



# United States Institute of Peace

## Media, Conflict, & Peacebuilding

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### CENTER OF INNOVATION FOR MEDIA, CONFLICT, & PEACEBUILDING

This new Center of Innovation focuses on the role of media throughout the conflict cycle: preventing media incitement to violence, protecting media from abuse during conflict, and empowering sustainable peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict situations. The Center, headed by Sheldon Himelfarb, conducts research, develops programming across all forms of media, and promotes cooperation and information sharing among policymakers, experts, media actors, and peacebuilding practitioners. Current projects and priorities include:

#### PROVIDING MUCH-NEEDED TOOLS

*Media have often been both targets and weapons in violent conflict, but less well developed is the capacity of the media for building peace.*

- **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MEDIA INTERVENTION:**

The Center is completing a two-year project to develop a strategic framework for media interventions throughout the conflict cycle, creating a shared vocabulary and comprehensive taxonomy for the field. It will also analyze best practices in peacebuilding media across the last 20 years and offer recommendations on maximizing impact. In June 2008, this framework received detailed feedback and positive responses during a two-day seminar at USIP, which brought together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. A draft of the framework was also presented for feedback at the Global Forum on Media Development (GFMD) in December 2008. The project is expected to culminate in a book published by USIP Press in fall 2009.

- **MEDIA ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE:**

The Center is continuing development of a template for the assessment of the media landscape in conflict situations. A longtime concern of practitioners and donors alike, this template will offer a clear and concise process for evaluating the range of opportunities and challenges in producing peacebuilding programming in fragile states, thereby providing a critical connection between integrating strategic media programming with peacebuilding planning and impact evaluation. A draft of the template was presented for feedback at the Global Forum on Media Development (GFMD) in December 2008.

- **PEACE MEDIA CLEARINGHOUSE:**

In December 2008 the Center launched the beta version of the *Peace Media Clearinghouse* (<http://peacemedia.usip.org>), a massive database of peacebuilding media productions and a collaborative resource that connects peacebuilders with relevant media tools. The Center will utilize input from beta testers to finalize website design, complete with new interactive features and cutting edge web design. The site was launched in March 2009.

## CONNECTING MEDIA NETWORKS

*Effective peacebuilding media requires understanding, information sharing, and cooperation among policymakers, experts, media actors, and peacebuilding practitioners.*

- **MEDIA AS GLOBAL DIPLOMAT:**

U.S. public diplomacy is at a critical juncture with policymakers searching for innovative recommendations both on projecting American virtues abroad as well as on how best to ensure an informed citizenry at home with media outlets folding and coverage of foreign affairs shrinking. Partnering with the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the Center hosted a February 3, 2009 Public Diplomacy Leadership Summit at the Newseum to consider innovative mechanisms for addressing current challenges of U.S. public diplomacy. **Ted Koppel** moderated three panels during this one-day summit, which sought the advice of three distinct communities: policymakers, broadcasters, and citizen journalists. Nearly the entire event is available online at: [http://www.usip.org/media/global\\_diplomat/](http://www.usip.org/media/global_diplomat/)

- **EXPERT WORKING GROUPS:**

The Center convenes, as needed, working groups made up of scholars, practitioners, policy makers, journalists, and donors in the Washington, D.C. area to analyze substantive and timely issues relating to the field of media, conflict, and peacebuilding. Previous topics considered include: "Media Incitement in the Iraq Crisis" and "Iraq's Communications and Media Commission: Recent Developments."

## MEDIA PEACEBUILDING IN IRAQ

*Peace in Iraq will require developing its media architecture to prevent factional incitement to violence, involving Iraq's neighbors in sustainable peacebuilding media development, and initiating a shared national dialogue among youth to engage the next generation of Iraqi citizens.*

- **PREVENTING MEDIA INCITEMENT:**

As part of a major initiative to formulate a two-track (regulatory and non-regulatory) strategy to address media incitement in Iraq, the Center is bringing media regulation experts with experience in conflict-affected countries to participate in a forum with Iraqi media regulatory officials and private-sector Iraqi media figures.

- **REGIONAL MEDIA SUMMIT:**

The Center is currently identifying, and will soon begin to engage in a series of one-and-one small group dialogues, key regional Arab media owners and editors in order reach consensus on how to reduce the bias and incitement in reporting that hinder regional peacebuilding efforts.

- **IRAQI YOUTH MEDIA SUMMIT:**

The Center is approaching in-country Iraqi youth leaders to assist in the design and production of carefully researched peacebuilding media and curriculum. This will result in a one-day conference in Iraq for up to 50 young Iraqi leaders scheduled for fall 2009. Most importantly, it will engage youth and media experts in country with youth leaders themselves in carefully designing and producing a research-based peacebuilding campaign.

## STAFF CONTACT

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