

MCC's Commitment to Press Freedom

The U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation recognizes the importance of a free press to the economic and democratic development of a country. A free press increases political transparency; educates citizens, enabling them to make informed decisions; provides information to consumers that leads to competitive pricing; and gives citizens an outlet through which they can voice opinions and ideas. A commitment to a free press is an investment in the long-term progress of any society.

MCC Indicators and Press Freedom

Countries must demonstrate a commitment to press freedom to be eligible for an MCC Compact. Freedom of the Press is a component in three of MCC's Ruling Justly Indicators:

The Civil Liberties indicator measures country performance on freedom of expression and belief, association and organizational rights, rule of law and human rights, personal autonomy, individual and economic rights, and the independence of the media and the judiciary.

The Political Rights indicator measures country performance on the quality of the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, government corruption and transparency, and fair political treatment of ethnic groups.

The Voice and Accountability indicator measures country performance on the ability of institutions to protect civil liberties, the extent to which citizens of a country are able to participate in the selection of governments, and the independence of the media.

MCC Programs Promoting Freedom of the Press

MCC is assisting those countries that have identified press freedom as an area needing improvement. MCC "Threshold Programs" engage with local media, NGOs, and government entities on taking the steps necessary to creating an environment where the free press can thrive.



Malawi (Component Total: \$850,000)

Malawi's program strengthens oversight and increases transparency.

- ★ Trains journalists and media professionals.
- ★ Establishes a Media Council to improve press freedom, promote ethical and professional standards, and accredit journalists.

Training was conducted for 45 journalists in investigative reporting, focusing heavily on how to "follow the money" and write well-researched articles on financial issues. Approximately 50 additional journalists from major print media have received training in investigative reporting since 2007.



Moldova (Component Total: \$4 million)

Moldova's program strengthens the monitoring capacity of civil society and mass-media.

- ★ Improves transparency and facilitates public scrutiny of government performance by NGOs and mass-media.
- ★ Builds positive NGO/Government partnerships and supports NGO capacity to provide effective policy analysis to successfully advocate for continued policy reform.
- ★ Improves the quality and quantity of investigative journalism.
- ★ Launches a mass media and NGO campaign to increase public knowledge and understanding of the social and financial consequences of corruption, etc.

The Independent Journalism Center stated that 716 corruption stories were published or broadcast by 16 monitored media outlets and that 27% of those articles tackled individual corruption cases.



Niger (Component Total: \$4.2 million)

Niger's program increases transparency of public procurement and strengthens civil society and the media.

- ★ Provides investigative journalism training on public procurement audits.
- ★ Supports anti-corruption efforts of the civil society and the media to help reduce public corruption.



Rwanda (Component Total: \$3.2 million)

Rwanda's program supports increasing the professionalism of journalists and the media, and helps build their capacity and sustainability as important actors in civil society.

- ★ Provides training to journalists to enable them to produce high-quality stories characterized by balance and accuracy.
- ★ Equips journalists with the skills to interpret budget and financial information.
- ★ Trains journalists to find, evaluate and protect sources.
- ★ Develops investigative skills for journalists to effectively monitor government activities.
- ★ Supports the development of independent, sustainable professional organizations for journalists and publishers.



Tanzania (Component Total: \$3 million)

Tanzania's program builds the nongovernmental sector monitoring capacity.

- ★ Trains and mobilizes civil society monitors at the national and local levels with an emphasis on enhancing the role of women in the process.
- ★ Trains journalists in investigative reporting.

The program trained more than 300 journalists in investigative reporting. A total of 6,363 stories exposing corruption were published during the program. The number of corruption-related stories appearing in the media increased from an average of 20 per month at the inception of the program to more than 400 per month.



Ukraine (Component Total: \$9.82 million)

Ukraine's program expands media and civil society monitoring of anti-corruption activities.

- ★ Develops public surveys to collect anti-corruption data and increases the number of NGO-initiated anti-corruption reforms.
- ★ Increases the role of the media and investigative journalism through increased exposure of corruption by the media and an increased number of investigations due to media exposure, among other activities.

The first national competition for Best Investigative Journalism was held with 462 submissions resulting in 82 prizes in 25 regions.

In addition, MCC works to ensure the free flow of information regarding details of the implementation of its compacts and projects around the world. Working closely with local and international media, MCC's transparent practices complement the work of a free, open press. MCC's work with in-country communications counterparts includes training that focuses on best practices that promote press freedom and transparency.