

Executive Summary

Media Matters is about the central role of the media in effective development. Following a year long collaboration between media development practitioners and leading social, political and communications scientists, Media Matters presents *five* core messages to the international development community. The messages are grounded in academic rigour and the seasoned analysis of field professionals.

Media Matters : Five Key Messages to Policy Makers

1 The New Governance Agenda: Independent media are integral to good governance. Media and press freedom indicators are being included in governance monitoring frameworks. But development agency engagement in media and communications assistance remains fragmented and marginal. Media support needs to be mainstreamed far more effectively across both policy and practice.

2 Media, Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Independent media systems have a positive impact on governance, democratic transitions and the 2015 MDG targets. A growing body of empirical evidence exists to demonstrate this. New communications technologies are reframing relationships between media, citizens and the state. Community media empowers those poorest communities who will benefit most from achieving the MDGs. However, research on the impact of media and communications on the poor needs to be strengthened.

3 Counterbalance to Extremism: Independent media systems that are inclusive and responsive to diversity play a key role in preventing the exclusion of voices that breed extremism. Healthy public spheres can host a wide range of views which can dilute intolerance. Policy makers should increase support for media assistance programmes to widen access for moderate voices and balanced discourse. And donors should engage systematically in media development in countries affected by extremism, as this threatens progress on the MDGs.

4 Media and Global Issues: the lack of local media coverage of the external driving forces of change on poor countries - international trade, climate change and global health for instance - is generating deficits in governance through continued public disengagement in these issues. These deficits can be tackled, however, through concerted media and communications strategies, that include assisting developing country journalists to cover processes such as the next phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

5 Strategies for Healthy Media Systems: a global media assistance community exists that has its own history, experience base, metrics and research agenda. Development agencies need to engage with this sector with more urgency in order to harness the proven contribution that media development can make to the MDGs; through established strategies such as support to media policy and legislation, the development of journalism associations, the provision of affordable capital, professional training and the capacity-building of indigenous media assistance organisations.

In October 2005 the first global gathering of the media assistance sector took place in Amman, Jordan, under the patronage of King Abdullah II. The inaugural Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) drew together over 425 representatives of media assistance organisations from 97 countries. Supported by a range of agencies and foundations including DFID, the SDC and the Ford and Knight Foundations, the GFMD also attracted high-level representation from the UN and the World Bank.

Media assistance aims to strengthen regional, national and local media systems and institutions in ways that serve the public interest. Examples of media assistance include support to regulatory reform, journalism training and media business management. It also covers support to community media, citizen journalism and media for sustainable development - on health and environmental issues, for instance - in ways that ensure that people are able to access information and to express their own opinions and priorities in the public arena.

Communication is a critical missing link in development policy and practice.

A major point of consensus at the GFMD was the need for the media assistance sector to argue more cogently for its place within the framework of international development. The pioneering work of the World Bank Institute had made the case for the role of the media in economic development in its publication 'The Right to Tell'. The GFMD called for the role of media and media support strategies to be examined more broadly against the wider canvas of the development agenda, encapsulated by the set of international targets, the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Media Matters is the response to that call.

Media Matters has four key aims:

1 To help development policy makers and practitioners understand the relevance of vibrant, independent media systems to their wider goals;

2 To highlight work on the evidence of the relationship between media, communications and the development agenda;

3 To flag key global and regional trends and opportunities in media assistance;

4 To map the media assistance sector, its growing body of literature, and the emerging international research partnerships that will help define its priorities to 2015.

Overview

Media Matters draws together thinking and analysis that covers the breadth and depth of the media development landscape. The opening section, **'Why Media Matters: Global Perspectives'** gathers the work of several thought leaders on major trends that cut across both the communications and development policy arenas; this is followed by an examination of the current debate that is engaging researchers, development professionals and media assistance experts alike, namely **'How Media Matters: Measuring its Impact'**. The third section, **'Challenges in Media Matters: Practitioner Experiences'** presents a range of regional and sectoral case studies, and the final section forms a guide to current information sources and studies of the field of media support, in **'Mapping the Sector - Literature, Surveys and Resources'**.

1

Why Media Matters: Global Perspectives

The rise of an information and communications economy and culture, and the relevance of media and media assistance to international development, form the focus of this first section of Media Matters. How and why is media important in international development, and what contribution can it play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals?

The Global Information Economy and Culture

In Information Equality David Hoffman, President, Internews Network, describes how the new networked information economy is creating a new wave of egalitarianism that - underpinned by adequate investment and a pro-poor policy framework - holds enormous promise for social and political development.

Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information, United Nations, outlines how new communications technologies are a key driver of globalisation, but also how the Information Divide runs across technology, gender, governance and content. He is concerned that the globalised media is dangerously lacking in authentic voices from the developing world. He calls for a media that recognises and embraces the diversity of the real world, warning that 'the alternative to this recognition may be terrorism, which has so dominated our headlines in recent times.'

Theories of the Public Sphere and Young Democracies

How media contributes to the development of democracy and to an inclusive public sphere is a vital question when considering the role of media in development. Thomas Jacobson, of Temple University explores this theme by looking at the challenges that young democracies face in developing the social norms and cultural processes that underpin deliberative politics, and the complex information flows that media systems need to facilitate if governments are to remain responsive to citizens. Jacobson characterises the latter as 'a requirement that is related to, but separate from, the news media's important role in facilitating governmental transparency and accountability. It is the additional requirement that media represent public opinion in a way that accurately expresses the voice of citizens across the full range of their interests.'