



INTERNEWS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Internews is a nonprofit that supports independent media and information actors in 100 countries – from radio stations in refugee camps, to hyper-local news outlets, to filmmakers and technologists. Internews trains journalists and digital rights activists, tackles disinformation, and offers business expertise to help media outlets thrive financially. We believe everyone deserves trustworthy news and information to make informed decisions about their lives and hold power to account.

In the Philippines, our work seeks to protect and improve a healthy information ecosystem, responding to challenges like attacks against media, disinformation, closing civic space, climate crisis, and public health.

We work with Philippine partners from media, academia, civil society, and the business community to help Filipinos safely receive quality, local information that saves lives, improves livelihoods, and holds institutions accountable.

INITIATIVE FOR MEDIA FREEDOM (IMF)

This five-year USAID-funded project supports and advances media capacity and independence to enhance democratic governance that provides economic and political inclusion and promotes social stability. Internews is implementing the IMF in partnership with key media, civil society, private sector, and academic organizations: EngageMedia, Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA), Lyf Solutions Inc., National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), PECOJON – The Peace and Conflict Journalism Network, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), Rappler, RIWI Corp., University of Philippines College of Mass Communication Foundation, Inc. (UPCMCFI) through the Department of Journalism, and VERA Files. The consortium of ten partners collectively designs and implements innovative, evidenced-based activities to support a healthy information ecosystem in the Philippines. The coalition promotes free press and journalist safety. We use a diverse toolbox of activities to tackle disinformation, both from the supply side – by tracking malign actors and supporting fact-checkers and investigative journalism – and the demand side, by promoting media literacy and critical thinking. We also support media self-regulation to consolidate trust in independent journalism and promote ethical standards. This project prioritizes making sustainable changes by empowering Philippine organizations and individuals including the marginalized and youth to seek, receive, and impart quality information and ideas.



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- **3,500** citizens engaged on freedom of expression, freedom on information, and digital rights
- **3,000** Facebook likes and followers of [#BarangayHub](#) online community
- **18** mentors trained to support peers on physical safety, digital security and overall well being
- **3,000** individuals trained on media literacy and fact-checking
- **19,000** Filipinos surveyed on media consumption, habits, and perceptions

- **500,000** Filipinos reached by and 85,000 people engaged in social media posts on critical thinking and responsible social media use
- Research, development and release of three major publications, downloaded in total over 1,000 times: **Information Dystopia and Philippine Democracy, Journalist Safety Guide, and Digital Rights Report**

PHILIPPINE FACT-CHECKER INCUBATOR (PFCI)

Internews, with support from Facebook, implements PFCI to incubate new fact-checking organizations ahead of the 2022 Philippine general elections. Selected organizations receive a comprehensive support package including training, technical and financial support, mentorship, and guidance following global fact-checking organization standards like those of the [International Fact-Checking Network \(IFCN\)](#) Code of Principles. This assistance package is provided to selected organizations by Internews in partnership with VERA Files and Rappler. PFCI also establishes a coordination mechanism to enable fact-checking organizations to collaborate.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON ELECTORAL DISINFORMATION (MDED)

The MDED project sets the ground for collaborative work to strengthen the information environment and mitigate the impact of disinformation on the May 2022 elections. Internews is working with two Filipino researchers Dr. Jonathan Corpus Ong (University of Massachusetts, USA) and Dr. Nicole Curato (University of Canberra, Australia) to conduct innovative and action-oriented research methods and network-building activities including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and a deliberative forum.

USAID-funded RiT program raises to the challenge in countering the rampant spread of misinformation about COVID-19 and its consequences, particularly where reliable sources of information are scarce such as in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In addition to tracking 200+ rumors, Internews supports the creation of information-exchange loops, encouraging better collaboration between public health agencies, humanitarian organizations, local media, and community leaders on live-saving health information. Internews also partner with the Coalition for Moro Youth Movement to empower 100+ local youth ambassadors to lead initiatives against COVID-19 misinformation in their communities.

RiT IMPACT

- Reached ~**800,000** people through social media engagements, and almost **700** people through community listening and learning sessions.
- More than **100** stories were produced which are composed of social media content from our field implementing partners, radio segments, and features from media outlets in the region highlighting the rumors surrounding COVID-19.
- **494** rumors collected both online and offline, and seven rumor bulletins published in **three local languages (Tagalog, Maranao, and Maguindanaoan)** and shared through various platforms catering to the needs of the communities, media organizations, and humanitarian agencies.
- An information ecosystem assessment report entitled **Disconnected**, which highlights the many disconnects in the information ecosystem in the Bangsamoro region, was published and shared with key actors in the humanitarian and media sectors.



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UNDERSTUDIED DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN THE PHILIPPINES (UDPP)

The UDPP project seeks to understand the role of lesser-known digital platforms, such as TikTok and WeChat, in the Philippine information environment and draw out strategies to mitigate disinformation in these platforms. Internews is working with three Filipino researchers Jose Mari Hall Lanuza, Rossine Fallorina, and Samuel Cabbuag to conduct an Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) to get a deeper understanding of why and how these platforms are used, whether they are being used to spread disinformation and identify their impact and contribution to the information environment. The IEA framework seeks to capture all dimensions of the relationship between information supply and information demand. The IEA process includes key informant interviews, focused group discussions, and digital ethnography.

EARTH JOURNALISM NETWORK (EJN)

EJN works to strengthen the quality and increase the quantity of environmental reporting worldwide. In the Philippines, EJN launched the Philippine Network of Environmental Journalists in 2010 to bolster the capacity of journalists and media organizations to cover environment and natural resource management issues. EJN builds the knowledge and skills of journalists to provide factual and engaging environmental information to policy makers and amplify the voices of the most vulnerable communities by providing training, webinar, documentary films, podcast and resources for reporting, grants for story production and capacity building projects, fellowships to report from local and global conferences, and the distribution of stories through innovative multimedia platforms. In 2019, EJN helped establish the conservation news and information website, Mongabay Environews Philippines. The first-ever Certificate Course on Climate Change Reporting in the Philippines was also launched in 2021 with the Asian Center for Journalism-Ateneo De Manila University.

EJN IMPACT

- Provided training and capacity building activities for over **800** national and local journalists on environmental reporting and the use of innovative reporting tools like data journalism, fact-checking, geojournalism, mapping, among others
- Produced **hundreds** of news and feature stories and investigative reports with national and community journalists and media organizations. Mongabay Environews Philippines alone has published over **150** stories since 2019.
- Assisted more than **200** journalists, through small grants, to produce local environment-related stories
- Produced and distributed journalists' reporting resources such as the **SMS Mobile Reporting Manual for Philippine Journalists; the Championing Climate Change Adaptation Resource Book; Reporting Environmental Issues through Gender Lens; a Training Module on Gender Sensitivity and Safety focusing on the environment; and the Klima 101: A Climate Change Guidebook for Philippine Journalists**



GREATER INTERNET FREEDOM (GIF)

The GIF project uses a two-pronged approach to advance digital rights and help realize other fundamental freedoms: Enhance digital safety for civil society and media and increase citizen engagement in internet governance. With the support of USAID, GIF works with EngageMedia in the Philippines to improve organizational security, technical support, and incident response, while training experts. Leveraging Internews IMF networks, Internews raises awareness of the public on digital rights and cyber laws that could undermine them.

HEALTH JOURNALISM NETWORK (HJN)

In the wake of COVID-19, Internews established the HJN to empower journalists everywhere to report on a range of health issues including emerging pathogen threats. This network provides an opportunity to collaborate, including rapidly mobilizing shared vital health information during an emergency, accessing resources, and finding opportunities on health reporting. HJN recently launched Let's Talk COVID-19 and Vaccine courses as well as Vaccine Story Production. With an in-house health reporting expert for Asia, Internews plans to expand support on health journalism in the Philippines as well.

2021 INTERNEWS FELLOWS PROGRAM

In alignment with Internews' foundational approach to partner with and support local communities, Internews have a year-long fellowship program with 11 organizations representing the best in their communities. One of them is the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), an independent nonprofit media agency that specializes in investigative reporting from the Philippines. Fellow recipients receive technical assistance beyond what is afforded through a typical grant project that will enhance their organizations' exposure, competitiveness, and sustainability, as well as support to collaborate with Internews in joint initiatives and events.



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