ARIES RUFO JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIP
FOR LOCAL JOURNALISTS

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In partnership with Journalism for Nation Building Foundation, Rappler's civic engagement arm MovePH is launching the Aries Rufo Journalism Fellowship program, an 10-month engagement opportunity for 15 community and local journalists based in different Philippine provinces that aims to equip them with skills and knowledge necessary to understand what disinformation is, how it works, and how journalists can effectively help address this problem. The program seeks to address a critical gap: many journalists don't fully understand technology and how it manipulates them/us. To effectively hold platforms accountable, it is critical for journalists to understand the new gatekeepers, how technology and algorithms shape the world, what disinformation is, and how journalists can help effectively address this problem.

The program will include a bootcamp that will be conducted by Rappler's senior editors and other key members of its research and data teams. Serving as a starting point, the bootcamp will cover a wide range of topics that aim to equip participants with skills and knowledge critical for journalists to have if they are to understand and address disinformation, as well as doing public interest journalism.

The bootcamp will also include a training where journalists will be taught how to properly document instances of attacks and harassment in relation to platform policies on disinformation that lead to harm. This takes off from Rappler's experience as a target of coordinated attacks. The purpose is also to build cases that can be used to hold perpetrators, and other responsible parties accountable through legal action. This is important especially with the rise of attacks and cases of harassment directed to local and community journalists in the past few years.

Applying lessons from the training sessions described earlier, local fellows will work on fact-check pieces on a monthly basis, data gathering, and a project related to fighting disinformation which they can lead in their community by the end of the fellowship program. This project may come in the form of, but not limited to, organizing a project, co-hosting a webinar, or building a local community initiating a fact-checking effort. During this period, Rappler senior editors will provide oversight on the fact-check pieces and the development and execution of the project they intend to pursue. This will take place through regular touch points (online chats and meetings) where participants can consult with Rappler's senior editors for further guidance (review and critique of work, feedback) as they pursue their projects and monthly output.

Participants will also be given access to the Rappler Sharktank database to aid them in their research and/or story projects. The Sharktank is a Rappler database built to monitor Philippine conversation channels within Facebook – through public pages, public groups, and publicly available posts.

During the program, selected fellows will be able to experience working with Rappler staff during a critical period: the months leading to the 2022 national elections. This would be an ideal opportunity for local journalists to see how disinformation and political propaganda, particularly on social media, are even more widespread at the national level at this time. Local fellows will witness first-hand how information operations influence and shape narratives around the elections and even affect their outcome, and apply learnings from this and the entire program to their own countries. This can open up the opportunity for

local journalists to either draw similarities or point out differences of the online landscape in the national perspective from what is happening on the ground in cities, municipalities and provinces.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Anchoring on Rappler's insights, techniques and tools developed through its extensive research and activities to combat disinformation, the goal is to train and empower local journalists:

- To apply lessons learned within their own context, evidenced by story, research, and data gathering outputs.

- To strengthen the fight against disinformation and coordinated attacks in the digital space in their locality

TIMELINE

Application date: June 2 to June 30

Shortlisting: June 30 to July 10

Start of fellowship: July 15

Training: August to October 2021

End of fellowship: May 30, 2021

EXPECTED OUTPUT

- Local fellows are expected to:

  - Submit fact-checks on a monthly basis throughout the duration of the 10-month program.
  - Conduct data-gathering that may include, but is not limited to, the following:
    - Documenting instances of attacks and harassment in relation to platform policies on disinformation
    - Gathering information about local politicians running in the 2022 elections
    - Spotting false and/or misleading claims circulating in his/her locality
  - One story on how disinformation affected shaped public opinion, affected policy, etc, in their locality

TARGET AUDIENCE/ELIGIBILITY:

The program is open to practicing journalists and community journalists/reporters from the Philippines. Applicant must have the following minimum qualifications:

- A local journalist in the Philippines based outside Metro Manila:
- Currently employed as a professional journalist for print, television, radio or internet media organizations. Both full-time and freelance journalists are encouraged to apply.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

I. **Onboarding**

After the selection process, fellows must attend the orientation session (1 hour) where the MovePH and editorial team will discuss the following

- What the program is about
- Who are the shortlisted participants and why were you selected
- What can they expect from the program
- What are their responsibilities
- What is the process and workflow of the program for fellows (communication channels, minders, check-in schedules, etc.)

II.   Budget

To assist in the data-gathering, research, and writing outputs, a monthly stipend of P12,500 for 10 months will be made available to community journalists.

III.   Promotions

By the beginning of the program, we will have a story and a series of social media posts introducing our fellows

IV.   Communication

Fellows will communicate with the MovePH and editorial team through a designated Slack channel and Google mailing group.

Aside from open communication in said channels, there will also be regular monthly check-ins between the fellows and their respective minders. The monthly check-ins will serve as an opportunity to track progress of their research or story proposal, learnings from the training, and sharing sessions with other fellows.

V.   Trainings

The program will begin with an initial bootcamp that will be conducted by Rappler's senior editors and other key members of its research and data teams. Serving as a starting point, the bootcamp will cover a wide range of topics that aim to equip participants with skills and knowledge that journalists should have to understand and address disinformation, and practice journalism in the public interest.

Journalists will also be trained on how to properly document instances of attacks and harassment in relation to platform policies on disinformation that lead to harm.

Day 1 - August 12
- Journalism standards and ethics
- Power, potential, and harm of social media
- Rights and responsibilities of citizens on social media

Day 2 - August 26
- Impactful storytelling
- Using data for stories
- Investigative reporting

Day 3 - September 9
- Fact-checking 101: How to spot and debunk lies and misleading information on social media

- ● Improving your information diet: How to scrutinize online sources in the age of networked propaganda and fake news
- ● Using Rappler Sharktank

Day 4 - October 7
- ● How platforms are handling disinformation
- ● Digital Hygiene: Managing risks in the age of disinformation (data security and privacy)

VI.   **Fellows' Outputs**

Applying learnings from the program, fellows are expected to:

- ● Submit false and/or misleading claims circulating in his/her locality and produce at least one fact check piece every month
- ● Gather data on the instances of local attacks and harassment in relation to platform policies on disinformation
- ● Gather Information about local politicians running in the 2022 elections