

# INITIATIVE FOR MEDIA FREEDOM

Supporting an independent and free press to counter disinformation, promote political inclusion, and enhance democratic governance



Families of the victims of the Ampatuan, Maguindanao massacre gather to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the single bloodiest attack against the media and demand justice for the 58 people, including 32 journalists and media workers, murdered on 23 November 2009.

**E**nshrined in the Philippine Constitution, freedom of expression and the press have underpinned the development of a largely independent media capable of conducting high quality investigative and public interest reporting on controversial social and political subjects.

In its re-emergence following the collapse of the repressive Marcos regime, the media sector thrived while establishing a healthy tension with subsequent governments as it performed its watchdog role and cemented itself as a critical democratic institution in Philippine society.

In 2020, the Philippines slipped to 136<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index (down from its 2019 ranking of 134) due to a number of challenges: increasingly dangerous environment for journalists, information disorder, regulatory obstacles and exceptions, and weak self-governance.

Despite the myriad of challenges confronting the media sector, Internews and its partners note a number of opportunities that exist to preserve and widen the space for healthy, pluralistic, democratic discourse in the Philippines: history of holding the line, diverse coalitions in place, youth potential, and openings on self-regulation.

## IMF Partners

**EngageMedia** uses the power of video, the internet, and open technologies to create social and environmental change.

**Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA)** assists citizens and communities, especially civil society organizations and other disadvantaged sectors, in the strategic and appropriate use of information and communications technologies for democratization and popular empowerment.

**Lyf Solutions Inc.** is a multimedia production, campaigns, and events company that produces fresh and innovative content for the digital community and tells stories to connect people's inspiring meaningful conversations with social action.

**National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP)**, a trade association that represents the interests of Filipino journalists. For more than a decade now, NUJP has been training and helping colleagues across the country on welfare and safety.

**Peace and Conflict Journalism Network (PECOJON)** is an international group of journalists that mainstreams conflict sensitive journalism and promotes high quality reporting.

**Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ)** specializes and promotes investigative reporting and data journalism on current and public interest issues.

**Rappler** combines the best of journalism, technology and civic engagement to produce rich multimedia content and tell stories in new and powerful ways, building communities of action.

**RIWI Corp.** is a global survey technology firm that gathers citizen opinion data and accelerates engagement initiatives in every country in the world using its patented technology.

**University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication Foundation, Incorporated (UPCMCFI)** through the Department of Journalism, is recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the country's best journalism program and Center of Excellence.

**VERA Files** takes a deeper look into current Philippine issues, whose expertise lies in the production of research-intensive and in-depth reports in multiple formats, and training and mentoring journalists, students, and civil society organizations.

## IMF's three-pronged approach

The Initiative for Media Freedom (IMF) is a five-year program implemented by Internews and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with the support of the American people. Internews and its partners work collaboratively to enhance democratic governance that provides economic, political, and social inclusion and advances social stability.

### OBJECTIVE ONE

#### Improve the environment for a free press

Strengthen media stakeholders' understanding of the laws that protect freedom of expression and build coalition capacity to support the enabling environments

- Understand the issues and develop coalitions
- Build community ownership and trust in media
- Promote safety of journalists

### OBJECTIVE TWO

#### Bolster capacity of media and other organizations to address disinformation

Confront information disorder at critical points on both the supply and demand sides of information dissemination

- Map disinformation ecosystem
- Build awareness and report disinformation
- Hold media outlets and platforms accountable
- Improve access to quality content

### OBJECTIVE THREE

#### Strengthen self-regulation of the media

Mobilize media stakeholders to update the industry code of ethics and design an auditable accounting mechanism, while targeted capacity building will increase awareness of and adherence to the code of ethics

- Develop agreed standards and reporting mechanism of ethical violations
- Empower community on digital rights



Internews, an international nonprofit organization, empowers people worldwide with the trustworthy, high-quality news and information they need to make informed decisions, participate in their communities, and hold power to account.



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