



# **MEDIA ENABLING DEMOCRACY, INCLUSION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN MOLDOVA (MEDIA-M)**

Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability in Moldova (MEDIA-M) promotes the development of Moldova's independent, professional media. The program, co-supported by USAID and UKAID, aims to expand citizens' access to a variety of perspectives and to foster a media sector that is more resilient to political and financial pressures. In addition, MEDIA-M focuses on reinforcing existing protections for freedom of speech, facilitating better implementation of laws, and advocating for media sector legal frameworks consistent with international norms. MEDIA-M works to improve the capacity of local media support organizations in promoting reform efforts in the media sector and empowering them to participate as equal partners in Moldova's democratic development. MEDIA-M's main implementing partners are Freedom House and the Independent Journalism Center-Moldova (IJC).

## **MAJOR AREAS OF SUPPORT**

### **PRODUCING MORE PROFESSIONAL, TRUSTWORTHY, AND ACTIONABLE MEDIA CONTENT**

MEDIA-M, through open application processes, selected twelve Key Partner (KP) media outlets (print, online, and television) to help them improve the quality of their content, diversify their news formats, strengthen their financial viability, and better engage their audiences, especially online. Assistance primarily consists of long-term, in-house mentoring combined with grant support, and is targeted toward outlets seeking to expand their coverage outside the capital. Smaller grants support pilot initiatives and cross-regional projects with the potential to expand access to useful, unbiased information.

### **INCREASING MEDIA LITERACY AND DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENT, RELIABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY JOURNALISM**

MEDIA-M partners with the IJC to foster media literacy and empower communities through curricula and initiatives that help citizens learn to detect media manipulation and better navigate information sources. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, IJC implements an ongoing training curriculum for teachers who are interested in teaching media literacy skills in their respective schools. IJC also develops and implements media literacy curricula for primary, secondary, and high school levels. In addition, MEDIA-M supports online media literacy initiatives such as

mediacritica.md, and provides targeted outreach to youth, the elderly and people living in rural areas to empower citizens of all ages across Moldova to discern fact from misinformation and demand better quality media. IJC conducts open in-person group trainings that allow media professionals to learn new skills and network with others in the field. MEDIA-M also holds master classes to serve as a flexible resource for media professionals and interested individuals to learn how to detect media manipulation and propaganda.

## **ADVOCATING FOR A FAIR, LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Freedom House leads MEDIA-M's policy and advocacy work by strengthening coalitions of local stakeholders and supporting them in advocating for key reforms to limit concentration of media ownership and the advertising market, among other critical issues. This approach is backed by targeted assistance to enhance the efficacy of regulators to sanction media that violate professional ethics.

## **INCUBATING NEW MEDIA PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND INSTITUTIONALIZING ACCESS TO ONGOING TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

MEDIA-M collaborates with Mediacor and the USAID Future Technologies Activity (FTA) team to provide development opportunities for traditional media as part of the Mediacor incubator concept. MEDIA-M also engages with Journalism Faculties and Moldova's School of Journalism, and provides necessary support for the development and implementation of updated curricula for journalists at Moldova State University. The School of Journalism maintains robust interaction with media outlets to facilitate continuous exposure to the latest and greatest technology and ensure media products are timely and relevant to their audience.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Improved media content, production, management skills, and processes across all platforms (TV, radio, print, and/or internet) for Key Partners;
- Increased understanding among media outlets and journalists of the importance of digital tools for interacting with their audience, as well as improved photojournalistic skills and visual literacy;
- Improved ability to seek and analyze news content for community members and decision-makers from rural communities, including minority-dominated regions;
- Increased ability of audiences to recognize misinformation and propaganda in the media;
- Creation and implementation of a new media literacy curriculum in Moldovan high schools;
- Creation and enforcement of media laws that support a healthy media legal and regulatory environment;
- Improved media-related legislation that is conducive to the development of independent media.

## **RESULTS ACHIEVED SINCE 2017**

- The average increase of online audiences of the first cohort of MEDIA-M Key Partners (KP) increased by over 208%. Revenue of KPs has increased by 310%, strengthening the financial independence of these media outlets.
- MEDIA-M contributes to improving the quality of news and editorial standards. The average increase in the scores for these indexes of the KPs from the first cohort is more than 21%. The average increase in the KP's scores for capacity and performance is 24%.

- MEDIA-M, through training and other educational events, supported capacity strengthening for 1125 journalists, editors, and related production staff.
- The IJC and the Center for Legal Resources from Moldova jointly trained journalists and lawyers on accessing public information and personal data protection. In turn, those trained lawyers have defended independent media and journalists from frivolous litigation.
- MEDIA-M and IJC supported more than 600 teachers for all education levels with training to teach media literacy courses. More than 16,200 students took media literacy as an optional course.
- MEDIA-M, in partnership with civil society organizations, held joint and thematic workshops and training sessions aiming to develop digital abilities among children and youth, to help young people recognize false information and propaganda.
- Nine civil society organizations took advantage of the production technologies offered by Mediacor to entice new audiences across diverse platforms and mediums.
- MEDIA-M conducted three national surveys on media preferences and perceptions that provide valuable new information on issues like trust in media and media literacy.
- Freedom House published three editions of the annual Freedom of Information Index that assess the progress of Moldova’s public institutions in ensuring freedom of information.
- MEDIA-M continued to advocate for the continuity of media reform priorities, including by contributing to a special government-civil society task force to develop the National Program and the Action Plan on Media Development in Moldova. These strategic documents will outline specific regulatory actions to improve the media sector by 2026, spurring government efforts to implement their existing obligations under the National Concept on Media Development.

**Program duration**

April 3, 2017 – September 30, 2026  
 Budget: \$14,301,728.00

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