

Addressing young reader initiatives worldwide - WAN-IFRA

As part of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers' (WAN-IFRA) Young Reader Development Working Group, young reader development experts gathered in Paris, France late last month to report on their programmes and exchange ideas. One of the projects discussed is based in Kenya, where young people in a Somali refugee camp created a newspaper that reports on conditions in the camp.



The project is Norwegian-supported and aims to teach them basic journalism, ethics, freedom of expression, democracy and more.

"If you have them tell their own stories, not only for themselves but for the environment around them, they get a purpose, they feel they have achieved something," said Paal Stensaas, a communication consultant involved in the project for 15- to 25-year olds in the camp, where some of them were born.

Helping the youth make choices - Sweden

In Sweden, one of the most wired countries in the world, the Swedish Newspaper Publishers' Association, has launched 'Media Compass' to help young people make informed media choices.

"Young people consume seven hours of media a day, pretty much as much hours as young people sleep. They spend so much time with media but they have little understanding of how it works," said Lena Vitorin of the Swedish association.

Among other things, the program hosted a meeting on freedom of speech that attracted 700 high school students and sold out within two hours of being announced. "People take freedom of speech for granted, it's not something on the top of mind for young people," Vitorin said.

"We wanted to get young people to take a stand on what freedom of speech and freedom of the press means to them. [watch the WAN-IFRA press freedom film that was used in the meeting to introduce the subject.](#)

Working with teachers in the digital age - US

In the US, where newspapers in education still serves 10 million students in schools, the Newspaper Association of America Foundation is reaching out to a new generation of teachers who grew up in the digital age. The foundation is conducting focus groups with teachers to assess how they think about and use Newspapers in Education (NIE) materials.

"In the past we never reached out directly to teachers. We worked with newspapers and they engaged with the teachers," said Margaret Vassilikos of the NAA Foundation. "We started to step beyond this, and this is the first time in my memory we're going to work directly with teachers to see what we can do to help the situation."

Other projects

In France more than 300,000 requests were received for 200,000 free newspaper subscriptions for 18- to 24-year olds in a project underwritten by the French government and French newspapers last year. The government had announced it would continue the programme again this year, offering 220,000 subscriptions. [Read more on the programme.](#)

In Brazil, schoolchildren created a special newspaper about press freedom for their classmates and won WAN-IFRA's first World School Newspaper Press Freedom Prize. The Brazilian Newspaper Association, ANJ, promoted the effort through placemats that are used at conferences and elsewhere the first in a series highlighting young reader actions, said Cristiane Parente of ANJ.

In Belgium, an 'Open My Newspaper' programme by the French wing of the Belgian Newspaper Association now makes newspapers and related lessons available to students in 73% of French-language secondary schools.

The Hungarian Newspaper Association gives children the opportunity to interview a personal national hero through a 'You are the one for me' contest. A similar contest is conducted in Chile.

WAN-IFRA Readership Conference draws near

The WAN-IFRA Young Reader Development Working Group comprises NIE and young reader development experts from national newspaper associations and others. [Read more on what WAN-IFRA does for young reader development](#)

Developing young readership will be a part of the upcoming WAN-IFRA Readership conference, to be held in San Francisco, California, from 16-17 November 2010. More more information, go to www.wan-press.org/readership2010/home.php.

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