IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CLIMATE RELATED REPORTING

GCCF is partnering with media organisations in Pakistan to build accountability and enhance press coverage of climate finance

THE CHALLENGE

While the public may be aware of hazards posed by a changing climate, its understanding of policies and expenditures to deal with these is often low. In Pakistan, public awareness and engagement on climate change has been constrained in part by the limited awareness of mainstream editors, journalists, and broadcasters on the topic.

For example, while Pakistan currently spends around 8% of its annual budget on programs related to its response to climate change. Public discourse on whether this spending is adequate, where the spending is taking place, and how effective past spending has not been substantive.

Accountability requires that those who are supposed to benefit from climate finance have a clear understanding of the issues and that the poor and climate vulnerable are aware of the services and programmes designed to aid their resiliency.

The media is critical in achieving this.

Media engagement can inform decision-makers and stakeholders of the need for climate-sensitive public investments and improve their understanding of how greater transparency is an important facet of more strategic climate finance management.

OUR SOLUTION

GCCF partnered with the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE)—a key national civil society organization with the mandate to advance media freedom—to implement a multi-tiered media education and engagement platform. Designed with input from a gender-balanced board of advisors, seminars and tools were developed to supporting GCCF advocacy objectives.

Through this partnership, GCCF specialists have educated local media to understand the complex issues surrounding the topic and to increase appreciation of the importance of the media's role in climate finance governance. UNDP and CPNE co-developed a Handbook for Climate-Smart Reporting targeting media professionals. This was disseminated at a series of seminars attended by over 200 journalists and senior editors coming from English, Urdu and Sindhi (local) press. The media briefings, which were held in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, were also widely reported in the print media and on some TV channels.

Finally, a story competition to promote better quality media coverage of these issues was rolled out with great success. Nine aspiring and existing journalists were recognized with awards in 3 different categories for their stories judged as being best from among 129 entries (78 in English, and 44 in Urdu). The winners were announced at a ceremony in Islamabad presided by the Minister of Information and Communication, who applauded the initiative.

MOVING FORWARD

This work is equipping the media to bring an additional layer of public demand for more effective and equitable climate finance. Stories are also helping to inform the public about where and how to access relevant information on climate spending.

New efforts will focus on securing publication of articles and essays developed under the story competition and also liaise with senior journalists for writing on climate change so that the voice is captured by policy makers. The media handbook will be translated into Urdu, Sindhi and Pashtu, and additional briefings conducted in Peshawar focusing on triangulating dialogue between the KP Assembly, the government and members of the press to build mechanisms for increasing accountability on climate finance.

Media tracking and focus group discussions involving over 100 print and online editors and journalists in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, already indicate tangible gains to both the quantity and quality of media coverage around climate finance. Since the initiative started, over 80 stories have appeared in mainstream newspapers and CPNE has been moderating a dedicated Facebook page to support sharing information on social media.

Want to find out more?
UNDP’s Governance of Climate Change Finance has devised appropriate, pragmatic and integrated climate finance budgeting solutions for countries throughout the Asia Pacific.

Useful links
www.CFADE.org
UNDP Pakistan: registry.pk@undp.org
Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors: http://cpne.com.pk/