	Skill-Building	Provide training and technical assistance to youth-led civil society organizations (CSOs) and other formal and informal media interest groups to advocate for adoption and implementation of laws to protect freedom of expression.
	Belonging and Membership	Support media, CSOs, and coalitions to advocate for reforms to the legal framework that increase equality of access to free and fair media for young people, including those from marginalized groups.
Young people's knowledge and participation as leaders in media and ICT professions is increased.	Skill-Building	Provide training and technical assistance for young activists and journalists to use social media and other ICT tools for advocacy, research, political communications, and other functions that may strengthen their ability to engage in political processes. Support journalism schools in strengthening and updating media and ICT programs.
	Healthy Relationships and Bonding	Support the creation of mentorship and internship programs for young women and men, including those from marginalized groups, to enter and advance within the media and ICT fields.
	Belonging and Membership	Support journalism clubs for youth bloggers, groups, and media workers.
The safety and security of all media and ICT users, activists, and professionals is protected.	Skill-Building	Support CSOs, legislators and government officials to review, revise, and advocate for passage and implementation of laws that protect people working in the media, including young citizen journalists and new media activists, from violence. Provide training to young people on media literacy and digital security.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Support youth-led public awareness-raising campaigns to improve public understanding of the ways in which young media workers and activists may be particularly vulnerable to targeted bullying, extortion, and violence in the course of their work and support efforts to address this problem.
Policies and practices of youth inclusion and nondiscrimination are strengthened within media organizations.	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Support media and ICT organizations to develop equal opportunity and non-discrimination clauses (inclusive of youth) in their human resource policies.
	Youth Engagement and Contribution	Work with media organizations to ensure that their policies and processes for recruitment and hiring are designed to reach youth and do not contain implicit biases that may exclude youth. Exclusionary policies may include advanced degrees or inflexible years of experience requirements.
Media organizations integrate a youth and diversity perspective into their work.	Skill-Building	Build the capacity of media organizations and professionals to institutionalize the use of youth analysis and an inclusion perspective so that their work is accessible to all. Provide training to enhance the ability of media and ICT professionals to design and produce content that promotes youth, equality, and inclusion.
	Youth Engagement and Contribution	Assist media and ICT organizations to organize opportunities and channels for young people to provide feedback on the accessibility and sensitivity of media coverage, and use perspectives gathered to improve their sensitivity and responsiveness to youth.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Provide training for journalists on how to cover and portray youth, including those from vulnerable or marginalized groups, that is sensitive to their needs and experiences. Such training might include techniques for interviewing young survivors of trauma without reinforcing trauma, as well as standards for protecting identities. This could either be standalone or integrated into other professionalization trainings.

Access to media and ICT is increased for all.	Belonging and Membership	Facilitate collaboration between media and youth-led civil society organizations to address gaps in media literacy and access to technology among youth, and particularly those from marginalized groups.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Support local governments and CSOs to integrate new technology and social media into their organizations' infrastructure and activities. Build the capacity of local government and CSOs to implement inclusive outreach, training, and education programs around new technology and social media.
Increased media literacy and critical thinking skills among youth.	Skill-Building	Build the capacity of schools and community groups to provide media literacy and technology training programs with a particular focus on women and girls and other marginalized groups who may not have the same access to education and use of ICT tools.

ILLUSTRATIVE PYD OR YOUTH-FOCUSED INDICATORS

To effectively measure PYD or youth-focused outcomes, indicators should be selected that are practical to measure and pertain as directly as possible to the PYD feature the program addresses. It is important to disaggregate monitoring data by relevant social segments including sex, geographic location, marital status, marginalized or at risk populations, and age (e.g., early adolescence (10-14); adolescence (15-19); emerging adulthood (20-24); transition to adulthood (25-29)). As a complement to inclusive indicator development, a [complexity-aware approach to monitoring, evaluation, and learning \(MEL\)](#) is likely to be useful for many USAID programs focused on social change in complex environments.

PYD FEATURE	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATOR
Youth Engagement and Contribution	% change of young people who are using social media and other platforms to engage in political processes
Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	% change in self-reported confidence of members of the media in interviewing youth who have experienced trauma without reinforcing that trauma.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE: NEW MEDIA SCHOOL (KOSOVO)

Through the New Media School (NMS) in Kosovo, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has assisted young political activists and leaders in using social media communication tools to carry out advocacy campaigns and improve their work. The program includes a “social media boot camp” to train youth on political communications and the use of social and traditional medial communication tools for enhancing advocacy campaigns, followed by technical support in designing and carrying out advocacy campaigns. Through three cohorts of the program, 60 young women and men who are active in political parties and civil society organizations have worked together to lead campaigns addressing a variety of local- and national-level issues, from preservation of historical sites to improving treatment of stray dogs to increasing gender equality in local and national assemblies. Recognizing NMS participants’ strengthened social media communication skills and expertise, many political parties hired NMS graduates into positions managing their parties’ communications and outreach.

PYD FEATURE	PROGRAM COMPONENT
Skill-Building	Through NMS, Kosovar youth have built technical and soft skills that have given them a better understanding of democracy, political processes, and the structure of Kosovo’s government. They also built skills related to policy advocacy, research, policy debates, and media communication (including online and traditional media). Participants said that the experience of learning, engaging with peers, and taking political action improved their soft skills, including an improved sense of self-efficacy, critical thinking abilities, goal orientation, and interpersonal skills.

Youth Engagement and Contribution	Young women and men have played a central role on the NMS program team, leading all aspects of program design, planning, management, and evaluation. Young team members have helped ensure that the program meets the needs of young people and have been key for establishing trusting relationships between the program and participants. The team often gathers feedback on the program from young participants and adjusts the curriculum and program delivery practices to respond to youth needs and interests.
Belonging and Membership	NMS advocacy campaigns have been led by mixed groups of young women and men from different political parties and civil society organizations. The experience of working together to reach a common goal promotes civil political discourse and constructive engagement across partisan lines.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS

To join the fight against child marriage and other issues that affect women and girls in marginalized communities, a YALI Fellow wanted to engage directly with communities to create change. He organized a radio talk show that brought together chiefs, religious leaders, girls, women and men to confront child marriage and discuss the importance of education for girls. Read more: [“The Power of Radio in the Fight for Girls Education in Malawi”](#).

CSII’s Process Historian site documents CSII’s co-creation process and the establishment of Hubs which included youth organizations as partners. The Tides center continues to provide funding to the Hubs to support activities including Innovation Labs that are led by youth.

YouthPower Learning - Michael Sweigart, Jennifer Heeg, and Cassandra Jessee – adapted this module in part from Counterpart International’s “Youth and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Programming: A Technical Guide.” YouthPower Learning acknowledges the guidance and contributions from USAID’s Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance and other USAID staff, in particular Maryanne Yerkes, Michael McCabe, Carey Utz, Vy Lam, and Claudia Agreda.

This module is a part of the Youth and Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Toolkit, which can be found at: <https://www.youthpower.org/youth-inclusion-drg-toolkit>.

For public inquiries and additional information, please email info@youthpower.org or mail to:
YouthPower Learning
 Making Cents International
 1350 Connecticut Ave, NW
 Suite 410 - Washington, DC 20036 USA

 www.YouthPower.org
 @YPLearning
 YouthPowerLearning

USAID YouthPower Learning generates and disseminates knowledge about the implementation and impact of positive youth development (PYD) and cross-sectoral approaches in international development. The project leads research, evaluations, and events designed to build the evidence base related to PYD. Concurrently, YouthPower Learning employs expertise in learning and knowledge sharing to promote engagement and inform the global community about how to successfully help transition young people into productive, healthy adults. YouthPower Learning supports the implementation of the 2012 USAID Youth in Development Policy to improve capacity and enable the aspirations of youth so that they can contribute to, and benefit from, more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities.

This brief is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Making Cents International through YouthPower: Evidence and Evaluation Task Order 1 (YouthPower Learning) AID Contract # AID-OAA-I-15-00034/ AID-OAA-TO-15-00011. This brief does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.