

SCS Democratic Republic of Congo: Media Sector Development Activity

Overview

The Media Sector Development Activity (MSDA) (July 2019 – June 2024), \$15 million) is a USAID/DRC-funded initiative to promote a more open and vibrant media sector that contributes to more respondent and transparent institutions.

DRC Context

The Congolese media's freedom is highly restricted and its capacity to produce and disseminate high-quality information is low. As a result, most citizens have minimal access to information, contributing to low levels of participation in governance.

Major Program Components

Strengthened legal and regulatory environment for media through:

- Support for advocacy and legal activities for media reform
- Organizing media laws and media information roundtable discussions and workshops
- Informing the public on the state of freedom of information and expression
- Building capacity of media to monitor and respond to press freedom violations
- Legal assistance and protection of journalists
- Trainings on digital security for journalists and media organizations

Targeted media outlets are more independent and professional through:

- Trainings for media houses to help them better understand audience information needs, improve content, increase capacity to incorporate new technologies and digital platforms into their work, and strengthen management and financial viability
- Development of a comprehensive training and mentoring program for female journalists

Access to high-quality, public-interest reporting is increased by:

- Awarding stipends to journalists to produce public interest stories focused on issues outside Kinshasa
- Grants to support production and broadcasting of youth- and gender-focused content
- Developing a specialized training program on investigative journalism
- Organizing quarterly roundtable events with media, government officials and moderate voices to discuss governance issues affecting women and youth
- Supporting youth- and women-driven radio programs that focus on youth and women's participation in governance and political processes
- Developing a media literacy program to empower women, youth and marginalized populations to become better consumers of media and more engaged citizens
- Expanding radio listener clubs to engage citizens in debates around grassroots issues

Achievements

- Conducted a Political Economy Analysis to inform program strategy and to support advocacy and legal activities of media and civil society organizations
- Hosted three roundtables on media legal reform in Kinshasa and Bukavu
- Established a technical assistance framework (hotline, distance mentoring, and field support) for partner media outlets
- Created Bukavu's Media Training and Resource Center to support local journalists with high-quality public interest content