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INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Independent media outlets in Indonesia face economic and political threats that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated. Further, the spread of mis/disinformation inhibits the public from accessing the information they need to realize their rights and hold the government and big businesses to account.

Independent media serves the public by defending citizens' rights, increasing transparency, raising awareness, and improving accountability. Today, independent media organizations struggle for readers' attention against social media advertising, while at the same time, physical, digital, and legal attacks on journalists and independent publications are on the rise.

USAID MEDIA EMPOWERMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY (MEDIA)

USAID MEDIA activity strengthens public-interest media and civil society organizations (CSOs) seeking to ensure government accountability, hold business interests to account, and counter misinformation and disinformation. The project trains and supports journalists reporting on issues relevant to sexual and

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religious minorities, among other marginalized groups, so that diverse voices are represented in public discourse. USAID MEDIA increases the ability of media and CSOs working on transparency and accountability to increase citizen engagement with high-quality, evidence-based coverage about issues of substantial public interest. The project also enhances the reporting skills of local and national media outlets and increases the capability of at-risk journalists to prevent and manage threats. This will boost the resilience and sustainability of media outlets so that they can adapt to—and survive—changes in the media landscape.

RESULTS

In the program's first year, collaborating partners in Indonesia achieved the following:

- **Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI)**, an Indonesian NGO that promotes independent media, press freedom and quality journalism with over 2,000 members nationwide, led advocacy that helped bring alleged perpetrators of police violence against journalists to court for the first time.
- **Indonesia Anti-Slander Society (MAFINDO)**, a grassroots anti-disinformation task force and fact-checking outlet, engaged with social media platforms including WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter to address misinformation and disinformation online in Indonesia.
- **Media Cyber Association of Indonesia (AMSI)**, an organization of more than 300 cyber media companies across 20 provinces working to improve digital literacy, launched a first assessment of online media to inform independent media outlets about business sustainability.
- **Indonesian Association for Media Development (PPMN)**, non-profit aimed at expanding access to information in Indonesia by increasing media capacity and improving media literacy. Empowered citizen journalists to bring forth personal stories in the community as a part of advocacy strategy for better governance.
- **Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW)**, an NGO dedicated to monitoring corruption in Indonesia. Pioneered the Investigative Journalists Club in Nusa Tenggara Timur, where CSO and media collaborate for the first time on monitoring corruption cases in the area.
- **Journalist Association for Diversity (SEJUK)**, a union of journalists dedicated to protecting religious and sexual minorities, supported young story grantees whose portrayals of transwomen in Kalimantan with diverse careers broke through stigma.
- **Legal Aid Center for the Press (LBH Pers)**, an Indonesian CSO that provides legal aid to defend press freedom, freedom of expression, and protection for press workers, mentored media organizations on their specific legal needs.

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