

FREE MEDIA

Should Canadians promote freedom of the media in the Asia-Pacific region. How. Can Canada help to develop communications/media capacity. Is there a role for institutions like Radio Canada International, or private sector or NGO initiatives, education, training, exchanges, etc. and who should take the lead.

Policy Options

- 1. Continue to promote universal values (freedom of the press being one) notwithstanding the perceived dichotomy between East and West.*
- 2. Take the initiative to encourage foreign media to come and to work with Canadian media by offering fellowships supported by the media (including Conrad Black, RCI and CBC).*
- 3. Maintain a quiet diplomacy approach to free media, but in some situations, such as the persecution of journalists, be more active and vocal, both diplomatically and/or through the NGO community. Building upon Canada's historical coalition-building role, collaborate with like-minded countries to pressure nations that severely restrict the free flow of communication and information.*
- 4. Invest Radio Canada International with the appropriate resources to act as a credible global communications vehicle committed to raising Canada's profile abroad through the provision of quality Canadian programming and international news.*
- 5. Promote the use of Internet and other information technologies in an effort to promote free media.*
- 6. Focus Canadian expertise and efforts on smaller projects where policy would have the most impact. Assist the development of media infrastructure at the grass roots level by:
(a) fostering linkages between journalists and professional journalism organizations at the local, national and international levels;
(b) providing communities with appropriate equipment and training in order to build a sense of empowerment at the local level. (In the Philippines, the Tambuli Community Radio Project with its "Village on the Air" program is an example.);
(c) seeking to expand and build upon situations that have proven mutually beneficial for the community and donors (for example, a Canadian-funded video camera used by the small public health unit in the city of Rafah, in the Gaza Strip).*
- 7. Promote greater multi-sectoral interaction among journalists in Asia-Pacific, and those in the legal, academic, local community level, government officials and multilateral organizations.*