



EVALUATION OF ECA'S PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM AND MEDIA EXCHANGE PROGRAMS:

**INTERNATIONAL VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
EDWARD R. MURROW PROGRAM FOR JOURNALISTS
CITIZEN EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) engages journalists and media professionals worldwide through a unique set of exchange programs. These programs offer participants the opportunity to deepen their journalistic skills and knowledge of journalism practice, as well as to encounter American society, media, and standards and practices, while facilitating collaboration with a new network of professional contacts.

In 2008 the Evaluation Division in the Bureau's Office of Policy and Evaluation undertook an evaluation of journalism and media programs across the Bureau: **the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists and the Citizen Exchange Program**. The Evaluation Division commissioned an independent evaluation organization, InterMedia, to assess the longer term effects of these programs globally.

This evaluation assesses the catalytic effect of the programs on individual participants, their colleagues and home institutions, by examining knowledge and skills acquired in the United States, the application of that information in the workplace and professional spheres, as well as dissemination among colleagues and peers after returning home.

Given the unique nature of each program, this evaluation comprises separate assessments and reports for each of the programs, in this order: (1) IVLP, (2) Edward R. Murrow Program and (3) Citizen Exchange Program. It should be noted that while the Edward R. Murrow Program is a project coordinated by the Office of International Visitors, it was also, at the inception of the evaluation, a relatively new exchange. Furthermore, the Murrow Program differs in format from other IVLP projects. Therefore, the results from Murrow participants constitute their own set of outcomes and appear separately from IVLP findings. There is no analysis comparing the results of one program to another.

The following is a summary of key findings from each of the three programs assessed as part of the complete evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation, carried out from 2008 through 2010, used a multi-stage, mixed-method data collection strategy to evaluate the IVLP and Citizen Exchanges programs from FY 2001 through FY 2006, and the Murrow Program from FY 2006 through FY 2008, based on the following key program goals and outcomes:

- **New knowledge and skills.** Participants develop increased knowledge or skills in the following areas: U.S. journalism and media environment; democracy in the United States; the role of the media in a democracy; U.S. society, people and values; journalism and media management skills; media ethics; and professional standards and practices. The Murrow program also included the reporting process and emerging electronic media. In addition, participants develop new areas of interest or expertise in specific subjects addressed in the program, such as human rights and ethnic diversity.

- ***Application of learning and skills.*** Participants apply their new knowledge and skills into their work when they return home.
- ***Professional development and career advancement.*** As a result of their program experience, participants attain promotion, take on new leadership roles or professional responsibilities, and/or make a change in their career track.
- ***Knowledge-sharing.*** Participants share their new knowledge and skills with coworkers, colleagues and the greater journalism community at home.
- ***Organizational changes.*** Participants effect changes in the editorial and managerial practices in the media organizations or outlets where they work.
- ***Increased linkages and professional networking.*** Participants develop ongoing ties with fellow journalists and media professionals met during the program, as well as encourage greater collaboration among media professionals in their home countries.
- ***Advocacy for journalists' rights and a strong media profession.*** At home, participants advocate for protection of journalists' rights, increased attention to the public responsibilities of journalists, and strengthening of journalists' professional associations.

The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore participant's opinions of their respective program with data collected and analyzed at three key stages over the two-year period:

- ***Document review:*** In 2008, a comprehensive review of all program-related documents from the evaluation period, including concept papers, proposals, grant agreements, final reports, trip reports, interim reports, and cable correspondence with U.S. missions.
- ***In-country face-to-face interviews and focus groups:*** Between December 2008 and February 2009, face-to-face interviews and focus groups were conducted with IVLP and Murrow program participants in Argentina, Azerbaijan, Tanzania and Tunisia. Face-to-face interviews with Citizen Exchange participants were conducted in Azerbaijan and Tanzania only.
- ***Survey:*** The evaluation team conducted an online survey of past program participants from all three programs around the world from August 2009 to April 2010. Pre- and post-program surveys were also conducted with Murrow participants in October 2008.

The evaluation results rely primarily on the global online survey, supported and illustrated by the other methods.

Key Findings: International Visitor Leadership Program in the Fields of Journalism and Media

Program Description

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) brought more than 1,600 leading journalists and media professionals from around the world to the United States during the six-year evaluation period (FY 2001–FY 2006). Each IVLP journalism or media project is tailored to a group either from a particular country or region, or from different regions of the world but focused on a specific topic. Key themes across projects include fundamentals of print and broadcast journalism; investigative journalism; the role of a free and independent media in a democracy; and the U.S. political system for journalists.

IVLP exchanges typically last about three weeks and involve activities in Washington, D.C., and three or four other cities. Each segment of the exchange project includes professional meetings with U.S. counterparts, site visits to national and/or regional media outlets, and opportunities to experience American culture by being hosted by American families and/or attending local cultural events. The geographic range of the program is designed to provide participants with an appreciation of the ethnic, cultural, political and socioeconomic diversity of the United States.

Participant Objectives for Attending the IVLP

Learning about the United States, especially its society and culture, was the most common objective for attending the program. In addition, most survey respondents wanted to learn about U.S. journalism practices, how a free press works in a democracy, and general journalism skills. Most respondents also looked forward to networking with fellow media professionals from the United States and around the world. On the whole, these objectives aligned with IVLP goals for mutual understanding, learning and growth.

New Knowledge and Skills

The IVLP has been quite effective in improving participants' knowledge and skills in all areas, as demonstrated by the following findings:

- The vast majority of respondents reported that their knowledge of U.S. society, government and policymaking, as well as the role of the media in a democracy, had increased “a great deal” or “a good deal” as a result of the program.
- Most respondents learned more about U.S. media relations with other sectors, especially the Government.
- Most respondents reported increased knowledge of specific subjects addressed during the program, especially human rights and corruption issues.
- Most respondents learned “a great deal” or “a good deal” about critical journalism skills, such as analyzing information, developing ideas, finding credible sources and developing interview questions.
- Most respondents substantially improved their knowledge of alternative media and their skills in new technology, especially how to develop web content and manage online media.

Application of Learning and Skills

Participants reported that their new knowledge and skills had made a substantial impact on their work when they returned home. The following findings are illustrative:

- More than 90 percent of survey respondents have applied their new knowledge of the United States and the role of the media in a democracy in their work.
- Respondents have applied their knowledge of all the specific subjects they learned about on the IVLP. Most notably, more than 90 percent of them have applied their increased understanding of human rights.
- Most respondents have applied their increased knowledge of media ethics and standards, as well their improved journalism skills, to their work at home.
- The great majority of respondents have applied their new skills and knowledge in technology and alternative media. These skills proved very useful to their employers and to their own career advancement.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

Participants reported that the new skills and knowledge they have gained and utilized have helped them to develop professionally and to further advance their careers. In fact, at the time of the global survey in 2010, more than three-quarters of the respondents noted that their participation in the IVLP had resulted in some kind of career change, especially taking on new responsibilities, such as working on web content. For many participants, taking on new responsibilities went hand in hand with a new leadership role and/or promotion. Specifically, many participants were promoted from journalist positions to editorial or management positions.

In addition, many participants shifted to a new focus in their work as a result of the new knowledge or expertise they acquired on the IVLP, such as increasing their coverage of U.S. events or corruption issues.

Knowledge-Sharing

After returning home from the program, participants shared information from their experience with others in four key ways:

1. ***Educating the workforce:*** Most respondents shared their knowledge and experience by training coworkers.
2. ***Sharing through professional forums:*** Most respondents shared their knowledge with other media professionals through a variety of forums, especially by speaking at local press clubs.
3. ***Educating beyond the workforce:*** Many program participants took opportunities to share their knowledge with students, either by teaching a course, or by making a presentation at a university or school of journalism.
4. ***Sharing through the media.*** Some participants also shared their knowledge and experiences through a variety of media, most commonly by writing articles for professional journals.

In addition, respondents reported that they had earned increased respect and status among their colleagues, as well as in the eyes of their superiors, because of the knowledge they had shared. In fact, the majority of respondents now feel that they are considered “experts” about journalism and media techniques, practices and standards.

Organizational Changes

The evaluation demonstrated that many IVLP participants, after returning home, undertook initiatives that resulted in organizational changes. The most common initiatives were (1) to encourage more teamwork and collaboration and (2) to help their organizations adopt new ethical or professional standards. In addition, more than a third of respondents helped to establish new management practices based on what they learned in the United States, such as creating a more coherent organizational structure or establishing standard training programs for new hires. In addition, nearly half the respondents helped their media outlets to develop new processes for writing articles and/or to begin reporting in new subjects or fields.

Increased Linkages and Professional Networking

At the time of the online survey in 2010, more than three-quarters of survey respondents were still in touch with fellow IVLP participants. Those who stayed in touch described their relationships with fellow journalists within their region or across the world as extremely valuable and mutually beneficial. Some of them reported that they frequently collaborate by exchanging information for reports. In addition, a third of the respondents have stayed in touch with U.S. media professionals they met on the program.

The Role of Journalists and Media in Society

An important part of this evaluation was to explore how past program participants now understand their role as journalists, and that of the media in their societies, including what kinds of challenges they face. Most respondents agreed that providing objective coverage of current events is the most important function of journalists. At the same time, a substantial proportion of respondents believe that a journalist’s most important function is either to draw attention to societal problems or to act as a watchdog.

In keeping with these priorities, most respondents reported that they have used the knowledge gained on the IVLP to advocate for greater freedom of the press and a stronger journalism profession. In particular, two-thirds of respondents have advocated for freedom of information since returning from the program.

The majority of respondents also have faced challenges in trying to apply their program learning in their work, most commonly difficulty accessing information, difficulty finding credible sources, and insufficient resources. Nonetheless, most respondents have acquired the confidence and motivation to continue striving to change the media environment in their countries despite the challenges. In fact, many of them emphasized that their IVLP experience had imbued them with a greater sense of the importance of their profession.

Program Value and Effectiveness in Meeting Participant Objectives

Most respondents agreed that their IVLP experience had completely met their expectations. Furthermore, many respondents described the program as pivotal in their careers, their self-perceptions, and their sense of purpose as journalists and media professionals.

While participants found every component of the program quite useful, they identified the following elements as the most useful: site visits at national and regional media outlets, interviews with local media, and meetings and panel discussions with media officials. Essentially, they felt that nothing compares with getting an inside view of the workings of a media outlet.

In addition to the media-specific skills and knowledge gained on the program, some respondents pointed out that the program experience as a whole had broadened their worldview. In this vein, one participant explained, “The greatest lesson you learn on the IVLP is that you must ... understand different points of view and respect different ways of looking at things.”

Key Findings: Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists

Program Description

Since its inception in 2006, the Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists, a special project of the Office of International Visitors, has brought approximately 150 rising journalists and media professionals to the United States each year to examine journalistic principles and practices. The program represents a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of State, the Aspen Institute and leading U.S. schools of journalism.

Each year, program participants engage in multi-region, multi-themed activities that run concurrently, with joint opening (in Washington, D.C.) and closing sessions (usually in New York City). Then participants travel in smaller groups to different parts of the country, where they participate in academic seminars and field activities, observe U.S. journalists at work, and observe American civic life and grassroots involvement in politics.

Participant Objectives for Attending the Murrow Program

The Murrow Program participants came to the United States eager to develop professionally and to learn more about this country and the role of the media in a democratic society. In particular, most respondents wanted to learn about the American people, society and culture; U.S. government and politics; U.S. journalism practices; general journalism skills; and how a free press works. In addition, most respondents looked forward to networking with fellow journalists and media professionals from the United States and around the world. On the whole, these objectives aligned with the Murrow Program goals.

New Knowledge and Skills

The Murrow Program has been quite effective in improving participants' knowledge and skills in all areas, as demonstrated by the following findings:

- At least two-thirds of survey respondents felt that their understanding of U.S. society, government and policymaking had increased “a great deal” or “a good deal” as a result of the program.
- Most respondents reported increased understanding of U.S. media relations with other sectors, especially the Government and nonprofit sectors.
- Most respondents reported increased knowledge of specific subjects discussed during the program, including human rights, religious/ethnic diversity, fighting corruption, and women in society.
- Most respondents gained “a lot” of new information about U.S. journalism practices, coverage of local news and grassroots reporting, and the role of the media in a democracy.
- More than 90 percent of respondents learned more about current trends in the media profession, including alternative media and new technologies.

- Most respondents learned “a great deal” or “a good deal” about critical journalism skills, such as developing ideas, analyzing information, finding credible sources, developing interview questions and posing questions to interviewees.
- The Murrow Program’s focus on grassroots reporting and NGOs had a substantial impact on participating journalists. By the end of the program, they planned to consult a much wider variety of sources in their reporting than before the program, especially nongovernmental sources, internet and international media.

Application of Learning and Skills

Participants reported that their new knowledge and skills had made a substantial impact on their work when they returned home. The following findings are illustrative:

- Nearly all survey respondents applied their new knowledge of the United States in their work, such as reporting on U.S. news or issues related to U.S. foreign policy.
- Most respondents have applied their new knowledge of the following specific subjects in their journalism work: human rights, religious/ethnic diversity, women in society, environment, fighting corruption and economics/business development.
- Most respondents have applied their increased knowledge of journalistic standards as well as their improved reporting skills after returning home.
- More than three-quarters of respondents have applied their knowledge of alternative media and/or their new technology skills in their work. Use of the internet in U.S. journalism was one of the key learning areas for program participants, and many of their employers were eager for them to use their new skills right away to help develop online content and/or their newspapers’ websites.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

Participants reported that the new skills and knowledge they gained and utilized have helped them develop professionally and further advance their careers. In fact, at the time of the global survey in 2010, three-quarters of the respondents noted that their participation in the Murrow Program had resulted in some kind of career change, especially taking on new responsibilities and/or changing to a new focus or subject area. Participants often attributed their career advancements to three key factors related to their program experience: (1) new confidence in their abilities; (2) new areas of interest, such as online media; and (3) increased desire for change based on new knowledge and skills.

The two most notable career shifts among the respondents as a group were the promotion of journalists to editors and the move from print newspapers to online publications. In terms of changing focus, moving toward online journalism was one of the most prominent impacts of the Murrow Program experience.

Knowledge-Sharing

After completing the program, all respondents (in the post-program survey) expressed their intention to share information from their experience with others. Indeed, participants followed through on their plans by sharing information in four key ways:

1. ***Educating the workforce:*** Nearly half the respondents shared their knowledge and experience by training coworkers.
2. ***Educating beyond the workforce:*** More than a third of respondents made presentations about their Murrow Program experience at universities or schools of journalism.
3. ***Sharing through professional forums:*** Many program participants shared their knowledge with other media professionals through a variety of forums, including local press clubs or professional associations. In fact, some participants even created new professional associations, partly for the purpose of sharing the knowledge they had gained.
4. ***Sharing through the media:*** More than a third of respondents used materials they had gathered during their time on the program to write articles for professional journals. Some also wrote articles for professional blogs and/or developed new websites or blogs to share information. A few participants even wrote books related to their Murrow Program experience.

In addition, most respondents reported that they had earned increased respect and status among their colleagues and peers because of the knowledge they had shared. In fact, three-quarters of respondents now feel that they are considered “experts” or “knowledgeable” about journalism and media techniques, practices and standards.

Organizational Changes

The evaluation demonstrated that many respondents, after returning home, used their new knowledge and skills to undertake initiatives that resulted in organizational changes. Some of the most significant organizational changes that program participants either initiated or participated in were those related to online journalism, including creating new online publications or websites, increasing the quantity of online content, or upgrading technology in order to facilitate increased online publication.

In addition, many respondents initiated policy changes, new management practices or new processes for writing articles within their organizations. In many cases, changes in the reporting process came about because when participants came back from the program, they adopted new practices in their own work, which their colleagues and/or supervisors liked and eventually adopted.

Increased Linkages and Professional Networking

After participating in the Murrow Program, respondents (in the post-program survey) looked forward to staying in contact and/or collaborating with a wide range of professional contacts they had met during the program. Indeed, at the time of the online survey in 2010, the vast majority of survey respondents had stayed in touch with other program participants—both within and outside of their country—and U.S. media professionals. Furthermore, many participants have collaborated with these contacts in a variety of ways, such as co-writing articles, sharing information for stories, creating journalist networks or organizing training programs. Thus, the

linkages established during the Murrow Program can help promote mutual understanding and journalistic excellence over the longer term.

The Role of Journalists and Media in Society

An important part of this evaluation was to explore how past program participants now understand their role as journalists, and that of the media in their societies, including what kinds of challenges they face. The majority of respondents agreed that providing objective coverage of current events is the most important function of journalists. At the same time, a substantial proportion of respondents believe that a journalist's most important function is either to draw attention to societal problems or to act as a watchdog.

In keeping with these priorities, most respondents reported that they have used the knowledge gained on the Murrow Program to advocate for greater freedom of the press, including freedom of information and greater access to public records.

The majority of respondents have faced challenges in trying to apply their program learning to their work, most commonly insufficient resources and/or requests to refrain from reporting on particular subjects. Nonetheless, some participants pointed out that the exchange of information and ideas during the Murrow Program helped them develop strategies for overcoming such obstacles.

Program Value and Effectiveness in Meeting Participant Objectives

Most survey respondents were very satisfied with their experience on the Murrow Program. They appreciated the overall program design, as well as its individual components, and most of them agreed that the program had met or exceeded their expectations. Participants explained that the Murrow Program's unique combination of classroom learning, discussions with fellow media professionals from the United States and around the world, and hands-on field trips to media outlets made the experience extremely valuable—in fact, for some, the experience was “life-changing.”

Key Findings: Citizen Exchange Programs in the Fields of Journalism and Media

Program Description

The Professional Exchanges Division of the Office of Citizen Exchanges provides grants to U.S. organizations for professional development of emerging leaders in critical professions. During the six-year evaluation period (FY 2001–FY 2006), more than 50 Citizen Exchange grant agreements with U.S. universities and organizations engaged professionals from 45 countries in journalism-related training programs.

Grant activities involved a series of professional exchanges between groups of approximately 10-20 core participants and U.S. media experts over the course of 1-3 years, usually including activities both in the United States and in the participants' home country or region. About half of the grant programs were country-specific, while the other half involved participants from multiple countries within a particular region. Many programs involved a training-of-trainers component.

Participant Objectives for Attending the Citizen Exchange Program

The majority of survey respondents embarked on the program with multiple objectives. They were eager to develop their journalism skills, network with fellow media professionals, and learn about the United States and the role of media in a democratic society. These objectives clearly aligned with the program goals for learning and growth.

New Knowledge and Skills

The Citizen Exchange programs have been quite effective in improving participants' knowledge and skills in all areas, as demonstrated by the following findings:

- Most survey respondents reported that their knowledge of U.S. society, government and policymaking, as well as the role of media in a democracy, had increased “a great deal” or “a good deal” as a result of the program.
- Most respondents reported substantially increased understanding of U.S. media relations with other sectors, especially the Government and NGOs.
- Most respondents reported increased understanding of specific subjects addressed during the programs, especially human rights.
- The great majority of respondents learned “a great deal” or “a good deal” about journalism skills and professional standards.
- Most respondents acquired valuable skills in new technologies and developed a greater understanding of alternative media.

Application of Learning and Skills

Participants reported that their new knowledge and skills had made a substantial impact on their work when they returned home. The following findings are illustrative:

- Most survey respondents have applied their new knowledge of the United States and the role of the media in a democracy in their work. Most notably, 100 percent of them have applied their knowledge of media relations with the U.S. Government.
- Most respondents have applied their knowledge of all the specific subjects they learned about during the program. Most notably, the majority of respondents have applied their knowledge of human rights “a great deal” or “a good deal.”
- The majority of respondents have applied their increased journalism skills, as well as their improved knowledge of media standards, ethics and principles, into their work at home “a great deal” or “a good deal.”
- Most respondents have applied their new technology skills and knowledge of alternative media. These skills have proved quite useful to participants over the long term, as their countries have continued to develop technologically and more media outlets have moved toward online content.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

Participants reported that the new skills and knowledge they gained and utilized have helped them to develop professionally and further advance their careers. Indeed, for many participants, their program experience was a turning point professionally, leading them to seek new directions and take charge of their own careers. At the time of the global survey in 2010, most respondents noted that their program participation had resulted in some kind of career change, especially taking on new responsibilities in their jobs. Sometimes these new responsibilities went hand in hand with a new leadership role and/or promotion.

In addition, some respondents were motivated to seek new jobs where they would be better able to apply their new skills and interests, or even to change to a new career track entirely, such as journalism education.

Knowledge-Sharing

After returning home from the program, participants shared information from their experience with others in four key ways:

1. ***Sharing through professional forums:*** Most respondents shared their knowledge with other media professionals through a variety of forums, especially by speaking at local press clubs.
2. ***Educating the workforce:*** Most respondents shared their knowledge and experience by training coworkers.
3. ***Sharing through the media:*** The majority of respondents also shared their knowledge and experiences by publishing articles about it, either in professional journals or in the

newspaper they work for. In fact, some participants were inspired to publish a whole series of articles related to the United States and/or its media.

4. ***Educating beyond the workforce:*** Some participants also felt it was important to share their knowledge with students. In some cases, participants simply made a presentation at a university or school of journalism, while others were motivated to influence journalism education more deeply by developing a new course or curriculum.

In addition, all the survey respondents reported that they had earned increased respect and status among their colleagues, as well as in the eyes of their superiors, because of the knowledge they had shared. In fact, the majority of respondents now feel that they are considered “experts” about journalism and media techniques, practices and standards.

Organizational Changes

The evaluation demonstrated that many participants, after returning home, undertook initiatives that resulted in organizational changes. In fact, the majority of survey respondents began one or more of the following initiatives when they went back to work: adopting new professional or ethical standards; developing new processes for writing articles; reporting on new subjects; encouraging more teamwork; facilitating collaboration; and/or acquiring more resources. These results indicate that the Citizen Exchange journalism programs were effective in equipping participants to become catalysts for developing and promoting journalistic excellence in their home countries.

Increased Linkages and Professional Networking

At the time of the online survey in 2010, most respondents were still in touch with fellow participants and U.S. media professionals they met on the program. In addition, some respondents have stayed in touch with valuable institutional contacts they met, such as government or NGO representatives. Respondents stressed that the relationships they formed with these new contacts were one of the most valuable results of their program experience. In some cases, these relationships have developed into lasting personal friendships as well as opportunities for ongoing collaboration, especially exchanging information for articles. The deep, long-term friendships formed between participants and their U.S. counterparts demonstrate that the journalism programs further a broader goal of the Office of Citizen Exchanges: to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries.

The Role of Journalists and Media in Society

An important part of this evaluation was to explore how past program participants now understand their role as journalists, and that of the media in their societies, including what kinds of challenges they face. The majority of survey respondents agreed that providing objective coverage of current events is the most important function of journalists.

At the same time, most respondents have used the knowledge gained on the exchange program to advocate for greater freedom of the press and a stronger media profession. In particular, more than three-quarters of respondents have advocated for freedom of information and greater access to public records since participating in the program.

Most respondents also have faced challenges in trying to apply their program learning in their work, the most common of which were the following:

- insufficient resources
- resistance to establishing new professional and ethical standards
- difficulty finding credible sources
- difficulty accessing information (especially from government sources)
- lack of new technology

Nonetheless, the program experience instilled many participants with the confidence and motivation to continue striving to change the media environment in their countries despite the challenges. Furthermore, some respondents pointed out that the experience had imbued them with a greater sense of the importance of the journalistic profession.

Program Value and Effectiveness in Meeting Participant Objectives

Most respondents agreed that their Citizen Exchange experience had completely met, or surpassed, their expectations. Some of them emphasized that the combination of activities—including professional training, education, cultural experiences and networking—made the program uniquely valuable.

Nonetheless, of all the program components, survey respondents found the visits to media outlets and direct interactions with media officials the most useful. They pointed out that the opportunity to experience the inside workings of a U.S. media outlet was critical for learning how the media work and for gathering new ideas and perspectives that could be applied to their own media outlets at home. In addition, many respondents identified the cultural side of the program—home hospitality and American cultural events—as a very useful and valuable way to get to know American society and its people.