

Program Factsheet

Budget: \$15 million

Timeline: 2023 – 2028

CONTEXT AND SUMMARY

Armenia has a vibrant media ecosystem that nevertheless faces serious challenges. Resource-strapped public interest media struggle to consistently produce high-quality coverage that reaches broad audiences, including youth, minorities, and residents of rural areas. Few independent media outlets in Armenia are financially viable, which poses a threat to their long-term sustainability.

The USAID-funded Media Program in Armenia (MPA) aims to strengthen the integrity of the information space in the country. Implemented by Internews and its partners, Media Initiatives Center (MIC), Yerevan Press Club (YPC), and Zinc Network, the program aims to enhance journalistic standards, catalyze the financial viability of public interest media, and foster an enabling environment for a society that is more resilient to disinformation.

In November 2023 and January 2024, MPA began its partnership with the Media Diversity Institute (MDI), Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression (CPFE), Public Journalism Club (PJC), and Freedom of Information Center in Armenia (FOICA) to amplify the Program's reach and impact, as partners will offer psychological, digital, and legal support to media and journalists and bolster advocacy efforts under MPA.

PROGRAM RESULTS AS OF FEBRUARY 2024

- The program assisted **55 media outlets** by providing digital security, legal and psychosocial support, and guidance on ethical standards.
- Overall, **69 media representatives received training and support** on media style guides and codes of ethics, media and information literacy, quality reporting, and physical and digital security, as well as psychosocial support.
- Media.am produced a total of **193 pieces of content spanning various noteworthy events** and addressing challenges within the media sector in Armenia.
- The "Tvapatum 2023" contest engaged **106 journalists from 47 media outlets** in Armenia.
- YPC organized the **annual assembly on media self-regulation**, bringing together diverse stakeholders.
- **Eleven Armenian media outlets adopted the Code of Ethics** of Armenian Media and Journalists since the start of MPA.
- More than **100 schools across the country participated in Media Literacy Week** initiatives.
- **MIC established a Consultation Group** that serves as a platform to facilitate the stakeholder communication on current developments in media literacy education.

GRANTS PROVIDED TO MEDIA WITHIN THE PROGRAM

<u>Content Development</u>	<u>Technical Development</u>	<u>Strategic Development</u>	<u>Emergency</u>
At least 70 grants for specialized reporting, investigative journalism, election coverage, etc. Seven grants have already been awarded; 11 are to be awarded during the 2nd year of MPA	At least 21 grants for organizational goals (newsroom convergence, workflow optimization, etc.), with eight awarded in the 2nd year of MPA	Seven grants to enact complex changes in organizational structure, business models, or editorial culture, with five awarded in the 2nd year of MPA	Rapid response funding to address operational, digital security and physical threats to media, content producers, and CSOs, with two grants awarded in the 2nd year of MPA

PROMOTING JOURNALISTIC EXCELLENCE

The Media Excellence Accelerator by MIC offers on-demand training and mentorship for media producers, aiding newsrooms in developing ethics policies and high-quality media products.

Internews provides grants for quality content, while the Media Initiatives Center offers tailored consulting. Internews' Distribution Desk supports the expansion of impact and reach.

ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED MEDIA CLIMATE

The YPC monitors media laws and policies, develops recommendations, and advocates with government bodies. MPA supports the independence of media oversight bodies by engaging with the Council of Public TV and Radio.

CPFE provides legal assistance to media and journalists via the Media Defense Fund, while YPC advocates with the government to make self-regulation a permanent part of the state policy and ensures the YPC-run Media Ethics Observatory plays an active role in the institutional development of the media self-regulation system.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF PUBLIC INTEREST MEDIA

The program offers tailored business management support by co-designing media business plans for audience and revenue growth. Internews provides grants to enhance business and operational capabilities, while Zinc Network offers consulting for market positioning and monetization strategies.

Additionally, MPA supports the establishment of an independent Media Support Fund for sustainable public interest media operations.

MEDIA LITERACY

Through comprehensive work with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia, the program will support the institutionalization of media literacy education in the country's preschools and schools. The program also aims to improve the media literacy skills of youth, educators and youth workers.

LEARNING THROUGH RESEARCH

Freedom of Expression and Media Consumption Research

The initial research was conducted during the first year of the Program, and subsequent studies will be conducted annually to provide Internews and its partners with valuable insights into media consumption trends in Armenia.

Media Market and Consumer Research

The first study was conducted in 2023 by Zinc Network to assess the advertisement and media market in Armenia. It will be repeated midway through and in the last year of the program and will help to formulate business development strategies for the media outlets.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Educators and Media and Information Literacy Community

Conducted by Media Initiatives Center, this assessment informs the Program's strategy on the institutionalization of Media and Information Literacy.

