

in other parts of the process like providing grants management support. Still others involve both peers and donors in reviewing, selecting, and making grant decisions.

Even funders who may not be able to immediately (or perhaps ever) hand over decisions about grantmaking have several options for incorporating meaningful participation in their work before, during, and after those decisions are made. They can engage non-grantmakers in identifying issue priorities, developing strategies, sitting on advisory councils/boards, engaging in research and evaluation, conducting site visits and reviewing proposals. They can test the approach in one or two program areas.

Internally, they can institute hiring policies that favor participatory experience; encourage staff to collaborate across programs; involve staff from all ranks in policy discussions; and stipulate a number of board seats for peers. And they can support field-building through research and evaluation about the approach.

Some funders see feedback and listening as indicators of participatory practice. Others believe that while these are important and necessary components of participatory philanthropy, they're insufficient to breaking down power imbalances because the people asking for feedback can still choose whether to use it in making decisions about issues affecting the lives of the people providing it. This, they say, ends up looping back to the top-down, expert-driven system that's been the hallmark of institutional philanthropy.

The good news is that some much-needed cracks in this system are starting to appear. The question is whether institutional philanthropy will follow other fields that are embracing participatory approaches because they understand that innovative ideas about resolving hard issues aren't going to come from solely from experts but in partnership with people who can bring their lived experience to bear in important decision-making about their lives, communities, and futures.

For a field whose sole purpose is the betterment of humankind, participatory grantmaking seems to be an approach that philanthropy not only should get behind but, ultimately, get in front of to lead the way for others. Will philanthropy step up? Let's hope it doesn't take another decade.

Theme 3: Security

A Holistic Approach to Operational and Digital Security
By Rowan Reid, Project Director, Journalist Safety, and Marjorie Rouse, Senior Vice President for Programs, Internews

Editor's note: Internews, an international nonprofit that works to ensure all people have access to trusted, quality information, explains the need for funders to understand and support digital safety among their grantees and partners, and offers simple approaches to increase safety across sectors.

A shrinking civic space and advanced technological means of attacking, surveilling, and silencing critics should concern all those who support civil society and other development objectives, and especially those who work with independent, investigative and community news organizations. According to Reporters without Borders' 2018 report, "The climate of hatred is steadily more visible... The line separating verbal violence from physical violence is dissolving."

While the digital age has greatly increased the potential for journalists to hold those in power to account, this same proliferation of information online has left journalists more vulnerable to adversaries. Beyond the killings reported around the world, journalists are being harassed physically, digitally and through the courts. While human rights and media organizations are often on the front lines of these attacks, risk and security must be considered when supporting health, environment, education, and other sectors as well, as they too are increasingly coming under attack.

Despite the relatively small community of public and private donors supporting this work, there is not a shared understanding of risks, risk tolerance, or risk mitigation within the donor community, or between donors and partners. As a result, implementing organizations underfund or de-prioritize risk mitigation; donors lag in their ability to assess or respond to emerging threats; and the community as a whole has a scattershot approach to organizational, informational, and physical security. Resilient solutions for journalist safety demands integrating operational security into the global, regional,

and national architecture for press freedom, trusted information, and journalist safety.

Internews has spent more than 35 years supporting independent media and information activists around the world. We have developed pioneering practices in digital and physical security for media and civil society, leading digital safety awareness campaigns, and improving the access for activists and journalists to secure communication channels using resources developed in-house such as LevelUp!, a resource for the digital safety training community; SaferJourno, a digital security resource for media trainers; and SAFETAG, a security audit framework for civil society organizations.

Internews recommends investment in a “community of safe actors” rather than focusing on the needs of individuals or individual organizations. We would also

welcome a conversation about these issues at the donor level. The “community of safe actors” would, in most cases, be comprised of an in-country group consisting of media and civil society groups sharing information and best practices around security issues. This approach provides multiple aspects of impact:

- **Sectoral behavior change**—Broader awareness and ongoing vigilance by members to increase behavior change across the sector. In one country context, we have seen media and civil society poorly prepared for defense against digital and physical surveillance as the government cracked down and exploited this vulnerability. In response, over the past two years, members of the development sector have increased their security capabilities with the view that those most exposed would be targeted first. However,

Security through a gender lens

Internews believes that access to information is a root solution to enabling women and men to make informed decisions, participate in dialogue, stand up for their rights, influence policy and social norms and hold governments to account. Due to the fundamental imperative of advancing our mission to over half the world’s population, our strategy prioritizes the advancement of women’s and girls’ rights in our programmatic work. We also aspire to address broader sexual orientation and gender inclusion. Our Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment strategy:

- Ensures safe access to information for women, girls and vulnerable groups in some of the world’s most challenging places;
- Supports women’s empowerment by building their leadership in the media, information and communications technology fields; and
- Improves the information we all consume by promoting more stories produced by, for and about women and girls.

In Iraq, for example, Internews’ approach to gender is rooted in local network building, coordinated advocacy, and targeted journalism trainings on gender-sensitive issues. Our program, “Women Voices” (Aswat Al-Maraa), aims to challenge societal attitudes that stigmatize survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by supporting journalists and women human rights defenders to shed light on sensitive issues through coordinated reporting and advocacy. We are working with female Iraqi journalists and media outlets to create a nationwide coalition of women journalists and human rights defenders to strengthen their resilience against gender-based attacks, and build the capacity of journalists to report on sensitive human rights and SGBV.



- because the sector remains fragmented, there are still organizations that have not taken measures to protect the identity of their staff and beneficiaries.
- **Collaboration**—A more secure network for civil society and media organizations that holds itself accountable and assists each other in their common interests. For example, in another country context where there was both conflict and a government crackdown, as the environment became difficult to operate for independent media and CSOs, the international donor community formed working groups with their beneficiaries to advise and share safety information. The relationships developed through these groups remain whilst many of the donors have scaled back operations. Some of the most appropriate safety information continues to be shared without direct donor coordination.
 - **Sustainability**—Members at the country/local should have the ability to train and bring new people into the fold rather than relying on a drop-in approach.
 - **Advocacy**—A collective, coordinated approach is far more effective in achieving change both locally and internationally; and
 - **Reporting**—Sharing of incidents and information in a “safe” network allows everyone to upskill.

At the project level, we have identified ways funders can influence and support grantees in pursuit of security. To start, funders should get up to speed on the risks impacting their work. The Digital Security and Grantcraft Guide, from the Netgain Partnership, is a great starting point. Internews will be releasing a research-based donor-focused risk assessment and best-practice report later this year. Early results indicate funders should:

- Begin the conversation, at multiple levels, early: What you fund and where you fund it affects the risk. Identify where you balance potential outcomes against potential risks. Include your decision makers, grantees, and beneficiaries in a full stakeholder discussion;
- Signal a willingness to fund security. Directly and clearly encourage budget line items to keep partners safe, and work with partners to adapt plans if the situation changes;
- Encourage project risk assessments in the ideation/proposal process that strike a balance between simplicity and the ability to deal with complex situations;
- Set appropriate internal expectations — this work is critical and important, and we have to all be in partnership together to do it well and safely; and
- Make sure partners are aware of existing emergency response mechanisms such as Lifeline or the remote help organizations listed in the Digital First Aid Kit and consider funding these mechanisms.

Organizations that defend human rights and democracy around the world often do so in high-risk environments. The digital age has wrought the journalism community with a host of safety vulnerabilities, but it also provides an opportunity to harness technology to protect those who protect freedom of speech. Internews sees a need to connect this collective energy, together with the funder and implementer community, toward sustainable approaches to the complex issue of journalist safety, designed with the needs of diverse communities in mind.

For Funders Working Inside of Hostile Nations, Sometimes the Only Solution Is to Leave

By Marius Dragomir, Director of the Center for Media, Data & Society

Editor's note: Marius Dragomir explains the limited options available for foundations and the nonprofits they support when operating in countries that are hostile to their work.

When the board of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) decided in spring 2018 to close its operation in Hungary, many local activists and NGOs were outraged, asserting that the charity—endowed by philanthropist George Soros—should stay and fight the populist, immigrant-bashing government of prime minister Viktor Orban. OSF's decision to leave was prompted by the resounding win of Orban's party, Fidesz, in the Hungarian elections held in April 2018.

But OSF first and foremost feared for its employees in Budapest after Orban's government introduced a bevy of legal provisions aimed at immigrant-defending NGOs. A law adopted in June 2016, officially called "Stop Soros," forbids NGOs to act in asylum cases. Because OSF funds such NGOs, the foundation also needed to operate according to the new laws. In response, its Budapest staff moved to Berlin, where it has been operating since August 2018.

But what happens to the organizations bankrolled by such philanthropies, particularly media outlets closely targeted by governments, when their sponsors leave?

Some choose to stay and fight from within, but that is hardly a sustainable and realistic solution, history shows. Through legal tools, pressures and intimidation, governments manage to muffle critical voices. Media in such regimes eventually have to move their operations out of country, just as funders do. None of the OSF's media grantees has moved out of Hungary yet.

Moving operations out of country was extremely complicated in the pre-internet era. For example, philanthropy-funded *The Zimbabwean*, established in 2005 by journalist Wilf Mbanga, was edited in London, printed

in South Africa and then shipped to its readers across Zimbabwe. That was a backbreaking operation. Yet, for Zimbabweans, the newspaper was the sole source of independent news during the grim times of the Robert Mugabe dictatorship.

Thousands of miles away, the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), a media outlet initially funded by philanthropic money, was based across the border in the Thai town of Chiang Mai. It aired its radio broadcasts from Norway for many years via a short-wave radio transmitter. Both *The Zimbabwean* and DVB had reporters on the ground, often operating incognito.

Today, thanks to the internet, people have much easier access to news and reporting from outside an anti-democratic country, and moving operations is less of a hassle. Meydan TV produces broadcast news for its Azerbai audience from Berlin. Meduza, a news portal covering Russia, is headquartered in Latvia's capital city, Riga. Both Meydan TV and Meduza are financed mostly by philanthropies.

It is hard to tell what will happen to the few philanthropically-supported investigative journalism outlets in Hungary. Although Hungary is part of the EU, a political and economic union that would normally guarantee media freedom, the EU has been ineffectual in reining in Orban's dictatorial outbursts.

If the political situation in Hungary deteriorates, the last standing independent media there will have to go into exile, too. That might be, unfortunately, the sole solution. However, especially in such situations, philanthropy support is probably the most needed.



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