SEENPM
South East European Network
for Professionalization of Media

MOBILIZATION FOR PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE MEDIA

Mapping Good Practices of Media Activism

Sanela Hodžić

MOBILIZATION FOR PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE MEDIA
Mapping Good Practices of Media Activism

Author and researcher: Sanela Hodžić

Editor, regional lead researcher: Brankica Petković

English language proofreading: Fiona Thompson

Graphic design: Špela Kranjec

Publishers:

Foundation Mediacentar, Sarajevo

Peace Institute, Ljubljana

Sarajevo, January 2024

CONTENTS

I.

INTRODUCTION

Media and communication form ostensibly the most important area of contemporary political struggles. This is because they are loaded with politically key issues, ranging from influences on editorial policies, ownership concentration and convergence to information security and surveillance, quality and diversity of information, and finally, the central role of media and communication platforms in public discussion and political processes. Rather than being only channels for communicating and representing the social realities, democratic media are a prerequisite of democracy.[1] In repressive regimes around the world independent journalism has been operating under pressure and in some of them has been literally wiped out. The media crisis is, however, global, with media being captured largely by corporate and political interests.[2] The global trends of polarization and radicalization amidst the wars in Ukraine and in the Levant region are only exacerbating the problems, and so are the technological changes and dominance of large technological platforms that threaten to further diminish general interest, independent and quality content production. Hence, media activism has become more important than ever. Therefore, in this report we start from the notion that media performance and media reforms will be determining the course of history, and that mapping good practices will help us envisage media activism that can enable the prevalence of public interest values in journalism, media, and communication in these times of crisis.

Media activism may be directed towards changes in media institutions, media policies, and media content and practices, but also towards creating alternative media, i.e. spaces that provide public interest content and promote democratic values. With that in mind, the overview of good examples of media activism that we provide in this report is aimed at inspiring more targeted and agile actions to defend public interest in the media and communication. More specifically, it is intended to inspire the creation of good Media Information Literacy practices by the coalitions of civil society organizations (CSOs), within the "Our Media"[3] project and beyond. Media activism and media

Mapping good practices will help us envisage media activism that can enable the prevalence of public interest values in journalism, media, and communication in these times of crisis.

---

1   Along these lines of argument, Jakubowicz (1990) approaches democratic communication as "communicative democracy", i.e. as a means of achieving democracy in the wider sense.

2   See Schiffrin, 2021.

3   The "Our Media" project is implemented by a coalition of media activism organizations from the Western Balkans and Turkey. See more at the website of the South East European Network for Profesionalisation of Media, at https://seenpm.org/about-the-project/. This report on good examples of media activism is prepared as part of the project.

and information literacy are intrinsically connected, as only media-literate citizenship is conductive to mobilization that can bring substantial media and communication reforms.

The overview includes examples of media activism from the region of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Turkey, as well as from the EU countries and the rest of the world. The mapping of good practices was conducted in June–October 2023, based primarily on secondary research and, where needed, primary research, i.e. analysis of the content of online sources and information requests to media-related institutions. The research relies on inputs from the seven country researchers: Ilda Londo (Albania), Anida Sokol (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Florent Spahija (Kosovo), Milica Bogdanović (Montenegro), Vesna Nikodinoska (North Macedonia), Milica Janjatović Jovanović (Serbia) and Sinem Aydinli (Turkey).[4]

This report starts with a discussion on the definitions and conceptualizations of media activism, followed by a short overview of the history of media activism. After that, we present and briefly analyze good examples of media activism, and in the concluding section we discuss the opportunities and challenges, and propose a typology of media activism.

Finally, this report seeks to present good examples of media activism, including those that were successful in bringing changes of media policies and practices, but also those successful in reframing public policies and raising public awareness, harnessing wider support, involving novel topics or types of actions, or successful only insomuch as they exist as a challenge to existing policies and practices.[5] We do not claim to have selected the best, most effective examples of media activism, but we aimed for diversity in terms of thematic focus, types of actions, the groups the participants belong to, geographical locus, and political context.

1.1. DEFINING MEDIA ACTIVISM

Media activism has been previously examined primarily within media studies[6] and from a policy-making standpoint, but in recent decades it has increasingly been approached from the social movement perspective.[7]

Theorists and media activists have employed different conceptual frameworks when defining media activism, ranging from "media freedom" or "freedom of

---

4   We also thank Mirela Rožajac-Zulčić for assisting in collecting reports and data on examples of good media activism practices outside the region of SEE and Turkey.

5   On how media activism challenges the standard concept of "success" in the social movement literature, see Carroll and Hackett (2006, 100) as well as Hackett (2016).

6   Ibid, 531-532.

7   In parallel, social movement theorists have been focusing largely on the role of media and information technology not as the *object of activism*, but as platforms *enabling activism* on non-communication issue. See Mueller, Page and Kuerbis 2004, 170.

expression" (focusing primarily on the violations of freedom by governmental and corporate agents), "media reforms" (implying reforms of the existing media structures), and "alternative media" as a form of media activism to "communication rights" (accentuating the connection between communication and other human rights), "media democratization" (centering on the role of media in enabling informed and active citizenship), "media justice" (taking into consideration marginalization and minority representation) and the "cultural environment" perspective (in which the cultural environment is viewed as a product of the problematically centralized, globalized and mass-marketed media environment).[8] There is a hesitance to adopt a single unifying frame (Napoli 2007, 2) and media activism has been defined in different terms. For instance, Hackett and Carroll define what they call media democratization as: " …*media-oriented activism that expands the range of voices accessed through the media, builds an egalitarian and participatory public sphere, promotes the values and practices of sustainable democracy outside the media, and/or within the media, and offsets the political and economic inequalities found elsewhere in the social system*" (2004, –).

While a single frame could be useful for joint mass mobilization, for the sake of the accumulation of knowledge, such as in our research, we will adopt a holistic understanding of media activism, inclusive of the above-mentioned frames. Napoli argues that regardless of the definitions and priorities, the movement for "the improvement of the media and communications system (…) can be usefully studied as a somewhat integrated whole" (2007, 9). Or as Opel (2004) notes, the different frames and definitions "…refer to a large umbrella of issues and organisations addressing the role of the media in the modern world" (p. 25; see also Klein, 2001).

More precisely, under the term "activism" we mean any struggle for change,[9] and under "media activism" any activism aimed at public interest change in the media and communication sector.[10] We adopt the definition of media activists by Hoynes: "*Media activists seek to change both the structure and content of mainstream media, and they use a wide variety of tactics to alternately woo and pressure journalists, call public attention to the failures of mainstream media, build public support for policies aimed at promoting diversity in media ownership and content, and support alternative media across the range of media platforms*" (2005, in Freedman 2017, 1), while additionally emphasizing that media activism involves a variety of media-related issues, including those related to communication on non-journalistic platforms, and that it targets various groups, from journalists, lawmakers, and state institutions to different citizens groups and the general public.

The results of media activism, i.e. of the struggle for communication rights/ democratization of media/media justice/media reforms, will, as they already do, determine the course of history.

---

8   See Hackett and Caroll 2006, Napoli 2007, for more on the "cultural environment" frame, see Duncan 1999.

9   Cammaerts defines activism as ability to make or change history (2007, 217).

10   Although the term media activism is also often used to mean the use of media and information technology to make social change in any domain we will not consider this aspect of media activism here.

We rely on the notion that the results of media activism, i.e. of the struggle for communication rights/democratization of media/media justice/media reforms, will, as they already do, determine the course of history. As Hackett and Carroll note: "Given the pivotal role mass media play in shaping public issues and consciousness, the struggle to democratise communication influences the outcome of a wide range of political, social and economic issues – from local urban development to war" (2004, –). Media activism involves attempts to influence the existing institutions (through media policy reforms and campaigns for changes in media content, e.g. concerning representation of minority groups) as well as building alternative media practices and developing the sensibility of media users (by sustaining alternative, democratic, participatory media outlets and empowering citizens through media education).[11]

Media activism involves attempts to influence the existing institutions as well as building alternative media practices and developing the sensibility of media users.

---

11   For more see Hackett and Carroll 2004.

II.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LONG HISTORY OF MEDIA ACTIVISM

Media activism has existed in very different historical periods and contexts. It has often drawn its strength from professional unions and human rights or social movements. In the United States of America, as far back as the 1920s activists were opposing commercialization of media and advocating for the establishment of a non-profit media sector, but it was the black power and women right movements in 1960s and 1970s that spilled over in a more substantial actions related to media and communication.[12] In the same period, cable television penetration and new opportunities for airing unprofitable cultural, educational, and public affairs programming incited advocacy for alternative media (Kranich 2004, 200). Anti-capitalist "Third World nationalism" was a driving force behind the movement for an inter-governmental movement New World Information & Communication Order (NWICO), which played a major role in media activism in the 1970s and 1980s.[13] In Brazil, in the 1980s there were two wide movements: a community media movement that demanded regulation and legitimization of the previously highly criminalized community radio sector, and a movement for pluralization of broadcasting and against the domination of private media conglomerates, started by university scholars and students, which both brought positive legislative changes.[14] Around the same time, Korea saw protests against the bias of the public broadcaster, which demonstrated the power of collective actions and spurred other audience movements.[15]

Media activism has existed in very different historical periods and contexts. It has often drawn its strength from professional unions and human rights or social movements.

---

12 See McChesney 2008 and Mueller, Kuerbis, & Page 2004. In this period, the focus of activists (often political minorities) was on media content and the number of advocacy organizations grew dramatically (Mueller 2004, 37).

13 However, the hostility of the UK and US governments, the global hegemony of market liberalism, and retreat from the socialist and anti-imperialist visions of nationalism caused the national political elites to abandon NWICO in favour of negotiating national and regional relationships with the global media powers (Hackett 2016).

14 See Custòdio 2017, 64.

15 See Young-han 2001.

In Western Europe it was also the existing public service ethic, in some cases coupled with cultural nationalism, that has been used to leverage state funding for democratic alternative and community media (Hackett 2016). In addition, the struggles of workers and social democratic parties in Western Europe have been a backbone of the Left press and of advocacy for reform of media policies.[16] In Northern Ireland, starting from the late 1790s, alternative media outlets and expressions through wall murals and street art were a part of the strategy of expressing alternative political views faced with the structural bias of mainstream media against republicans and other subaltern groups (Hoey 2018, 4).[17] Media activism has emerged even in the most unexpected places, like in the case of the newspaper Vedem, run by teenage boys in 1942–1944 in Theresienstadt (todays Czech Republic) concentration camp, that "uniquely symbolizes human capacity and need to communicate" (Carpentier 2011, 10).

More recently, in the circumstances of disintegration and war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, media activism had a strong antiwar dimension and provided an alternative to the ethno-national ideology that dominated the public sphere. One of the most notable examples of antiwar engagement using alternative media forms was the ARKzin newspaper in Croatia, which saw 93 issues in which politics, culture, theory, and art met.[18] Since the war, the civic sector in the region has expanded, supporting independent journalism,[19] seeking public-interest-driven media reforms,[20] and strengthening the capacities of citizen participation, including in media reforms.[21]

Under the pressure of authoritarian governments, civil society in Hungary and in Poland has also been resisting media capture and limitations to media freedom, frequently through mass protests. For instance, in 2016 in Warsaw, thousands of citizens blocked the parliament building in protest against the government's plans to limit the access of journalists to parliamentary sessions.[22] Media activism also involved pleas to the European Union to intervene and use conditionality measures to preserve media freedom.[23]

---

16 The CPBF in Britain, for example, founded in 1979, was an "alliance between journalists, academics, public sector workers facing hostile press coverage, and print media unions facing technological annihilation" (Hackett 2016).

17 Since the start of peace process in the early 1990s, these voices have been increasingly integrated in the mainstream media sphere (Hoey, 2018, 5).

18 See website of ARKzin, at: https://monoskop.org/Arkzin.

19 For instance, the resignations of journalists of B92 after the media outlet was forcefully taken over by a government official in 1999, as well as protests of journalistic community and citizens against government interference into broadcasting frequencies of B92. B92 was, at that time, one of the rare independent media outlets at the background of strong government repression. See an article of Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT), at https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/bhs/zone/Srbija/Srbija-kako-je-nastao-i-nestao-Radio-B92-163188.

20 For instance, the journalists' associations, civil society organizations and independent media in 2013 stopped the legislative changes that would have limited the access to public information in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dekić 2013).

21 In Montenegro, for example, media literacy was introduced as an optional subject for 16- and 17-year-old students of gymnasium high schools as early as 2009.

22 See, for instance, a report by Al Jazeera at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/17/thousands-protest-new-media-restrictions-in-poland.

23 See, for instance, pleas concerning government-related media ownership, in a report by Euractive, at:https://www.euractiv.com/section/media/news/hungary-may-see-takeovers-of-last-free-media-experts-warn/.

Media activists have been engaging in issues of public interest concerning media and communication, e.g. representation of minority groups in media content and employment policies, providing alternative (e.g. community) media, media funding and ownership, access to public information, media literacy, and many other issues.

Media activists have been engaging in a wide variety of issues of public interest concerning media and communication, from representation of minority groups in media content and diversity in employment policies through providing alternative (e.g. community) media (including through legislation and providing broadcasting frequencies),[24] to issues concerning the independence and role of public service broadcasting, transparency of media funding and ownership, access to public information, safety and protection of the rights of journalists, media watch (monitoring and countering media bias, stereotypes, disinformation, etc.), increasing media literacy, and many other issues.

Most often, media activism has been led by civil society organizations.[25] In recent decades in the US, for instance, the number of both public interest organizations and policy-making activities in the area of communication has grown dramatically.[26] Not only left-leaning civil society organizations were engaged. For example, a major court case initiated by a religious community in the US led not only to a broadcaster with racist content losing its licence but also gave citizens legal standing to participate in all regulatory proceedings concerning the media sector.[27]

Some examples of media activism have involved wider citizen participation. The most frequently mentioned is the case of a grassroots campaign in the US, in 2003, which involved hundreds of thousands (or even around two million people as other sources suggest) phone calls and petition signatures to stop changes to the media ownership law that meant a loosening of the prevention of overt media concentration. Such large-scale mobilization demonstrated the disenchantment of the public with the "free market" approach to media policy and a growing awareness that it is largely curbed by corporate and political interests.[28]

Throughout the course of history, media activism has been marked with many difficulties, including those related to lack of expertise among activists in the circumstances of large and constant technological developments,[29] difficulties in mobilizing citizens for media-related causes and lack of capacity to overpower political and commercial interests that influence media policies and practices. Subsequently, for the most part, media activism has not managed to reverse negative trends in journalism and media over the past decades worldwide. As McChesney argues, even the most radical reform proposals in the US barely threatened the corporate dominance of media

Media activism has brought indispensable positive (and stopped numerous negative) changes of media policies and practices.

The media activism initiatives have shown that there is a large constituency for media reforms that involves not only media professionals and journalist organizations, but also researchers, civil rights activists, librarians, educators, parents, students, in short – everyone of us.

---

24 For an overview of radio stations across the world that exemplified participatory communication, see Dagron 2001. Also see the volume edited by Pajnik and Downing (2008) on what is called civil society media.

25 This has reportedly been the case in US and Third World countries, for instance.

26 See, for example, Napoli 2007, limited however to the review of literature written in English and related primarily to the USA. Also see Rentschler 2004.

27 In 1964, the United Church of Christ (UCC) challenged the television station licence of a racist Mississippi broadcaster. More in Horowitz 1997.

28 See McChesney 2008, Hackett and Carroll 2004, Klinenberg 2007.

29 See McChesney 2008.

system (2008). Similarly, in Korea, the positive effects of media activism were deemed as small "concessions within neoliberal reforms design to benefit the media and ICT corporations" (Hadl and Dongwon 2008, 99).

Media activism, however, has brought indispensable positive (and stopped numerous negative) changes of media policies and practices, including overall democratization of policy-making processes concerning communication, contribution to the development of the community media sector, a more inclusive mainstream media sphere, preserving public service media and programming, setting standards for access to public information and for media transparency, and many other issues. Moreover, the media activism initiatives have shown that there is a large constituency for media reforms that involves not only media professionals and journalist organizations, but also researchers, civil rights activists, librarians,[30] educators, parents, students, in short – everyone of us.

---

30 For more on how librarians have been engaging in public discussion on issues concerning media in the USA, see Kranich 2004.

III.

MAPPING GOOD EXAMPLES OF MEDIA ACTIVISM

In this chapter we aim to map good examples of media activism. An extensive list of such examples would fall far beyond the scope and resources of this project. Instead, we aim to present media activism cases that exemplify a variety of topics and various types of media activism, while also reflecting diversity in terms of geographical locus and socio-political contexts. Each subtitle presents an identified type of media activism.

3.1. ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS

Alternative media activism platforms provide content created either by citizens or by professional journalists. Alternative journalistic platforms involve those that function as platforms independent of government or corporate interference, operating mainly on a not-for-profit basis, serving particular communities, or providing investigative journalism. These functions often overlap, as both community media and investigative journalism platforms are in principle those that are simultaneously the most independent and involve topics and views neglected in mainstream media. We consider all these platforms to present a type of media activism, as they, in different ways, provide an alternative to dominant, mainstream media content and contribute to the pluralism of public debate. These platforms are largely funded by developmental funds and international donors, but also by the communities they serve. Some of them are also partly sustained through voluntary citizen engagement.

Alternative platforms provide a safe and independent space for political subversion and contra-narratives. These platforms depend on the collaborative work of citizen journalists, while there might, or might not, be some form of editing of the content involved.

3.1.1. Platforms for alternative content and/or alternative internet services

In authoritarian societies, but also in the context of dominant neoliberal ideology, alternative platforms provide a safe and independent space for political subversion and contra-narratives. These platforms depend on the collaborative work of citizen journalists, while there might, or might not, be some form of editing of the content involved. Many of these platforms, such as Indymedia or Mosireen, emerged during citizen protests and social unrests. The majority rely on participatory content production. Under this category we also include blogs that provide a unique perspective on public-interest topics (See Table 1 for some examples).

Table 1: **EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/project	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Global voices	Media pluralism, digital participation	Reporting on underrepresented group	At first Harvard University, since 2008: Organisation Stichting Global Voices	International	Massachusetts, USA Netherlands	2004–2008 2008–today
Indymedia	Independent news, media pluralism, digital participation, citizen journalism	International internet platform for alternative news	Seattle Independent Media Centre, similar organizations across the world	International	Seattle, United States of America	1999–2019 (est.)
Jinbonet	Freedom of expression, citizen journalism, digital participation	Independent internet service provider (webmail, web hosting, online communities, blogs) for social movements, labour unions and progressive activists	Non-profit organization Korean Progressive Network Jinbonet	National	South Korea	1998–today

Mosireen	Independent news, political pluralism, citizen journalism	Documenting and publishing photos and videos on 2011 revolution in Egypt	Citizen journalists	National	Egypt	2011–2018
Blog "In Media Res" (Boris Vezjak)	Media and democracy, media and society	weekly (or plus) blogs/columns on media and democracy, e-mail distribution; re-publishing by Mladina weekly magazine website	University professor Boris Vezjak	National	Slovenia	2008–today
Sbunker blog	Independent news, critical thinking	Blog providing content under-represented top-ics/perspectives	NGO Sbunker	National	Kosovo	2017–today

Highlight: **THE CASE OF INDYMEDIA** (USA and +)

Indymedia originally provided content on protests against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in November 1999, but it soon became a reference for a platform managed by users and protesters. It resulted from a coalition of social justice groups, anarchist, communist, socialist, and environmentalist groups and trade unions, with a small core staff that distributed the content regularly. In the 2000s they were joined by groups across the globe (in 2014, there were 175 worldwide (Girauld 2014))[31] with leanings mostly ranging from socialist to radical anti-capitalist. Indymedia allowed anyone to publish content, but in the 2000s a unique form of control by an editorial group involved the later removal of contributions judged false, libelous, or inappropriate to a separate page titled "hidden stories" (Atton 2010, 8). Indymedia managed to pull off what the early online platforms of social movements had not, i.e. achieving a large global reach and assuring sustainability over a period of around 20 years. The strategy that proved successful included involvement of numerous local groups, broadening protest agenda and international networking. However, Indymedia and similar platforms finally met their demise with the rise of commercial social media companies. Some radical participatory online sites still exist, but their scope is more local.[32]

---

31   The majority of them were from the US and Europe, while other regions were involved, but less so (Atton 2010, 8).

32   An example is Unicorn Riot in the USA, known for live streaming of protests, and an anti-racism stance.

3.1.2. Community media outlets

Under this category we include media that report about and for underrepresented communities, for instance certain municipalities, student groups, unions, and communities based on ethnic, gender, or other identity. The community media also involve members of those communities in production and management. There are various understandings of what community media is, but here we consider them to be media with a clear community-driven and public-interest mission, based mainly on a non-for-profit financial model. Such model in principle should bring a certain degree of insulation from commercial and particular political interest that ensures more independent and engaging content.

Table 2: **EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY MEDIA**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/project	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Radio Orange	Independent, community-oriented content	A radio station and occasional advocacy for media policy supportive of non-profit media	Staff of a dozen and citizen volunteers	Local and national	Vienna, Austria	1998–today (registered) before that a pirate radio
Telestreet	Independent news	A network of Micro TV stations	Local communities	National	Italy	2002–today
Network of miners' radio stations	Independent news, political pluralism and pluralism in terms of groups presented in media	A communication platform for miners	Miners' trades unions	National	Bolivia	1949–1985+
Contre attaque (previous Nantes Révoltée)	Independent news, alternative, activist media	Website providing analyses and articles with strong left-leaning editorial stance and critique of the government	N/A	Mainly national, although available to wider audience and reporting on international issues	Nantes, France	2012-2022 as Nantes Révoltée; 2022-today as Contre attaque

Radio Huay-acocotla	Media pluralism, local news, cultural preservation	Serving indige-nous communi-ties and pro-moting cultural preservation and local develop-ment	Owned by a civil society organization Fomento Cultural y Educativo, A.C.	Regional, within Mexico	Mexico	1965–today
Community Media Forum Europe	Community media in Europe	Platform for net-works, national federations, and projects active in the community media sector in Europe	Community media and their national associations in Europe, including from Germany, Austria, France, Denmark, Slovenia, etc. 98 members from 25 European countries	Europe	Office in Brussels	2004–today
Radio Študent	Independent, alternative reporting and debate, alternative culture, music subcultures, social movements, ethnic minorities	Student radio and website	Students of University of Ljubljana (formal founder: Student Organization of University of Ljubljana)	Wider area of Ljubljana	Ljubljana, Slovenia	1969–today

While community media are often largely funded by their audience, other sources might involve philanthropic donations, funding from international development agencies, to some extent from advertising (although this is usually limited by law), and even from governments. The community that the media serves can have a different level of ownership over a specific community media outlet. The network of miners' radio stations in Bolivia is one of the earliest examples of a high level of community ownership, as it was conceived, set up, managed, technically run, financed, and maintained by their community (Dagron 2008, 16).[33]

Historically, community media have played an important role in satisfying communication needs of the public, by consistently putting forward reporting on communities and issues neglected in commercial and public media alike. Some of early examples involve the Pacifica radio network in the USA, which promoted a pacifist ideology in the midst of World War II, and later the Challenge for Change television broadcasting series in Canada that

---

33 For an overview of radio stations across the world that exemplify participatory communication, see Dagron 2001. Also see the volume edited by Pajnik and Downing (2008) on what is called civil society media.

in 1967 democratized the production process by bringing the subjects of documentaries into collaborative relationship with filmmakers. In Western and Central Europe, the first media functioning as community content producers were established in the 1960s and 70s, although largely as pirate media, and their history has been marked with a struggle for legalization and more recently with demands for continuous financial support from public funds. A mapping by the coalition CMFE and the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities from 2012 showed that there was a total of 2237 community radio stations and 521 community television stations active across Europe.[34] For instance, the internet platform of the Swiss Red Cross https://www.migesplus.ch/ lists 38 migrant media outlets in Switzerland, i.e. outlets that communicate in migrant languages and about and for people with a migrant background.

In the region of South East Europe, the community media sector is still underdeveloped, but many media outlets run by civil society organizations and funded by the international donor community function as community media, insomuch as they cover public interest issues relevant for local communities and neglected elsewhere.[35] One of the exceptions is Radio Študent in Ljubljana (Slovenia), as one of the oldest community media in Europe, established in 1969 in the context of student protests, which continues to provide non-commercial programming and to give a voice to students and underrepresented groups in Slovenia.[36]

Numerous national and international associations of community media, such as the Community Media Association (UK), Alliance of Community Television Austria, Community Radio Forum Europe, and World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters are providing support and lobbying for better policy framework for community media.

Highlight: **THE CASE OF TELESTREET** (Italy)
Telestreet is an example of a network of local groups providing the citizens with alternative news. Telestreet was a movement born in Italian metropolitan areas, first with the Orfeo TV station that broadcasted a few hours a day with a range of 200 metres. If was founded by media theorist and activist Franko "Bifo" Berardi. Later, the movement grew to include nearly one hundred mini TV stations across Italy. These pirate micro-broadcasters with very limited reach were started as a reaction to the then Prime Minister Berlusconi's control over the media in the country. They technically support each other and share a web-archive of broadcasting materials, thus increasing their national coverage and providing sustainable infrastructure despite poor economic and technical resources (Renzi 2011, 36).

Historically, community media have played an important role by consistently putting forward reporting on communities and issues neglected in commercial and public media alike.

3.1.3. Independent media outlets

Journalistic projects and platforms that provide independent accounts of events in countries ruled by repressive governments are indispensable sites of resistance and democratic struggle. Moreover, in media systems largely captured by political and/or economic interest groups through funding and ownership relations, independent media outlets are the only ones calling power to account and covering neglected topics and perspectives.

Independent media outlets are calling power to account and covering neglected topics and perspectives.

Table 3: **EXAMPLES OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA OUTLETS**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/ project	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
AcTVism	Independent news, political pluralism	Online media outlet on pubic interest topics	Organization AcTVism	International	Munich, Germany	2014–today
El Faro	Independent news, political pluralism	Reporting on corruption, criminal organizations, etc.	Media company Trípode S.A. de C.V.	International (focus on Central America)	El Salvador until 2023/ San Hosé (Costa Rica)	1998–today
Rappler	Independent news, political pluralism	Independent online news provider	Rappler Holding Corporation	National +	Philippines	2012–today
Malaysiakini	Independent news, political pluralism	Independent online news provider	Mikini Group Sdn Bhd (publisher), majority owned by editors and journalists	National +	Malaysia	1999–today
Ninja media (Mídia Ninja) (No website, instead see Menezes Teixeira, 2020)	Independent news, political pluralism	Providing alternative news and commentaries	Two journalists, started from the cultural production network Fora do Eixo	National (Brazil)	Brazil	2011

Bianet	Media pluralism, media freedom	Publishing inde-pendent content, particularly for and about underrepre-sented groups	Communica-tion Foundation IPS	Aimed at national audience, but the content concerns geographical areas	Turkey	2001–today
Kosovo 2.0	Independent journalism, media pluralism	Platform provid-ing journalistic content, reports on art and culture, fostering critical thinking	Kosovo 2.0	National	Kosovo	2010–today
Preportr Çohu	Media pluralism, Independent news	Website providing unique content	NGO Çohu	National	Kosovo	2005–today
Zurnal online magazine	Media pluralism, independent news	Online media outlet providing en-gaging and public interest content	NGO CRMAstaff of 7 and external contributors	National, although they cover regional and global issues as well	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2009–today

Highlight: **THE CASE OF KOSOVO 2.0** (Kosovo)
Kosovo 2.0, established in 2010, provides a space for alternative narratives, in-depth analysis, personal stories, and diverse perspectives. It gained recognition for its unique storytelling approach and commitment to critical thinking and dialogue. Kosovo 2.0 utilizes multimedia including articles, photo essays, videos, and art projects to cover a wide range of thematic areas, including social justice, politics, gender, culture, and human rights. Kosovo 2.0 also provides a platform for young writers, artists, and activists to showcase their work.

3.1.4. Investigative journalism projects, centres and regional/international networks

Journalism centres and networks, such as the International Consortium of Investigative Journalism (ICIJ), Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) or centers for investigative journalism (BiH, Serbia and Montenegro) enable demanding, long, costly, often cross-border, investigations that would in other media be impossible for reasons of commercialization, political servility, or simply lack of resources.

Journalism centres and networks enable demanding, long, costly, often cross-border, investigations that would in other media be impossible for reasons of com-mercialization, political servility, or simply lack of resources.

Table 4: **EXAMPLES OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM CENTRES/NETWORKS/PROJECTS**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/ project	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Pegasus project/ Daphne project	Investigative journalism, cross-border investigations	Journalist projects	Organization Forbidden stories	International	Paris, France	2020–2021/ 2018
Global Investigative Journalism Network	Investigative journalism	Support and promotion of investigative journalism (through education, exchange, networking, etc.)	Over 75 independent journalism organizations	International	Washington, USA	2003–today
International Consortium of Investigative Journalism (ICIJ)	Investigative journalism, cross-border investigations	Network of jour-nalist and media organizations engaging in inves-tigative journalism	Center for Public Integrity (Parent organization)	International	Washington, USA	1997–today
Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)	Investigative journalism, cross-border investigations	Network of independent media centres and journalists	Started by veteran journalists, it is organized by investigative journalism centres	International	Amsterdam, Netherlands	2006–today
BIRN, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network	Investigative journalism, media pluralism	Investigative reporting projects, journalist awards, fellowships	BIRN offices across the region, central one in Sarajevo, BiH	National centres, plus regional cooperation	Centres in seven countries (ALB, BiH, KOS, MKD, SRB, MNG, ROM)	2005 on (depending on the country)-today
Center for Investigative Journalism CIN	Investigative journalism	Investigative journalism platform	CIN	National	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004–today

Crime and Corruption Reporting Network	Investigative journalism, media pluralism	Investigative reporting on crime and corruption	KRIK	National, but reporting involves international issues	Serbia	2015–today
Investigative Reporting Lab (particularly the episode "A Murder in Tetovo)	Investigative reporting, access to public information	TV broadcasting	National Investigative Reporting Laboratory and PBS MRT	National	North Macedonia	2023–today
Kallxo	Investigative journalism, independent journalism	Platform for investigative journalism, monitoring, advocacy	BIRN and Internews Kosovo are founders of the platform	National	Kosovo	2012–today

The investigative journalism centres and networks are among rare platforms that consistently pursue the highest professional standards and contribute to the public insight on issues of public interests.[37]

Highlight: **THE CASE OF THE DAPHNE PROJECT**
Daphne was a journalistic research project of a France-based journalism organization Forbidden Stories which coordinated the work of 45 journalists from 18 news organizations after the assassination of Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia on 17 October 2017. The journalists gathered and shared a large amount of information and documents and the stories were published by media organizations around the world. This was just the first of the international journalistic projects of Forbidden Stories, which are based on the idea that collaborative investigative journalism is the best defence against censorship. Many investigative journalism initiatives have been followed by criminal investigations and resignations of government officials. After the Daphne Project published the investigative stories, one of the hit men confessed to the murder of the Maltese journalist, the businessman to whom the murder was linked was arrested, and the Prime Minister resigned due to ties of government officials with the said businessman (Simon 2023, 16).

---

37   For example, see annual reports of BIRN.

3.1.5. Support initiatives for alternative, independent media

Media activism also involves providing support for alternative, independent, investigative media. This support might include efforts to raise funds, provide logistic, technical, and legal support, and opportunities for training, acquire equipment and know-how, or any other action that develops the capacities of alternative media to provide valuable content and contribute to public debate.

Table 5: **EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT INITIATIVES FOR ALTERNATIVE, INDEPENDENT MEDIA**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/ project	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Novi dan (New day) platform	Funding of independent media	Platform for donations to several non-profit independent media producers (use of open web monetization standard WMS)	NGO Danas manages the platform Participating media outlets/ Ostro, In Media Res, Drzavljan D, Argument DJND	National	Slovenia	2022–today
Prometheus radio project	Media pluralism, community radio	Providing support to community radio stations, advocacy for favourable policies	Prometheus radio project team and volunteers	National	Philadelphia, USA	1998–today
Odbranimo OK radio (Let's defend OK radio)	Media pluralism, media funding	Crowdfunding campaign for Radio Vranje	Association ANEM	National	Serbia	1990s–today

These media activism initiatives are contributing to capacity-building and the sustainability of independent and investigative journalism platforms, which are often struggling on a market shaped by particular political and corporate interests.

Highlight: **THE CASE OF THE PLATFORM NOV DAN** (Slovenia)

Nov dan (New Day) is an experimental digital platform, started in 2022, aimed at contributing to the sustainability of independent journalism in Slovenia, by collecting community funding for five independent media producers in Slovenia, i.e. Oštro, In Media Res, Mešanec, Državljan D, Agrument - DJND. The platform is based on the Web Monetization Standard, optimization of user onboarding and testing of communication strategies. Its developer is the non-governmental organization Danes je nov dan (Today is a New Day), which engages on issues such as digital participation and citizen activism, transparency, and public oversight. The action is supported by the foundation Grant for the Web with the amount of USD 46,014. As a crowdfunding project, Nov dan has the potential to empower the community to sustain platforms and content they value and to foster community cohesion as the audience transforms from mere spectators to active stakeholders. There are other examples of community fundraising in the region of South East Europe. They are facing challenges concerning the limited audience shares of independent media outlets, low income of citizens, and difficulty of maintaining long-term citizen support, but some platforms (mainly those offering unique content and having a loyal audience) manage to acquire an important part of their revenues through community fundraising.[38]

THE CASE OF THE PROMETHEUS RADIO PROJECT (USA) is another inspiring example of support for alternative (in this case community) media. Prometheus is an NGO that promotes participatory community expression, starting from the idea that media should be controlled by the communities they serve. It provides support for starting and managing community radio stations, from applying for licences and building radio stations to day-to-day operations. One of Prometheus' most interesting actions involves organizing "radio barn-raisings," where in the spirit of the Amish barn-raising tradition, hundreds of volunteers (engineers, journalists, lawyers, musicians, activists, students, and others) gather to build a radio station (raise an antenna mast and put the station on air) over the course of three days. These barn-raisings have helped build a community along with the stations. Prometheus also engages in often lengthy policy advocacy[39], opposed by lobbyists from big private broadcasters. Prometheus's work is based on the contribution of interns and volunteers, with over 120 of them engaged over the course of 10 years.

In sum, alternative platforms, in all their variants, are indispensable for fostering democratic communication insulated from the dominance of particular commercial and political interests. They bring forward neglected issues and communities and promote citizen participation in the communication processes. These examples constitute alternative journalistic and communication platforms.

---

38   See Hodzic and Petkovic 2020, 25.

39   One of the biggest achievements of media reform movement in USA is the results of the ten-year grassroots campaign of Prometheus, which in 2010 led to the passing of legislation that opened the airwaves for hundreds of new low-power radio stations operated by various communities.

3.2. RESEARCH, CAMPAIGNS, AND ADVOCACY FOR MEDIA REFORMS

In this section we focus on media activism aimed at reversing negative trends in policies and practices governing the mainstream media and communication sector. The examples of media activism presented here expose failings and demand changes of media policies and practices. They involve organizations engaged in: a) research concerning the media and communication sector and/or b) campaigns and advocacy for structural and systemic changes. The chapter is divided into subchapters, based on thematic areas in which these organizations monitor developments and/or demand reforms.

3.2.1. Media reform coalitions and networks

The first category of activism for media reforms pertains to coalitions, which rely on the power of their constituents, including civil society organizations and citizens, to assure impact on media policies and institutions. Some of them are recognized as important advocates for media reforms and consultants in the process of media policy development. Some are organized for the purpose of exchange (of media content, experiences, knowledge), public campaigning, and/or building capacities of their members for media activism. A few examples are presented in Table 6.

Media activism is also aimed at reversing negative policies and practices governing the mainstream media and communication sector, including through research, campaigns and advocacy for structural and systemic changes.

Table 6: **EXAMPLES OF NETWORKS AND COALITIONS FOR MEDIA REFORMS**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Association for Progressive Communication APC	Collective power, digital inclusion, governing the internet as a public good, equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes, and environmental sustainability	Research, advocacy, building networks, and capacity, communication and outreach	APC incorporated is a non-profit, charity organizations registered in the USA	International	Melville, South Africa (central office) and other centres across the world	1990–today

Civil society coalition Voice of the People/ Glas ljudstva	Media reforms as one of their thematic areas	Pre-election demands of civil society on progressive policies, including media reforms + post-election monitoring and advocacy	Coalition of NGOs and civic groups (more than 100), individual supporters (several thousands), coordinated by the operational team of 10–15 NGOs	National	Slovenia	2021–today
Coalition for Media freedom/ Koalicija za slobodu medija	Media reforms, status of journalists	Advocacy and participation in media policies development	Six organizations, including media and journalists associations	National	Serbia	2021–today
Safe journalists Western Balkans Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and Journalists' Safety	Safety of journalists, journalists' rights	Advocating for journalists' rights and safety through an online platform, data-base of attacks and pressures on journalists, alerts and press releases, research reports, capacity building	Journalists' organizations in: CRO, BiH, KOS, SRB, MKD, MNE (the latter is a trade union), plus a researcher in Albania	Regional (Western Balkans)	Serbia	2015–today

In terms of their legal status and organizational structure, the coalitions can be formally registered as a legal entity and have a central coordination office, or operate as informal joint initiatives without being registered as an organization.

Highlight: **COALITION FOR MEDIA FREEDOM** (Serbia) is a notable example of media research and advocacy engagement. It brings together six civil society organizations that engage in monitoring, analyzing and advocating progressive media policies. Their mission involves joint engagement on issues concerning the rights of journalists, journalists' safety, public spending in the media sector, and improvement of media laws and the self-regulatory framework. The coalition has on several occasions been involved in the development of media laws and strategies. While some of their suggestions have been adopted (predominantly in the wording of the media strategy), others continue to be ignored in the current drafts of media laws, most notably those on preventing government ownership of media outlets and on the obligation of media regulator to, after citizens' complaints, check if the media content in question violates media regulations.[40]

---

40   See more in the article on the network's website, at: https://koalicijazaslobodumedija.rs/2023/10/25/koalicija-za-slobodu-medija-i-crta-pokrenuli-peticiju-za-izmene-medijskih-zakona/.

3.2.2. **Organizations demanding media reforms in the wide thematic area of freedom of expression**

On the global level there is a multitude of organizations that pursue a variety of media-related reforms, including limiting media ownership concentration and media pluralism, preserving public service media, assuring digital participation, protecting privacy, and limiting surveillance over citizens.

Table 7: **RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SECTOR**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Better media	Media reforms, media ownership, independent regulation, public service media, transparency, rein in tech giants	Campaigning for independent media and related issues	Better media cooperative, with open membership	National	London, United Kingdom	2018–today
Media Reform Coalition	Media reform, media ownership, media commons, future of journalism	Campaigning; petitions, research	Core team of five people, academics, activists, and media producers	National	London, United Kingdom	2011–today
Free Press (FP)	Free and open internet, media and platform accountability, media control, privacy and surveillance	Public campaigns, research and advocacy	FP, i.e. 37 staff members, including lawyers, campaigners, researchers, fundraisers, and administrators	National	Washington, USA	2003–today
Derechos digitales	Freedom of expression, privacy and personal data, copyright and access to knowledge	Research, reports, campaigns, public policy proposals and advocacy	NGO Derechos digitales	Regional (Latin America)	Santiago, Chile (central office)	2005–today
Friends of Canadian Broadcasting	Media diversity, local news, media policies reform, public service broadcasting	Campaigning	NGO Friends of Canadian Broadcasting	National	Canada	1985–today

Media Watch project	Media and democracy, media, regulation and self-regulation, media ownership, media ethics, etc.	Monitoring, analysis, reporting. Media Watch journal and book series; Intolerance monitoring reports; guidelines and handbooks; public debates, round tables, and conferences	The Peace Institute, bringing together a wide group of collaborators from the media, academia, and civil society.	National, but also cross-border (SEE, EU)	Slovenia, with collaboration with SEE and EU	1997–2013 (completed)

Some of these initiatives were founded to counter worrying trends. For instance, the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom in the UK was a pressure group that was initiated in 1979 in response to the Tory-favourable press industry in the period of the government's aggressive policies against trade unions. These organizations and projects provide a convincing case for media reforms. Some of them have become important contributors to policy-making processes and are regularly consulted by media regulators and lawmakers.

Highlight: **THE CASE OF FREE PRESS** (USA)
Free Press is a non-governmental media advocacy organization that exemplifies the potential of organizational growth and impact rising with the accumulated leverage of their work. Starting in 2003 with a handful of staff, it has grown into an organization with a substantial staff of more than 35 members. On occasions it has profoundly influenced Washington's policies on, for instance, media ownership and net neutrality,[41] funding of public broadcasters, and false media reporting (McChesney 2009, 49). Free Press forms strategic coalitions with different ideological groups, including, for instance, the Christian Coalition and other conservative activists, which maximizes their chances of impact (Ibid, 52).

THE CASE OF FRIENDS OF CANADIAN BROADCASTING (Canada)
Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, or just Friends, is an advocacy organization that monitors developments in Canadian broadcasting and argues for strengthening of public broadcasting, investment in Canadian content (including by streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon, and Disney), and production of local news, e.g. they advocate tax policies that favour placing advertising in Canadian media (as opposed to global online platforms), and for Google and Facebook to compensate Canadian news organizations for their content. Friends has a core staff of 10 and more than 350,000 supporters across the country, and is funded through donations and community fundraising. In formulating its causes Friends relies on nationalist sentiments, arguing for media policies that enable Canadian voices to be heard, national culture to be preserved, and news that matters to Canadians to be provided.

---

41 I.e. preventing telecommunication companies from deciding which websites travel at the fastest speeds

3.2.3. Reactive activism to retrograde policy initiatives with demands for progressive policy changes

Media activism involves also *ad hoc* actions and demands to stop retrograde policy proposals, as well as long term advocacy for positive policy solutions. This media activism might include protests, letters, petitions, media campaigns, and discussions with representatives of the public sector (See Table 8 for some examples).

Media activism involves also *ad hoc* actions and demands to stop retrograde policy proposals, as well as long term advocacy for positive policy solutions.

Table 8: **EXAMPLES OF ACTIVISM AGAINST/FOR POLICY CHANGES**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
[Media without choice](#)	Media taxes, sustainability, independent media, press freedom	Going offline for 24 hours in protest against taxes on advertising revenues that threaten to limit media freedom	24 media outlets, including the leading newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza and tabloid Fakt	National	Poland	2 October 2021
Initiative against changes in media law (Website N/A. See some info [here](#))	Media regulation, media freedom	Lobbying against the changes in the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services seeking to regulate online media by giving almost a court-like competencies to audiovisual media regulator	Journalists, BIRN Albania, Albanian Media Council, Faktoje, Citizens Channel, Albanian Centre for Quality Journalism, Union of Albanian Journalists, Albanian Helsinki Committee, etc.	National (but events organized in Tirana)	Albania	2019–2022
Media against the Media Law changes (See some info in [the report by Association of Journalists](#))	Media funding transparency, media policies	Lobbying against changes of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, allowing state advertising in media outlets	Association of Journalists of Macedonia, Council of Media Ethics, Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers, Macedonian Institute for Media	National	North Macedonia	2023–today
Enhancement of Media Policies (Website N/A)	Quality journalism, media freedom, media funding transparency	Advocating for media reforms	BIRN	National	Serbia	2011–2019
			BIRN, Internews Kosova	National	Kosovo	2007–2011 (completed)

Highlight: **ACTIVISM AGAINST THE AMENDMENTS OF THE LAW ON AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICES** (Albania).

There have been continuous attempts in Albania to introduce regulation of online media content. The latest proposed amendments stipulated that the regulator has executive powers of fining and/or shutting down online media in case of complaints from citizens about their content. Numerous civil society organizations opposed the changes as they potentially limit media freedom, as the independence of the regulator is not guaranteed and the executive measures are too vague and restrictive. Media and media organizations organized meetings, drafted letters and opinions against the changes, participated in a hearing with the respective parliamentary commission, and organized an on-site protest on December 2019, before the parliament, during a plenary session. The law was passed nonetheless. The actions of domestic civil society, however, contributed to the mobilization of international public and to international pressure for withdrawal of the law. The Venice Commission published the opinion in June 2020[42], stating that the law "suffers from vagueness and would likely have a 'chilling effect' suppressing free discussion and political speech". The law was not applied in the meantime, while civil society organizations to an extent continued thematizing it in public debates, roundtables, TV interviews, etc. The final withdrawal of the law was announced on October 2022.

---

42 At: https://www.coe.int/en/web/tirana/-/venice-commission-adopts-opinions-on-the-law-on-audio-visual-media-services-and-on-the-appointment-of-judges-to-the-constitutional-court.

3.2.4. Law-driven media activism: monitoring, legal support, and advocacy to prevent misuse of laws

There is a growing global trend of misuse of laws for pressuring media, journalists, activists, and other watchdogs, called a strategic lawsuit against public participation (hereafter SLAPP). More precisely, is it a misuse of laws, including civil or criminal defamation but also other laws such as intellectual property, privacy, and data protection, in lawsuits intending to intimidate, silence, and drain the financial and psychological resources of the targets.43 These lawsuits have a chilling effect on exposing crimes or abuses, on voicing alternative opinions, and on public engagement.

For these reasons we consider law-driven media activism as a separate category of media activism, which includes monitoring and exposing such misuse of laws, legal support for the targets, and overall advocacy for better regulation to prevent SLAPPs (see examples in Table 9).

Law-driven media activism includes monitoring and exposing misuse of laws, legal support for the targets, and overall advocacy for better regulation to prevent SLAPPs.

Table 9: **EXAMPLES OF "LAW-DRIVEN" ACTIVISM**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
ANTI-SLAPP ACTIVISM						
[Stop abusive lawsuits! (petition)](#)	Media freedom	Petition for effective anti-SLAPP regulation in Europe	CASE (Coalition against SLAPPS in Europe); NGOs from Europe	International (Europe)	N/A	2023–today
[Bridges for media freedom project](#)	Media freedom, SLAPP monitor	Monitoring and providing information on major court cases involving violations of media freedom	NGO Blueprint for Free Speech	International	N/A	2019 (est.) –today
[Monitoring of trials against journalists](#)	Media freedom, media accountability	Conducting monitoring and exposing law abuses in trials against journalists	Association Media and Law studies	National	Turkey	2018–today

---

43 Paraphrased from the European Parliament Briefing "Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs)" from 2023.

Article 19	Freedom of expression, right to information	Monitoring threats to free expression, lobbying for progressive laws, drafting legal standards for free expression, access to information, PSB, etc.	NGO Article 19	International	United Kingdom	1987–today
Legal Network for the Protection of Democracy	Media freedom and independence of PSB	Using legal knowledge and means, including concerning the new law on PSB (arguing for depoliticized governing model at the referendum on the law and in the procedure at the Constitutional Court)	Network of 4 NGOs (Legal Centre, Amnesty International, Danes je nov dan, Institute Open) and a group of law firms and lawyers providing legal advice and services pro-bono or paid	National	Slovenia	2020–today

The anti-SLAPP activism involves proposals for early dismissal of abusive lawsuits and rights for compensation of damages and costs incurred by the defendant, training for judiciary on SLAPP, a public registry for SLAPP cases, and a specific fund for financial support for SLAPP targets. In 2023, on the EU level, it has included advocacy for adoption of the anti-SLAPP Directive.[44] Activists equally provide legal analyses and policy proposals concerning other laws and policies, such as those related to public service broadcasting (PSB), independence of media regulators, guaranties of access to public information, etc.

Activists equally provide legal analyses and policy proposals concerning other laws and policies, such as those related to public service broadcasting (PSB), independence of media regulators, guaranties of access to public information, etc.

---

44   See more in the open letter by CASE coalition published at: https://ipi.media/eu-anti-slapp-directive-cannot-be-a-missed-opportunity/.

Highlight: [THE CASE OF LEGAL NETWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF DEMOCRACY LNPD](#) (Slovenia)

The Network started during the COVID-19 pandemic and the formation of the new government led by the Slovenian Democratic Party, with the aim to offer legal protection and challenge restrictive government measures, such as limiting the right to movement, limiting citizens insight and participation in decision-making processes, and to provide support in cases of attacks on independent state bodies, judiciary, civil society actors, and protestors. The LNPD was formed at the end of 2020, when Amnesty International Slovenia, Danes je nov dan (Today is a New Day), PIC – Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs and Institute for Culture of Diversity Open – joined forces with the support and cooperation of various attorney offices, professors of law, and volunteers. LNPD offers advice, files appeals to state offices, helps file lawsuits, files criminal charges against government officials, organizes discussions, etc. Regulations challenged by LNPD were annulled by the Constitutional Court or asked to be corrected, and the network showed great potential as a solidarity-based network in the defence of the rule of law.

Media activists concerned with gender issues advocate for e.g. access to communication platforms for women and members of the LGBTIQ community, against pressures based on sex, gender, and sexual identity, and for better representation in media content.

3.2.5. **Gender-related media activism**

Media activists concerned with gender issues in the media and communication sector engage on a variety of the issues including access to communication platforms for women and members of the LGBTIQ community, specific pressures, and attacks they are exposed to precisely because of their sex, gender, and sexual identity, and their representation in media content. These media activist initiatives, for example, promote a better working environment for women journalists and a safer and more equitable communication environment for different vulnerable groups and political minorities.

Table 10: **EXAMPLES OF GENDER ACTIVISM IN THE COMMUNICATION SECTOR**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Coalition for Women in Journalism (CFWJ)	Support for women and LGBTQ journalists	Advocating a safe and flourishing professional environment, mentorship programme, reports and campaigns concerning the position of women journalists	NGO CFWJ	International	New York, USA	2017–today
Feminist Internet Research Network (FIRN)	Access, big data, impact on vulnerable populations, online gender-based violence, gendered labour in the digital economy	Research, advocacy, exchange	Association for Progressive Communications	International	Melville, Australia (central office), centres around the globe	2018–2021 (est.)
The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)	Representation of women in news media	Content monitoring of news media, conducted each five years	Coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC); volunteering activists, researchers and organizations in 114 participating countries	International	Central WACC offices in Canada and UK	1995–today
Media monitoring	Media accountability, diversity	Monitoring and publishing reports on media content concerning LGBTI identities	Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association (KAOS GL)	National	Turkey	2009–today

Highlight: **[FEMINIST INTERNET RESEARCH NETWORK FIRN](#)** (Australia)
FIRN undertakes data-driven research to drive change in policy and law and in the discourse around internet rights. The network's objective is to ensure that the needs of women, gender-diverse, and queer people are taken into account in internet policy discussions and decision making. The network tackles issues such as online gender-based violence, access to the internet for women in the Global South, participatory design of smartphone technology, marginalization of vulnerable groups in internet economy, and many others. FIRN is financed by the Internet Development Research Centre (IDRC).

3.2.6. Advocacy for ethical advertising and demonetization of unethical media practices

Media activists engage in monitoring, disclosing, and countering misuse of advertising practices and advertising funds for sustaining platforms that publish content harmful for the public, including hate and discriminatory speech and disinformation, with no respect for self-regulation mechanisms and journalistic standards of fairness and accuracy. These platforms rely on funding from advertising by both the commercial brands and government bodies. Media activism involves campaigning for both types of advertisers to consider public interest value (or harm) of media outlets when deciding where to place their advertising, i.e. to demonetize hate, discrimination, and disinformation in media (See examples in Table 11).

Media activists engage in monitoring, disclosing, and countering misuse of advertising practices and campaigning for demonetizing hate, discrimination, and disinformation in media.

Table 11: **EXAMPLES OF ACTIVISM FOR ETHICAL ADVERTISING AND DEMONETIZATION OF UNETHICAL MEDIA PRACTICES**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
[#KeinGeld-FürRechts](#) (No money for the right)	Media freedom, media financing	Online campaign (a blog, tweet, and hashtag)	Gerald Hensel, private individual	National, with international implications	Germany	2016–2017
[Državljan D/ Citizen D](#)	Media and information literacy, digital rights, countering government funding of hate (media)	Monitoring of advertising of public bodies and companies in hate media, podcast, etc.	NGO Institute Citizen D (Domen Savič)	National, with collaboration with actors from SEE and EU	Slovenia	2015–today

These campaigns add to the public discussion on harmful media content and ask for advertisers to adopt more ethical policies for placing their ads. More specifically, they ask advertisers not to place adds in media outlets that promote hatred, spread disinformation, or promote far-right ideology.

Highlight: **THE CASE OF NO MONEY FOR THE RIGHT** (Germany)
What was started by Gerald Hensen, manager of an advertising company, in 2016—2017, was an inspiring example of how just one person can incite pivotal debates that lead to important changes. Hashtag #KeinGeldFürRechts was calling for advertisers to stop placing advertising on right-wing websites that spread disinformation. Some sources suggest that revenues of the right-wing websites that were targeted by Hensen fell soon after the tweet became viral (see the Goethe Institute post). Moreover, the discussion that followed urged some large companies in USA to announce in 2017 that they "would abandon programmatic advertising on YouTube, as this platform cannot ensure that the automatically played advertising videos are not played in front of racist, sexist or other unethical video content". As countermeasures, concepts such as blacklists and whitelists of advertising environments and control mechanisms such as overviews of playouts that have taken place have been discussed and implemented for some time under the catchphrase "Brand Safety & Suitability" (Baumgarth et al 2021, 19).

In Slovenia, **Domen Savič and his NGO Institute Citizen D** have been leading a similar campaign for years, including monitoring the advertising of public bodies and companies in media involving hate speech, podcasts, and campaigning in media. The campaign has influenced parliamentary discussions on issues of corrupt placement of advertisement by public companies.

3.2.7. **Fact-checking**

Fact-checking platforms, including those functioning across the region of South East Europe,[45] contribute to the visibility of the problem of disinformation, to promotion of the accuracy in media and public communication, and to media literacy of citizens. These platforms are also networking, which makes it possible to follow the patterns of cross-border dissemination of fake news. Their work contributes to the resilience of the public to disinformation.

Table 12: **EXAMPLES OF FACT-CHECKING PLATFORMS**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
The Digital Forensic Centre	Media accountability, fact checking	Engaging in fact-checking	Atlantic Council	National	Montenegro	2020–today
Fake News Tragač (tracer)	Media accountability, false media reporting	Monitoring media reporting and reporting on content involving disinformation and propaganda	Novi Sad School of Journalism	National	Serbia	2017–today
raskrinkavanje. me	Media accountability, fact-checking	Engaging in fact-checking	Center for Democratic Transition	National	Montenegro	2018–2023 (ongoing)
Faktoje	Fact-checking, transparency of government institutions	Engaging in fact-checking	Faktoje	National	Albania	2018–today
Raskrinkavanje	Fight against disin-formation, propa-ganda, and mis-leading information, fact-checking,	Fact-checking platform	NGO Zasto ne	National	Sarajevo, BiH	2017–today

These websites are increasingly visited by the public and their reports are also carried by mainstream media.

---

45 Including platforms: Raskrinkavanje.ba (BiH), Raskrinkavanje.me (MN), Faktograf.hr (CRO), Raskrikavanje.rs (RS), FakeNews Tragač (RS), Razkrinkavanje.si (SLO) and F2N2.mk (MK).

Highlight: **THE CASE OF THE PLATFORM RASKRINKAVANJE** (BiH)

The fact-checking platform Raskrinkavanje was founded by the Citizens' Association Zašto ne in 2017. It is a platform that checks, based on readers complaints and virality, online media and social networks for problematic media content, including disinformation and fake news. In 2020, the platform joined a partnership with Facebook (Third Party Fact-Checking Program)[46], in which after the fact-checkers mark content as false, Facebook places a flag on the disputed content and reduces the reach of these posts, and informs those who spread the content. In this way, problematic content and the reach of those who spread disinformation is reduced, as is their profit. If the post is corrected, Facebook will withdraw its sanctions.

---

46   For more on the programme, see: https://www.facebook.com/formedia/mjp/programs/third-party-fact-checking.

3.2.8. Activism for media accountability

Media activism also involves arguing for more accountability for the content that media and non-journalistic online platforms publish. Such activism involves monitoring and disclosing harmful media content and advocacy for better (self)regulation.

Table 13: **EXAMPLES OF ACTIVISM FOR MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY**

Name	Thematic area	Type of project/ activities	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Hacked Off	Media freedom, media accountability	Campaigning for re-form of press regula-tion, including punitive powers, arbitration and prominent retrac-tions and apologies	The core team includes nine journalists, lawyers, academics, and a victim of phone-hacking	National	London, United Kingdom	2011–today
FAIR	Media accountability, independent reporting, and related issues	Scrutinizing media practices that margin-alize public interest, exposing neglected stories and plus	NGO Fairness and accuracy, the key staff is made of journalists and academics	National	New York, USA	1986–today
Hate speech media watch	Hate speech, media accountability	Conducting and supporting studies	Hrant Dink Foundation (Asulis Project)	National	Turkey	2009–today
Mapping hate	Media accountability, hate speech, discriminatory speech, denial of genocide	Database	BIRN BiH	National	Sarajevo, BiH	2021–today

Highlight: **THE CASE OF HACKED OFF** (UK)
Hacked Off is a campaign demanding regulation of the press media sector in the UK. It was founded in reaction to the hacking scandal in the UK made public in 2011, when it was revealed that employees of the now-defunct News of the World and other British newspapers owned by Rupert Murdoch engaged in phone hacking, police bribery, and improper influence in the pursuit of stories.[47]

---

47   While here we do not agree that regulation of the press sector is necessarily the best framework, we mention Hacked Off only as one example of advocacy for media accountability and (self)regulation.

3.2.9. Other media monitoring and watchdog initiatives

Media activism includes also a watchdog and monitoring of the media and communication sector focusing on monitoring content (including hate speech and disinformation), monitoring the media environment including media funding and ownership, etc. In Table 14, we list examples of media watch projects and campaigns.

Table 14: **EXAMPLES OF MONITORING AND WATCHDOG INITIATIVES**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/ project/actions	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Mérték media monitoring	Media freedom, media regulation, media market, media content	Analyses on different media-related issues (e.g. government funding, independence of media regulator, etc.)	Six experts plus other staff and external collaborators	National, but some analyses concern Central Europe and beyond	Hungary	2011–today
Real 411	Fight against disinformation, hate speech, incitement to crime and harassment	Research monitoring and analysis, 2) Advocate, litigate and lobby, 3) Community and audience engagement, 4) Building skills for media and the public	NGO Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) and African National Editors Forum (SANEF)	Regional	Johannesburg, South Africa	2019–today
Media.ba	Media accountability, media independence, quality journalism	Website providing news, analyses, research and educative material concerning media and communication in BiH and beyond	Mediacentar Sarajevo	National	Sarajevo, BiH	1995–today
BIA Media monitoring reports	Media freedom, media accountability	Conducting monitoring and publishing annual and quarterly reports	Communication Foundation IPS/ Bianet (Erol Önderoğlu)	National (i.e. local, regional, national)	Turkey	2001–today

Highlight: **BIA MEDIA MONITORING REPORTS BY IPS COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION** (Turkey)

BIA quarterly and annual monitoring reports provide an important account of the violations of media freedom in Turkey, including arbitrary prosecution on charges of violating the Turkish Penal Code and the Anti-Terror Law, prison sentences, administrative fines, physical violence by the security forces, charges of "membership in a terrorist organization" hearings, legislative changes, national and international campaigns, and reports. The reporting and data collection is being carried out by Erol Önderoğlu, the Representative of Reporters Without Borders (RSF), who follows the news and contacts NGOs, lawyers, journalists' organizations, and newspapers to compile the reports. These reports will soon be shared through the Media Monitoring Database, a searchable and user-friendly source of information for journalists, academics, lawyers, activists, the international community, and the general public. IPS Media Monitoring reports are an important source of information for the international, intergovernmental, and national organizations that put pressure on the government authorities in reacting to the legal actions against journalists, writers, publishers, and academics.

3.3. BUILDING CAPACITIES OF MEDIA, JOURNALISTS, AND CITIZENS

Finally, media activism involves capacity-building efforts that can capacitate public interest journalism, monitoring, and advocacy for public interest in the media and communication sector. Examples are listed in Tables 15 and 16.

Media activism involves capacity-building efforts that can capacitate public interest journalism, monitoring, and advocacy for public interest in the media and communication sector.

Table 15: **EXAMPLES OF CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES FOR JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA**

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/project/actions	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Digital security workshops	Media literacy, digital security, access to information	Workshop for human rights defenders, journalists, and activists	Thai Netizen Network	National	Thailand	2008 (est.)–today
Slobodni glasovi (Free voices)	Journalist education	Internship programme for journalists	Mediacentar Sarajevo	National	Sarajevo, BiH	2016–today
Female journalists against violence against women	Media quality, reporting on women exposed to violence	Sensibilization of journalists	UNDP and B92 Fund	National	Serbia	2017–today

Name	Thematic area	Type of platform/project/actions	Key organizers	Scope	Geographical base	Duration
Media literacy education	Media literacy	Initiative to introduce MIL to formal education curricula	Albanian Media Institute in partnership with Ministry of Education, and partnership with public and private faculties	National	Albania	2020–2024 (ongoing)
Youth literacy camps	Media and information literacy	Educational camps	Mediacentar Sarajevo	National	Sarajevo, BiH	2018–today
Media literacy education	Media literacy education	Creation of media literacy practices, research activities, quizzes of media literacy, panels	Novi Sad School of Journalism	National	Serbia	2006–today
Media literacy education	Media literacy education	Cooperation between government and the non-governmental sector, supported by IREX, in introducing MLE in schools	IREX, Macedonian Institute for Media, Institute of Communication Studies and Youth Educational Forum, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and Bureau for Development	National	North Macedonia	2021–2025
Young Reporters project	Media literacy education, journalism training, fact-checking	MIL education for youth, providing media experience, engaging in fact-checking	UNICEF Montenegro UNICEF, Albanian Media Institute, Faktoje, ACQJ, Citizens Channel, Global Voices project	National	Montenegro/Albania	2018–today 2000–today (frequently repeated project)
Media literacy education	Media literacy education	Initiative for introducing MIL education in formal education	Montenegro Media Institute	National	Montenegro	2019–today

Highlight: **INTRODUCING MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION** (Montenegro and beyond). The educational system in Montenegro includes media literacy as an elective subject in grammar schools (grammar school students make up only 30% of the total number of secondary school students in the country) but not in vocational and primary schools. It is why the Montenegro Media Institute, with media literacy experts and other partners from civil society and schools, has for several years advocated the introduction of media literacy in all schools. After an intensive civil society campaign from 2018 to 2022, official data from the Ministry of Education show a growing interest of high school students in media and information literacy and the greater good of teachers in formal and informal education in this area. In 2022, the authorities decided to introduce media literacy education as an elective subject for students in all elementary schools in Montenegro. Also, students will be able to learn this subject based on the educational programme prepared by the MMI and external experts in 2023. The Bureau for Education, the Agency for Electronic Media, and the MMI launched a campaign to promote this subject and educate elementary school teachers. It is one of the most successful initiatives of the Montenegro Media Institute, its partners from state institutions, and media literacy experts. It exemplifies the synergy of the mutual initiative of state institutions, civil society organizations, and media literacy experts.

Similar initiatives exist in Albania, North Macedonia, and Serbia as well, indicating that there is considerable political will across the region to work on this particular issue. Exchange of experiences within SEE from these initiatives would be advisable.

3.4. MEDIA FREEDOM AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS AND DONOR INITIATIVES

Finally, we should also mention the **international organizations and networks for media development and protection of journalists**, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) and IFEX,[48] which present a separate framework for continuous media activism both by networks and by their individual members.[49] They use their capacities and influence to warn, through global media campaigns, about the repression of and violence against journalists and media outlets, and to directly engage with governments and demand freedom for journalists. Media development organizations also provide support for independent media, including through funding, developing funding models, supporting public service media development, lobbying for better funding and policies concerning journalism, and providing fellowship and training.

There are also **international funds**, such as the International Media Development Fund (IMDF), International Fund for Journalists, and other funds dedicated to media development and sustaining media activism. The establishment of the International Fund for Public Interest Media, in 2021, by the government departments and agencies of the US and other countries (Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Taiwan, New Zealand, Estonia, etc.) together with private donor funders (Google, Ford Foundation, Craig Newmark Philanthropies, etc.) has been based on recognizing the need for long-term and more substantial media assistance, particularly in a hostile political climate and limited support of the public.[50]

---

48   Besides the usual press releases and advocacy, RSF has performed activist stunts, such as disrupting the start of the 2008 Olympic torch relay by unfurling a banner with interconnecting handcuffs replacing the Olympic rings.

49   A mapping of media development organizations would, however, fall outside the scope of this report

50   So far it is unclear if the Fund will attract more funding for media, as was intended, or if it will just divert the existing funding, but the initial data show that the Fund attained only half of the estimated USD 100M needed to achieve viability (Simon 2023, 28).

IV.
CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Media activism delivers some remarkable results, from preventing adoption of retrograde media laws, law enforcement against corrupt persons in power, through research and informing the public about issues of public interest concerning media and communication, empowerment of media and journalists for defence and sustainability of public-interest journalism, empowerment of citizens for media literacy, resilience to harmful media practices, and for demanding media freedom and accountability, and advocating for media reforms, i.e. changes in media policies and practices. Moreover, the simple existence of media activists is a success in itself as it brings necessary alternative voices into the public debate about our media, defying the growing capture of media by those holding political and/or economic power.

In the countries targeted by the Our Media project, media activism initiatives are mostly led by non-governmental organizations and journalists' unions, and to some extent alternative media and producers, scholars, and similar interest groups. Media activism initiatives thus often depend on funding tied to individual, short-term projects and institutional agendas. However, many of the media policy advocacy initiatives have been voluntary, including ad hoc initiatives in reaction to backward legislative proposals, but also long-term initiatives, such as coalitions for introducing media literacy. These initiatives have included engagement of individuals such as civil society activists, educators, journalists, and researchers, but also have occasionally acquired pro bono services from lawyers, from creative agencies providing pro bono solutions for visual material and slogans, from printing houses providing pro bono printing of posters and stickers with campaign slogans, cultural workers and artists ("artivism"), including actors, painters, and musicians but also service providers in cultural industries devoting their art or infrastructure to campaigns for media and democracy.

Based on the mapping of media activism cases, we propose a typology, aiming to inform future media activism and media literacy initiatives within and outside of the regional project "Our Media".

Alternative platforms, providing relevant underrepresented content

a. Citizen journalism platforms
b. Blogs (including blogs on media and communication, as well as blogs
   on other underreported issues of public relevance)
c. Community media outlets
d. Independent media outlets
e. Investigative journalism projects, centres, and regional/international networks
f. Initiatives to support alternative platforms (fundraising, logistical, and other support)

Alternative platforms providing internet services

web hosting, webmail, online community platform,
blog service (hosting and storing blog data)

Research, campaigns, and advocacy for media reforms

a. Coalitions for media reforms
b. Initiatives for a wide range of media reforms (including through research and advocacy)
c. Reactions to a retrograde policy proposal, and demanding progressive policy changes
d. Law-driven media activism: monitoring, legal support, and advocacy
   to prevent misuse of laws
e. Gender-related media activism (including representation of women and LGBTIQ
   community in communication and issues of access to media and technologies)
f. Activism for ethical advertising and demonetization of unethical media practices
g. Fact-checking
h. Activism for strengthening media accountability
i. Other media monitoring and watchdog initiatives (including monitoring
   of freedom of expression, monitoring of media content, advertising, etc.)

Capacity building

a. Initiatives aimed at building capacities of media and journalists (training,
   study visits, technical and logistical support, etc.).
b. Initiatives aimed at building capacities of citizens (media and information
   literacy training, fact-checking, monitoring of harmful media practices, etc.).

For media activism to acquire greater cultural and political resonance, it needs to attract various citizen groups, such as parents, librarians, youth, etc. Future citizen mobilization will depend on the media activists' ability to respond to the daily concerns of wide constituencies, and to communicate the consequences of undemocratic policies and practices on the issues that already matter to citizens.[51] For instance, an issue that matters to parents might be the destructive impact of commercial media on socialization of children, and an issue of concern for librarians and educators might be open access to information.

---

51 Historically, citizen engagement in media activism has been limited, apart from during times of social turmoil and change, including due to the stresses of everyday life and the notion that media and communication issues are far from citizens' daily concerns.

Media advocacy initiatives often face strong resistance from the mainstream media outlets captured by corrupt political and economic interests as well as those who benefit the most from the existing media policies and culture, which prevents fair and relevant media coverage of media advocacy issues and actions. Journalists and trade unions have little power to resist and confront the interest of their employers, as the markets are small and offer limited opportunity for alternative employment. One of the last items of online content published by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (UK), in 2018, had suggested that collective organizing, even within a large media industry such as the one in the UK, has in practice been limited. The trade unions affiliated with the Campaign had millions of members (at one point 4.4 million, as noted on the website) but their support was limited and: "Campaigning from without instead of within the media industry has diluted the ability to apply direct pressure on the employers, and indirectly on politicians" (CPBF website).

Some media activism initiatives have been gaining momentum in the region. The fact that there are ongoing initiatives to introduce media literacy into formal education curricula in four countries of the region (Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia) show that there is a growing sensiblization of government officials and increasing political will to tackle this issue, and media activists should use this momentum to push for further changes.

Other types of actions are less likely to garner similar support, as they challenge dominant interests (of government officials, key advertisers, and commercial media outlets). Such media reforms will thus depend on political ruptures and openings that might occur as a result of party-political dynamics and divisions, but also the impact of other-than-media-centred social movements and initiatives.

While reacting to worrying practices and policy initiatives, which we have seen across the region, media activism is an important tool in preventing further decline of the integrity of media and communication. Where possible, media activists should set the agenda and systematically advocate substantial improvements of media policies and practices. This might include participation in working groups for drafting laws and other institutional processes concerning media and communication. For instance, Free Press has become a regular consultant in the development of media policies in the USA.

The power, in terms of reach and capacities, of communication platforms that are embodying the interests of governments and corporations remains immeasurably greater. As Bob Hackett claims: "Media reform is unlikely to be achieved without a popular movement devoted specifically to this objective. Only sustained popular pressure is likely to persuade governments to challenge the power and earn the wrath of media conglomerates" (2016, N/A).

For media activism to acquire greater cultural and political resonance, it needs to attract various citizen groups, such as parents, librarians, youth, etc. Future citizen mobilization will depend on the media activists' ability to communicate the consequences of undemocratic policies and practices on the issues that already matter to citizens.

Media activism is an important tool in preventing further decline of the integrity of media and communication. Where possible, media activists should set the agenda and systematically advocate substantial improvements of media policies and practices.

Successful media reform strategies have involved thoughtful, big coalitions (cross-coalitions), aimed at increasing reach and enabling political effectiveness. Links between local, national, and international actions, as well as between "grassroots" and policy-making levels, are also likely to enable sharing of knowledge and resources, amplify reach, and acquire larger impact. International cooperation and coordination of media activists is pivotal because many of the issues concerning media activism are global and involve issues of trade, economic regulatory policies, and the work of tech giants and streaming platforms. In the issues concerning particularly harmful content, the coordination of activists within countries that share similar culture and language is likely to assert more impact and result in positive steps in marginalizing hate and discriminatory speech and disinformation.

The good media activism practices are a source of inspiration for possible future actions, and taken together they incite the notion that media activism can and should take very different forms and tackle a variety of issues for it to bring substantial reforms. The future of the media is a key political issue and media activists need to establish a variety of attempts and models of mobilization of wider citizenship in defence of public interest in the media and communication sector. Media and information literacy education will have to be a part of the strategy of the citizen mobilization, as a means of promoting the interest of citizens in the media sector and for developing skills and acquiring the knowledge needed for effective mobilization.

Successful media reform strategies have involved thoughtful, big coalitions (cross-coalitions), aimed at increasing reach and enabling political effectiveness.

The future of the media is a key political issue and media activists need to establish a variety of attempts and models of mobilization of wider citizenship in defence of public interest in the media and communication sector.

LITERATURE AND SOURCES

Baumgarth, C., Kirkby, A., Lambrecht A. (2021). End of the AI Brand Winter: Artificial Intelligence in Brand Management. Berlin School of Economics and Law.

Carroll, W.K., Hackett, R.A. "Democratic Media Activism Through the Lens of Social Movement Theory. Media, Culture and Society, (2006), 28(1), 83-104.

Carpentier, N. (2011). Media and Participation: A site of ideological-democratic struggle. Intellect: Bristol.

Custòdio, L. 2017. Favela media activism: counterpublics for human rights in Brazil. Lexington Books, Lanham.

Dagron, A.G., 2001. Making Waves: Stories of participatory communication for social change. Rockefeller Foundation.

Dekić, S. 2013. Flash report Bosnia and Herzegovina. SEE Media Observatory, https://mediaobservatory.net/radar/flash-report-2-bosnia-and-herzegovina.

Duncan, K. (Ed.) 1999. Liberating alternatives: The founding convention of the Cultural Environment Movement. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Fahey, P. M. (1991). Advocacy group boycotting of network television advertisers and its effects on programming content. University of Pennsylvania Law Review, 140, 647-709. https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3685&context=penn_law_review [accessed on April 16, 2023]

Hackett, R. A. 2016. Taking back the media: notes on the potential for a communicative democracy movement. Media Alliance. Available at: https://media-alliance.org/2016/05/taking-back-the-media-notes-on-the-potential-for-a-communicative-democracy-movement-by-bob-Hackettt/ [accessed on April 16, 2023]

Hackett, R. A. & Carroll, W. K. 2006. Remaking media: The struggle to democratize public communication. New York: Routledge.

Hackett, R. A. & Carroll, W. K. (2004). Critical social movements and media reform (in Media Development, 4(1), 14-19), the open-source version available at http://www.sfu.ca/~Hackettt/CriticalSocialMovements.htm.

Hadl, G. and Dongwon, J. 2008. New approaches to our media: General Challenges and the Korean case. In: Pajnik, M. and Downing, J. (eds). Alternative Media and the Politics of Resistance. Ljubljana: The Peace Institute, p.81-109.

Hodzic, S. and Petkovic, B. 2020. Sustainability of Independent Journalism in Media Business Environment of the Western Balkans. TACSO.

Hoey, P. 2018) Shinners, Dissos and Dissenters: Irish Republican Media Activism Since the Good Friday Agreement. Manchester University Press.

Horwitz, R. B. 1997. Broadcast reform revisited: Reverend Everett C. Parker and the "Standing" case. Communications Review 2(3):311– 348.

Jakubowicz, K. 1990. 'Solidarity' and Media Reform in Poland. European Journal of Communication, 5(23), 333–354.

Klinenberg, E. 2007. Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media, Holt Paperbacks.

Kranich, N. 2004. Media, Democracy and Libraries: The Growth of Media Activism in the United States. Feliciter, 50(5), pp. 200-203.

McChesney, R.W. Understanding the Media Reform Movement. International Journal of Communication 3 (2009). https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/download/442/299.

McChesney, R.W, The U.S. Media Movement: Going Forward. Monthly review, 2008, Vol. 60 (04). https://monthlyreview.org/2008/09/01/the-u-s-media-reform-movement-going-forward/.

Menezes Teixeira, A. C. E. 2020. Grassroots media activism and the counter-hegemonic narrative of politics, Ephemera 20 (1), 147–175.

Mueller, M., Kuerbis, B., Pagé, Ch. 2004). Reinventing Media Activism: Public Interest Advocacy in the Making of U.S. Communication- Information Policy, 1960-2002

Mueller, M., Pagé, Ch., Kuerbis, B. 2004. Civil Society and the Shaping of Communication–Information Policy: Four Decades of Advocacy. The Information Society, 20, 160-185.

Napoli, Philip M., 2007. "Public Interest Media Activism and Advocacy as a Social Movement: A Review of the Literature". McGannon Center Working Paper Series. 21. https://fordham.bepress.com/mcgannon_working_papers/21.

Pajnik, M. and Downing J.D.H. 2008. Alternative Media and the Politics of Resistance: Perspectives and Challenges. Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organisation

Renzi, A. 2011. From Collectives to Connectives: Italian Media Activism and the Repurposing of the Social, University of Toronto, Toronto, https://hdl.handle.net/1807/29845, http://bnarchives.yorku.ca/635/.

Simon, J. 2023. A New Paradigm for Global Journalism: Press Freedom and Public Interest. Available at: https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/a-new-paradigm-for-global-journalism-press-freedom-and-public-interest.php#The%20Platforms%20and%20Public%20Interest.

Schiffrin, A. ed, Media Capture: How Money, Digital Platforms, and Governments Control the News. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.

Young-han Kim, 2001. The Broadcasting Audience Movement in Korea. Media, Culture and Society, 23(1). 91–107.

Wible, Scott (2004). Media advocates, Latino citizens and niche cable The limits of 'no limits' TV, Cultural Studies, 18:1, 34-66.

All links accessed between April and October 2023.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sanela Hodžić holds an MA in Gender Studies from the Center of Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Sarajevo. She is an independent researcher and was a longtime senior researcher and coordinator of research projects at Mediacentar Sarajevo.

MOBILIZATION FOR PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE MEDIA

Mapping Good Practices of Media Activism

SEENPM
South East European Network
for Professionalization of Media