Media and Peace-Building

The project has strengthened the skills of media professionals to report in a well-researched, factual and non-biased way, which is essential for peace. UNESCO has promoted journalistic professional standards and has introduced Conflict-Sensitive Reporting (CSR) training in Myanmar, focusing on local media in Mon and Kayin States, as well as national media (private and state owned) based in Yangon. After UNESCO’s intervention the stories applying CSR principles increased by 40%.

The project has set up editorial guidelines and has enabled greater collaboration between ethnic leaders, media houses, government and CSOs to facilitate news gathering leading to an improved coverage of conflict and peace initiatives.

As the leading UN Agency in the implementation of the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UNESCO has put the subject of Safety of Journalists on top of the media development agenda in Myanmar. The project has raised awareness on the issue of safety of journalists and has equipped 700 Myanmar reporters with the necessary knowledge and skills to protect themselves. The Safety Guide for Journalists, translated and published in Myanmar language by UNESCO, is being used as a teaching resource by the Myanmar News Media Council in their trainings on the safety of journalists across the country.

UNESCO Communication and Information

As the United Nations agency with a specific mandate to promote “the free flow of Ideas by word and image”, UNESCO works to foster freedom of expression, and its corollaries, press freedom and freedom of information. UNESCO sees these rights as crucial foundations of democracy, sustainable development, dialogue, and as preconditions for protecting and promoting all other human rights including gender equality.

Publications

Safety guide for journalists: A handbook for reporters in high-risk environments

Story-based Inquiry: a manual for Investigative journalists

Community Media Sustainability Policy Series

Contact

UNESCO Yangon Project Office
No. 8(C) Bogyoke Museum Road, Bahan Township
Yangon – The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Email: Yangon@unesco.org

Supporting media development in the context of democratic reforms and peace-building initiatives in Myanmar
Project Description

The project builds on and supports the ongoing media reforms in Myanmar to enable the media sector to fulfill its role in a democracy and to operate in accordance with the principles of accuracy, objectivity, pluralism and sensitivity. The overall drive is to develop human resources and increase the capacity of local institutions and media outlets. UNESCO therefore builds the capacities of media professionals and media institutions and facilitates the dialogue between media, democratic institutions and the different ethnic groups in Myanmar.

Partners

Ministry of Information; Myanmar News Media Council; Burma News International; Mizzima Media Group; Heldonelle Foundation; Centre for Law and Democracy; Journalism Department at the National Management Degree College, Kingdom of Sweden.

Key results

Media and Democratic Reforms

The project has contributed to greater transparency and access to information through improving collaboration and building bridges between government spokespersons and information officers in Parliament and the media. UNESCO equipped beat reporters with the necessary skills, knowledge and resources to better report and write stories on the legislative and the judiciary and also built the capacities of information officers and government spokespersons on media relations and engagement with journalists.

The project contributed further to strengthen media’s role in ensuring transparency, participation and accountability by introducing investigative journalism in Myanmar. UNESCO trained senior reporters and assisted the Journalism Department at the National Management Degree College in integrating the subject into their 4-year degree.

Engagement with Parliamentarians

The project pushed forward a number of media reforms in the legislative agenda, including the Right to Information Law. A draft version of this law is now being discussed by the Ministry of Information, civil society and Parliament. Also through the project, UNESCO assisted the Ministry of Information in drafting the Public Service Broadcasting Law and preparing the by-laws and amendments to the Broadcasting Law. This direct assistance to the Ministry was strengthened through three workshops with members of the parliament and the government on the principles of Freedom of Expression and international standards and best practices on Access to Information, Public Service Broadcasting and Community Broadcasting, respectively.

In parallel, UNESCO worked with CSOs to provide citizens with training on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) to make Myanmar people responsible media consumers and ready in assuming more responsibilities in seeking an ethical and accountable media sector in Myanmar.

and Citizens

© MSF/UDC

© TilAgyPH/UNDP