

KEY INSIGHTS:

[The Human Development Report 23/24](#) highlights the critical need for reimagining cooperation in an increasingly polarized world, emphasizing the concept of a *democracy paradox*, where there is strong support for democratic values despite growing appeal for authoritarian leaderships. This paradox reflects the broader challenge of **perceived lack of individual agency**, as many feel disconnected from political decision-making.

The report finds that while there is a high willingness among the public for collective action on issues like climate change, cooperation often fails due to a **misalignment of expectations** and **misperceptions about others' willingness to engage**. The media's role remains critical in bridging these perception gaps, promoting accurate information, and fostering an inclusive public sphere to strengthen democratic governance. At the same time, media must adapt to rapidly changing environments, particularly in conflict situations, supporting information dissemination and community cohesion through tailored local initiatives.

10 LESSONS LEARNT:

1. High support for **democracy can co-exist with rising support for authoritarian leaders**, signaling a need to address public dissatisfaction with democratic processes and a lack of personal agency.
2. Although there is broad public support for tackling global issues like climate change through collective action, **perceived discrepancies in others' willingness to act can hinder cooperation**, hinting at the importance of *aligning expectations* for collective action.
3. **High-quality, accurate media** is critical for upholding democratic governance, rule of law, and peacebuilding, as it helps bridge divisions and clarify intentions among diverse groups.
4. **Media ownership** often reflects specific interests, consolidating power and limiting objectivity, which can exacerbate misinformation and fuel polarization.
5. Increasing **attacks on journalists** and **shrinking civic space** underscore the need for strengthening protections that allow media to operate freely and independently.
6. Media initiatives using diverse formats, such as multi-media shows and **youth-led storytelling**, encourage the youth to voice their unique perspective, as being part of a divided society but often detached from the legacy of historical context. These

efforts don't only foster connections amongst the youth but also plant the seeds for healing and reconciliation.

7. **Tailoring media initiatives to local contexts** by amplifying the voice of local leaders is essential for effectiveness and relevance, helping ensure that these efforts resonate with the intended audience.
8. Initiatives such as *the Youth Talk* supported by the SFCG in South Sudan and the Great Lakes Generation Radio Show demonstrate that **cross-cultural media** can be effective in building shared understanding and replacing "us vs. them" attitudes with a collective sense of identity.
9. [Fondation Hironnelle](#)'s work employing various media channels emphasizes the importance of **reaching diverse audiences** with balanced reporting to foster social cohesion.
10. **Collaborations between media and ethical businesses** and/or independent organizations can support **sustainable media practices** that uphold democracy, strengthen public trust and counter polarization.

Appendix II:

Follow-up Resources:

- UNDP, [Human Development Report 2023-24](#) (The Democracy Paradox), March 2024, p.21
- UNDP, [Human Development Report 2023-24](#) The Gaps in Agency), March 2024, p.150
- The OECD, [Development Co-operation Principles for Relevant and Effective Support to Media and the Information Environment](#), May 2024
- Search for Common Ground & Build Up, [Digital Peacebuilder's Guide](#), February 2023
- The Global Forum for Media Development, [Webpage](#).
- The Skeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom, [Webpage](#).
- The Fondation Hironnelle, [Webpage](#).
- The International Institute for Regional Media and Information (Ukraine), [Webpage](#).
- The Fondation Hironnelle, [Reconnecting Audiences: Understanding the role of Local Media in Promoting Social Cohesion](#) (Ukraine), October 2024
- Search for Common Ground, [Teen Voices for Peace: A practical guide for bringing new adolescent voices to peace and security](#), 2023/24
- Search for Common Ground, [Final Evaluation: Youth Talk-Empowering Young People through Media in Mali, Central African Republic, and South Sudan](#), July 2022
- The Life & Peace Institute, New Routes, [Peace without Borders: Regional peacebuilding in focus](#) (Radio Program), April 2012
- Ross Howard and Francis Rolt, Search for Common Ground & Radio for Peacebuilding, [Radio Talkshows for Peacebuilding](#) (a Guide), October 2006
- NOW on PBS featuring Search for Common Ground and "The Team" TV Productions, [The Team Kenya](#), December 2010
- Search for Common Ground, [Global Impact Evaluation](#), 2023