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INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH INDEPENDENT MEDIA

CONTEXT

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

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

USAID MEDIA EMPOWERMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY (USAID MEDIA)

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

groups like sexual and religious minorities, so that diverse voices are represented in public discourse, and increases the ability of media and CSOs working on transparency and accountability to improve citizen engagement with high-quality, evidence-based coverage about issues of substantial public interest. USAID MEDIA also enhances reporting skills of local and national media outlets and increases the capability of at-risk journalists to prevent and manage threats. This all boosts resilience and sustainability of media outlets so that they can adapt to—and survive—changes in the media landscape. In its implementation, USAID MEDIA partners with local media organizations including:

- **Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI)**, an NGO with over 2,000 members nationwide that promotes independent media, press freedom, and quality journalism.
- **Indonesia Anti-Slander Society (MAFINDO)**, a grassroots anti-disinformation task force and fact-checking outlet, engaged with social media platforms including WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter to address mis/disinformation online.
- **Media Cyber Association of Indonesia (AMSI)**, an organization of more than 300 cyber media companies across 20 provinces working to improve digital literacy.
- **Indonesian Association for Media Development (PPMN)**, a non-profit working to expand access to information by increasing media capacity and improving media literacy.
- **Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW)**, an NGO dedicated to monitoring corruption.
- **Journalist Association for Diversity (SEJUK)**, a union of journalists dedicated to protecting religious and sexual minorities.
- **Legal Aid Center for the Press (LBH Pers)**, a CSO that provides legal aid to defend press freedom, freedom of expression, and protection for press workers.

RESULTS

- Through USAID MEDIA, a total of 990 journalists received comprehensive training in subjects such as data journalism and citizen journalism. This led to the publication of 649 pieces of content, including 71 impactful data journalism pieces and 27 pieces promoting diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the project successfully trained and supported 832 rights defenders and 352 local civil society organizations (CSOs), enabling them to drive 92 advocacy efforts focused on information resilience, rights, and accountability.
- USAID strengthens independent media's sustainability and business practices. As a result of our support, 140 media organizations have experienced increased revenues, further enhancing their crucial role in fostering democratic integrity and accountability.

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