

# Opportunities for investments in independent quality media

## Declaration Prague Meeting March 2019

Media and journalists around the globe play a crucial role in creating an informed citizenry and holding those in power to account. However, media are in a state of deep crisis which prevents them from being able to function as the fourth estate in our societies. Governments, the media industry and multilateral organizations need to do more to protect the vital function of independent quality journalism. The capture of media markets by monopolistic players and the opportunistic aggression and repression against quality, fact based journalism must end.

90 experts in the field of quality media and journalism from 33 countries attended a meeting in Prague from 11 to 13 February 2019. They identified two major opportunities for investments in independent quality media.

### 1. Build media coalitions in order to counter shrinking civic space

Coalitions of strong media actors counter the shrinking civic space and allow citizens to speak out and take part in the public conversation about the direction of society.

In collaborating, media actors use their resources more effectively. They are able to share existing knowledge and undertake cross-border investigations and analysis to create new insights, data and understanding. Furthermore, these networks can create much-needed solidarity among media actors which in many countries are under increasing threats.

*Long-term investments are therefore needed from donors to enable regional and thematic collaborations among media actors.*

### 2. Support better audience understanding in order to promote diversity and inclusion

In many countries, the media does not represent all layers of society. Women all over the world are portrayed in a stereotypical way, thus confirming existing gender inequalities instead of challenging them. Young audiences are under-represented in political decision-making and in the media industry. Countless minority groups are not served by or represented in the media at all.

The risks are enormous. Some turn to fabricated stories because of their discontent with the information landscape. The susceptibility to radical content by young audiences in Africa and the Middle East is worrying. The growing young population in Latin America seek content that helps them face the challenges for their future. Independent, quality media can serve these audiences by ensuring their voices are heard and ensuring they have the information available to them to make informed choices. To do so effectively, they need to understand their current and future audiences.

*Investments by donors are therefore needed in technology, tools and processes for media actors to do better audience research and engagement.*

AfricaonAir, Kenya - ARTA FM, Syria - BNNRC, Bangladesh - Centre National de Presse Norbert Zongo, Burkina Faso - Confidencial-Esta Semana, Nicaragua - Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan - E-jicom, Senegal - El Surtidor, Paraguay - European Journalism Centre, the Netherlands - European Radio for Belarus, Belarus - Free Press Unlimited, the Netherlands - Freedom Forum, Nepal - GO Group Media, Georgia - KirkukNow, Iraq - Kunafoni.com, Mali - Latitud25, Paraguay - Magamba Network, Zimbabwe - Media Development Center, Tunisia - Media Ink, Somalia - Meydan TV, Ukraine - NEFEJ, Nepal - PAGED Initiative, Nigeria - Pakistan Press Foundation, Pakistan - PPMN, Indonesia - Sahelien.com, Sahel region - SOS Media, Burundi - South Asia Center for Media in Development, Bangladesh - Syrian Ethical Charter, Syria - Syrian Journalist Association - Tribal News Network, Pakistan - Tuwindi, Mali - Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, Nigeria - Ziarul de Garda, Moldova