

Since March 2022, Fondation Hironnelle, together with its local partner the Institute for Regional Press and Information (IRMI), has been implementing a multi-faceted project to support the Ukrainian media. The aim is to provide the population of the occupied territories and internally displaced persons (East and South-East) with access to reliable information on subjects of public, humanitarian and social interest, as well as content focusing on justice in relation to war crimes.

The editorial, managerial and financial reinforcement of 18 local media is the epicentre of a mentoring programme rooted in the realities of our partners, which enables us to continuously assess and respond to the priority needs of journalists and media managers. With one essential aim: their survival, by adapting their information mission to the existential constraints of war.



Journalists from Nadiya TV interview a food aid recipient in Pervomaisky, Ukraine, 2023.
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SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Swiss Solidarity
- Fondazione aiuto alla cooperazione e allo sviluppo
- Fondation genevoise de bienfaisance « Valeria Rossi di Montelera »
- Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz
- Switzerland (SDC - Core contribution)
- Private donations

Key figures for 2023



18 media partners



11 regions of Ukraine



134 media professionals trained



96 media productions on war crimes trials



95% training satisfaction rate

Context

The Russian invasion on February 24th, 2022 resulted in a takeover of the Ukrainian media in the occupied zones. By the end of 2023, eleven journalists had died in the course of their reporting duties on Ukrainian soil. And many others, in Russian-controlled territories and on the front line, are under serious threat. Helping these media to survive by adapting to the constraints of war remains a priority.

Helping Ukrainian media survive and cope with war

All of Fondation Hironnelle's activities in Ukraine are geared towards providing a practical response to the needs of our partner media. In most cases, they have had to relocate their newsrooms, but they have been able to restore their work tools and resume their activities. The strength of the project lies in its flexibility, individual approach and responsiveness. This has led to the development of websites and Telegram channels for the print media, the introduction of training courses on managing the media in crisis situations, on processing open source data, and the training of new journalists who have just been hired by our partner media.

Emphasis has also been placed on coverage of war crimes trials, for which a network of Ukrainian journalists has been set up and supported. One of the most significant advances has been the increased visibility of the defence, which was previously inaudible.

Over the course of these activities, a solid professional bond was forged between the 18 Ukrainian media partners in the project. Although several managers and journalists already knew each other, their relationships have grown stronger, leading to the sharing of content across several platforms, and even to some co-productions.



In Lviv, during a bomb alert in 2022, residents hid in the catacombs of a church.
@ Lâm Duc Hiên

OUR IMPACT

Each media outlet has developed and implemented its own institutional strategy, which has enabled them not only to continue to provide information, but above all to increase their audience figures, some by more than 40%.

All the journalists' jobs that needed saving were saved. Although not all the men who left for the front were replaced, new media professionals were trained, reducing the additional pressure on media managers.

TESTIMONIAL

"There has been a big learning curve. We now master new editorial approaches, particularly digital, which has enabled us to continue working and providing independent information to our audiences in the territories occupied by the Russian army."

Igor Novikov, journalist with Visti Snigurivshchyny (Snihourivka).

In 2024, Fondation Hironnelle, in conjunction with IRMI, wants to improve its response to the growing challenges of social cohesion in the communities most affected by the war. The plan is to provide tailor-made support to the Ukrainian media to enable them to respond to multifaceted challenges, so that people have access to reliable and useful content, particularly on issues of social cohesion. A monitoring and analysis tool is being set up to deal with this phenomenon more effectively. The aim is also to maintain journalistic coverage of violations of international humanitarian law. This focuses on Ukrainian journalists' coverage of the justice of war process, particularly the most serious crimes.

The project intends to continue its contribution to strengthening local associations representing the profession and local press clubs, in order to (re)create solidarity between professionals, capable of participating in the development of the media landscape and promoting good practice.

The project also seeks to support partner media in acquiring skills in managing their physical and digital security. Psychological support for media professionals facing trauma, set up with Reporters Sans Frontières, is also provided.

PRIORITIES

- ▶ Improving the response to social cohesion issues
- ▶ Customised support for Ukrainian media
- ▶ Support for local media to reconnect with their audiences and information needs

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Editorial, managerial and financial support for local Ukrainian media
- ▶ Training partner media in managing their physical and digital security

BENEFICIARIES

Of the 23 local media supported in 2024, 14 are from project beneficiaries in 2023 (total then of 18). These resilient media have a direct impact on the drivers of social cohesion, by dealing with community issues. Our partner IRMI and our teams have noted encouraging progress, driven by the great proactivity of journalists and media managers. However, there are still major challenges ahead. These include access to energy and the implementation of creative strategies to reach their dispersed audiences.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

- Strengthening of the media system from within, by Ukrainian peers
- Development of local journalism
- Acquisition of journalistic techniques enabling adaptation to war
- Addressing issues of social cohesion and war justice

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE PROJECT SUPPORTING
MEDIA RESILIENCE IN UKRAINE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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