

Project Annual Report Year One

# Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh

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## Background:

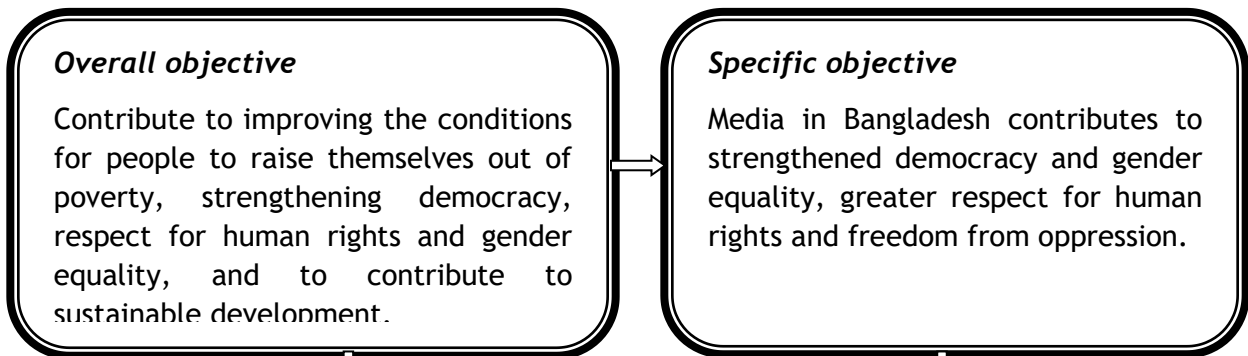
Bangladesh media is growing geometrically. There are 26 television channels and 189 national newspapers. Newsrooms are mostly filled with fresh low cost reporters without proper training and there is lack of quality leaders and mentors, as most of the managers have been promoted to these posts well before they should, to meet the bunch of new needs.

In the wake of the growth of media in recent years, it is strongly felt that proper interventions are needed for the journalists to enhance their ability to identify, produce and finally publish high quality in-depth reports on areas of public interest. Issues like safety and security of journalist, conflict between media owners and other stakeholders, political and business conflicts also need to be addressed.

In this context of landscape and scenario of media, Fojo-MRDI project ‘Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh’ has been taken to improve the quality of reporting, particularly the depth and reliability of qualitative journalism upto a desired standard.

## Objective and outcomes:

The project is based on the following objectives to reach the intermediate outcomes:



### **Intermediate Outcome**

Targeted media houses and news providers publish qualitative investigative journalism, particularly on themes related to gender equality, labour rights, corruption and environmental impact and climate change.

#### **Immediate outcome 1:**

Targeted media houses and news providers identify, research and produce high quality investigative journalism, particularly on gender equality, labour rights, corruption and environmental impact and climate change.

#### **Immediate outcome 2:**

Targeted partners in the media sector collaborate to create a conducive environment for investigative journalism, particularly on gender equality, labour rights, corruption and environmental impact and climate change.

Duration of year one was September 2016 - August 2017.

## Activities performed in Year 1:

During year one a set of activities was planned which includes research, advocacy and capacity building activities focused on improving the situation of quality reporting and internal capacity building of media houses.

### *Activity- 1: General Baseline*

To assess the existing scenario of media and qualitative journalism in Bangladesh especially on gender equality, labour rights, corruption and environment & climate change one general baseline was conducted during first year of the project. 11 media houses including print, TV and online were selected for this assessment.

Literature review, media content analysis, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, media house profile through questionnaire and follow-up phone interviews were applied in carrying out the assessment. Findings sharing meeting was also organized where media gatekeepers were present.



Based on the data analysis from applied methodologies and recommendations achieved from sharing meeting final report has been prepared.

### *Activity- 2: Gender Baseline*



One separate baseline was conducted on the issue of gender. The study revealed gender presence in published news coverage and gender representation in the media workplace. Assessment was conducted with same media houses selected for general baseline.

Literature review, media content analysis, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and media house questionnaire were also applied to conduct this assessment.

Final report has been prepared based on the findings of data analysis and recommendations received from respondents.

### ***Activity-3: Safety training and programmes***

Safety and security issues are not widely discussed though it is a vital issue for the media houses and reporters. Reporters face various types of safety and security problems while covering, preparing and publishing stories. They need training on the safety and security issue.

To develop training content, two meetings were organized in presence of reporters and media gatekeepers to finalize the sessions and identify the detailed contents of those sessions. Based on the discussion and recommendations final training session plan was developed.

### ***Activity-4: Safety and security training for freelance journalists***

As per the activity plan training for freelance journalists was planned for the first year. Freelance writers hardly exist in Bangladesh. Freelancers become working journalist whenever they get a job. It has been noticed that there is no intervention in this project for the newspapers published from outside Dhaka. But good newspapers with credibility among the readers are also being published from the districts. Considering this one training was held with the Daily Gramer Kagoj at Jessore.

Two day in-house training on Journalists' Safety and Conflict Management was held with Daily Gramer Kagoj, Jessore. Twenty five participants including news editor, chief reporter, senior reporter, staff reporter and district correspondents of Gramer Kagoj were present in the training.



The training was divided mainly into five sessions-- Basic of Investigative journalism, Physical Safety for the Journalist, Media relevant laws and policies, Digital safety for the Journalist and Journalism and Conflict sensitivity. One separate session was organized for developing the Security Protocol for Gramer Kagoj. Through a group work participants identified the issues important for the security of Gramer Kagoj

and their reporters.

During the training, assessment was conducted to find participants' level of understanding on physical and digital securities and current practices. Participants found this training very helpful as the issue is important and the initiative is new to them.



Relevant documents, handouts, copies of presentation were distributed among the participants as course materials. At the end of the training, certificate was awarded to each participant.

#### ***Activity-5: ToT for PIB Trainers***



This year one training of trainers was organized for the trainers of Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB). Three day training was held at the training room of PIB. A Total of fifteen trainers took part in the training selected by the authority of PIB. Ten out of fifteen were from Dhaka and five came from other districts.

The course was divided into 15 sessions including opening and closing. Following contents were covered through discussions and practical exercises during three days of the training.

- Training Norms and its Importance
- Education, Training, and Learning: An Overview
- Principles of Adult Learning (Andragogy)
- Learning Conditions
- Learning Domains
- Training Cycle: Traditional vs. Integrated
- Training Needs Assessment: The Concept
- Broad Areas of Assessing Training Needs
- Setting Training Objectives
- Training Methods, Tools and Techniques: An Overview
- Types of Methods
- Experiential Learning Cycle
- Andragogy focused Methods
- Considerations for Selecting Training Methods
- Lesson Plan Preparation: The Steps
- Method Demonstration by the Participants

Lecture, question & answer, multimedia presentation and group exercise methodologies were applied in conducting the training. Documents, handouts, copies of presentation as well as relevant course materials were distributed among the participants. At the end of the training, certificate was awarded to the participants.



Most of the participants found that objective of the training was achieved, training contents & methods were appropriate, trainers were competent & cooperative.

Appreciating the initiative of FOJO and MRDI to enhance capacity of PIB trainers, authority of PIB hoped technical aspects of training will increase the skills of the participants as trainers. They also requested to continue this type of capacity building programmes in coming years.

#### ***Activity-6: Thematic Forum Workshop***

One workshop on bridging the gap in citizen- media interaction was organized as an initiative to strengthen information flow between media and CSO/government bodies to explore more sources of qualitative reports. A total of 22 participants took part in the workshop.

The workshop began with discussion about objective of the initiative. Through this programme participants identified the existing gaps and challenges media/CSOs are facing, sensitization and representation of gender and how to address challenges. Discussion was held on the purpose of interactions in four thematic areas of project (labour rights, gender equity, corruption, environment/climate change) and common areas of concern and their relation with qualitative journalism.

During the workshop participants also developed the scope of work and make a guideline of roadmap to continue this interaction for facilitating more quality reporting in future.

#### ***Activity-7: Trainee programme for potential future editor-in-chiefs and media managers***

To strengthen the skills and knowledge of potential journalist to become future editors, newsroom managers and media mangers two in-house training for potential future editor-in-chiefs and media managers were organized with Daily Prothom Alo and TV channel News 24.



34 promising mid-level professionals received the training selected by their authorities. One international trainer conducted these training sessions. The following contents were discussed during the trainings:

- Observing how the newsroom operates
- Talking to individual staff
- Gathering a first-hand assessment of training needs
- Adapting training material based on findings
- Breaking news
- Workflows
- Roles and responsibilities
- Case studies from print newsrooms in Europe, Africa and The Caucasus
- Planning
- Original in-depth proactive journalism and story development
- Creating a unique core editorial proposition in order to establish a market differential

Participants evaluated this initiative as fruitful for their future planning. They learned about new techniques which can help them to perform their responsibilities in a better way.

#### ***Activity-8: Introductory Workshop for Investigative Journalism Support Fund***

Investigative Journalism Partnership (IJP) is at the core of the whole project. First investigative journalism partnership call was placed before media houses through a workshop. 17 participants from national and local media attended the programme. 12 media houses came up with 16 proposals for this call. 12 of those proposals were selected for support.



The project team supported them in developing a comprehensive project plan to implement those ideas and structure their need. In those meetings, one of the media houses decided to withdraw and come up in next calls with better ideas.



In the planning phase, 11 media houses identified around 30 story ideas with a primary research. At least 7 of them are big in scope and impact. Agreements are to be signed with them within the first quarter of next project year.

#### ***Activity-9: RTI Help Desk***

During the project period RTI help desk gave assistance to seven reporters of national and local levels on 28 occasions. Help desk facilitated them to select appropriate designated officer and appellate authority and fill-up application, appeal and complaint forms. These reporters published 11 reports with the information received through these applications.

#### ***Activity-10: Organizational support to sector wide associations***

Meetings and interactions with the Editors council, Newspapers owners association of Bangladesh, National Press Club and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists were held to apprise the media leaders about the project, seeking their cooperation in project implementation and create conducive environment for investigative journalism.

#### ***Activity-11: Sweden Visit***

A team from MRDI visited Sweden in August 2017. Initially two team members were supposed to visit. Later, another member was added to the team with the funding of Fojo and MRDI took approval of NGOAB through FC1 form. This three member team took part in the partners meeting which was also attended by Fojo partners from Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar. Presentation made by MRDI in the meeting was highly appreciated. The team also had meetings with the Fojo staff members to discuss overall activities of the project, roles and responsibilities of project staffs, monitoring & evaluation process, administrative and financial issues.



Team also met with Press Ombudsman of Sweden, some organizations working for media and journalism, freelance journalist group and organization working for data journalism. These meetings explored the real scenario of press freedom and investigative journalism in Sweden which would help create a platform of networking for future implementation of

the project activities.

## Activity shifted to second year

### *Safety and security training*

During this project year two 3 daylong in-house training programs on safety and security were planned. In discussion with the media houses and approval from Fojo, these trainings have been shifted to 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

### Challenges:

- Availability of experts is one of the challenges for implementing some programmes on time.
- This project aims to develop internal capacity of media houses intensively. During the project period some activities had to be changed and project budget was revised.

### Sustainability:

Intervention of the projects enhanced understanding of qualitative journalism among the journalists, media managers and media practitioners to encourage them in producing more quality reports. It will facilitate them to bring the important public oriented issues in front of the audience and policy makers.

Capacity building initiatives increased skills of journalists and introduced new tools and techniques for their future reporting. Trained reporters can disseminate their knowledge to others.

The targeted media houses will receive support from the project for producing quality during the project period.

Moreover, success of the initiative will bring desired positive changes in the mindset of the media owners and the management.