Media and Human Rights in Southeast Asia

USAID YouTube Collaboration

Background

During their recent meeting, Administrator Power and YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki discussed the potential of a formal partnership to support independent journalists through leveraging YouTube's revenue sharing model and platform. Given the success of independent and mainstream journalists on YouTube across nearly all geographies, and USAID's support for civil society and independent media around the world, we are seeking to develop and launch a formal partnership between our organizations in H2 2022, to advance our shared objectives.

Proposal

Given these shared values and interests, YouTube and USAID are launching an independent media partnership program to support independent media across the world. This program is dedicated to spotlighting and growing independent media on our platform, by giving them access to resources and training to help them thrive on YouTube.

USAID RDMA has already established a project with Internews is Southeast Asia and has asked Internews to consider how this project can align the USAID/YouTube partnership.

Proposed Internews Scope of Work

Activity 1 - "Pre-bunking" Support to Journalists, Civil Society

Internews will gather journalists, civil society factcheckers and researchers from across SEA to identify existing cleavages and narratives around which disinformation will likely arise and which groups are most susceptible to those narratives. Research materials and reporting guides addressing these identified narratives will be shared through country and regional level networks to assist media to proactively address concerns or respond quickly and responsibly as topics are raised in public discourse. There will be two cohorts of 25 participants, 50 in total, with each participant attending a total of four trainings: two in person and two online trainings. During the first two in person meetings, participants will develop the SoW for Activity 2 Research and Needs Assessment – Online Video Practice Among SEA Media and Civil Society. USAID and YouTube will be invited to participate in some of these sessions.

Outputs: *Four regional stakeholder meetings (two in person) with a total of 50 participants (25 participants per meeting X 2)*

RDMA Synergy This activity is expanded, the two cohorts were originally planned for just two online meetings now they will have an in-person meeting to kick off the project and a follow up online meeting.

Activity 2 - Research and Needs Assessment – Online Video Practice Among SEA Media and Civil Society

Internews will conduct research with media and civil society partners from across SEA to understand their use of online video and identify potential needs and opportunities. For independent newsrooms and civil society organizations engaged in advocacy, video can be an important channel to engage with audiences and expand reach, impact and potentially revenue. This research will seek to understand what platforms SEA partners are already using and document their experiences, including successes and challenges. Topics will range from audience engagement and monetization to safety and the practicalities of video production. The report will inform project activities, provide a baseline for evaluation, and shape wider strategy when it comes to training and investment in video programming in the region.

Outputs: *One report outlining current online video practice of SEA Media and Civil Society partners, which identifies needs and provides strategic recommendations.*

Activity 3 - Training of Trainers – Understanding Online Video

This Training of Trainers will provide selected media and civil society participants with an up-to-date understanding of online video, equipping them to bring skills back to their organizations and networks. A key focus of the TOT will be on strategies around online video, and how to evaluate if these approaches are tailored for individual organizations. The training will include topics such as audience engagement and monetization. Whilst all video platforms will be covered, the TOT will be co-facilitated by YouTube who will run a deep-dive session into the features of their platform. The focus of the TOT will be on the use of online video for news and advocacy, and the understanding of platform mechanics covered in the training that will also be relevant to Activity 5 Disinformation Investigations. Finally, it is anticipated there may be some crossover in the participants. Fellowships will be available for TOT participants to hone skills developed during the training. Grantees will have the opportunity to engage with trainers at the end of the process to review their strategies.

Outputs: *20 trainers trained to run sessions on online video strategy. 40 video stories produced with the support of fellowships.*

Activity 4 – Online Video Training Fellowships

Following on directly from Activity 3, TOT participants will be supported to run their own workshops for networks in their own countries. Trainers will design, organize and facilitate these trainings and strategic workshops under a fellowship model. Identifying the participants for trainings will be up to the trainers, with some likely to focus on their own newsrooms and

organizations, whilst others will take a wider approach. As well as covering costs for the events Internews will facilitate support for the trainers where needed, including reviewing training curricula to ensure suitability for the audience. The fellowship will also allow the trainers to provide limited mentoring for participants of the workshops.

Outputs: *20 fellowships provided to TOT participants. 20 trainings held on online video strategy.*

Activity 5 - Disinformation Investigations

Building on the "pre-bunking" reports in Activity 1, Internews will support journalists and civil society researchers to jointly investigate, map and document disinformation actors and networks—and then communicate their findings. Specific focus will be given to disinformation related to democracy, human rights, and governance (e.g., elections). Investigations will focus on deceptive behavior, such as media manipulation and the use of fake online accounts. This could also include a deep dive into monetization of disinformation as a tool for engagement with large platforms like Facebook and YouTube to drive accountability. Reporting will help communicate such disinformation tactics to the public, and investigations will ultimately seek to gather enough evidence to attribute disinformation campaigns to specific actors to hold them publicly accountable. Participants will learn how to identify and document deceptive behavior associated with organized disinformation campaigns, enabling journalists to investigate the actors behind disinformation campaigns, as well as addressing the content or narratives that is being circulated.

Outputs: *24 collaborative story grants (four grants for six countries), resulting in 24 stories, at least 12 of which will include a video element.*

RDMA Synergy This activity is expanded with double the number of story grants and at least 12 grants now quarantined for video-based stories.

Activity 6 - Core Capacity Support – Disinformation Investigation

While reporting on disinformation is a skill that needs developing across the board, the handful of SEA media and civil society organizations that are more keenly focused on investigation and documentation require specialist support. This activity will provide funding for selected grantees to cover costs including equipment, software licenses, security, training, and staff time. This support is designed to build the overall capacity of selected organizations to investigate disinformation in the SEA region. Applicants will be selected based on their role within the ecosystem and ability to impact their own contexts through investigation and documentation of disinformation. In addition to the grant recipients will be supported through safety audits, mentoring and networking opportunities. Organizations with staff/members involved in Activities 1 & 3, will be preferred.

Outputs: *Ten organizations receive core capacity support which strengthens their ability to generate impact through investigation and documentation of disinformation.*

Activity 7 - Capstone Conference

A regional conference will round out the project, bringing together partners and participants from across the program activities. This in-person meet up will generate important regional networking opportunities for organizations engaged in similar work. Partners will be given an opportunity to present their investigations and share their experiences. Practical workshops will also provide an opportunity for participants to share digital investigations methodologies that have been successful for them, or ask questions of their counterparts, allowing for peer-to-peer learning. Internews will use the event to feed into project evaluation, giving participants the opportunity to provide feedback and make recommendations for future programming. The workshop will be designed and attended by the project evaluator who will produce a final report analyzing the performance of the project.

Outputs: *36 program participants attend a capstone conference to share experiences and feedback. Final report produced*

RDMA Synergy Due to budget constraints this activity was dropped from the agreed project it has now been re-included.

Project Timeline (months)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
USAID – YouTube – Internews Collaboration												
Activity 1 - "Pre-bunking" Support to Journalists, Civil Society	X	X					X	X				
Activity 2 - Research and Needs Assessment – Online Video Practice Among SEA Media and Civil Society			X	X	X							
Activity 3 - Training of Trainers – Understanding Online Video					X	X						
Activity 4 – Online Video Training Fellowships						X	X					
Activity 5 - Disinformation Investigations				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 6 Core Capacity Support – Disinformation Investigation			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 7 Capstone Conference												X