

5. Training in human rights and free expression.

This is a field obviously related to, yet separate from, the general capacity development of journalists. It is one which the CCPJ takes very seriously. As managers of IFEX, the CCPJ has already put in place the world's premier freedom of expression action alert network processing almost 2000 urgent alerts each year. Through IFEX, a Developing Countries Outreach Program has been created. With small amounts of money, this Program reaches out to burgeoning human rights and freedom of expression organizations abroad to build their capacity, with equipment and training, to actively participate in their own country's development into a civil society. This too is training people to fish. After all, free media are an organic component of a vibrant civil society, and programs to build capacity in this area are a major tool in the strengthening of civil society. So instead of outsiders leading the protest when a government represses free expression, participants in civil society on the spot will be equipped to give the necessary leadership.

This work could be, and should be, undertaken on a much grander scale. There are countless emerging freedom of expression organizations across the globe that are anxious for assistance and advice. Training and equipment for extending Internet hookups would significantly increase the capacity of such groups to escalate the campaign for democracy and human rights, as well as monitoring violations when they do occur. In the end, it will be indigenous freedom of expression groups that lead to an overall change in societal values that will enshrine and protect human rights and free expression.

Many Canadians are prepared to get involved in furthering these ends. What is needed is long-term commitment to IFEX and the Developing Country Outreach Program. This means not just greater resources; it also means, for example, a program whereby IFEX alerts, calling attention to violations of freedom of expression, would automatically be transmitted to Canadian and other embassies abroad, which could then be incorporated in country analyses and programs. If the diplomatic community actively supported the IFEX world wide web site, this would be a dramatic manifestation of the effective use of knowledge in the world today on behalf of the values that Canada espouses.