ANNUAL REPORT
2023-24

MRDI

ANNUAL
REPORT
2023-24

MRDI

FOREWORD

MRDI publishes its annual report to document what it achieved in the previous year, what challenges it faced and how it utilized its strengths and opportunities to overcome those challenges. This report for the year 2023-24 will apprise our development partners, government authorities, our beneficiaries and stakeholders about what we did in the year. This is also a legal compliance as a non-governmental organization under the purview of RTI Act.

The reporting year has been marked with the initiative to step towards a shift of organizational paradigm. During its journey of more than two decades, MRDI has come across two major shifts in the years 2008 and 2016 in terms of exploring new horizons which placed the organization to a new height. MRDI now plans to shift from an approach of implementing different projects to the approach of one-programme operation to focus on result-based interventions and face the sustainability challenges in compliance with its strategic plan. To take this forward, MRDI opts for a core funding strategy as part of its resource mobilization through exploring partners.

A programme-based approach will enable MRDI for more integrated programming by addressing underfunded and overlooked needs, enabling new modes of operation and setting up new activities, facilitate more strategic operational presence and organizational sustainability. This approach will facilitate MRDI focus on its stated mission and strategic objectives with its ultimate vision of fostering just and open societies capitalizing its excellence in the areas earned through its work. Approval of one programme by the government instead of getting individual projects approved separately, will save time and effort. The shift will strategically position the organization to lead impactful sustainable change.

The approach is built on five outcome pillars, such as

- ► Production of investigative journalism
- ► People's right of accessing information
- ► Gender transformation
- ► Institute for quality journalism and news media viability
- ► Organizational development

The reporting period experienced a significant decline in production of investigative stories due to engagement of reporters in instant reporting on political conflict and national election stories. However, investigative journalism partnership and support from the IJ helpdesk continued. Special bootcamp for young journalists on visual journalism, mentorship for women journalists, training on visual investigation, mentorship support on health reporting, training on digital security and climate change reporting among others added value to the capacity building efforts. Collaboration and partnership with journalism schools contributed to reducing gap between classroom and newsroom.

MRDI conducted an assessment of the web-based proactive disclosure by the NGOs in the context of perception established by a reliable study that NGOs are lagging rather behind in complying with the proactive disclosure guidelines and updating their websites.

Initiative of developing a gender charter of commitment for news media, first of its kind in Bangladesh, has been a significant effort of the year. Providing mental health support to women journalists facing stress and trauma is an innovative initiative.

MRDI's venture to establish a journalism training centre has now started taking its shape. MRDI board has finalized the name of the centre as "South Asian Institute of Journalism and Research". One veteran journalist with wide international exposure has joined as the CEO and communication for networking and collaboration is going on. Process of registration of the institute is in progress.

The initiative for MRDI's systems automation was taken in the year before this reporting year. The process of deployment is taking a bit longer than the planned schedule to resolve some issues that will contribute to its operational accuracy. However, efforts are on to expedite the process.

This compilation of performances also discloses major decisions taken by the board of directors during the reporting year, mentions the committees in operation to comply with the standards of internal governance and attaches the auditor's report on consolidated financial statements.

We hope our partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders will have an idea of our work during last year from this report.

ACJ	Asian College of Journalism
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIJ	Centre for Investigative Journalism
CMJF	Capital Market Journalists' Forum
CSA	Cyber Security Act
DSA	Digital Security Act
EU	European Union
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FRD	Functional Requirements Document
GIJC	Global Investigative Journalism Conference
GIJN	Global Investigative Journalism Network
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Information Disclosure Policy
IIJNM	Indian Institute of Journalism and New Media
IJ	Investigative Journalism
IJP	Investigative Journalism Partnership
INMA	International News Media Association
IQJB	Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh
ITP	International Training Programme
JANAK	Jagrata Nagorik Committee
JU	Jahangirnagar University
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau
NVC	Nonviolent Communication
RTI	Right to Information
RTIA	Right to Information Act
RTK	Right to Know
SAIJR	South Asian Institute of Journalism and Research
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SO	Strategic Objective
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TCC	The Carter Center
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
ToT	Training of Trainer
ULAB	University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
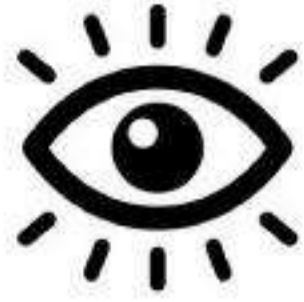
VISION

Just and open societies
where all people enjoy their rights

MISSION

To support the development of a strong and
independent media that exercises excellence in journalism,
and to empower all people including the marginalised to freely
enjoy their right to information, working with partners in
Bangladesh and beyond

VALUES

▶ Transparent ...in all we do
▶ Resourceful ...in addressing problems
▶ Belief in Equity ...in all outcomes
▶ Trustworthy ...in relationships
▶ Working in Partnership

MRDI's Contribution in Achieving SDG Goals

MRDI, as a media development organization, has strategically aligned its initiatives to contribute significantly to sustainable development goals. This is primarily achieved through production-based journalist capacity-building initiatives implemented under various projects. The focus of these initiatives is on enhancing the quality, depth, ethics, and objectivity of reporting to empower news outlets to serve as agents of positive change. The increased production of public interest stories serves to identify the real socio-economic and political scenarios, making authorities accountable and drawing the attention of policymakers. Through this approach, news outlets become instrumental in building an informed, accountable, and inclusive society through ensuring a free and continuous flow of information. This approach helps MRDI to achieve SDG goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

MRDI's commitment to achieving SDG Goal 16 is further demonstrated through its Right to Information awareness initiatives where the interventions target both the supply and demand ends of information with the aim of keeping the demand-supply chain of information increasingly operative. By raising awareness about the Right to Information Act, MRDI empowers individuals to access information, fostering transparency and accountability, promotes the rule of law at national and international levels and ensures equal access to justice for all which aligns directly with SDG Goal 16.10 -- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.
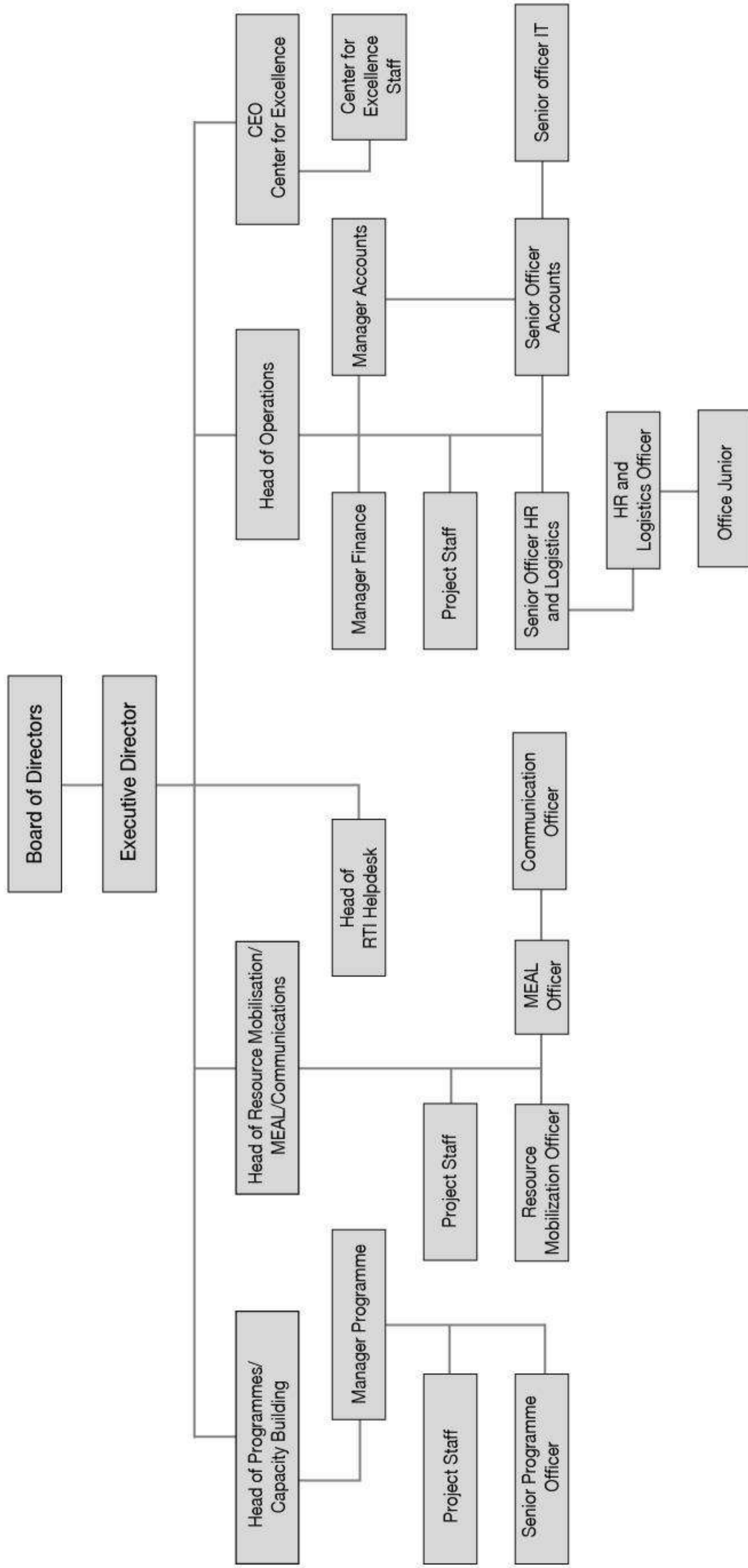
It also played an effective role in achieving the SDG 5 on gender equality through the initiative of developing Gender Chater of Commitment for Bangladeshi news outlets and enhancing the skills of journalists in reporting on various issues including women empowerment, ensuring women's rights and eliminating discrimination against women.

MRDI's initiatives on engaging news media to play its due role bringing the sustainable energy goals in policy discussions contributed to SDG 7.a which focuses on enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology by 2030.

MRDI demonstrated its commitment to addressing climate change by enhancing the reporting skills of district correspondents from national and community news outlets situated in climate hotspot zones of Bangladesh. This initiative aligned with SDG 13.b, aims to promote mechanisms for effective climate change-related planning and management, particularly in least developed countries, with a focus on women, youth, and marginalized communities.

Through the initiative to enhance the capacity of district correspondents of national print, online and electronic media on health reporting, MRDI also proved its commitment to SDG 3.d-- strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks. Improved health journalism enables reporters to investigate corruption in the health sector, raise awareness of critical health issues, promote public health education, and advocate for policies that enhance healthcare access and outcomes. Stories produced under this initiative will contribute to attaining this SDG.

ORGANOGRAM

Board of Directors

Executive Director

CEO
Center for Excellence
- Center for Excellence Staff
  - Senior officer IT

Head of Operations
- Manager Accounts
  - Senior Officer Accounts
- Manager Finance
- Project Staff
- Senior Officer HR and Logistics
  - HR and Logistics Officer
    - Office Junior

Head of RTI Helpdesk

Head of Resource Mobilisation/ MEAL/Communications
- Communication Officer
  - MEAL Officer
- Project Staff
- Resource Mobilization Officer

Head of Programmes/ Capacity Building
- Manager Programme
  - Project Staff
  - Senior Programme Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past year, the journalism landscape in Bangladesh faced significant challenges marked by a shrinking civic space, restrictive regulations and continued suppression of press freedom. Leading up to the 14th national elections, attacks against journalists surged that created a climate of fear in favor of the ruling regime.

Reporters Without Borders highlighted instances of journalists being murdered, imprisoned, and brutalized while reporting. Despite such adversities, journalists and news outlets in Bangladesh remained steadfast in their duty to inform the public and hold the people in power accountable.

MRDI addressed these challenges under its strategic objectives by focusing on enhancing news media capacity for quality reporting, promoting people's access to information, advancing gender equity through transformative approaches, fostering a free and diverse media environment and supporting digital platform adoption by news media.

Through its strategic initiatives, it continues to equip the journalists and news outlets further with different skills, tools and knowledge. It also supported investigative journalism and public interest reporting to promote transparency and accountability.

MRDI, through its long experience of working in the field of news media development and promoting citizen's right of accessing information, had a feeling that project-based interventions are not appropriate for addressing emerging priorities and focused needs. To overcome challenges, MRDI initiated a shift from the current project driven approach to a one-programme one for results-based interventions and sustainability in line with its strategic plan. Discussions with development partners to secure core funding began during the year as part of a resource mobilization strategy.

A significant milestone in MRDI's sustainability journey was the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer to advance the vision of establishing a world-class journalism institute in Bangladesh. Through stakeholder engagement and discussions of international collaboration, the initiative made meaningful progress.

Another key highlight of the last year was the success in training and mentoring district-level journalists. Their impactful stories received attentions as many were published on the front pages of leading newspapers and some also receiving prestigious awards. Similarly, capacity-building initiatives targeting youth groups to transform them into agents of change showed effective results.

A groundbreaking initiative to support mental health of women journalists was another highlight. Under this initiative, MRDI provided a safe space for female journalists to address their mental health challenges. It was widely recognized in the community as a model for empowering women in this demanding profession- journalism.

In response to the pervasive misinformation crisis, MRDI conducted multi-tiered programmes engaging journalists, academia and students nationwide to foster a responsive society.

MRDI's commitment to journalism and the right to information solidified its credibility among development partners past year. With 13 projects implemented-the highest in recent years-MRDI demonstrated its reliability and reinforced partner trust. With this, the organization remains constant in its mission to safeguard press freedom, improve journalism standards and supporting democratic values in Bangladesh.

A summary of MRDI's work during 2023-2024 is furnished below.

Journalism and News Media

MRDI's work to empower the country's news media for production of high-quality reports continued despite a challenging year marked by national and local elections, political tension and natural calamities.

Empowering district correspondents has been a core part of MRDI's last year interventions. In-house training, residential training, mentorship and orientation sessions on issues like public Interest journalism and accountability reporting, reporting on climate change and renewable energy and reporting on climate change impacts and investigation of climate fund use, and on health journalism were organised.

Trainings in multiple batches, under different projects, were organized for district correspondents on digital safety and hygiene. District correspondents and community level reporters were trained on digital safety and how to navigate the Digital Security Act through sessions on security of the device, encryption, source protection and basic fact-checking along with ethical reporting and strategies to safeguard sensitive information.

A training was also organized for young journalists from marginalized communities to enhance their investigative journalism skills.

Three separate programmes engaged news managers to explore the role of journalism in critical topics of public interest, energy transition.

Through Investigative Journalism Partnership (IJP), MRDI empowered seven news outlets to enhance their reporting capacity for quality journalism. Key highlights also included support for a national English daily to develop a digital integration plan to implement their paywall by 2027.

Recognizing the stressful nature of journalism, training on female journalists as para-counselors and orientation programs focusing on mental health were organised. Keeping in mind of gender transformation, training and mentorship for female journalists was organised to help them excel in their career and promote gender diversity in the industry.

Efforts to create a Gender Charter of Commitment for News Media gained momentum in the reporting year where collaborations with news media owners, editors, policymakers and civil society were made to challenge gender stereotypes and foster equal rights. Inspirational sessions helped female journalism students encourage to pursue careers in journalism.

The vision of establishing a world-class journalism institute in Bangladesh was progressed this year with appointment of a Chief Executive Officer who continued to hold national and international meetings and visits to proceed the dream forward through stakeholder engagement and partnerships.

In the global front, MRDI facilitated ten journalists, including two women to attend Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Sweden to foster international collaboration and capacity building in investigative journalism.

In the visual journalism front, the project trained young journalists on multimedia journalism to address newsroom demand for multitasking skills whereas a training on visual investigative journalism by a former BBC Panorama journalist was organised for journalists seasoned in investigative journalism. An e-learning course was also introduced on television news reporting.

In order to better fight against misinformation, MRDI equipped gatekeepers of digital platforms of national news outlets with essential skills, knowledge and tools to counteract misinformation and basics of fact-checking & verification strategies. It also engaged stakeholders including journalists, academics, development organizations and fact-checking experts to identify the major causes and consequences of information disorder and generate recommendations to design future initiative to improve the situation.

Keeping in mind of the strong role of academia in mind, multiple interventions took place. Journalism teachers trained by MRDI in preceding year conducted full day fact-checking sessions at 10 universities and half-day trainings at five universities under peer learning approach. A Training of Trainers (ToT) on Fact-checking for Women Journalists empowered participants to combat misinformation with 18 of the trainees later organising peer-training.

A "Future Search Workshop" gathered journalism educators from 10 universities to formulate an action plan for strengthening fact-checking capacities of students. Advanced-level training for digital news platform gatekeepers and basic training for university correspondents of national news outlets refined their fact-checking understanding.

Several interaction sessions with experts were organised to address conceptual gaps in energy reporting.

The success of MRDI initiatives can be defined with the prestigious awards such as Investigative Journalism Awards by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Best Reporting Award by Capital Market Journalists' Forum Award, and Meena Media Awards by UNICEF.

Four media monitoring initiatives were taken under multiple projects that helped identify coverage of various development agendas, provide recommendations for improving journalist capacity, and develop of new proposals by the organisation. These include track reporting trends, assess the quality of the stories and identify ethical violations particularly related to gender; on issues related to politics, democracy and elections to examine the role of journalism in strengthening democratic processes, assessing news media's role in advancing energy transition topics and to highlighting gaps in coverage and areas for improvement in news media reporting on elections and electoral process.

Reducing Gap Between Classroom and Newsroom

In order to reduce the gap between classroom and newsroom, a two-day national conference was held at Jahangirnagar University (JU) featuring 95 participants and 26 research papers on misinformation, media ethics and the role of AI in journalism.

The collaboration with JU led to the development of a "Digital Literacy and Fact-Checking" course, the establishment of a fact-checking lab and monthly expert lectures to bridge the gap between classroom learning and newsroom practices.

Lectures on sustainable journalism were delivered at two universities highlighting new approaches to strengthen the role of journalism in society. MRDI also organized orientation sessions on fact-checking and digital hygiene for students at two public universities.

Right to Information

Keeping the supply-demand chain of information operative in order to ease the process of disclosure is one of the core working area of MRDI. The organisation in reporting year promoted proactive information disclosure by NGOs to enhance transparency. It assessed web-based disclosures of 56 national and 10 international NGOs keeping in mind of NGO's dual role in implementing the RTI Act.

To increase awareness on RTI in the grassroot level and to emphasise proactive disclosure by NGOs, workshops on proactive disclosure guidelines were held. Planning meetings were held with JANAK members and youth groups in Jashore and multiple school campaign targeting students were organised to raise awareness.

The community meetings engaged fisherfolk, farmers, Dalits, and others on significance of information in their daily life and livelihoods. An online RTI competition promoted RTI knowledge among school students with winners recognized during International Right to Know Day celebrations which also included rallies and cultural programs.

A follow-up boot camp was organised to enhance the capacity of young professionals of three districts who were previously trained on RTI to foster their ongoing professional growth. Support towards women as RTI changemakers continued.

Publications

MRDI published Anusandhani Sangbadikatar Casebook, a Bangla-translated investigative journalism handbook, featuring world's great investigations and story behind the story. This casebook, distributed during most of MRDI's journalist capacity building initiatives received widespread recognition from reporters who are willing to conduct deep investigations.

Investigative Journalism Helpdesk

The IJ helpdesk continued its supports towards journalists to produce quality investigative reports. Throughout the year, journalists from different news outlets visited the help desk to seek assistance in their production and the help desk offered tailored support to individual journalists on queries related to investigative journalism. Throughout the year, the Helpdesk provided 42 journalists with at least 160 supports for their investigative efforts.

RTI Helpdesk

The RTI Helpdesk supported journalists and information seekers with 162 supports across Bangladesh by assisting them to identify the right authorities, complete applications and handle appeals and complaints.

GIJN Bangla

GIJN Bangla contents including guides, tools and resources reached over 48,000 users with more than 88,000 page views in reporting year. The 83 translated articles and 12 newsletters featured in the platform contributed to enhance the skills of Bangla-speaking journalists.

Organizational and Staff Development

MRDI has advanced its systems automation by working with BizzNtek Limited to deploy Microsoft Dynamic 365 Business Central Essential. During the reporting period, MRDI shared its chart of accounts and master data to finalize the Functional Requirements Document. Project timelines were revised to meet the specified needs. The agreement with BizzNtek was signed in preceding year for the deployment of the ERP software.

A strategic review workshop for all staffs was organised to refine MRDI's objectives, key performance indicators and solutions for overcoming challenges.

Partnership and Collaboration

The organization partnered with Fojo Media Institute, Sweden, European Union Bangladesh, Tara Climate Ltd, Internews, Centre for Investigative Journalism, Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh, UNDP Bangladesh, Global Investigative Journalism Network, The Asia Foundation, The Carter Center (TCC) and Bangladesh Health Watch.

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

During the reporting year, MRDI implemented the following projects in partnership with the organizations mentioned.

PROJECT

Improving Quality Journalism in Bangladesh - Phase II

OBJECTIVE

Media in Bangladesh contributes to strengthened democracy and gender equality, greater respect for human rights and freedom from oppression.

WITH SUPPORT OF

:Fojo
Linnaeus University

PROJECT

Climate, Energy and the Media

OBJECTIVE

To bring the sustainable energy goals in policy discussions through engagement of media to play its due role

WITH SUPPORT OF

Tara

PROJECT

Media Strengthening Democracy

OBJECTIVE

To strengthen role of news outlets through capacity building of journalist on public interest reporting and create awareness on digital safety

WITH SUPPORT OF

European Union

PROJECT

Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh

OBJECTIVE

To create a responsive society against misinformation through capacity building of journalists, journalism teachers, and youths on factchecking

WITH SUPPORT OF

Internews
Local voices. Global change.

PROJECT
Journalist Capacity on Climate Change Reporting

OBJECTIVE
To enhance climate change reporting skills of the district correspondents of national news outlets and reporters of community news outlets located in climate hotspot zones of Bangladesh through production-based capacity building activities.

WITH SUPPORT OF

cij | OPEN CLIMATE REPORTING INITIATIVE
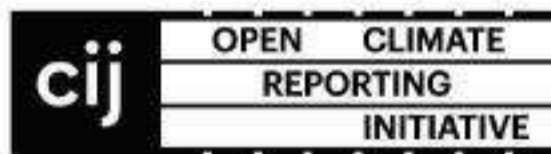
PROJECT
More Information More Accountability (MIMA) Phase II

OBJECTIVE
▶ Create awareness on RTI and enhance demand for information in the community

▶ Facilitate NGOs to comply with the provisions of RTI Act and regulations of proactive disclosure.

WITH SUPPORT OF

The Asia Foundation

PROJECT
Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI)

OBJECTIVE
▶ To support NGO authorities in proactive disclosure of information for ensuring transparency and keeping the chain of information rolling

▶ To groom a group of young women as RTI changemakers for supporting their communities to claim information as a right

▶ To develop perception of right to information among the women future leaders.

WITH SUPPORT OF

THE CARTER CENTER

PROJECT
Journalist Capacity Building on Health Reporting

OBJECTIVE
▶ To enhance capacity of district correspondents of national print, online and electronic media on health reporting

▶ To support production of in-depth/ investigative health reports through mentorship assistance.

WITH SUPPORT OF

BANGLADESH HEALTH WATCH

PROJECT
Digital Safety for Journalists

OBJECTIVE
▶ To sensitize correspondents on how to safely navigate the Digital Security Act (DSA)

▶ To sensitize correspondents on how to maintain safety of their digital devices and communications.

WITH SUPPORT OF

Supported by
Switzerland

PROJECT
News media capacity-building for information integrity

OBJECTIVE
To mitigate the impact of misinformation and enhance information integrity in Bangladesh by building relevant capacities in media through adoption of best practices and policies.

WITH SUPPORT OF

UNDP
Bangladesh

PROJECT
Training for journalists from marginalized and disenfranchised communities

OBJECTIVE
To build capacity for young journalists from the marginalised and disenfranchised communities.

WITH SUPPORT OF

Global Investigative Journalism Network

PROJECT
Journalism for Functional Democracy

OBJECTIVE
To strengthen national news outlets by developing capacity of district correspondents to produce in-depth and investigative stories of public interest that contributes to make the democratic institutes functional and accountable to citizens

WITH SUPPORT OF

The Asia Foundation

PROJECT
News Integrity Monitoring Project

OBJECTIVE
▶ To monitor and assess the coverage of political processes in Bangladesh to track developments related to the upcoming parliamentary election through news media monitoring.

▶ To contribute the development of a future capacity-building programme for journalists, enhancing their ability to report on political processes and uphold news integrity.
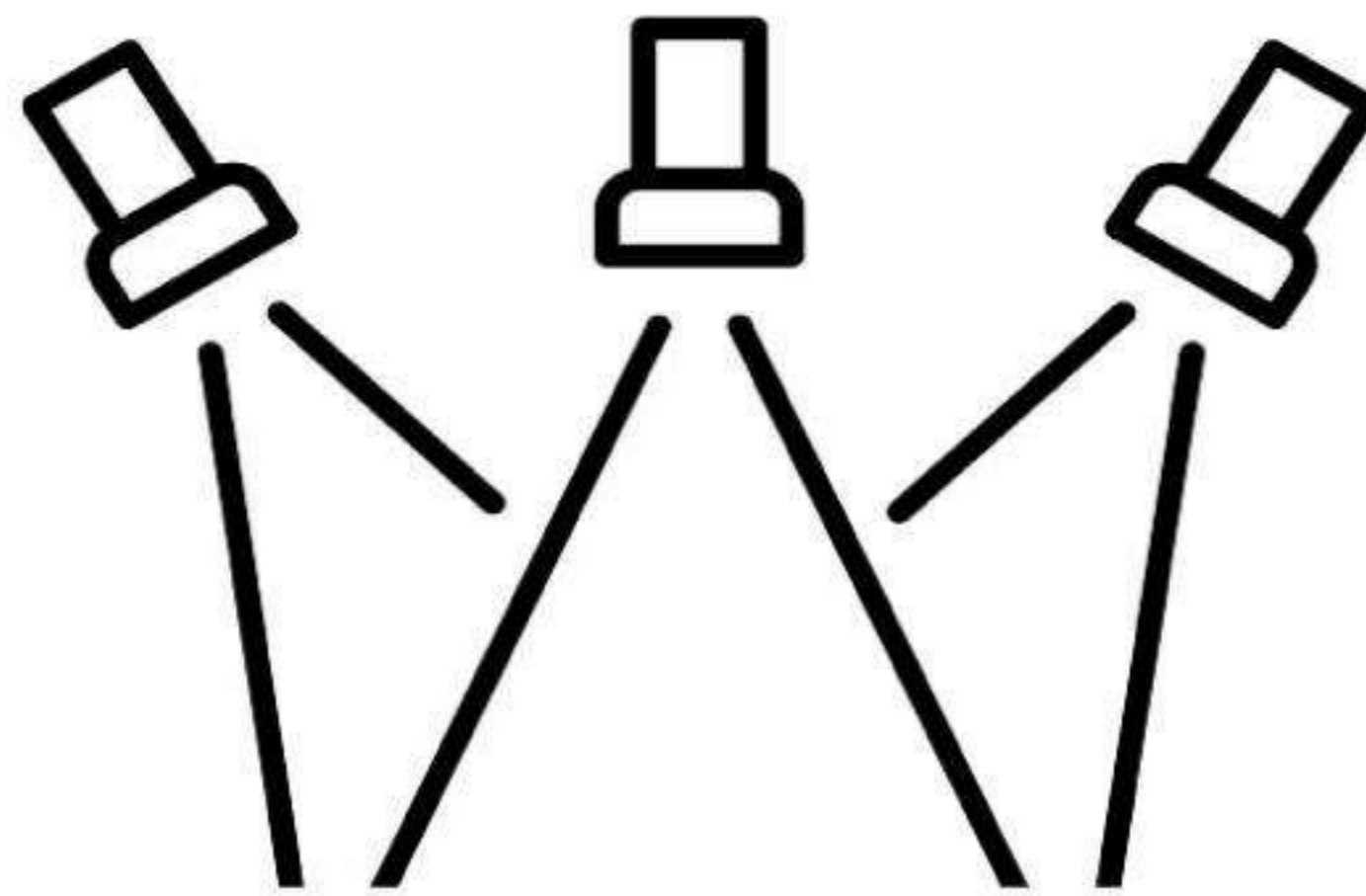
WITH SUPPORT OF

The Asia Foundation

SPOTLIGHT 2023-24

Transforming Local Journalism to Champion Quality Reporting

For years, district level journalists struggled to cover their stories in the prominent coverage of the newspapers or in prime-time electronic media coverage only except if there is a breaking event or national disaster in their localities.

They remain overlooked and under-resourced with their stories regularly placed in inside pages or their news items broadcast in specific segment of the TV news programmes. Lack of capacity building interventions by the newsrooms also kept them surrounded within conventional form of reporting.

Keeping the scenario in mind, MRDI, in the last one year implemented nearly half of its total projects towards the capacity building of the district correspondents where training was common but mentorship support under the guidance of senior and experienced journalists also took place that helped some participants produce impactful stories on public interest.

The outcomes were far-reaching. The comprehensive and all-around support helped those journalists look into critical issues that are often overlooked in mainstream news media. Be it into critical subjects like health, environment, education and migration or corruption and the misuse of power, their stories were widely covered but not in small corners of the news pages, but many were published on the front and back pages of leading newspapers some even featured as full-page reports-an achievement few district journalists could previously imagine. On television, many of those supported reports received prime-time coverage amplifying their reach to diverse audiences.

Some stories even went on to achieve prestigious awards and recognition. One such story on aired in a TV channel covering how a network of Bangladeshi and Libyan nationals holds youths attempting to reach Italy captive, tortures them and extorts millions from their families won the BRAC Migration Media Award this year. Another two stories including one on how an island in the Bay of Bengal is bearing the brunt of the sea level rise induced by climate change have been featured in the Editors' Pick of Investigative Stories from Bangladesh released by Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN).

Additionally, another story on series report on the health sector highlighting how patients falling victim to the greed of medical professionals received TIB Investigation Awards this year. All these stories were supported in the reporting period and all were covered by the district level journalists.

These recognitions are not just symbolic achievements but reflect the depth, quality and sustained efforts by MRDI. Stories that once might have gone unnoticed are now sparking conversations and influencing change. District correspondents, who often struggled for recognition are now celebrated as drivers of impactful storytelling representing the voices and concerns of their communities.

One of MRDI's strategic objectives towards developing the capacity of the news media to produce quality investigative, objective, ethical and in-depth reports has been realized through journalists including these district level ones whose contributions now shape public discourse, inform policymakers and enrich the overall news media narrative in Bangladesh.

Fight Fake and Find the Fact

Due to the rapid expansion of internet access and social media, Bangladesh is facing a growing challenge of information disorder causing danger of digital harm. False information spreads quickly via social media and online platforms, threatening public trust and democratic processes, fuelling communal tensions, social instability and bloodshed.

While fact-checking teams exist in other countries' media landscapes, Bangladesh has yet to properly recognize their significance. Furthermore, fact-checking is still absent from the media and journalism education curriculum, resulting in a lack of emphasis on this critical ability among aspiring journalists and students. Addressing this issue, MRDI initiated multi-tiered programmes in this reporting year with the objective to create a responsive society against misinformation through capacity building of journalists, journalism academia and students across the country.

To address the immediate need for newsroom integrity, MRDI engaged 15 news managers from online/digital platforms of news outlets in a knowledge-sharing programme on combating information disorder where participants learned different strategies that enhanced their ability to mitigate mis/disinformation. As rapid development of AI and generative technology amplifies the spread of disinformation, including them, 19 gatekeepers of online news platforms later underwent an extensive training which was of advanced level focusing online investigation, AI detection, deepfakes and geolocation. These gatekeepers, in turn, formed a dynamic WhatsApp-based virtual lab to collaboratively debunk false news and share fact-checking resources.

Women journalists were also at the forefront of MRDI's efforts. Through a Training of Trainers (ToT) program, 19 women journalists received training in fact-checking. Equipped with these skills, they led peer-training sessions, reaching their 195 journalist fellows.

To make the efforts of combating misinformation sustainable, MRDI extended its efforts to academia. During this year, nine journalism teachers of five universities conducted half-day training sessions at their respective departments following a ToT. Later, a "Future Search Workshop: Fact-checking for Journalism Students" was organized involving these teachers for developing an action plan to improve journalism students' fact-checking capabilities by incorporating fact-checking lessons into their curricula through a variety of means, including training sessions, courses, and national camps.

To enhance the synergy between classroom and newsroom regarding information integrity, MRDI signed an MoU with Journalism and Media Studies department of Jahangirnagar University for developing a course outline on 'Digital Literacy and Fact-Checking' for the undergraduate programme and establishing a fact-checking lab with the latest techniques to identify dis/misinformation on digital platforms.

Simultaneously, recognizing the importance of engaging future journalists, MRDI held two orientation programmes for journalism students on Fact-checking and Digital Hygiene at the journalism departments of two universities of Dhaka - Jagannath University and Jahangirnagar University aiming to instill a foundational understanding of maintaining digital hygiene and the importance of fact-checking to make them able to think and verify contents before sharing in social media. A fact-checking capacity-building programme was also carried out, involving 20 correspondents from universities and national new outlets.

A separate discussion session was held, with a diverse group of participants, including senior editors, journalist association representatives, news managers, academics, development organizations, and fact-checking experts, to identify the major causes and consequences of information disorder, as well as the challenges that news organizations face in combating misinformation. This discussion prompted proposals for future initiatives to improve the situation.

These initiatives of MRDI constitute a transformative step towards a more resilient media ecosystem in Bangladesh. By increasing the capacity of journalists, educators, and students, the organization has established a solid foundation for countering the spread of misinformation.

For future initiatives, MRDI has planned to introduce a fellowship on digital investigation through fact-checking to develop a group of fact-checkers who will solely work to debunking stories and investigation at their respective new outlets. Besides keeping up the current initiatives, an e-learning course on fact-checking for young journalism learners not only addressing current challenges but also the efforts to establish democracy and social harmony ultimately.

A Safe Space: Breaking the Silence on Mental Health

Journalists all around the world works under a lot of pressure: they work long hours often behind the scheduled timeframes, cover stories and subjects that can take a mental toll and are always expected to do more with fewer resources. On top of all, the industry offers a state of uncertainty where job security and workplace morale are not so great.

When it comes for female journalists in particular, the challenges are more unique that often go unnoticed-psychological stress from covering traumatic events, workplace harassment and the attempts to constantly balance between professional and personal responsibilities.

Even during such challenging period, stigma around mental health prevents many of them from seeking help that makes those challenges remain unaddressed. Recognizing this pressing need, MRDI in the reporting year launched a groundbreaking initiative to create a safe space where women journalists can address their mental health, request support and develop resilience.

Under a peer-driven support model, the initiative developed five experienced women journalists as para-counsellors with the skills in stress management, self-care and coping strategies to act as the first point of contact for women journalists facing mental health challenges. Now, these batch of para-counsellors are providing emotional support to the female journalists facing challenges. For cases requiring more advanced support, they are referred to professional psycho-counselors all while maintaining strict confidentiality.

"After years in this field, this is the first time I was able to defy the stigma and seek psycho-counseling support. The sessions helped me discover myself and realize that mental health is integral to overall health," this is how one female journalist shared her experience about the programme.

Along with this counselling service, MRDI orientation programmes helped female journalists focus on their mental health priorities. During the reporting year, 73 women journalists attended the sessions where they learn on the symptoms and information on when and where to seek support. These sessions not only raised awareness about the importance of mental health but also equipped participants with practical tools to manage stress. Open discussions encouraged female journalists to share their experiences, to break the silence on issues that they kept inside for years.

A key success of the programme has been the creation of a supportive network among women journalists. Para-counsellors, who themselves understand the unique pressures of the profession, have fostered a sisterhood of trust and understanding. This network offers a safe platform for journalists to express their struggles and receive empathetic guidance.

In a country where discussions on mental health remains a taboo, MRDI's initiative has been transformative. It has provided female journalists with a space to discuss their struggles without fear of judgment. By addressing mental health issues, the initiative is also contributing to creation of more inclusive and supportive newsrooms.

This initiative not only championed MRDI in addressing the mental health challenges among female journalists, but also stands as a model on how targeted support can empower women to break stigma and foster well-being this challenging profession.

ACCOMPLISHMENT AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MRDI's strategic plan sets the following 5 programmatic strategic objectives to attain its stated mission, contributing to the far-reaching vision complying with its committed values.

1. To develop the capacity of the media to produce quality investigative, objective, ethical, and in-depth reports.

2. To promote people's access to information

3. To work toward gender equity both internally and in programmes using a gender transformative approach

4. To contribute to a free and diverse media environment in Bangladesh

5. To support the media in their transformation in the use of digital platforms

Project activities and the organization's core initiatives collectively contributed to fulfil the objectives.

1. To develop the capacity of the media to produce quality investigative, objective, ethical, and in-depth reports

The reporting period in general was challenging due to newsrooms' more focus on immediate coverage instead of in-depth reports in a tense political and overall climate surrounding national elections. Story production experienced a significant decline this year dropping to nearly half of the previous year's output largely due to the tense political climate in Bangladesh where the former regime of Awami League (AL) and the main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were engaged in intense conflict over electoral processes, governance issues and allegations of corruption and human rights abuses. Most newsrooms shifted the focus toward covering immediate developments rather than producing investigative journalism due to political tensions surrounding the election.

Of the 61 stories produced during the reporting period, 46% were generated through the Investigative Journalism Helpdesk, 31% from the Investigative Journalism Partnership Program (IJP) and 23% from the Boot Camp. Unfortunately, no stories emerged from the mentorship programme. These stories were produced with support from the Improving Quality Journalism in Bangladesh (IQJB) project.

Visual Reporting Bootcamp

A specialized training program was organized for young reporters from television, digital platforms, newspapers and online news portals focusing on how to enhance their skills in visual journalism. Initially planned as a TV Reporting Boot Camp, it was expanded into a Visual Reporting Boot Camp to address the evolving demands from newsrooms to support transformation into multi-media journalism where multi-tasking skills become extremely important. Through an open call, the project organised a four-day residential training participated by 12 reporters all of whom attended a three-day follow-up training after a three-month interval. The training, designed with support from experts, covered essential aspects of visual reporting, including idea generation, research, live reporting, interviews and storytelling techniques. Three months later, the same participants returned for follow-up training with their developed stories along with newsroom approval and presented that to mentors for feedback and refinement. Through expert guidance during follow-up training, they finalized the stories demonstrating the practical impact of the training all of which were later published.

Training on Visual Investigation

A former BBC Panorama producer conducted a three-day training on visual investigative journalism and an in-house capacity building of a partner TV channel in Dhaka on MRDI's invitation. The 3-day training aimed at enhancing the storytelling and filming techniques of 10 investigative reporters from different TV channels, including two participants currently serving as trainers and facilitators. Through 13 interactive sessions, the expert shared real-world experiences and examples to turn the training engaging and practical. While this 3-day workshop was an eye-opener for the reporters, a longer workshop where reporters develop their own stories or work on already developed stories would certainly add value to the initiative.

Television News Reporting Online Course

An online training course on Television News Reporting was developed and uploaded on the MRDI web platform accompanied by a virtual announcement on MRDI's social media pages. During launching of the course, the course producer, trainers and the technical team shared their experiences in developing the course.

The course is designed to be accessible to Bangla-speaking users, including journalists and students, from around the world offering them the opportunity to enrol and complete the course free of charge. In the first seven months following the launch, 1,183 users enrolled in the course with 226 of them successfully completing it and earning a certificate.

Distribution of Translated Investigative Reporting Handbook

At the end of the project last year, Anusandhani Sangbadikatar Casebook', a Bangla translated IJ Handbook from 'The Global Investigative Journalism Casebook' by UNESCO, has been published which is distributed among the editors, news media gatekeepers, reporters, diplomates, development partners and CSO's during this period.

Investigative Journalism Partnership (IJP)

A key feature of the programme, the Investigative Journalism Partnership (IJP) once again proved to be among the most impactful activities in the reporting period. A total of seven news outlets - four newspapers, two TV channels and an online news portal received support to enhance the capacity of their reporters through training and workshops and to produce stories this year. Three partnerships ended in June 2024, one continued until August 2024 and two others are extended to the following year. Under the IJP support, 19 stories have been produced from four IJ partnerships of the project.

Apart from journalistic investigations that often have percussions even internationally, the IJP is an important feature for contributing to positive sustainable change within Bangladeshi society and more notably in shifting public opinion, mobilizing communities and influencing policy changes. The collaborative model supports partner news outlets in streamlining processes to produce investigative journalism by enabling them to tackle complex topics from a critical perspective that would otherwise remain unexplored.

Under the project's largest partnership, a national English daily focused on major investigations and audience surveys where an international consultant was engaged to enhance its digital integration, revenue modelling and develop a business plan with introduction of a paywall by 2027. The planned stories were investigated by the journalists of the partner news outlets under the guidance of an internationally renowned journalist who mentored, trained and supported reporters to produce their stories.

The project also supported a leading TV channel with a 10-day in-house capacity-building training for their newsroom and investigative show. A renewed investigative journalist and former BBC Panorama producer, who conducted the training, assessed the existing capacity, guided journalists to improve investigative reporting skills and advised on content, structure and presentation.

Also, the project completed partnership with a popular Bangla daily that received capacity on producing quality, in-depth and investigative stories from workshop on investigative reporting and the Right to Information Act. Three experienced mentors supported the journalists to produce their stories. A climate and environment focused news portal also produced an investigative story under the partnership.

At the end of the year, one national daily and a community newspaper signed agreements for capacity building and investigative reporting support. An in-house capacity building programme was organized for one of the new partners where experts trained their correspondents from the coastal districts.

These training programmes have been organized under the IQJB project

Training on Public Interest Journalism and Accountability Tools

Public Interest Journalism is about delivering powerful stories that have an impact on society, with the sole objective of making the authorities accountable. To increase the trend of publishing public interest stories over news media, this project built the capacity of district correspondents on updated tools and techniques of in-depth and investigative reporting. Developing a story idea through a systemic manner, ethics and gender perception in stories are also discussed in this capacity building approach. This year two 2-day in-house training programmes were organized for two TV channels in which 34 district correspondents and 6 newsroom editors participated. Each of the district correspondents developed one story idea keeping the important issue of their locality in mind and presented before their executive director, editorial head and news editors. Later, each news outlet selected 9 best story ideas for mentorship programme.

Mentorship on Public Interest Reporting

Objective and in-depth reports on public interest issues can help policymakers to conceptualize the real scenario from a deeper and critical perspective. To contribute to the process as a part of production-based capacity building approach, a 2-month mentorship on public interest reporting has been awarded to 18 selected district correspondents who took part in 2-day in-house training from 2 news outlets. 63 district correspondents selected from 7 news outlets in the previous year also completed their mentorship assignment. Learning through a process of mentoring support the selected district correspondents got the opportunity to utilize their knowledge gained from the in-house training to produce investigative stories on public interest concerns at the district level. Reports published under the mentorship programme portrayed the situation on the issues related to corruption in healthcare; environment and climate change; public health risks; mismanagement and irregularities; socio-economic challenges; legal and governance issues; urban planning and infrastructure and challenges faced by poor and marginalized communities at the district level.

These training programmes were organized under MRDI-EU Bangladesh partnership -- Media Strengthening Democracy aiming at contributing to promote accountability of democratic institutions by enhancing capacity of the news outlets to produce public interest report and create awareness on digital safety.

Orientaion on Public Interest Reporting

A daylong orientation on public interest reporting and its features was organized for 15 news editors and sub-editors of national desks nominated by 8 news outlets engaged in the capacity building process. The objective of the orientation was to increase the level of perception and understanding on public interest reporting as they are the responsible person for gatekeeping of the reports by the district correspondents.

Analyzing report trends through news monitoring

To portray the overarching trends in news media coverage provided by national print, television, and online news outlets concerning the democratic processes in Bangladesh, particularly focusing on politics, democracy and elections, news content analysis of 12 months has been conducted over 7 TV channels, 7 newspapers and 2 online portals. Findings from this trend analysis will facilitate to develop a long-term capacity building programme and educate the gatekeepers about trend and quality of news.

Mentorship on Climate Change and Renewable Energy

MRDI successfully mentored 15 reporters from national media outlets in a two-month mentorship programme on climate change and renewable energy reporting guided by five experienced journalists as mentors. A total of 16 stories were produced under this mentorship.

Training Content Development Meeting

The project developed a four-member panel of experienced journalists and issue experts to implement the capacity building part of the project. The experts with responsibility of also acting as facilitators, resource persons and mentors during the training, held a meeting to develop selection criteria and develop training content for one semi-residential and two residential programmes.

Later on, a training content development meeting was separately organized where session plans for three training programmes - a training for 20 district correspondents, a residential bootcamp for 12 selected journalists with mentorship for story production, and an advanced residential training and mentorship for 12 journalists previously trained in renewable energy reporting was discussed. Six gatekeepers of national news outlets, four members of a journalism expert group involved in this initiative, a technical expert involved in this initiative, and a communications expert attended the meeting along with MRDI team.

Training on Climate Change and Renewable Energy Reporting for District Correspondents

A two-day training was organized for 20 district correspondents to help them improve their ability to report on climate change and renewable energy topics. Following the training, participants were requested to apply for a four-day bootcamp for 12 selected reporters and two-month long mentorship programme.

Prior to organizing these capacity building programmes, training sessions were developed by a team of experts in a training content development meeting. Six gatekeepers of national news outlets, four members of a journalism expert group involved in this initiative, a technical expert and a communications expert along with MRDI team attended the meeting.

Media Monitoring

A structured news media monitoring activity is underway to track renewable energy issues through stories, editorials, post-editorials, opinions, and interviews across nine news outlets to assess the current news media landscape on renewable energy.

Energy Glossary

The project initiated the development of a glossary for journalists with relevant terminologies and their explanations related to energy and climate change to enhance the quality and accuracy of reporting. Frequently used words and important sources/resources related to energy linked with climate change and environment will also be available in the glossary. An interaction was organised where three people including experts and possible writer of the glossary discussed the methodology and draft content for the planned glossary.

Web-Based Knowledge Hub

An open data portal to provide journalists with access to valuable resources and data related to energy transition are being uploaded at MRDI website to enhance journalists' awareness of developments in the renewable energy sector. This database will function as a centralized hub, providing easy access to relevant data for journalists and other stakeholders.

Lesson Learnt Workshop and Certificate Giving Ceremony of Mentorship Programme

This programme was organised to offer a platform for dialogue between the participants attending earlier training and mentorship where 11 journalists shared their valuable lessons learned through capacity development activities organised under the project. Finally, certificates were presented to the participants in recognition of their successful completion of the programme.

Interaction Session with Experts and Reporters

Two expert interaction sessions were organised with the group of already trained journalists to help them identify gaps in their stories and clear their conceptual problems with the energy sector. A total of 16 and 15 journalists attended the sessions respectively. The experts also offered suggestions on how to improve reporting that are themed on renewable energy.

With an aim to bring the sustainable energy goals in policy discussions through engagement of news media to play its due role, MRDI organised these interventions as part of the Climate, Energy and the Media project with support from Tara Climate Limited.

Fact-checking Training for Digital News Platform Gatekeepers

A three-day advanced level residential Fact-checking Training for Digital News Platform Gatekeepers was organized to enhance the fact-checking abilities of gatekeepers of online news platforms, including news managers, heads of digital platforms, copy editors, and reporters. Nineteen gatekeepers of online news platforms including news managers, head of digital platforms, copy editors and reporters participated in the training. The program featured practical activities, group discussions, and presentations.

Fact-checking Training for University Correspondents

A three-day residential "Fact-checking Training for University Correspondents," was organized to develop their capacity on fact-checking to combat the spread of misinformation where 20 correspondents for universities of national new outlets participated. Like previous programs, this training combined theoretical knowledge with practical exercises. Sessions were focused on various topics, including information disorder, online abuse, ethics of fact-checking, verification tools, and geolocation techniques.

MRDI organized these three training programmes with support from Internews under the Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh project with the objective to create a responsive society against misinformation through capacity building of journalists, journalism teachers, and youths on fact-checking.

Training Content Development on Climate Reporting

Five newsroom gatekeepers in-person and an expert through online joined this meeting to finalise structure of the two three-day residential training sessions - first one for district correspondents of national news outlets and second one designed for reporters from community news outlets. The aims, expectations from the training, potential participant selection methods, and session topics were all discussed.

The meeting participants together identified a list of significant districts for potential reporter invitations. The shortlisted districts are Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bhola, Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rajshahi, Noakhali, Chittagong, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, and Sunamganj.

Training on Climate Change Reporting for Correspondents of National News Outlets

A three-day training on climate change reporting equipped 15 correspondents of national news outlets from climate hotspot zones with skills to cover climate change issues more effectively and digging deep. The training covered various aspects including concepts of Climate Change and Environment, accessing data from online sources and use of free tools to develop maps, interactives and analysing satellite images etc. It also covered sessions on investigative journalism, interview techniques and there were practical sessions on how to turn an idea into a pitch form forsubmission of story idea to newsroom. The session also covered topics of climate justice and climate finance as well. All the participants then submitted their story ideas as part of the application process to a mentorship that will support production of their in-depth and investigative story ideas.

Mentorship Programme for Correspondents of National News Outlets

The project provided mentorship support to 11 correspondents of national news outlets under a senior journalist as mentor in transforming their story concepts into investigative pieces addressing climate change issues. During the reporting timeframe, nine mentees successfully concluded their mentorship resulting in the publication of a total of 10 stories. Two mentees were unable to complete the mentorship.

Training for Reporters of Community News Outlets

A three-day training on climate change reporting equipped 15 reporters of community news outlets from climate hotspot zones with skills to cover climate change issues more effectively and in greater depth. The training covered various aspects including concepts of Climate Change and Environment, accessing data from online sources and use of free tools to develop maps, interactives and analysing satellite images etc. It also covered sessions on investigative journalism, interview techniques and there were practical sessions on how to turn an idea into a pitch form for submission of story idea to newsroom. The session also covered topics of climate justice and climate finance as well. All the participants then submitted their story ideas as part of the application process to a mentorship that will support production of their in-depth and investigative story ideas.

Mentorship Programme for Reporters of Community News Outlets

The project provided mentorship support for 10 reporters under an experienced journalist as mentor in transforming their story concepts into investigative pieces addressing climate change issues. During the reporting timeframe, nine mentees successfully concluded their mentorship, resulting in the publication of a total of 9 stories. One mentee was unable to complete the mentorship.

These production-based capacity building programmes were implemented under the project 'Journalist Capacity on Climate Change Reporting' in partnership with Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) involving correspondents from national and reporters of community news outlets in climate hotspot zones in reporting on climate change impacts, investigating climate fund use and addressing issues through a gender and economic lens.

Training Content Development Meeting

A training content development meeting was organized to finalize session plan and identify potential resource persons for the 4-day training on 'Health Reporting' for the district correspondents. gatekeepers from eight news outlets along with 3 health experts attended the meeting.

One expert journalist presented a draft training content and session plan in the meeting which was finalized after incorporation of valuable input from the gatekeepers and issue experts. Potential resources persons' names were also discussed for conducting sessions in the training.

Health Reporting Training for District Correspondents

To enhance the capacity of district correspondents of national print, online and TV news outlets on health reporting a 4-day training was organized. 16 district correspondents from 9 news outlets representing 8 working districts of BHW participated in the training. The sessions covered importance of health journalism; how does the health sector work; discrimination in health sector; universal health coverage; story idea development; writing technique of health reporting; important aspects at field level; use of open sources in health reporting; journalism ethics and gender perception; RTI Act and its importance in public interest; nutrition reporting; public procurement at the local level and how to read audit report. The pre and post knowledge assessment results show significant improvement of knowledge on the topics discussed.

Mentorship Support for Reporters

Throughout the training session, the correspondents pitched their story ideas and finalized their story planning. Under four experienced journalists as mentors, the 16 reporters from national print, TV and online media, who attended the training, joined a production based two-month mentorship on health reporting and published 15 reports.

The training and mentorship programmes were organized under the project 'Journalist Capacity Building on Health Reporting' in partnership with Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW), to help journalists develop capacity to look at health issues in a broader policy perspective, along with skills to deal with evidence-based information, research analyzing capacity, and also a great hold on how to interpret medical jargons easily to public.

News Media Monitoring

With a comprehensive trend analysis of news coverage generated from daily monitoring of 16 news media outlets, this initiative served as a vital tool for promoting transparency and accountability in the electoral process through highlighting gaps in coverage and areas for improvement in news media reporting on elections and electoral process.

The limitations include reliance on event-based reporting rather than in-depth analysis, lack of editorials addressing election integrity concerns, insufficient capacity for fact-checking statements, lack of follow up on reported incidents of code of conduct violations, limited coverage of public interest stories, inadequate attention to election-related mis/disinformation, minimal coverage of election financing and limited understanding among journalists on laws governing electoral process.

It recommends more capacity building focusing on election processes, democracy and ethical reporting, training for district correspondents of national news outlets on public interest journalism and news integrity and engage with newsroom gatekeepers to inform them on importance of news integrity during elections and encourage prioritization of coverage that serves the public interest.

MRDI, in partnership with The Asia Foundation offers suggestions for future capacity-building programme for journalists to enhance their ability to report on political processes and uphold news integrity.

Content Development Meeting for Journalist

MRDI organized a meeting with newsroom gatekeepers, journalism teachers and capacity-building experts to finalize the training content and session plans for two public interest reporting training designed for district correspondents of national news outlets.

The objectives of the training, its expectations, potential participant selection methods, mentorship procedures, numbering criterion and session topics were discussed at the meeting.

Gatekeepers emphasized the importance of prioritizing stories which have a significant impact on the community, ranging from socio-political matters to environmental concerns and beyond that are committed to integrity, accuracy, and fairness of the fact to capture audience attention in an increasingly crowded information landscape.

Residential Training on Public Interest Journalism

Two three-day residential training programmes on public interest journalism were organized to develop capacity of district correspondents of national news outlets to produce in-depth and investigative stories of public interest. A total of 30 district correspondents, 15 in each batch, selected through an open call competition took part in the trainings in two batches during May and June. Both the training sessions covered the same sessions as public interest reporting and its components, research for reporting, planning an investigation and evidence gathering, interviewing techniques, Right to Information Act in journalism, storytelling, and ethics & gender. These sessions collectively equipped journalists with the tools to produce insightful, ethical, and high-quality journalism, contributing to a well-informed public.

Mentorship Support

After the training, all the trainees submitted their story ideas as part of the application process to a mentorship that will support production of their in-depth and investigative story ideas. Based on the quality of their previous work, depth of story ideas submitted, and their classroom performance, 12 participants were awarded with mentorship support.

> *MRDI organized the training and mentorship under its "Journalism for Functional Democracy" project, supported by The Asia Foundation to strengthen national news outlets by developing capacity of district correspondents to produce in-depth and investigative stories of public interest that contributes to make the democratic institutes functional and accountable to citizens.*

Training for Journalists from Marginalized and Disenfranchised Communities

Three-day training on investigative journalism organized to build capacity of young journalists from the marginalized and disenfranchised communities on investigative journalism to hold the authorities accountable and advocate the rights of marginalized and disenfranchised communities. Seven young journalists from Dhaka and outside Dhaka participated in the training. The comprehensive training prioritized the sessions on tools and techniques of journalistic investigation along with online research and the use of accountability tools. The knowledge assessment results of the participants reflected the positive shift of knowledge on the discussed topics.

> " The knowledge I acquired from this training has enriched my understanding of investigative journalism. I now possess the skills to develop a comprehensive plan prior to commencing an investigation, develop effective source maps, and utilize various investigative tools. This newfound expertise will undoubtedly streamline my future reporting initiatives "
>
> --Anupam Ghagra

> *MRDI organized the training with support from Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN).*

News Media Monitoring

MRDI has set up a two-member news monitoring team to track reporting trends, assess the quality of the stories and identify ethical violations particularly related to gender. The team also evaluates the impact of MRDI's capacity-building initiatives and contributes to key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with MRDI's strategic objectives. Over the past year, the team monitored 15 national news outlets, including 7 newspapers, 5 TV stations and 3 online portals to assess the publication trend of public interest stories, gauge coverage of various development agendas that also helps develop new proposals.

GIJN Bangla

GIJN Bangla publishes guides, tips, tools & techniques of modern journalism, examples of investigative journalism, fellowship, grants, and training related information to enhance the capacity of Bangla-speaking journalists. The platform is widely followed by journalists, particularly those outside of Dhaka and has contributed to capacity building, network expansion, providing access to investigative tools and techniques and sparking new ideas. GIJN Bangla reached over 48,095 users and received more than 88,465 page views during reporting period. It delivered 83 translated articles in Bangla and 12 monthly newsletters. GIJN Bangla shares approximately six posts and tweets across our social media handles daily, highlighting important articles, cutting-edge tips, tools, and techniques.

Global Investigative Journalism Conference

In September 2023, ten Bangladeshi journalists, of which two were women, attended the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, a unique opportunity for international collaboration, upskilling capacity and shifting the mindset on investigative journalism in Bangladesh. GIJC 2023 brought together over 20,000 journalists from around the world. The journalists got an opportunity to acquire comprehensive knowledge on investigative journalism, learn new global trends of investigations, and the latest tools and techniques. The visit created the opportunities for the Bangladeshi journalists to develop networks and connections that opened a new window of quality investigation.

"

I got the opportunity to share my experience of doing investigative reporting in such a great event. I consider myself lucky and the experience of participating in this gathering of world-renowned investigative journalists has made me more focused as a journalist.

--*Jesmin Papri*, a female investigative journalist, was one of the panelists in the GIJC session

Attending the GIJC in Gothenburg was a game changer for me. Not only did it connect me to a handful of journalists whom I'm still regularly in touch with, but it also changed the way I approach my reporting.

--*Nayan Aditto,* Ekattor TV

"

Achievements

As in previous years, several stories produced under the project gained recognition and success when national/local organizations announced their investigative/best reporting awards. Some of these reports were published during the previous year's activities, with the announcements made at the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024.

Two stories produced with support from the IJ helpdesk and mentorship received TIB's IJ Award 2023. One story published in a vernacular daily exposed how victims are deprived of justice from the court of law due to changing the type of crime by the police in the case. The other story is on counterfeit medicine and corruption in the medical sector.

The story that received CMJF Award 2023 unearthed the corruption of the brokerage houses of the capital market who sold out the company shares of their clients without informing them and declined to pay the money.

The other story winning Unicef Meena Aawrd 2023 narrates how juvenile crime is turned into adult crime by manipulating age of adolescent perpetrators by the law enforcing agencies.

Out of four award winners, one is a woman reporter.

2. To promote people's access to information

During the reporting year, MRDI continued its efforts to promote people's right of access to information through advocacy and capacity building on keeping the demand-supply chain of information increasingly operative. Assessment study, campaigning and training programmes were implemented during the period.

Web-based Proactive Disclosure Assessment for NGOs

NGOs have a dual role in implementing the RTI Act - seeking information on public interest issues from authorities and providing information to citizens as authorities themselves. It now appears that NGOs are lagging rather behind in complying with the proactive disclosure guidelines and updating their websites. MRDI team assessed the web-based proactive disclosure of the selected NGOs under the supervision of Nepal Chandra Sarker, former Information Commissioner and Advisor RTI of MRDI.

A meeting was organized at the MRDI office to finalize the methodology of the assessment where Director general of NGOAB was present as the chief guest. Representative from the Information Commission, a2i programme under ICT division and NGOs working for RTI implementation participated in the meeting. Following the decision of the methodology finalization meeting, one lottery programme was organized at MRDI conference room to select 100 NGOs (90 local and 10 international) through Random Name Picker software. Finaly 56 national NGOs and 10 international NGOs were assessed through the assessment process upon availability of website.

RTI Campaign in Girls' Educational Institutions

School students are the future leaders of the country. Good perception of the RTI act can facilitate them to grow up as responsible citizens. To make the students aware of the importance of information and conceptualize the main spirit of RTI Act, two campaign sessions were held in two schools in Dhaka and Satkhira. Executive Director of MRDI Hasibur Rahman conducted the sessions where he disseminated the spirit of the Right to Information Act (RTI) as well as the knowledge on key features of RTI Act, authorities under the act, application, appeal and complaint process and list of exempted information. A total of 226 students of these schools participated and gained knowledge of RTI. At the end of the sessions in both schools, the students took part in a quiz competition containing 12 multiple choice questions. And 20 highest scorers of each school were awarded books as prizes.

These activities were implemented under the Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI) project in partnership with The Carter Center (TCC) that aimed to support NGO authorities in proactive disclosure of information for ensuring transparency, and grooming a group of young women as RTI changemakers and developing perception of right to information among the future women leaders.

Orientation for NGO on RTI and Proactive Disclosure

MRDI organized a workshop in collaboration with the Jashore district administration to emphasize the importance of proactive disclosure by NGOs under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The workshop aimed to embody the RTI Act's principle of maximum disclosure and minimum exemption. The event saw the presence of Chief Information Commissioner and the Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau. The then Deputy Commissioner of Jashore presided over the program. Executive Director of MRDI, delivered a presentation highlighting key aspects of the RTI Act, including information classification, guidelines for proactive disclosure, and the disclosure requirements according to FD-6. The presentation was followed by an open discussion, where participants raised questions to clarify their understanding. Chief Executives and senior officials from 76 NGOs across eight upazilas in Jashore participated in the orientation.

Planning Meeting with JANAK Member & Youth Group

Eight planning meetings were held with members of the Jagrata Nagorik Committee (JANAK) in Jashore's eight upazilas and youth groups to develop action plans to enhance public understanding of the RTI Act at the grassroots level and discuss activities marking the Right to Know (RTK) Day. These meetings involved 67 JANAK members (38 men and 29 women) and a youth group consisting of five men and four women. The meetings aimed to prepare for a follow-up boot camp focused on RTI activities.

School Awareness Campaign

To cultivate a sense of responsible citizenship among students, MRDI conducted School Awareness Campaign on RTI, targeting students in classes IX and X across Jashore's eight upazilas. Hasibur Rahman led RTI sessions in eight schools and introduced an upcoming online RTI course competition, a joint initiative by MRDI, Jashore District Administration, and the District Education Office. Educational resources, including MRDI's RTI Easy Learning Book and informational leaflets, were distributed to approximately 900 students.

Community Mobilization Meeting

Community mobilization meetings were held across Jashore's eight upazilas to highlight the significance of information in daily life and livelihoods. The meetings educated attendees on the process of requesting information under the RTI Act. MRDI's Executive Director conducted courtyard meetings with diverse community groups, including fisherfolk, farmers, Dalits, youths, cultural activists, mothers, and teachers.

RTI Online Course Competition at 8 Upazilas

MRDI launched an online RTI course competition on Facebook, in collaboration with the Jashore District Administration and the District Education Office, to promote RTI awareness among school students in classes IX and X from eight upazilas, aiming to celebrate International Right to Know Day. Prizes were awarded to students based on an algorithm that considered the highest marks achieved in the shortest time. Out of 132 registered participants, 59 students completed the course, and 24 top scorers were awarded prize bonds.

Right to Know Day Observance

International Right to Know Day was observed with MRDI organizing a discussion meeting and a prize-giving ceremony at the Jashore Collectorate. The event was presided over by Jashore Additional Deputy Commissioner, with Information Commissioner as the chief guest. The ceremony saw participation from 135 attendees, including 40 women, and featured a lively rally promoting RTI awareness. The event concluded with the distribution of prizes to the 24 top-performing students from the RTI online course competition.

In addition to the district-level event, JANAK members from seven upazilas, along with respective upazila administrations, organized rallies, discussions, cultural programs, art competitions, and leaflet campaigns to celebrate International Right to Know Day.

Follow-Up Boot Camp for Youth

MRDI organized a follow-up boot camp for youth at the RRF Training & Resource Centre (RRF TARC) in Jashore to enhance the capacity of youths from Barishal, Jashore, and Rangpur districts, who had previously participated in an RTI boot camp and had since begun their professional careers. Thirty-two participants engaged in various participatory learning methods, including lectures, discussions, games, drama, and group work, to reinforce their understanding of the RTI application process and develop strategies for future RTI campaigns.
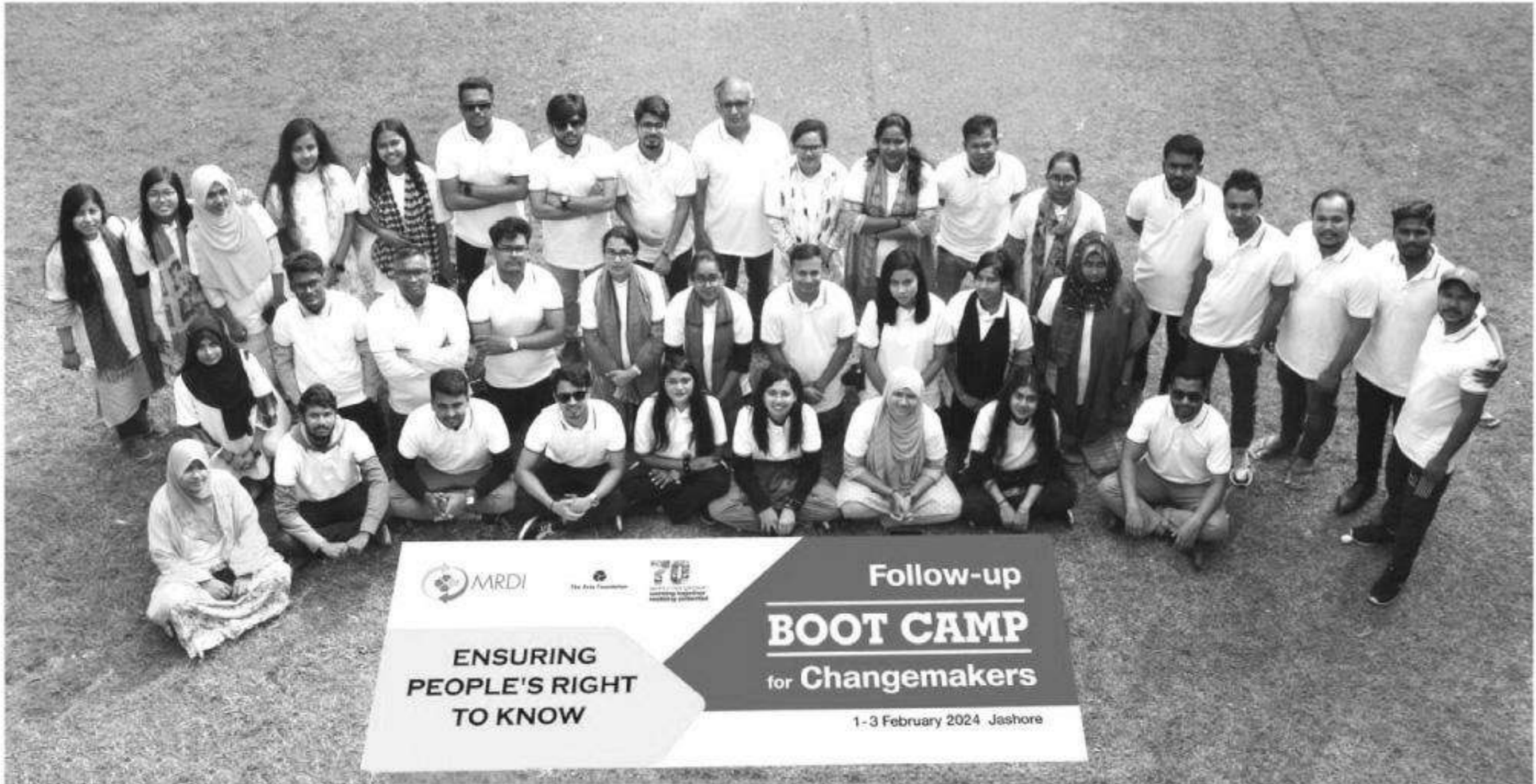
These activities were implemented under the "More Accountability More Information Phase II," project in partnership with The Asia Foundation aiming to raise public awareness about the right to information (RTI) at the grassroots level, with the goal of increasing the demand for information and to facilitate NGOs to comply with the provisions of RTI Act and regulations of proactive disclosure.

3. To work toward gender equity both internally and in programmes using a gender transformative approach

On inclusion of gender transformation as a strategic programmatic objective of MRDI, gender programme has been given special focus this year. The idea of developing a gender charter of commitment for Bangladeshi news media has been acclaimed as an innovative and timely initiative. Exclusive capacity building programmes have been taken for women journalists and journalism learners who are lagging far behind their male counterparts as an approach of positive discrimination.

MRDI made significant strides towards its gender equity goals throughout this fiscal year, hitting significant benchmarks across a few Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under this objective. Women had three positions on the Board of Directors, exceeding the minimal objective of 20%. Senior staff positions reached the minimum aim of two women but fell slightly short of the 34% target, attaining 33%. Overall, women made up 42.9% of all staff, surpassing the 40% target. A gender-sensitive workplace culture was successfully established, as evidenced by the rise in male staff attitudes towards gender objectives, with 33.3% rating it as "High" (5), 47.6% rating it as "Good" (4) and 19% rating it as "Average" (3) on a scale of 1 to 5.

Even with these successes, a few KPIs still need improvement. The programme to support start-ups led by women was not initiated. Gender-focused content in training sessions fell short of the 100% target, with only 84.38% of trainings discussing gender as some trainings on technical aspects on journalism like safety-security and fact-checking do not require such topic. Similarly, women's participation in staff and journalist training was low, at 33.77% and 17.6%, respectively, compared to expectations of 50% and 20%. The female participation in journalism training is low as participants are often nominated by the news managers following MRDI's call. Meanwhile, only 15% of MRDI staff in external meetings were women, far lower than the 50% target, which is due to lack of proper documentation of participation. While these areas require additional attention, MRDI's commitment to integrating gender equity into its operational and decision-making processes promotes gender equity through a transformative approach.

Gender Charter of Commitment for News Media

Women's representation in Bangladeshi news media is highly disproportionate in terms of both newsroom presence and content coverage while non-binary individuals are rarely seen. Equal representation in media fosters recognition of equal rights of men, women and other genders, and their equal contributions to social development and changes. To achieve the desired change, MRDI is developing a gender charter of commitment in collaboration with news media owners, editors, association leaders, government bodies, policy makers, development partners, civil society and other stakeholders. The initiative aims to challenge existing norms and attitudes that reinforce gender role stereotypes and foster equal rights for all genders in news media. The stakeholders in a seminar identified the need for a gender charter to bring the desired transformation in the news media. Led by Dr. Gitiara Nasreen, Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at University of Dhaka, a ten-member working group has conducted 8 meetings, finalized the scope of work, completed a desk review, mapped stakeholders and developed a questionnaire for focus group discussions (FGDs). 15 FGDs were conducted during the reporting year.

Mentorship Training for Women Journalists

In terms of gender diversity, equality and sensitivity, Bangladeshi news media is lagging with women journalists underrepresented and typically assigned softer beats of reporting or sub-editing at the news desks. Hardly there are women investigative reporters in Bangladeshi news outlets. To bridge this gap by increasing the number of women investigative reporters through enhancing their investigation skills, a special initiative trained 12 women journalists with 2-5 years of experience in journalism. Participants from different news platforms and nominated by newsroom gatekeepers took part in this four-day residential training that covered classroom lectures, interactive discussions and practical exercises. Using tools like video presentations and flip charts, participants explored journalistic standards, deepened their understanding of journalism ethics and explored the use of the RTI Act for public interest reporting. The story ideas developed during the training were finalized with feedback from the mentors in post-training mentorship period to empower women journalists to create compelling investigative stories to support them advance in both their careers and ensure gender diversity in the industry.

Mental Health Support for Women Journalist

Journalism is a highly challenging and stressful profession globally with added difficulties for women journalists, including gender-based discrimination, harassment, unequal pay, and limited career advancement opportunities. Recognizing the importance of addressing the mental health needs of women journalists in Bangladesh, a special initiative was taken this year. The programme aims to provide essential mental health support, resources, and a safe space for women journalists to address the challenges they face. MRDI is working in collaboration with Roufun Naher, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology at University of Dhaka to address the mental health needs of women journalists in Bangladesh. A trauma therapist and Nonviolent Communication (NVC) trainer, she provided a four-day residential training to develop 5 women journalists as para-counsellors. Additionally, 3 orientation programs were held for 20 women journalists each focusing on mental health, risks, self-care and meditation.

Inspiration Session for Female Journalism Students

In the context of a very negligible presence and representation of women and almost absence of the people of non-binary genders in Bangladeshi news media, Fojo and MRDI teamed up separately with University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) and Jahangirnagar University to organize inspiring sessions for female journalism students as a pilot initiative to empower and prepare them to take journalism as a career. It is expected that the sessions will help these female learners overcome the traditional norms which discourage them from pursuing journalism as a career. Fair and inclusive media coverage, mainstreaming of the genders and diverse identities who face discrimination, and plurality will contribute to objective and ethical journalism. In the reporting year, 10 sessions were held, 5 at each university, where 20 female students from each institution participated. Renowned women journalists led the sessions where they shared their experiences to inspire and empower the students.

MRDI is implementing these initiatives under its IQJB project.

Training of Trainers (ToT) on Fact-checking for Women Journalists

MRDI organized a three-day residential "Training of Trainers (ToT) on Fact-checking for Women Journalists" to develop their capacity on fact-checking to combat the spread of misinformation. Nineteen women journalists of national and local news outlets participated in the training following an open call considering their work experiences and ability to organize a peer training later to share their learnings. The programme was designed to provide the journalists with not just theoretical knowledge or lectures, but also hands-on activities, group discussions, and presentations. Following the training, participating journalists were asked to conduct a half-day fact-checking training for a diverse and gender-equitable group of 10 peers to exchange experiences.

This activity organized with support from Internews under the Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh project.

4. To create a free and diverse media environment in Bangladesh

News media in Bangladesh has been facing multifarious challenges like financial viability, undesired pressure from powerholders, nexus between ownership and politics, alarming spread of misinformation & disinformation, lack of fact-checking skills and lack of internal regulations in the newsroom. These challenges have, in turn, created opportunities and space to work for improvement. During the reporting year, MRDI implemented following activities which are expected to contribute to creating free and diverse news media environment in the country.

Fact-checking Training for Journalism Students

Following a three-day residential "Fact-checking Training for Teachers" to develop capacity to teach fact-checking to journalism students, journalism teachers of 10 public and private universities conducted a one-day fact-checking training for a diverse and gender-equitable group of students in their respective departments to exchange experiences, tips, and troubleshoot, and to network for future collaborations. During this year, nine teachers of five universities conducted half-day training sessions at their respective departments with a total of 114 students. The session plan, developed by themselves, focuses on media literacy and fact-checking, emphasizing the importance of information literacy in today's digital age.

Fact-checking Training for Peer Educator Journalist

Following the Training of Trainers on Fact-checking for Women Journalists, 18 journalists conducted half-day training sessions with a total of 200 journalists.

Future Search Workshop : Fact-checking for Journalism Students

MRDI organized "Future Search Workshop: Fact-checking for Journalism Students" where 17 teachers of journalism department of 10 public and private universities in and outside Dhaka participated in the discussion regarding the action plan to enhance journalism students' capacity in fact-checking. These teachers earlier participated in MRDI's 'Fact-checking Training for Teachers' and conducted follow-on sessions in their respective departments.

The workshop, chaired by MRDI's Executive Director Hasibur Rahman, focused on developing an action plan to enhance journalism students' fact-checking capabilities. The teachers shared their experiences from the follow-on sessions and agreed to continue incorporating fact-checking lessons into their curricula through various means, including training sessions, courses, and national camps. Shameem Ara Sheuli, Country Representative for Bangladesh at Internews, concluded the program, expressing hope for future collaboration to further develop journalism students' fact-checking skills.

Fact-checking & Digital Hygiene Orientation of Journalism Students

MRDI organized two orientation programmes for journalism students on Fact-checking & Digital Hygiene at the journalism departments of two universities of Dhaka - Jagannath University and Jahangirnagar University.

The sessions were held at Jagannath University with participation of 46 students of the Mass Communication and Journalism Department and at Jahangirnagar University with participation of 44 students of Journalism and Media Studies Department.

These orientations aimed to instil a foundational understanding of maintaining digital hygiene and the importance of fact-checking in the students' professional development.

MRDI organised these activities under the Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh project with support from Internews

Engagement Programme with Newsroom Managers

News managers' engagement programmes were organized twice. The first programme participated by 8 news managers discussed the importance of public interest stories and find way out how public interest stories can attract media audience, enhance trust in media, and ultimately contribute to the sustainability of news outlets. Throughout the discussion newsroom managers reached a consensus on the idea of collaborating collectively to pursue their common interests. The second interaction participated by 11 including the national desk in-charge of the news outlets and the mentors of the mentorship programme thoroughly evaluated the whole process of the capacity building, analyzed the stories published, challenges faced, continuation of the effort in future and what role MRDI can play. Some recommendations also surfaced from the discussions.

Journalists Training on Digital Safety and Security

In the age of digital era dependency on digital devices influences our life and livelihood. Journalists also utilize technological advancement for sharing information and evidence. Proper knowledge on handling digital devices is very much crucial for them to ensure safety of information gathered during story preparation. 2-day training on digital safety and security was organized in six batches for district correspondents to enhance their knowledge on digital security and introduced with digital hygiene. Inadequate knowledge about the provisions of the Cyber Security Act (CSA) creates threats and legal barriers while doing journalism. Awareness on CSA was also raised among the correspondents throughout the training sessions to increase the level of confidence to keep safe from legal harassment in producing objective stories. A total of 119 district correspondents nominated by 15 national print, TV and online news outlets participated in these trainings.

This programme was organized under MRDI-EU Bangladesh partnership project -- Media Strengthening Democracy.

Knowledge Exchange and Interaction Programme

To enhance the media's information integrity and counteract information pollution, a knowledge exchange and interaction programme on information integrity was organized for 15 news managers of online platforms of mainstream news outlets. The interaction aimed to improve knowledge of the news managers on counterstrategies against information disorder, including fact-checking, debunking & verification, techniques for evaluating sources, verifying photos, and confirming the authenticity of videos to enhance media literacy and combat misinformation. A separate discussion session took place under the programme that brought together a diverse group of participants, including senior editors, representatives from journalist associations, news managers, academics, development organizations, and fact-checking experts to identify the major causes and consequences of information disorder while tackling the challenges faced by news outlets in combatting misinformation. The discussion generated recommendations to design future initiative to improve the situation.

*MRDI partnered with the
UNDP Bangladesh in this initiative.*

Training for Journalists on Digital Security

District correspondents of national news outlets and reporters of community news outlets were trained on digital security in two batches with 20 participants in each batch. The sessions delivered knowledge and information on various aspects including securing devices, encryption, data management, source protection, keeping source and document safe, fake news and fact checking, and understanding the implications of the DSA. Participants affirmed their commitment to utilizing security tools to enhance digital safety in both personal and professional life and pledged to adopt strategies to safeguard information on digital devices. The training programmes were organized in Dhaka and Khulna.

*MRDI partnered with the Embassy of Switzerland in
Bangladesh in conducting the training.*

News Manager Engagement Meeting

The meeting with editors and newsroom managers, organised to share the lessons learnt during the project's first year, underscored the key role of newsroom gatekeepers as primary stakeholders in shaping news media's support for critical issues. The meeting with attendance of 13 newsroom gatekeepers and one communication professional in the fields of climate, energy and nature also encouraged newsrooms to take up active contribution by fostering a positive mindset regarding the significance of energy transition issues to bring policy attention and drive positive change on relevant matters.

This activity organized with support from Tara Climate Ltd. under the project Climate, Energy and the Media

National Conference 2023 on Journalism, Media, and Communication

In order to explore the state of journalism, media, and communication practices in contemporary Bangladesh and to address the challenges and opportunities in the country's journalism landscape, a two-day national conference was jointly organized by Jahangirnagar University's Department of Journalism and Media Studies and MRDI during 3-4 October, 2023. The event addressed challenges in Bangladesh's journalism landscape with focus on media ethics, misinformation, digital transformation, the role of news media in democracy and future of the news media industry. The conference provided a platform for scholars, journalists, and activists to share their research and experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of contemporary journalism practices in Bangladesh. With 95 participants, including 26 paper presenters, 48 conference attendees and 21 from academia and journalism, the conference featured 26 research papers on journalism, media, & communication and keynote discussions on impact of disinformation, role of artificial intelligence and need for improved data analysis skills in journalism. A special panel discussion, moderated by MRDI's Executive Director explored ways to bridge the gap between academia and the industry, highlighted challenges contributing to this gap and emphasized collaboration. Selected research papers will be published in a special academic journal.

Fact-checking Support

As part of the support, Jahangirnagar University undertook efforts to enhance its undergraduate programme including developing a course outline on "Digital Literacy and Fact-checking" and establishment of a fact-checking lab. The course and lab aim to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for digital literacy and fact-checking, enabling them to identify falsehoods on digital platforms.

Lecture Session on Sustainable Journalism

MRDI organized two lecture sessions on Sustainable Journalism in practice at the journalism departments of Daffodil International University and Jahangirnagar University in February when Lars Tallert, Senior Advisor at Fojo Media Institute and the President of Sustainable Journalism Partnership delivered lectures to 110 students and faculties about the new approach and practice of journalism to make society sustainable.

These programmes were organized under the IQJB project.

5. To support the media in their transformation in the use of digital platforms

In Bangladesh, despite rapid digital growth, revenue generation from digital platforms by news outlets remains limited due to capacity gaps, lack of diversity and insufficient resources. In order to empower news media to harness the potential of digital platforms for disseminating journalistic content, monetization and organizational sustainability, MRDI in the reporting year supported three national news outlets in their digital transformation journey.

To address these challenges, the organization worked with the three news outlets to determine their strategies to ensure long-term viability in the digital space. An English-language newspaper was supported through an audience research which enabled them to gather key audience insights. This data will be used to develop their publication strategy, business model and plans to place content behind a paywall for revenue generation.

On the other hand, two television channels were provided technical assistance on creating integrated newsrooms to bridge digital and traditional teams for their transformation. Needs assessment study was conducted by MRDI in these two outlets which identified their current situation and their available resources for future growth.

MRDI Strategic Plan Review Workshop

MRDI's five-year strategic plan, the guiding document of the organization, entered its third year demonstrating successes and challenges. Performances of MRDI's projects are measured against the key performance indicators set against the strategic objectives. Like previous years, the annual Strategic Plan Review Workshop 2023 was held involving the whole team of MRDI. Due to tense political situation surrounding national elections, the workshop was organized in January 2024.

The four-day workshop organized in the Sundarbans aimed to review key features of the strategic plan, analyze achievement and challenges of the progarmme plan and other milestone plans and find ways for improvement in implementation of the plans. Moreover, the retreat in the world's largest mangrove forest provided team building and a refreshing experience for the staff.

An integral part of the strategic plan review workshop was to gain insights from the staff on how they perceive the organization. Divided into groups the participants discussed and made presentations in creative ways. These presentations not only reflected their viewpoints on the organization and its activities but also challenges, areas for improvement, recommendations for making MRDI a sustainable entity through various steps and activities.

Through the plenaries, group exercises and presentations, participants provided a comprehensive view of the organization's impact, its values, challenges, and recommended future directions that are reflected below.

- At this stage of growth, MRDI needs a transformative shift to a program-based approach from its current project-based operations.

- Young journalists and journalism learners have to be targeted in order to sustain the impact of capacity-building interventions.

- Future innovations can be enhanced by integrating digital tools into capacity-building efforts and collaborating on cross-border journalism projects.

- Creating a separate e-learning platform for online training or learning, incorporating both text and multimedia will help.

- Strengthening MRDI's social media presence for branding beyond Bangladesh is important.

- Offering training on new topics such as data journalism, mobile journalism, and podcasting can attract new audience base.

- Media monitoring could be expanded and potentially turned into a paid service.

- Developing monthly resources, including blogs, newsletters, and video lessons can support media professionals, academics, and researchers.

- The web-based knowledge hub can centralize resources and support for the journalism community.

- Ongoing support for integrating new practices and technologies into newsrooms is essential.

- MRDI Institute can bring new dimensions to enhance its offerings and impact.

The collective narratives and recommendations underscore the need for strategic shifts and innovative approaches to ensure MRDI's continued growth and sustainability.

South Asian Institute of Journalism and Research (SAIJR)

MRDI's long-cherished dream to establish a professional journalism institute has progressed yet few more steps - the name of the institute finalized as South Asian Institute of Journalism and Research, CEO of the institute joined, meetings held and networks established with renowned international institutes and the process of registration started.

Shakeel Anwar, a senior journalist with more than two-and-a-half decades of professional experience with BBC World Service and Reuters, has joined as the CEO of the institute. He has been instrumental in driving the institute's vision forward as he continues to discuss with the team, experts, editors and academics to explore the initiative, its ownership pattern, legal and administrative requirements and other facilities for the institute. An interactive discussion was organized with some selected academics of journalism schools where 8 professors and heads of the departments joined and gave their valuable suggestions during the reporting period.

Two virtual meetings were held with top journalism institutes in India - Asian College of Journalism (ACJ) in Chennai & Indian Institute of Journalism and New Media (IIJNM) in Bangalore where both the institutes initially agreed to work with MRDI. Later, MRDI team including the Chair, Executive Director and one Director visited Chennai to see how ACJ operates and discuss further with the management. ACJ team enthusiastically agreed to extend cooperation to MRDI in its noble initiative.

While attending the International News Media Association (INMA) Congress in London, the Executive Director and the CEO of the institute had several meetings with dignitaries including media actors, academics and development partners. They presented MRDI's initiative to establish a journalism training institute in Bangladesh, requested cooperation and got positive responses. On a different occasion, the CEO visited renowned journalism schools and institutes in the UK seeking collaboration in MRDI's effort.

The institute aims to create a space for the news outlets, news managers, practicing journalists, journalism learners and equip them with professional skills who bring to the table latest trends, techniques and the business through research and training.

It will provide a modern training facility and diploma course offering news media professionals, institutions and other interested parties access to state-of-the-art technology, logistics, and other supports. Equipped with cutting-edge tools and skillsets, it aims to elevate journalistic standards in Bangladesh and beyond.

The institute will provide industry-ready education and skills enhancement for current and aspiring journalists, to make them well-prepared to ensure quality journalism, linking learning to practice with time-appropriate courses and teaching, and tracking trends in technology and business for the sustainability of the news media industry.

Automation of MRDI's Systems Operation

As part of the process of MRDI's systems automation through deployment of Microsoft Dynamic 365 Business Central Essential, MRDI has shared its chart of account and project chart of account with its vendor BizzNtek Limited, along with master data to finalize the Functional Requirements Document (FRD) during the reporting period. MRDI is revising and rearranging the delivery milestones and timeline according to the solicited requirements and understandings. Previously, MRDI signed an agreement with BizzNtek Limited in the last year for the deployment of the ERP software.
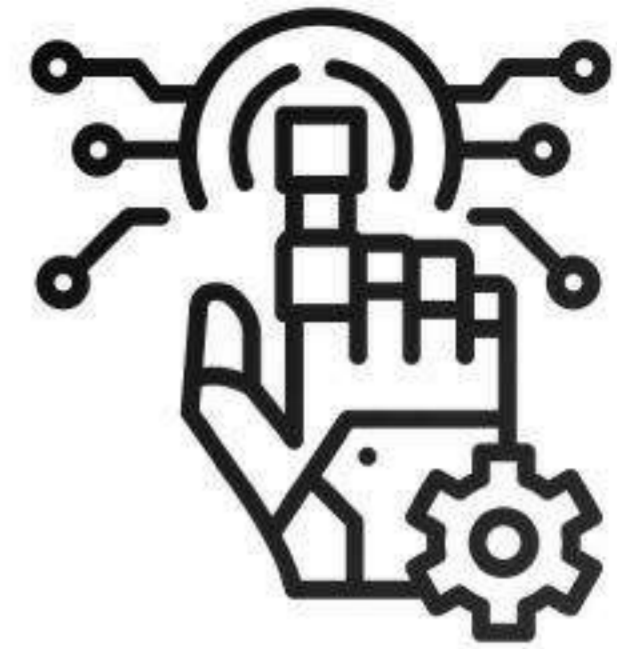
MRDI HELPDESKS

Currently MRDI is maintaining two helpdesks -- Investigative Journalism Helpdesk and RTI Helpdesk to provide support to relevant beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Investigative Journalism Helpdesk

The IJ helpdesk of MRDI continues to be an important complement to the IJ partners by providing tailored support to individual journalists on queries related to investigative journalism. The desk intends to improve the quality of investigative reporting and the skills of journalists. Thus, the IJ helpdesk supports the production of investigative journalism through providing with required knowledge and skills to individual journalists to continue producing investigative pieces. Keeping in mind of constraints and realties of news outlets in committing longer time and more resources to carry out investigations under IJ partnership, reporters particularly the enthusiastic young ones continued to reach the IJ Helpdesk to receive tips, resources and mentoring for their investigative ideas.

Throughout the year, the Helpdesk provided assistance to 42 journalists with at least 160 supports for their investigative efforts. These journalists conducted investigations and produced stories out of which 28 reports were published/broadcast in their respective news outlets. Two reports produced under the IJ Helpdesk support received TIB's IJ award.

RTI Helpdesk

MRDI's RTI Helpdesk is meant to support to information seekers across the country and also to information providing authorities if requested. One dedicated person who operates the helpdesk extends the support to journalists and other citizens by providing the forms, filling them up, identifying relevant authorities and explaining the different provisions of the law via a hotline number from Sunday to Thursday during office hours.

Through provision of these supports the desk also intends to develop capacity of the information seekers using the RTI Act so they can proceed with the process of application, appeal and complaint by themselves without assistance. To encourage the information seekers who have already taken support from the desk for three or four times, it has been decided that the desk will stop providing support to these applicants except for special cases. Financial assistance is also provided to applicants who are unable to bear the expenses related to applying for information.

During the reporting year, the desk provided 162 instances of support which include 14 applications, 11 appeals and 7 complaints and other information related supports. During this period, 25 journalists received assistance from the desk. Financial assistance was provided to one applicant for paying the cost of information document copies.

Journalists produced and published as many as 8 quality impactful reports using the information received through RTI Helpdesk. One such investigative report received TIB's IJ Award this year.

The desk faces problems in documentation of support provided at times when the applicant even after receiving the information is reluctant to inform the desk. The desk officer, however, follows up and tries to collect status of the application.

RTI Helpdesk is continuing its collaboration and support to citizens in seeking information they need, thus contributing to ensure open flow of information.

In response to a request from Rural Reconstruction Foundation (RRF), Jashore MRDI organized a day-long workshop on Information Disclosure Policy (IDP). The founder Executive Director of RRF, deputy executive director, assistant executive director, head of different departments and directors and other officials were present in the workshop. Discussions took place on RTI Act at a glance, information disclosure policy and its importance, components of IDP and section 7 of RTI Act. Participants identified list of information disclosed proactively, disclosed on request and not mandatory to disclose and finalized the time plan for developing their IDP. Later, a template on IDP was shared with RRF on which they can easily draft their disclosure policy.

Opportunities and Challenges

The year 2023-2024 has been marked with increased government control, leading to media exercising more self-censorship and being more limited in their freedom of expression resulting in further decrease of the country status to165th out of 180 countries according to the 2024 World Press Freedom Index. Also, the Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018, later turned into Cyber Security Act (CSA) 2023, constrained free speech further and had a chilling effect on the entire media and journalism.

It is observed that the news media environment in Bangladesh remains a challenge for quality and investigative journalism to exercise their profession without fear.

The reporting year ended with a long span of time where the journalists and news outlets were engaged in covering national and local body elections that resulted in missing deadline for production-based capacity building programmes. Flood in some districts worsened the situation. Apart from these external challenges, the system automation process has not progressed in desired pace. However, this delay has so far not resulted in additional costs and is also partly a result of a more engaged approach from MRDI, so their staff develop capacity from the trial phase. In the challenge of showcasing the results of the specific types of interventions, it is difficult for MRDI to accommodate requirements from the donors of different projects and their MEAL structure. Absence of a structured MEAL system and a designated MEAL person for the organization are the barriers to mitigate this challenge.

However, at a time of shrinking the civic space, the organization started to visualize its growth and sustainability through the shift from project-based approach to one programme approach along with a systems automation of its programme, finance and MEAL (introducing MIS) operations.

The trust among news media, academia and civil society facilitated MRDI to envision the establishment of a journalism training institute -- South Asian Institute of Journalism and Research - the long-cherished dream of MRDI.

Disclosure of Major Decisions by the Board

- ► As per clause 17.0 - Grievance Handling Procedure of MRDI's Financial and Administrative Manual, Farid Hossain, Chair MRDI was appointed as appellate authority if the grievance is against the Executive Director.

- ► The 20th AGM appointed Howladar Yunus & Co., Chartered Accountants for conducting the audit of MRDI consolidated financial statements for 2023-2024 along with MRDI staff contributory provident fund.

- ► Farid Hossain has been re-elected as the Chair of MRDI board of directors for the period from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 at the 20th AGM.

- ► Hasibur Rahman has been re-appointed as the Executive Director of MRDI for the period from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 at the 20th AGM.

- ► The 20th AGM decided to replace Kajal Kanti Sengupta with Md. Nazrul Islam as the member of CPF committee upon his resignation.

- ► Dr. Shamim Imam and M.B.M. Lutful Hadee FCA are adopted as the members of MRDI and directors of the board replacing Rokia Afzal Rahman due to death and Kajal Kanti Sengupta following his resignation respectively.

- ► Clause 12.2 of MRDI financial and administrative manual is renumbered as 12.2.1 and withheld until further decision and an extra clause 12.2.2 is added which reads "MRDI will provide Group Health Insurance Policy to all employees of the organization. The employee will receive the claim amount as per agreement of insurance company."

- The text of the clause 9.0.3 is modified as "Leave entitlement will be calculated on the basis of fiscal year".

- The rates of perdiem for international travels is modified in the context of global price hike for the period until the financial and administrative manual of MRDI is reviewed.

- Increasing the number of members, Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury and Shahana Huda are appointed as the members of MRDI and board of directors.

- Maintaining the manual cheque register will be discontinued from 1st July 2024 as the softcopy of bank register is being maintained through tally software.

- Provision of maintaining the advance money receipts will also discontinue from 1st July 2024.

- Due to starting of new projects 4 project bank accounts have been opened.

PUBLICATIONS

Investigative Journalism Casebook

A publication on investigative journalism containing world's great investigations and story behind the story. Edited by famous investigative journalist Mark Lee Hunter, the book will be of great help to the reporters who go for deep investigations. It mentions investigation plan, strategy and procedure followed by the famous investigative journalists. This book is published under UNESCO's journalism publication series. After huge responses from the readers of the earlier translation of journalist manual on story-based enquiry, Fojo and MRDI initiated to translate this book. We hope investigative journalists will benefit from it. Its copyright is protected by UNESCO. MRDI is responsible for its translation and editing. Iraj Ahmed translated the book, Shibabrata Barman reviewed the script and Partho Protim Das helped in the process.

অনুসন্ধানী সাংবাদিকতার
কেসবুক

Every investigative report has an untold story behind the scenes that the public does not see. While the report sheds light on important issues, the background story always remains hidden. This casebook reveals those stories of investigative reports, along with the plans and strategies behind the investigation.

The book is originally a UNESCO funded publication (2012) praised by readers worldwide. MRDI partnered with Fojo Media Institute took the initiative to translate it for Bengali speaking journalist.

20 stories compiled in this casebook by Mark Lee Hunter share the experience of journalists from North America to South America, and from Asia to Africa, highlighting the diverse and challenging situations they encounter while uncovering the truth.

The stories uncovered human trafficking in Africa, corruption in American education, the oppression of women due to corruption in Jardan, abuse of government fund allocated for river saving, and how life-saving medicine for poor people was hijacked by politicians in Philippines, and how African football was devastated by corruption in sports. All the stories include untold story of the reporters such as journalist journalists pursuing the mystery of human trafficking found themselves trafficked in the African desert.

At the end of each story, the casebook detailed the plans, strategies and methods used in the investigation. It described how journalists from different countries collaborate on cross border investigation. This casebook serves as a valuable resource for investigative journalists, providing insights into investigative reporting.

Fact-checking and Digital Hygiene Flyer

Fact-checking in journalism is as crucial today as reporting itself. However, journalism departments of Bangladeshi universities currently have not dedicated fact-checking courses in their curriculum. Moreover, most of the students are not properly aware of digital safety and security which is essential for personal and professional activities.

Keeping this reality into consideration, MRDI partnered with Internews and launched an initiative to conduct learning sessions for journalism students and youths at 13 public and private universities across the country. As part of the communication materials for these sessions, the initiative developed folding flyers for distributing to the students.

The flyers are split into two parts- one focused on fact-checking and other on digital hygiene.

The fact-checking flyer introduces the concept and the importance of fact-checking in today's world, explains various kinds of information disorders, explores how and why misinformation spreads, and offers guidance to avoid the trap of false information. It also outlines basic fact-checking tools and techniques for verifying text, photos, videos and websites.

The digital hygiene flyer, explains the concept and the importance of maintaining digital hygiene, highlights key considerations for digital safety, notes the common objectives of cyber criminals, and provides tips for ensuring digital security. It also includes mobile app security and a list of good digital habits. It also includes practical digital security tools, along with descriptions and links for online use.

Annual Report 2022-23

To disseminate the accomplishment of the organization in a compiled volume, and also as a compliance with the provision of proactive disclosure under the RTI Act, MRDI published the annual report 2022-23.

VISIT ABROAD

During the reporting period, executive director and one staff member made international visit taking approval of NGOAB through FC1. Hasibur Rahman as the national facilitator Bangladesh and Modina Jahan Rime as team member visited the Philippines to attend the ITP Media Regional Alumni and Stakeholder meeting organised by NIRAS Sweden AB, FOJO Media Institute, Global Reporting and International Media Support, on behalf of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) during 5-8 October 2023.

COMMITTEES

Procurement

Md. Shahid Hossain
Advisor, Planning & Development

Aktarun Naher
Manager, Programme

Sk. Shaniaz Ahmed
Deputy Manager, Accounts

Sarwat Tarannum Nadia
Senior Programme Officer

Tahmina Ferdowsy
Senior Accounts Officer

Whistle Blower

Farid Hossain
Chair

Hasibur Rahman
Executive Director

Md. Shahid Hossain
Advisor, Planning & Development

Samsun Nahar
Manager, Finance

Grievance Redress Officer

Hasibur Rahman
Executive Director

Grievance against the Executive Director

Farid Hossain
Chair

Budget

Aktarun Naher
Manager, Programme

Md. Mominul Islam
Manager, Accounts

Samsun Nahar
Manager, Finance

Provident Fund Trust

Hasibur Rahman
Chairman

Md. Nazrul Islam
Member

Aktarun Naher
Member

Samsun Nahar
Secretary

Md. Mominul Islam
Member

Safeguard Officer

Md. Shahid Hossain
Advisor, Planning & Development

Anti-money Laundering CAMLCO

Md. Shahid Hossain
Advisor, Planning & Development

Members of AML/CFT Compliance Unit

Aktarun Naher
Manager, Programme

Samsun Nahar
Manager, Finance

Gender Committee

Dr. Azizunnahar Islam
Director of MRDI Board

Md. Shahid Hossain
Advisor, Planning & Development

Aktarun Naher
Manager, Programme

Samsun Nahar
Manager, Finance

Mohua Alam Snigdha
Senior Officer HR & Logistics

External Expert

Shahnaz Munni
Former Chief News Editor, News 24

Board of Directors
(As of 30 June 2024)

Name	Position	Profession
Farid Hossain	Chair	Journalism
Hasibur Rahman	Executive Director	Development Worker
Md. Nazrul Islam	Director	Former Secretary, Coordination & Reforms, Cabinet Division; Former Permanent Member, The National Human Rights Commission
Syed Ishtiaque Reza	Director	Journalism
Sakiul Millat Morshed	Director	Development Worker
Dr. Azizunnahar Islam	Director	Honorary Professor, Dhaka University
Mainul Alam	Director	Journalism
Dr. Shamim Imam	Director	Development worker
M.B.M. Lutful Hadee, FCA	Director	Business
Shahana Huda Ranjana	Director	Communication expert
Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury	Director	Business

Policy Documents

1. Financial and Administrative Policy containing
   - Human Resource (HR) Policy
   - Procurement Policy
   - Fixed Assets Management Policy
   - Bank & cash management policy
   - Travel policy
   - Anti- corruption policy
   - Conflict of interest policy
2. Information Disclosure Policy
3. Gender Policy

Contributions to other Organizations this Year

Provide salary and benefits of two personnel to coordinate and facilitate in implementing activities of three somities at Sundarbans and one in Basatpur, Jashore.

MRDI Advisor

Md. Shahid Hossain
Advisor, Planning and Development

Nepal Chandra Sarker
Advisor, RTI

Advisory Staff

Rashid Naim
Coordinator, Programme Development

MRDI Institute

Shakeel Anwar
Chief Executive Officer

CORE STAFFS

Name & Designation	Responsibilities
1. **Md. Badruddoza** Head of Capacity Building & Head of IJ Helpdesk	Responsible for implementation and oversight of capacity building programmes complying with the policies and practice of organization and regulations of the donor organization; developing news ideas and concepts as per need of the organization; represent the organization in different forum and maintain liaison with donors and other stakeholders and support media houses and journalists to improve their journalism skills through IJ Helpdesk.
2. **Aktarun Naher** Manager Programme	Deputed as programme coordinator in the project, 'Media Strengthening Democracy' and ITP programme under the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities. She is responsible to coordinate and supervise the overall programme related activities of the organization in consultation with the supervisor, maintain effective communication with the donor/s, NGO affairs bureau and others as determined by MRDI management.
3. **Samsun Nahar** Manager, Finance	Deputed as finance manager in the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II'. Responsible for preparing required financial report and statements for financial analysis; prepare budget as per requirement; perform duties and responsibilities assigned by the supervisor.
4. **Md. Mominul Islam** Manager, Accounts	Deputed as finance coordinator in the projects 'Media Strengthening Democracy' and 'More Information More Accountability-Phase II'. Responsible for preparing required financial report and statements for financial analysis; prepare budget as per requirement; perform duties and responsibilities assigned by the supervisor.
5. **Syed Samiul Basher Anik** Senior Programme Officer	Deputed as programme coordinator, in the project, 'Climate, energy and the media'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities. He has been promoted to Manager Programme, MRDI from July 2024.
6. **Sarwat Tarannum Nadia** Senior Programme Officer	Deputed as project coordinator in the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities.
7. **Md. Mizanur Rahman** Senior Coordinator Programme Management	Deputed as logistic coordinator in the projects, 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh-Phase II' and training coordinator in the project, 'Media Strengthening Democracy'. Responsible to facilitate programme coordinator in organizing programmes successfully.
8. **Md. Tarik Hasan Al Mahamud** Senior Officer IT	Deputed as senior officer, IT in the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II'. Responsible for handling all IT needs of the organization, maintain website and the server of MRDI, coordinate and supervise with all the vendors and suppliers related to IT.
9. **Tahmina Ferdowsy** Senior Accounts Officer	Deputed as finance officer in the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II'. Responsible for maintaining accounts of all expenditures of the project activity and bank account of the project.

Name & Designation	Responsibilities
10. **Mohua Alam Snigdha** Senior Officer HR & Logistic	Deputed as HR & Logistic Coordinator in the projects 'Media Strengthening Democracy' and 'Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh'. Responsible to facilitate programme coordinator in organizing programmes successfully.
11. **Modina Jahan Rime** Senior Programme Officer	Deputed as senior media monitoring officer in the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II' and responsible to run the media monitoring department of the project.
12. **Minhaz Sheikh,** Office Junior	Providing support services as per requirement.
13. **Hamida Begum,** Office Junior	Providing support services as per requirement.

CORE STAFFS
(CONTRACTUAL)

Name & Designation	Responsibilities
1. **Sk. Shaniaz Ahmed** Deputy Manager, Accounts	Deputed as finance coordinator in the projects 'Climate, energy and the media' and 'Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh'. Responsible for maintaining accounts of all expenditures of the project activity and bank account of the project. Preparing financial reports according to the format and timeframe; facilitating programme team regarding the financial transaction of the programmes; taking care of project administrative work relevant to finance; maintaining liaison with donor.

PROJECT STAFFS

Name & Designation	Responsibilities
1. **A K M Sanaul Haq** Capacity Building Manager	Deputed as capacity building manager in the project, 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh-Phase II'. Responsible for all capacity building programme of the project; organize trainings, roundtables and other activities as per project plans; ensure project delivers expected outputs and outcomes, in line with the budget and activity plan; ensure quality of capacity building activities, online/classroom/in-house training and publications; supervise development of communication materials (print/multimedia) and represent the organization in different forum and maintain liaison with donors and other stakeholders.

Name & Designation	Responsibilities
2. **Selim Bashar** Project Coordinator	Deputed as programme coordinator in the project, 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh-Phase II'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities.
3. **Ruhina Akter** Sub-Editor at GIJN	Deputed as sub-editor GIJN in the project, 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh-Phase II'. Responsible to facilitate GIJN editor to run the GIJN Facebook page.
4. **Dilruba Begum Monalisa** Project Coordinator	Deputed as project coordinator in the project, 'Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI)'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities.
5. **Mohammad Zakir Hossain** Accounts Coordinator	Deputed as accounts coordinator in the project, 'Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI)'. Responsible for maintaining accounts of all expenditures of the project activity and bank account of the project.
6. **Jannatun Nahar** Programme Coordinator	Deputed as programme coordinator in the project, 'Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities.
7. **Abu Bakar Bin Alam** Programme Coordinator	Deputed as programme coordinator in the project, 'Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities. Resigned in February 2024.
8. **Atiqur Rahman** Programme Coordinator	Deputed as media monitoring officer in the project 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh Phase-II' and programme coordinator in the project, 'Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh'. Responsible for working with senior media monitoring officer and successful implementation of project activities.
9. **Md. Saeed Ul Abedin** Programme Officer Web based Knowledge Hub	Deputed as programme officer-web based knowledge hub in the project 'Climate, energy and the media'. Responsible for maintaining web-based knowledge hub under the supervision of programme coordinator of the project. Resigned in September 2024.
10. **Sumona Hembrom** Senior Programme Officer RTI Help Desk	Deputed as Senior Programme Officer- RTI Help Desk in the project, 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh-Phase II'. Responsible to run the RTI helpdesk.
11. **Maimuna Chowdhury** Training Coordinator	Deputed as training coordinator in the project, 'Media Strengthening Democracy'. Responsible to work with programme coordinator for successful implementation of project activities. Resigned in December 2023.
12. **Umme Samia** Programme Officer	Deputed as training coordinator in the project, 'Media Strengthening Democracy' and programme coordinator in the project 'Journalism for Functional Democracy'. Responsible for successful implementation of project activities.
13. **Anannya Paul** Media Monitoring Officer	Deputed as Media Monitoring Officer in the project, 'Media Strengthening Democracy'. Responsible to run the media monitoring activities of the project.

Name & Designation	Responsibilities
14. Buty Hajong Media Monitoring Officer	Deputed as Media Monitoring Officer in the project, 'Media Strengthening Democracy' and 'Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh - Phase II'. Responsible to run the media monitoring activities of the projects.
15. S M Arifuzzaman Field Intervention Coordinator, Jashore	Deputed as field intervention coordinator, Jashore in the project 'More Information More Accountability-Phase II. Responsible to implement the project activities at Jashore.
16. Sarojit Mondal Field Intervention Officer, Jashore	Deputed as field intervention officer, Jashore in the project 'More Information More Accountability-Phase II. Responsible to implement the project activities at Jashore.

Designated Information Officer under RTIA
Name   : Aktarun Naher
Designation   : Manager, Programme
Tel   : +88 02 41022772-74
E-mail   : aktarun.naher@mrdibd.org

Alternative Designated Information Officer under RTIA
Name   : Samsun Nahar
Designation   : Manager, Finance
Tel   : +88 02 41022772-74
E-mail   : samsun.nahar@mrdibd.org

Appellate Authority under RTIA
Name   : Hasibur Rahman
Designation   : Executive Director
Tel   : +88 02 41022772-74
E-mail   : hasibur.rahman@mrdibd.org

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

MRDI practices a transparent financial management and a scientific and reliable accounting system. Committed and efficient finance team has been able to keep up the reputation with the support of the management. A strong internal control system is there in place. Policy documents like financial and administrative manual, HR policy, gender policy, information disclosure policy are now in place for its managerial operations. MRDI meticulously abides by the law of the land and regulations of the concerned regulatory authorities.

MRDI maintains required books of accounts and related records in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs). We record all financial transaction through tally software. Management and control of all funds, assets, procurement and expenditure are done through a very transparent and controlled system complying with the in-house policies, rules and regulations.

Last year MRDI has started the process of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to automate the organizational processes using Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central Essentials. Bizzntek Ltd. has started their work from June 2023 for implementation the ERP software that will cover finance and accounting management, procurement management, store management, fixed assets management, attendance & staff movement management, human resource and pay roll management. Now they are collecting information from MRDI as a part of scope of requirement analysis and planning. This year Bizzntek has completed the requirement analysis part of all sections and finalized the Functional Requirements Document (FRD) for implementation of MS Dynamics 365 Business central on 25 June 2024. This is the very essential document for customization of MS Dynamics 365 as per MRDI requirements. Separate books and documents are maintained for individual and independent projects.During the financial year 2023-2024 MRDI finance team maintained twelve separate sets of books of accounts. One set for transactions of the core organization and the other eleven sets for the individual projects.

The financial statements of MRDI reflect the true and fair view of the financial position and are free of material misstatement.

In 2023-2024 MRDI received fund from the following funding authorities/Organizations:

Fojo Media Institute (IQJB-Phase II)	BDT. 51,935,124
Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh (DSJ)	121,536
Internews (PFCCMB)	7,589,789
TARA Climate Ltd. (CEM)	17,002,606
European Union (MSD)	8,219,787
The Asia Foundation (MIMA Phase II)	3,227,711
The Asia Foundation (JFD)	3,279,098
Centre for Investigative Journalism (JCCCR)	3,877,527
The Carter Center (AWRTI)	4,438,146
Global Investigative Journalism Network (TJMDC)	365,050
Bangladesh Health Watch (JCBHR)	2,339,419
The Asia Foundation (NIM)	2,504,778
UNDP (RTIIGDP)	952,400
Total	**105,852,971**

MRDI meticulously follows the government policy and procedures as well as standards in all spheres of its programme and administration. In particular the income tax and VAT are deducted as per the income tax and VAT at ordinance. MRDI has its own TAX Identification Number (TIN) and submit the company tax return each year as per law of income tax.

During 2023-2024 MRDI deducted at source and deposited the following amounts of money in the government treasury:

VAT	Tk. 1,068,398
Tax	Tk. 5,578,807
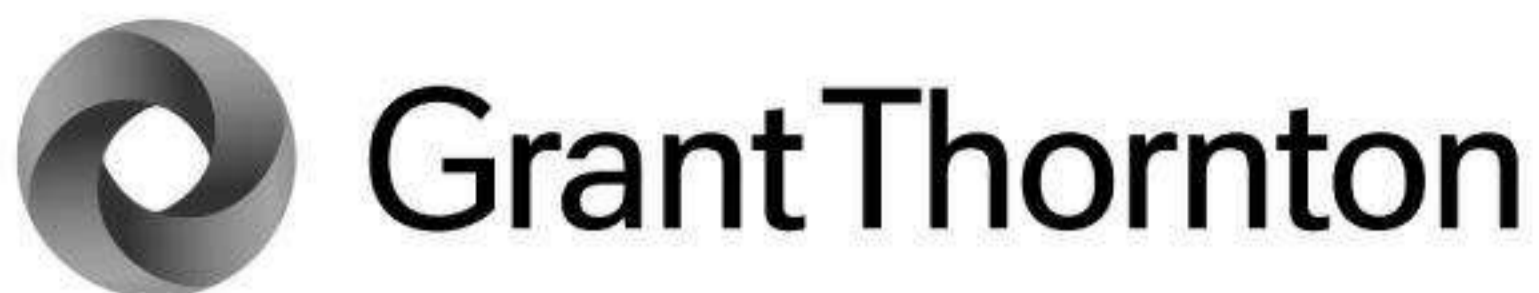
Grant Thornton

Howladar Yunus & Co.

Independent Auditor's Report
On the Combined Financial Statements of
Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

Submitted by :

Howladar Yunus & Co.
Chartered Accountants

25 November 2024

Contents

Independent Auditor's Report
To the Board of Directors of
Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
On the Audit of the Combined Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the combined financial statements of the "Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) (the Company) which comprise the Combined Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2024, and Combined Statement of Income and Expenditures and the Combined Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policy information.

In our opinion, the accompanying combined financial statements give true and fair view of the financial position of the organization as at 30 June 2024, and its financial performance and its Receipts and Payments for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the combined Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the organizations in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code), and we have fulfilled other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IESBA Code and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) Bye Laws. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the combined Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the combined financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs), the Companies Act, 1994 and other applicable laws and regulations and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of combined financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern

Chartered Accountants
Member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd
Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL) and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. GTIL and each member firm is a separate legal entity. Services are delivered independently by the member firms. GTIL does not provide services to clients. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions.

grantthornton.com.bd

and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the combined Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the combined financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or the in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these combined financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the combined financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the combined financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organization's to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the combined financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the combined financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that gives a true and fair view.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

In accordance with the Companies Act, 1994, we also report the following:

a) we have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of our audit and made due verification thereof.

b) in our opinion, proper books of accounts as required by law have been kept by the organization so far as it appeared from our examination of those books; and

c) the statements of financial position and statement of comprehensive income dealt with by the report are in agreement with the books of account.

Muhammad Farooq FCA
Managing Partner, Enrolment No. 0521
Howladar Yunus & Co., Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration No.: N/A
DVC No.: 2411250521AS588711

Dated: Dhaka
25 November 2024

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Combined Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2024

	Notes	Amount in BDT	
		30 June 2024	30 June 2023
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property and equipment	3.00	2,795,135	7,105,285
Right-of-use asset	4.00	-	849,039
Intangible Assets	5.00	1,715,000	1,355,000
Total non-current assets		**4,510,135**	**9,309,324**
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6.00	36,537,251	30,484,563
Investment in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR)	7.00	1,368,907	1,310,632
Advance and prepayments	8.00	494,952	369,960
Stock of RTI books & Gaon Swapna products	9.00	537,736	473,673
Reimbursable cost from projects		261,355	26,400
Total current assets		**39,200,201**	**32,665,228**
Total assets		**43,710,336**	**41,974,552**
FUND AND LIABILITIES			
Fund			
Unutilized project fund	10.00	34,286,264	30,163,892
Capital fund	11.00	2,898,282	(2,019,610)
Gaon Swapna fund	12.00	1,894,528	1,855,439
Project fixed assets fund	13.00	2,456,004	6,731,243
Intangible Assets Fund	14.00	1,715,000	1,355,000
Total fund		**43,250,078**	**38,085,964**
Non-current liabilities		-	-
Total non-current liabilities		**-**	**-**
Current liabilities			
Outstanding liabilities	15.00	460,258	2,880,905
Loan from Executive Director	16.00	-	-
Lease liabilities	17.00	-	1,007,683
Total current liabilities		**460,258**	**3,888,588**
Total Liabilities		**460,258**	**3,888,588**
Total fund and liabilities		**43,710,336**	**41,974,552**

The accompanying notes (1-33) and annexures (A-I) form an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

Chair

Executive Director

As per our annexed report of same date.

Muhammad Farooq FCA
Managing Partner, Enrolment No. 0521
Howladar Yunus & Co., Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration Number: [N/A]
DVC No.: 2411250521AS588711

Dated: Dhaka
25 November 2024

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Combined Statement of Income and Expenditures
For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	Amount in BDT 2023-2024	Amount in BDT 2022-2023
Income			
Grant income	18	103,369,538	72,881,326
Interest on bank deposits	19	15,125	5,147
Reimbursement of cost against facilities & archiving		1,138,501	1,956,000
Expert Support cost received from Project		29,000	6,000
Other income including forfeited PF balances		-	18,693
Overhead/organizational Cost from Project		7,681,826	-
		112,233,990	**74,867,166**
Expenditure			
Programme cost	20	42,917,924	30,986,980
Contribution to Projects	21	127,054	213,280
Salary and benefits	22	42,678,815	38,284,529
Office rent	23	2,631,476	2,633,477
Professional and audit fees	24	965,217	431,350
Transportation and conveyance	25	751,912	651,369
Utility and office maintenance	26	1,274,683	874,425
Phone, fax, internet, postage etc.	27	369,951	343,788
Printing and stationery	28	330,490	181,418
Depreciation on Fixed Assets	29	5,338,085	600,569
Depreciation on Right of used Asset	30	849,039	849,040
Donation and assistance		20,000	-
Bank Charges		96,591	98,080
Media Monitoring		231,000	-
Newspaper and periodicals	31	25,200	187,418
Facility charges		946,873	570,000
Staff Capacity Building		7,058	-
Annual Retreat		124,585	-
Registration & Renewal		-	6,500
Programme Planning & Design		123,977	64,138
Miscellaneous Expenses		44,584	31,397
Interest expense on lease liability		49,797	136,218
Loss on disposal of assets		20,150	114,266
Staff Group Health Insurance Premium		249,309	92,188
Overhead/organizational cost		7,804,960	-
Total Expenditure before provision for Income Tax		**107,978,730**	**77,350,430**
Excess/(Short) of income over expenditure before Income Tax		**4,255,260**	**(2,483,264)**
Provision for Income Tax		4,992	21,371
Excess/(Short) of income over expenditure		**4,250,268**	**(2,504,635)**
		112,233,990	**74,867,166**

The accompanying notes (1-33) and annexures (A-I) form an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

Fhossain

Chair

As per our annexed report of same date.

Executive Director

Muhammad Farooq

Muhammad Farooq FCA
Managing Partner, Enrolment No. 0521
Howladar Yunus & Co., Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration Number: [N/A]
DVC No.: 2411250521AS588711

Dated: Dhaka
25 November 2024

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Combined Statement of Receipts and Payments
For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	Amount in BDT 2023-2024	2022-2023
Opening balance			
Cash in hand	6.01	14,184	18,986
Cash at bank	6.02	30,470,379	6,208,278
		30,484,563	**6,227,264**
Receipts			
Donor fund received	10.01	105,852,971	100,871,053
Realization of advance and prepayments		-	344,700
Interest on project bank account		225,825	206,207
Reimbursement of cost against Archiving & facilities		1,138,501	1,956,000
Expert Support cost received from Project		29,000	6,000
Capital Fund (Closing from Project Bank account)		-	164,107
Sale of Gaon Swapna products		48,613	85,936
Reimbursement of cost against MRDI writing pad & folder		69,009	24,735
Interest on MRDI bank account		15,125	5,147
Miscellaneous Income (Sale of scrap of old Assets)		41,000	23,468
Pervious years adjustment Account		646,500	-
Directors entry fee and subscription		9,500	5,500
Loan from Executive Director		-	500,000
Other Receivable: CPF Forfeiture Account		-	18,693
Overhead/organizational Cost from Project		7,681,826	-
		115,757,870	**104,211,546**
Total receipts		**146,242,433**	**110,438,810**
Payments			
Programme cost	20.00	42,917,924	30,986,980
Contribution to Projects	21.00	127,054	213,280
Salary and benefits	22.00	42,678,815	35,845,441
Office rent	23.00	3,688,956	3,690,957
Professional and audit fees	24.00	595,217	75,000
Transportation and conveyance	25.00	751,912	651,369
Utility and office maintenance	26.00	1,226,079	824,099
Phone, fax, internet, postage etc.	27.00	369,951	342,618
Printing and stationery	28.00	288,107	175,332
Facility Charges		946,873	570,000
Purchase of fixed assets		852,191	735,926
Automation Development Cost-Honorarium for expert		360,000	1,355,000
Payment of outstanding liabilities		3,040,137	1,688,341
Donation and assistance		50,000	5,000
Advance and prepayments		120,000	-

	Notes	Amount in BDT	
		2023-2024	2022-2023
Newspaper & periodicals	31.00	25,200	174,818
Gaon Swapna operational expenses		782	24,177
Investment in FDR		54,286	44,988
Staff Group Health Insurance Premium		249,309	92,188
Bank charges		99,266	100,180
Media Monitoring		231,000	-
Repayment of loan to Executive Director		-	900,000
Unutilized Fund (Project Bank Account)		-	164,107
Adjustment of last year's unutilized project fund		2,443,286	-
Reimbursable Cost from projects		261,355	-
Income Tax Paid in advance		4,992	5,315
Purchase of Gaon Swapna Products		-	147,890
Staff Capacity Building		7,058	-
Doner fund refund		-	1,039,000
Registration & Renewal		-	6,500
Annual Retreat		124,585	-
Programme Planning & Design		123,977	64,138
Miscellaneous Expenses		44,584	31,397
Stock of MRDI Folder and Writing Pad		214,350	-
Previous years adjustment Account		2,976	206
Overhead/organizational Cost to MRDI		7,804,960	-
Total payments		**109,705,182**	**79,954,247**
Closing balance			
Cash in hand	6.01	19,200	14,184
Cash at bank	6.02	36,518,051	30,470,379
		36,537,251	**30,484,563**
		146,242,433	**110,438,810**

The accompanying notes (1-33) and annexures (A-I) form an integral part of these consolidated financial

Fhossain
Chair

_L. L._
Executive Director

As per our annexed report of same date.

Muhammad Farooq

Muhammad Farooq FCA
Managing Partner, Enrolment No. 0521
Howladar Yunus & Co., Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration Number: [N/A]
DVC No.: 2411250521AS588711

Dated: Dhaka
25 November 2024

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Notes to the Combined Financial Statements
As at the year ended 30 June 2024

1.00 Background

1.01 Legal form of the organization

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) vision's just and open societies where all people enjoy their rights.

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) is registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh under the Section 28 of the Company Act 1994 having Incorporation Number C-544(57)/2003 dated 13 May 2003 as a company limited by guarantee and also registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau having registration number 1962 dated 21 September 2004 under the Foreign Donations Regulation Ordinance 1978 which was renewed on 24 July 2019 for a period of ten years up to 20 September 2029.

Furthermore the organization has changed its name from "Management Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)" to "Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)" by getting approval from NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) vide reference no. 03.07.2666.660.66.014.23-187, dated- 23 November 2023.

The registered office of the organization is 8/19 Sir Syed Road (3rd floor), Block-A, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.

1.02 Objectives of the organization

To support the development of a strong and independent media that exercises excellence in journalism, and to empower all people including the marginalized to freely enjoy their right to information working with partners in Bangladesh and beyond.

2.00 Material accounting policy information

2.01 Statement of compliance

The consolidated financial statements have been prepared and presented in accordance with:
a) International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and International Accounting Standards (IASs).
b) Other relevant laws and regulations applicable in Bangladesh

Authorization for issue

The combined financial statements were authorized for issue by the Board of Directors of the Organization on 09 November 2024.

2.02 Combined of Financial Statements

MRDI maintains its books of account project wise and combined financial statements are prepared by adding each accounting head of individual project's financial statements. The projects include:

Sl.	Name of project	Funded by
01	Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh	Fojo Media Institute, Linnaeus University, Sweden
02	Media Strengthening Democracy	European Union
03	Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh	Internews
04	Climate,Energy and the Media	TARA Climate Limited
05	More Information More Accountability (MIMA) Phase II	The Asia Foundation
06	Journalism for Functional Democracy	The Asia Foundation

Sl.	Name of project	Funded by
07	Journalist Capacity on Climate Change Reporting	Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)
08	Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI)	The Carter Center (TCC)
09	Training for Journalists from Marginalized and Disenfranchised Communities	Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)
10	Gaon Swapna	The City Bank Ltd., HSBC Bangladesh and

2.03 Basis of accounting

The combined financial statements have been prepared applying accrual basis of accounting on going concern basis.

2.04 Property, plant and equipment

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognized as an asset if, it is probable that the future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the organization and the cost of item can be measured reliably. Property, plant and equipment are stated at cost and accumulated depreciation is shown separately. Cost represents the cost of acquisition, purchase price and other directly attributable cost of bringing the assets to working conditions for its intended use.

2.05 Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on property, plant and equipment using straight line method. If assets are acquired during the first half of the year then full year depreciation is charged on assets. No depreciation is charged if the assets are acquired during the second half of the year and also in the year of disposal. Depreciation is charged at the following rates:

Property, plant and equipment	Rate
Furniture and fixtures	20.00%
Computer, printer & multimedia	33.00%
Office equipment	30.00%
Vehicle	25.00%
Other assets	20.00%

Applicability of Depreciation on Projects' assets depends on donors' requirements

2.06 Related party transaction

As per IAS 24 "Related Party Disclosures", a related party is a person or entity that is related to the entity that is preparing its financial statements. Related party transaction is a transfer of resources, services, or obligations between a reporting entity and a related party, regardless of whether a price is charged as per IAS 24. In case of MRDI, related parties include the directors, key management personnel, associates, companies under common directorship etc. as per IAS 24 "Related Party Disclosures". All transactions involving related parties arising in the normal course of business are conducted at arm's length at normal commercial rates on the same terms and conditions as third party transactions using valuation modes as admissible.

2.07 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents for the purpose of the receipts and payments comprise of cash and bank balance. Cash and bank balance includes donations received through donor grants which are available for the use of organization without restrictions.

2.08 Investment

Investments are accounted for at cost. No provisions were made in respect of impairment of such Investment. Interest earned on investment in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) before maturity date is recognized as income on accrual basis. When FDR reached in maturity date, Investment in FDRs is debited and receivable interest is credited. **Details are given in Annexure-C.**

2.09 Taxation

In accordance with the provisions of Income Tax Act 2023, all NGOs working in Bangladesh are assessable entities and submission of Income Tax return is mandatory whether the income of any NGO for any year is taxable or not is decided only after regular assessment to be made by the assessing authority. MRDI has made provision for taxation as per requirement of Income Tax Act 2023.

2.10 Provision for liabilities

Provision and accrued expenses are recognized in the combined financial statements when the organization has a present obligation resulting from past events and it is probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate of the amount can be made.

2.11 Foreign currency transactions

MRDI maintains its books of account in Bangladeshi Taka. Transactions in foreign currencies are accounted for in Bangladeshi Taka at the rate of exchange ruling on the date of transactions.

2.12 Grant income

International Accounting Standard IAS-20 "Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance" has been followed for recognizing the grant income. As per IAS-20 grant received is initially recorded as liability. Grant amount used for project expenses has been recognized as income to the extent of expenses incurred.

2.13 Capital fund

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) is registered with the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh under Section 28 of the Companies Act 1994 as a company limited by guarantee and without capital. MRDI receives grants/donation from national and international funding agencies based on agreement signed between them. The capital fund represents excess of income over expenditures.

2.14 Gaon Swapna fund

MRDI has created this fund from the completed projects "Livelihood Programme for Women" implemented for the poor and marginalized women in Basatpur, Jessore and Bonlaodob, Kailashgonj & Dhangmari in the Sundarbans. This fund is meant for the capacity building of the beneficiaries of the projects for the betterment of their lives and livelihoods. The beneficiaries of the four areas formed four Samities under District Women and Children Affairs Office under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Through Gaon Swapna, MRDI is aiming to showcase and sell the handmade products of the Samities to the people living at the urban area and abroad. The objective of the Gaon Swapna fund is to generate income for disadvantaged women under a common brand. The fund is operated following the policy of MRDI. To ensure the transparency of the fund operation, a separate set of books of account along with a separate bank account have been maintained.

2.15 Preparation of Combined Financial Statements

MRDI's combined financial statements have been prepared based on the following principles:

a) Total project cost has been segregated considering the nature of expenditure and booked under the related head of combined financial statements.

b) Mutual debts has been adjusted during the combination.

c) Balance of fund against unimplemented activities has been shown under unutilized fund.

2.16 IFRS 16 Leases

At the inception of a contract, the company assess whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To assess whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, the Organization uses the definition of a lease in IFRS 16. This policy is applied to contracts entered into (or changed) on or after 01 January 2019. The organization recognizes a right-of-use leased asset and lease liability at the lease commencement date.

The company recognizes right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for the leases - i.e. these leases are on-balance sheet. Right-of-use assets were measured at the amount equal to the lease liability, adjusted by the amount of any prepaid or accrued lease payments relating to those lease payments, discounted using the lessee's incremental borrowing rate. Right-of-use assets are measured at the amount of the lease liability on adoption. Leases are recognized at the commencement of the lease at the lower of the fair value of the leased asset or the present value of the minimum lease payments. Each lease payment is apportioned between the liability and finance charges using the effective interest method.

Applying IFRS 16, the Organization:

a) Recognises right-of-use assets and lease liabilities in the statement of financial position, initially measured at the present value of the future lease payments;

b) Recognises depreciation of right-of-use assets and interest on lease liabilities in the statement of income and expenses.

The Organization has used the following practical expedients when applying the IFRS-16:

- The organization has applied a single discount rate
- The organization has elected not to recognize right-of-use assets and lease liabilities to leases for the portion of the rent charged in the project accounts.
- The organization has excluded initial direct costs from the measurement of the right-of-use asset at the date of initial application.
- The organization has analysed the situation of the lease term when the contract contains options to extend or terminate the lease.

2.17 Reporting year

The combined financial statements of MRDI cover 12 months starting from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 consistently.

2.18 General

i. The figures in the combined financial statements have been rounded off to the nearest Taka (BDT) whenever necessary.

ii. Previous year figures have been rearranged wherever considered necessary to conform to the current year's presentation.

	Notes	Amount in BDT	
		30 June 2024	30 June 2023
3.00	**Property and equipment**		
Cost:			
Opening balance		12,409,977	12,397,101
Add: Addition during the year	3.01	1,048,085	1,193,885
Add: Adjustment during the year	Annexure-A	(411,178)	-
		13,046,884	13,590,986
Less: Disposal during the year		(577,486)	(1,181,009)
Total cost		**12,469,398**	**12,409,977**
Accumulated depreciation:			
Opening balance		5,304,692	5,312,907
Add: Depreciation charged for the year	Annexure-A	5,338,085	600,569
Add: Adjustment during the year	Annexure-A	(391,041)	-
		10,251,736	5,913,476
Less: Disposal during the year	Annexure-A	(577,473)	(608,784)
Total accumulated depreciation		**9,674,263**	**5,304,692**
Written down value		**2,795,135**	**7,105,285**

Details are shown in **Annexure-A**

Changes in accounting policy

Till 31 August 2023, no depreciation was charged on fixed assets under any project considering there is no impact on utilization of fund. As per agreement with donor, when any fixed assets were purchased as per approved budget, this will be considered as utilization of fund. However, MRDI has changed it's policy and decided to charge depreciation on the assets under project from 01 September 2023. With impact of this, depreciation on the assets procured from the initiation of the project was charged during this year. MRDI has charged depreciation for the year ended 30 June 2024 for the following projects: FOJO-IQJB, TAF-JSMA, TAF-MIMA & EU-MSD.

3.01	**Addition during the year**		
	Purchased under MRDI core:		
	Computer, printer and multimedia	-	160,000
	Office equipment	195,894	1,590
	Furniture & Fixture	-	18,000
		195,894	179,590
	Transfer from Projects:		
	Computer, printer and multimedia	-	310,135
	Office equipment	-	6,136
	Furniture & Fixture	-	141,688
		-	457,959
	Purchased under FOJO project:		
	Computer Monitor, Air Condition, mobile phone and printer	472,271	-
	Computer Monitor, Air Condition, USB Hub, Server Rack and Sherder machine		125,124
	Purchased under EU-MSD project:		
	Laptop, Desktop Computer, Printer	-	431,212
	Purchased under TAF-JFD project:		
	Laptop	139,230	-
	Purchased under TARA-CEM project:		
	Laptop	240,690	-
		852,191	556,336
		1,048,085	**1,193,885**

4.00	**Right-of-use asset**		
	Cost	4,245,198	4,245,198
	Accumulated Depreciation	4,245,198	3,396,159
		-	849,039

The Company leases a assets(two floor) for continuing its operation. The tenure of the lease was 5 years which has been ended 30 June 2024. Details are in **Annexure-A**

5.00	**Intangible Assets**		
	Automation/Software Development Cost (Work in Progress)	-	1,355,000
	Opening Balance	1,355,000	-
	Automation Development Cost-Honorarium for expert	360,000	-
		1,715,000	**1,355,000**

12

Note : Full automation of MRDI administrative and financial procedure was an revenue expenditure item as per NGOAB approved budget. However, as per IAS 38 it is a capital expenditure in nature and recognized as automation/software development cost (work in progress) until the full automation has been done. As per the MoU the full process will be done by 30 March 2025. Then automation/software development cost (work in progress) will be transferred to Intangible Assets.

6.00	Cash and cash equivalents			
	Cash in hand	6.01	19,200	14,184
	Cash at bank	6.02	36,518,051	30,470,379
			36,537,251	**30,484,563**
6.01	**Cash in hand**			
	Core account		14,982	9,184
	Gaon Swapna		4,218	5,000
			19,200	**14,184**
6.02	**Cash at bank**			
	Project bank accounts	6.02.01	27,613,570	26,430,035
	Core bank accounts	6.02.02	8,904,481	4,040,344
			36,518,051	**30,470,379**

6.02.01 Project bank accounts

Name of bank	Accounts title	Accounts no.	2024 BDT	2023 BDT
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-FOJO	STD-2138314003939	18,772,887	12,486,265
Prime Bank PLC.	Gaon Swapna	STD-2138311005680	166,181	148,696
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-EU-MSD	SND-2138314019091	365,101	9,070,666
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-INTERNEWS-PFCCMB	SND-2138317019148	796,414	3,039,319
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-TARA-CEM	SND-2138314018929	6,148,827	1,685,089
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-CIJ-JCCCR	SND-2138315019520	234,226	-
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-TCC-AWRTI	SND-2138314019521	843,500	-
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-TAF-MIMA	SND-2138313019522	102,799	-
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-TAF-JFD	SND-2138318020137	183,635	-
Total			**27,613,570**	**26,430,035**

6.02.02 Core bank accounts

Name of bank	Accounts title	Accounts no.	2024 BDT	2023 BDT
Southeast Bank PLC.	MRDI mother account	CD-001211100006616	6,847,120	2,448,256
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI operational account	STD 2138315008259	2,057,360	1,592,087
Prime Bank PLC.	MRDI-INFCOUS	STD 2138315003581	1	1
Total			**8,904,481**	**4,040,344**

7.00	Investment in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR)			
	FDR against Gaon Swapna fund	7.01	1,368,907	1,310,632
			1,368,907	**1,310,632**
7.01	**FDR against Gaon Swapna fund**			
	Opening balance		1,283,053	1,238,065
	Add: Closing balance of interest as at 30 June 2024		85,854	44,988
	Balance of FDR		**1,368,907**	**1,283,053**
	Details are shown in Annexure-C			
8.00	**Advance and prepayments**			
	Advance income tax	8.01	10,307	5,315
	Security money	8.02	374,645	364,645
	Advance for programme	8.03	-	-
	Advance to staff against salaries	8.04	110,000	-
			494,952	**369,960**

		Notes	Amount in BDT	
			30 June 2024	30 June 2023

8.01 Advance income tax

Particulars	Opening balance as on 01 July 2023	Adjustment during the year	Deduction made during the year	Closing balance as on 30 Jun 2024	Closing balance as on 30 Jun 2023
	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
MRDI	1,012	-	1,986	2,998	1,012
Gaon Swapna	4,303	-	3,006	7,309	4,303
Total	5,315	-	4,992	10,307	5,315

Details are shown in Annexure-E

8.02 Security Money

Opening balance	364,645	364,645
Security money against Rental & Maintenance Service Charge	10,000	-
	374,645	364,645
Less: Security money adjusted during the year	-	-
	374,645	364,645

8.03 Advance for programme

Opening balance	-	344,700
Add: Advance made during the year	-	-
Less: Adjustment made during the year	-	(344,700)
Closing balance	-	-

8.04 Advance to staff against salaries

Opening balance	-	-
Add: Advance made during the year	340,000	-
Less: Adjustment made during the year	(230,000)	-
Closing balance	110,000	-

9.00 Stock of RTI books & Gaon Swapna products

Gaon Swapna products	347,913	386,808
RTI books	17,784	29,578
MRDI folder	30,645	42,935
MRDI writing pad	141,394	14,352
	537,736	473,673

10.00 Unutilized project fund

	Notes	30 June 2024	30 June 2023
Opening balance		30,163,892	4,969,269
Add: Fund received during the year	10.01	105,852,971	100,871,053
Add: Interest on fund received during the year		166,986	155,232
Add: Project Depreciation during the year		5,127,430	-
		141,311,279	105,995,554
Less: Project fixed assets fund (FOJO-IQJB, TAF-JFD & TARA-CEM)		(852,191)	(556,336)
Less: Automation/Software Development Cost (Work in Progress)		(360,000)	(1,355,000)
Less: Donor fund refund		-	(1,039,000)
Less: Adjustment of last year's unutilized project fund		(2,443,286)	-
Less: Grant income recognized during the year	18.00	(103,369,538)	(72,881,326)
		34,286,264	30,163,892

14

Details of project-wise unutilized fund are as follows:

Project Name	Donar Name	Amount	Amount
Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh -Phase II (IQJB)	Fojo Media Institute (FOJO)	18,772,887	12,486,265
MRDI Operational		-	1,439,267
MRDI Mother Account	TARA Climate Ltd (TARA) & European Union (EU)	6,838,875	2,443,286
Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh (PFCCMB)	INTERNEWS	796,414	3,039,319
Climate, Energy and the Media (CEM)	TARA Climate Ltd (TARA)	6,148,827	1,685,089
Media Strengthening Democracy (MSD)	European Union (EU)	365,101	9,070,666
More Information More Accountability Phase II (MIMA Phase II)	The Asia Foundation (TAF)	102,799	-
Journalism for Functional Democracy (JFD)	The Asia Foundation (TAF)	183,635	-
Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI)	The Carter Center (TCC)	843,500	-
Journalist Capacity on Climate Change Reporting (JCCCR)	Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)	234,226	-
		34,286,264	30,163,892

10.01 Fund received during the year

FOJO Media Institute		51,935,124	63,382,954
Manusher Jonno Foundation		-	308,876
SWA (MRDI Operational)		-	170,000
The Asia Foundation (JSMA Phase II)		-	2,779,038
The Asia Foundation Programme (MRDI Operational)		-	241,767
Swiss Embassy (MRDI Operational)		121,536	1,000,000
Internews (PFCCMB)		7,589,789	7,455,062
TARA Climate Ltd (CEM)		17,002,606	6,471,383
European Union (MSD)		8,219,787	19,061,973
The Asia Foundation (MIMA Phase II)		3,227,711	-
The Asia Foundation (JFD)		3,279,098	-
Centre for Investigative Journalism (JCCCR)		3,877,527	-
The Carter Center (AWRTI)		4,438,146	-
Global Investigative Journalism Network (MRDI Operational)		365,050	-
Bangladesh Health Watch (MRDI Operational)		2,339,419	-
The Asia Foundation (MRDI Operational)		2,504,778	-
UNDP (MRDI Operational)		952,400	-
		105,852,971	100,871,053

11.00 Capital fund

Opening balance		(2,019,610)	606,570
Add: Excess/(short) of income over expenditure		4,250,268	(2,504,635)
Add: Transfer of Project Bank Balance		-	164,107
Add: Previous year's adjustment		643,524	7,530
Add: Profit on sale of scrap assets		41,000	23,468
Add: Directors' subscription		9,500	5,500
Add: Transfer Fixed assets from Projects (MJF PCAI Project and MJF BGBS project)		-	457,959
Less: Adjustment of Previous years Income tax paid in advance		-	(780,109)
Less: Adjustment of reimbursable cost from projects-BGBS		(26,400)	-
Closing balance		**2,898,282**	**(2,019,610)**

12.00 Gaon Swapna fund

Opening balance		1,855,439	1,851,912
Interest on bank deposit	12.01	60,153	39,933
Add: Profit/(loss) during the year	12.02	(21,064)	7,632
Less: Adjustment of Previous years Income tax paid in advance		-	(44,038)
Closing balance		**1,894,528**	**1,855,439**

12.01 Interest on Gaon Swapna bank deposit

Opening balance of interest on SND account		855	1,124
Add: Interest received on FDR during the year		57,984	49,851
Add: Accrued interest		31,568	27,579
		90,407	78,554
Less: Last years' provision		(27,579)	(36,521)
Less: Bank charges		(2,675)	(2,100)
		60,153	39,933

		Notes	Amount in BDT	
			30 June 2024	30 June 2023
12.02	**Profit/ (loss) from Gaon Swapna**			
	Sale of Gaon Swapna products		48,613	85,936
	Operational expenses			
	Opening stock of products		386,808	288,045
	Add: Purchase of products		-	147,890
	Add: Operational expenses		30,782	29,177
	Less: Closing stock of products		(347,913)	(386,808)
			69,677	**78,304**
	Profit/(loss) from Gaon Swapna		**(21,064)**	**7,632**
13.00	**Project fixed assets fund**			
	Opening balance		6,731,243	6,632,866
	Add: Addition during the year	13.01	852,191	556,336
	Add: Adjustment during the year		-	-
	Less: Project Assets transfer to MRDI		-	(457,959)
	Less: Project Assets Disposed		-	-
	Less. Depreciation during the period		(5,127,430)	-
	Closing balance		**2,456,004**	**6,731,243**
13.01	**Addition during the year**			
	Fojo Project		472,271	125,124
	EU-MSD Project		-	431,212
	TAF-JFD Project		139,230	-
	TARA-CEM Project		240,690	-
			852,191	**556,336**
14.00	**Intangible Assets Fund**			
	Automation/Software Development Cost (Work in Progress)		-	1,355,000
	Opening Balance		1,355,000	-
	Automation Development Cost-Honorarium for expert		360,000	-
			1,715,000	**1,355,000**
15.00	**Outstanding liabilities**			
	Opening balance		2,880,905	2,167,306
	Add: Addition during the year		619,493	2,880,905
	Less: Payment made during the year		(3,040,140)	(2,167,306)
	Closing balance		**460,258**	**2,880,905**
	Details are shown in Annexure-D			
16.00	**Loan from Executive Director**			
	Opening balance		-	400,000
	Add: Addition during the year		-	500,000
	Less: Payment made during the year		-	(900,000)
	Closing balance		**-**	**-**
17.00	**Lease liabilities**			
	Non-current		-	-
	Current		-	1,007,683
			-	**1,007,683**

16

	Notes	Amount in BDT	
		2023-2024	2022-2023
18.00 Grant income			
FOJO Media Institute		49,281,331	50,301,173
The Asia Foundation (JSMA)		493,043	2,206,406
The Asia Foundation (MIMA Phase II)		3,126,742	-
The Asia Foundation (MIMA)		142,117	-
The Asia Foundation (JFD)		2,958,651	-
Manusher Jonno Foundation		-	318,254
Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)		3,645,934	-
Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.		-	54,359
The Carter Center (AWRTI)		3,600,314	-
HSBC Bangladesh		-	496,586
MRDI Operational		7,722,450	3,117,775
Internews (PFCCMB)		9,837,438	4,420,301
TARA Climate Ltd (CEM)		6,711,565	4,786,795
European Union (MSD)		15,849,953	7,179,677
		103,369,538	**72,881,326**
19.00 Interest on bank deposits			
Interest received on other bank accounts (MRDI Operational)		15,125	5,147
		15,125	**5,147**
20.00 Programme cost			
Programme cost		42,917,924	30,986,980
		42,917,924	**30,986,980**
Details are shown in Annexure-B			
21.00 MRDI Contribution to project			
Contribution to IQJB Project		-	83,300
Contribution to AWRTI Project		6,054	-
Contribution to CSR Project Sundarbans		65,000	65,000
Contribution to CSR Project Basatpur		56,000	56,000
Contribution to MIMA Project		-	8,980
Contribution to Staff Picnic		-	-
		127,054	**213,280**
22.00 Salary and benefits			
Executive Director	22.01	7,476,137	7,299,774
Head of Programme & Advisor		9,717,066	6,383,058
Manager & Deputy Manager		8,581,917	12,034,763
SPO, PO & APO		15,918,515	11,879,054
Office Junior		636,040	687,880
Salary Expense for Project		349,140	-
As per Income and Expenditure Account		**42,678,815**	**38,284,529**
Add: Payment made during the year		-	-
Less: Payable/adjustment during the year	Annexure-D	-	(2,439,088)
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments		**42,678,815**	**35,845,441**
22.01 Executive Director's benefits include the following items:			
Basic salary		3,530,769	3,426,414
House rent		1,765,385	1,713,207
Festival allowance		1,056,556	1,069,930
Medical allowance		641,958	622,985
Conveyance allowance		481,469	467,238
		7,476,137	**7,299,774**

17

	Notes	Amount in BDT	
		2023-2024	2022-2023

23.00 Office rent

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Office rent Recovered from Projects	2,769,619	1,425,028
MRDI contribution	(138,143)	1,208,449
As per Income and Expenditure Account	**2,631,476**	**2,633,477**
Less: Amount adjusted from security deposit	-	-
Add: MRDI contribution for lease payment	1,057,480	1,057,480
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments	**3,688,956**	**3,690,957**

24.00 Professional and audit fees

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Audit fee for MRDI Consolidated Accounts	200,000	196,350
Professional fee for tax assessment and company affairs	160,000	160,000
Professional fee for tax assessment EPF	10,000	-
Audit fee for TAF-JSMA Project	-	75,000
Audit fee for OA	85,000	-
Audit fee for TARA-CEM Project	80,000	-
Audit fee for EU-MSD Project	200,000	-
Audit fee for TAF-MIMA Phase II Project	75,000	-
Audit fee for CIJ-JCCCR Project	90,000	-
Audit fee for TCC-AWRTI Project	65,217	-
As per Income and Expenditure Account	**965,217**	**431,350**
Less: Payable during the year	(370,000)	(356,350)
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments	**595,217**	**75,000**

25.00 Transportation and conveyance

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Local transportation for executive movement	414,184	317,351
Local transportation for programmatic and administrative movement	324,408	334,018
Overseas travel	13,320	-
	751,912	**651,369**

26.00 Utility and office maintenance

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Electricity bill	502,129	307,154
Office service charges	80,000	100,000
Repair & maintenance	692,554	467,271
As per Income and Expenditure Account	**1,274,683**	**874,425**
Less: Payable during the year	(48,604)	(50,326)
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments	**1,226,079**	**824,099**

27.00 Phone, fax, internet, postage etc.

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Internet	263,922	221,112
Mobile phone	90,750	113,308
Telephone	6,445	6,363
Postage	8,834	3,005
As per Income and Expenditure Account	**369,951**	**343,788**
Less: Payable during the year	-	(1,170)
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments	**369,951**	**342,618**

28.00 Printing and stationery

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Printing and stationery	330,490	181,418
Less: Transferred to programme cost	-	-
As per Income and Expenditure Statement	**330,490**	**181,418**
Less: Adjustment during the year	(42,383)	(6,086)
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments	**288,107**	**175,332**

	Notes	Amount in BDT	
		2023-2024	2022-2023
29.00 Depreciation on Fixed Assets			
Depreciation on Fixed Assets		5,338,085	600,569
		5,338,085	**600,569**
30.00 Depreciation on Right of used Asset			
Depreciation on Right of used Asset		849,039	849,040
		849,039	**849,040**
31.00 Newspaper and periodicals			
Newspaper and periodicals		25,200	187,418
As per Income and Expenditure Statement		**25,200**	**187,418**
Less: Payable during the year		-	(12,600)
As per Statement of Receipts and Payments		**25,200**	**174,818**

32.00 Number of employees

32.01 Core employee

The number of core employees engaged by the Company for the whole or part of the year from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, receiving a total salary of more than Taka 36,000 p.a is 16. The number of core employees engaged by the Company for the whole or part of the year from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, receiving a total salary of less than Taka 36,000 p.a is 6.

32.02 Project employee

The number of project employees engaged by the Company for the whole or part of the year from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, receiving a total salary of more than Taka 36,000 p.a is 17. The number of project employees engaged by the Company for the whole or part of the year from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, receiving a total salary of less than Taka 36,000 p.a is 3.

33.00 Related party disclosures

During the year, the company made a number of transactions with related parties in the normal course of business. The name of related parties, nature of transactions, their total value and closing balance have been set out in accordance with the provisions of "IAS 24: Related Party Disclosures".

Details are shown in Annexure-F

Hossain	*L.L.L*
Chair	**Executive Director**

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of Property and Equipment
As at 30 June 2024

Sl. No.	Particulars	Opening balance	During the year — Adjustment	During the year — Addition	During the year — Adjustment /disposal	Closing balance	Rate (%)	Opening balance	During the year — Adjustment	During the year — Charged	During the year — Adjustment/ disposal	Closing balance	Written down value
		BDT	BDT		BDT	BDT		BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
1.0	Furniture and fixture:												
1.1	Table	430,080	(7,252)	-	(10,430)	412,398	20%	357,260	(9,033)	42,609	10,428	380,408	31,990
1.2	Chair, sofa etc.	343,560	63	-	(2,050)	341,573	20%	273,449	(269)	27,541	2,049	298,672	42,901
1.3	Shelf, paper stand, notice board etc.	375,129	5,391	-	(7,500)	373,020	20%	348,715	6,058	16,046	7,499	363,320	9,700
1.4	Interior decoration	269,951	75,000	-		344,951	20%	262,675	82,262	-	-	344,937	14
	Sub-total (A)	1,418,720	73,202	-	(19,980)	1,471,942		1,242,099	79,018	86,196	19,976	1,387,337	84,605
2.0	Office equipment:												
2.1	Monitoring set up	206,334	(135,407)	-	-	70,927	30%	206,333	(135,409)		-	70,924	3
2.2	Fax machine, scanner, TV, recorder etc.	39,630	20,550	-	(3,600)	56,580	30%	39,628	20,546		3,599	56,575	5
2.3	Power generator (Honda)	102,250	-	-	-	102,250	30%	102,249	-	-	-	102,249	1
2.4	Electric fans	64,713	425	-	-	65,138	30%	62,605	405	2,100	-	65,110	28
2.5	Air cooler	658,193	-	-	(74,000)	584,193	30%	651,077	7,105	-	73,999	584,183	10
2.6	Telephone and internet connectivity	127,243	(36,393)	-	-	90,850	30%	127,242	(36,402)	-	-	90,840	10
2.7	Camera	56,539	(32,162)	-	-	24,377	30%	56,538	(32,162)	-	-	24,376	1
2.8	Mobile and telephone set	378,360	(134,078)	195,894	(110,000)	330,176	30%	352,677	(127,513)	67,810	109,999	182,975	147,201
2.9	Access & Attendance Control Device	55,000	-	-	-	55,000	30%	54,999	(1)	-	-	54,998	2
	Sub-total (B)	1,688,262	(317,065)	195,894	(187,600)	1,379,491		1,653,348	(303,431)	69,910	187,597	1,232,230	147,261
3.0	Computer, printer and multimedia												
3.1	Tower server	180,360	-	-	-	180,360	33%	180,359	-	-	-	180,359	1
3.2	Desktop computer	675,390	(30,180)	-	(69,114)	576,096	33%	674,707	(29,519)	-	69,112	576,076	20
3.3	Laptop computer	888,799	(156,320)	-	(94,450)	638,029	33%	887,449	(156,327)	1,342	94,448	638,016	13
3.4	Laser printer	200,035	(8,140)	-	(62,900)	128,995	33%	199,624	(8,144)	407	62,898	128,989	6
3.5	UPS, IPS and stabilizer	291,333	(97,475)	-	-	193,858	33%	131,275	(97,418)	52,800	-	86,657	107,201
3.6	Multimedia projector	191,225	-	-	-	191,225	33%	191,224	(3)	-	-	191,221	4
3.7	Computer networking	78,680	-	-	-	78,680	33%	78,679	(1)	-	-	78,678	2
	Sub-total (C)	2,505,822	(292,115)	-	(226,464)	1,987,243		2,343,317	(291,412)	54,549	226,458	1,879,996	107,247
4.0	Other assets												
4.1	Books	25,930	-	-	-	25,930	20%	25,929	(16)	-	-	25,913	17
4.2	Paintings	40,000	-	-	-	40,000	20%	39,999	-	-	-	39,999	1
4.3	Tally ERP.9 Gold	-	124,800	-	-	124,800	20%	-	124,800	-	-	124,800	-
	Sub-total (D)	65,930	124,800	-	-	190,730		65,928	124,784	-	-	190,712	18

20

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of Property and Equipment
As at 30 June 2024

Sl. No.	Particulars	Cost					Rate (%)	Depreciation					Written down value
		Opening balance	During the year			Closing balance		Opening balance	During the year			Closing balance	
			Adjustment	Addition	Adjustment /disposal				Adjustment	Charged	Adjustment/ disposal		
		BDT	BDT		BDT	BDT		BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
5.0	**Project assets**									-			
5.1	FOJO IQJB Project	5,549,714	-	472,271	(143,442)	5,878,543			-	4,349,969	143,442	4,206,527	1,672,016
5.2	TAF JSMA Project	601,898	-	-	-	601,898			-	493,043	-	493,043	108,855
5.3	TAF MIMA Project	148,419	-	-	-	148,419			-	142,117	-	142,117	6,302
5.4	EU-MSD Project	431,212	-	-	-	431,212			-	142,301	-	142,301	288,911
5.5	MRDI-TARA-CEM	-	-	240,690	-	240,690			-	-	-	-	240,690
5.6	MRDI-TAF-JFD	-	-	139,230	-	139,230			-	-	-	-	139,230
	Sub-total (E)	6,731,243	-	852,191	(143,442)	7,439,992			-	5,127,430	143,442	4,983,988	2,456,004
	Balance as at 30 June 2024	12,409,977	(411,178)	1,048,085	(577,486)	12,469,398	-	5,304,692	(391,041)	5,338,085	577,473	9,674,263	2,795,135
	Balance as at 30 June 2023	12,397,101	-	1,193,885	1,181,009	12,409,977		5,312,907	-	600,569	608,784	5,304,692	7,105,285

Right-of-use asset

Sl. No.	Particulars	Opening balance	Adjustment	Addition	Adjustment /disposal	Closing balance	Rate (%)	Opening balance	Adjustment	Charged	Adjustment/ disposal	Closing balance	Written down value
	Balance as at 30 June 2024	4,245,198	-	-	-	4,245,198		3,396,159		849,039	-	4,245,198	-
	Balance as at 30 June 2023	4,245,198				4,245,198		2,547,119		849,040		3,396,159	849,039

21

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Programme Cost
For the year ended 30 June 2024

SI. No.	Project/contract/agreement title	For the year ended	
		30 June 2024	30 June 2023
1	Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh, supported by Fojo Media Institute, Linnaeus University, Sweden	16,555,171	18,675,891
2	Better Governance for Better Services (BGBS), supported by MJF	-	54,962
3	Livelihood Programme for the Women and Health Clinic for the Community, supported by Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.	-	14,000
4	Understanding Finance for the Youth and Garment Workers - Phase III, supported by HSBC	-	292,666
5	MRDI Operational (Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh, supported by Fojo Media Institute, Linnaeus University, Sweden, Digital Safety for Journalists, supported by Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh, Journalist capacity building on health reporting, supported by Bangladesh Health Watch, Training for journalists from marginalized and disenfranchised communities supported by Global Investigative Journalism Network, News Integrity Monitoring, supported by The Asia Foundation, Promoting self-regulation in digital news platforms, supported by The Asia Foundation, Residential Training on information integrity for gatekeepers of digital platform supported by United Nations Development Programme Country Office, Bangladesh)	4,748,880	3,508,270
6	Journalism Skills in media & Academia, supported by The Asia Foundation	-	1,355,330
7	Promoting Fact Checking to Counter Misinformation in Bangladesh in partnership with INTERNEWS	4,507,327	1,762,655
8	Climate,Energy and the Media in partnership with TARA Climate Ltd	2,194,200	2,262,517
9	Media Strengthening Democracy in partnership with European Union (EU)	8,249,837	3,060,689
10	More Information More Accountability (MIMA) Phase II, supported by The Asia Foundation	1,893,605	-
11	Journalism for Functional Democracy, supported by The Asia Foundation	1,582,870	-
12	Journalist Capacity on Climate Change Reporting, supported by Centre for Investigative Journalism	2,458,315	-
13	Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh (AWRTI), supported by The Carter Center	727,719	-
	Total	**42,917,924**	**30,986,980**

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Statement of Investment in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR)
As at 30 June 2024

Sl. No.	FDR No.	Name of bank & branch	Type	Date of Opening	Principal				Interest						Total
					Opening as at 01 July 2023	Addition during the year 2023-2024	Encashment during the year	Closing balance as at 30 June 2024	Received during the year (As per Bank Statement)	Provision of interest as on June 2024	Total	AIT	Bank charges	Closing balance as at 30 June 2024	
					BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (5+6-7)	9	10	11 (9+10)	12	13	14 (11-12-13)	15 (8+14)
1	A/C#005424400000138	South East Bank Ltd. Mohammadpur Br.	6 month	7-Jul-15	234,044	-	-	234,044	12,426	6,931	19,357	621	150	18,586	252,630
2	A/C#005424500000330	South East Bank Ltd. Mohammadpur Br.	12 month	7-Jul-15	578,258	-	-	578,258	23,130	21,235	44,365	1,156	500	42,709	620,967
3	A/C#005424300002202	South East Bank Ltd. Mohammadpur Br.	3 month	26-Jul-16	470,751	-	-	470,751	22,428	3,402	25,830	1,121	150	24,559	495,310
	Total				1,283,053	-	-	1,283,053	57,984	31,568	89,552	2,898	800	85,854	1,368,907

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of outstanding liabilities
As at 30 June 2024

Sl. No.	Particular	Project, contract/ component	Opening balance	During the year		Closing balance
				Addition	Payment/ Adjustment	
			BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
1	Audit fees	MRDI core	196,350	200,000	196,350	200,000
2	Fee and expenses for tax consultants	MRDI core	160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000
3	Provision for Office Expenses for company Return	MRDI core	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
4	Professional fees for Tax Assessment For FY 2022-2023 (MRDI Employee's Provident Fund)	MRDI core	-	10,000	-	10,000
5	Hasibur Rahman	MRDI core	2,439,088	195,894	2,619,691	15,291
6	Provision for income tax	MRDI core & Gaon Swapna	21,371	4,992	-	26,363
7	Telephone & Internet bill	MRDI core	1,170	-	1,170	-
8	Utility bill	MRDI core	35,326	33,607	35,329	33,604
9	News paper scanning bill	MRDI core	12,600	-	12,600	-
	Total		**2,880,905**	**619,493**	**3,040,140**	**460,258**

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Tax liabilities and advance tax position
As at 30 June 2024

Income year	Assessment year	Tax liabilities as per assessment order	Tax deducted at source/paid	Tax adjustment	Total tax paid in advance
		BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
2022-2023	2023-2024	-	5,315	-	5,315
2023-2024	2024-2025	-	4,992	-	4,992
Total		-	10,307	-	10,307

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Statement of related party transactions
As at 30 June 2024

Director	Project/Contract	Assigned as	Transactions for the period from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	Transactions for the period from 01 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
			BDT	BDT
Syed Ishtiaque Reza	Transforming Governance for Sustainable Development (TG4SD) IP	Mentorship facilitation	5,000	-
	Improving Qualitative Journalism in Bangladesh (IQJB)-Phase II, supported by Fojo Media Institute, Linnaeus University, Sweden	Gatekeepers Engagement Meeting for Bootcamp	-	5,000
		Consultation Meeting on Media Monitoring	-	5,000
	Media strengthening democracy project in partnership with European Union	Conduct training on public interest journalism and accountability tools	-	10,000

Grand Total			5,000	20,000

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of Combined Statement of Financial Position-Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2024

Particulars	2023-2024	MRDI Operational	FOJO-IQJB	Internews (PFCCMB)	TARA-CEM	EU-MSD	TAF-JSMA	TAF-MIMA	TAF-MIMA Phase II	TAF-JFD	CIJ-JCCCR	TCC-AWRTI	Gaon Swapna
	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
ASSETS													
Non-current assets													
Property, Plant and Equipment	2,795,136	339,132	1,672,016	-	240,690	288,911	108,855	6,302	-	139,230	-	-	-
Right-of-use asset	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intangible Assets	1,715,000	-	1,715,000	-									
Total non-current assets	4,510,136	339,132	3,387,016	-	240,690	288,911	108,855	6,302	-	139,230	-	-	-
Current assets													
Cash and Cash Equivalents	36,537,251	8,919,463	18,772,887	796,414	6,148,827	365,101				102,799	183,635	234,226	843,500	170,399
Investment in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR)	1,368,907												1,368,907
Advance and Prepayments	494,952	487,643											7,309
Stock of RTI Books & Gaon Swapna products	537,736	189,823											347,913
Reimbursable cost from projects	261,355	261,355											
Total current assets	39,200,201	9,858,284	18,772,887	796,414	6,148,827	365,101				102,799	183,635	234,226	843,500	1,894,528
Total assets	43,710,337	10,197,416	22,159,903	796,414	6,389,517	654,012	108,855	6,302	102,799	322,865	234,226	843,500	1,894,528
FUND AND LIABILITIES													
Fund													
Unutilized Project Fund	34,286,264	6,838,875	18,772,887	796,414	6,148,827	365,101				102,799	183,635	234,226	843,500	-
Capital Fund	2,898,282	2,898,282	-										
Gaon Swapna Fund	1,894,528												1,894,528
Project fixed assets fund	2,456,004	-	1,672,016	-	240,690	288,911	108,855	6,302	-	139,230	-	-	-
Intangible Assets Fund	1,715,000	-	1,715,000	-									
Total fund	43,250,078	9,737,157	22,159,903	796,414	6,389,517	654,012	108,855	6,302	102,799	322,865	234,226	843,500	1,894,528
Liabilities													
Non-current liabilities													
Non-current liabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total non-current liabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current Liabilities													
Outstanding Liabilities	460,258	460,258	-										-
Lease liability	-	-											-
Total current liabilities	460,258	460,258	-										-
Total fund and liabilities	43,710,336	10,197,415	22,159,903	796,414	6,389,517	654,012	108,855	6,302	102,799	322,865	234,226	843,500	1,894,528

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of Combined Statement of Income and Expenditures
For the year ended 30 June 2024

Particulars	2023-2024	MRDI Operational	FOJO-IQJB	Internews (PFCCMB)	TARA-CEM	EU-MSD	TAF-JSMA	TAF-MIMA	TAF-MIMA Phase II	TAF-JFD	CIJ-JCCCR	TCC-AWRTI
	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
Income												
Grant Income	103,369,538	7,722,450	49,281,331	9,837,438	6,711,565	15,849,953	493,043	142,117	3,126,742	2,958,651	3,645,934	3,600,314
Reimbursement of cost against facilities & archiving	1,138,501	1,138,501	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overhead/organizational Cost from Project	7,681,826	7,681,826	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Expert Support cost received from Project	29,000	29,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interest on Bank Deposits	15,125	15,125	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	112,233,990	16,586,902	49,281,331	9,837,438	6,711,565	15,849,953	493,043	142,117	3,126,742	2,958,651	3,645,934	3,600,314
Expenditure												
Programme Cost	42,917,924	4,748,880	16,555,171	4,507,327	2,194,200	8,249,837			1,893,605	1,582,870	2,458,315	727,719
Contribution to Projects	127,054	127,054										
Salary and Benefits	42,678,815	3,503,095	22,911,821	3,613,254	3,283,961	5,228,213			860,223	917,610	600,000	1,760,638
Office rent	2,631,476	(138,143)		553,344	686,580	576,664				353,031	-	600,000
Professional and Audit Fees	965,217	455,000		-	80,000	200,000			75,000		90,000	65,217
Transportation and Conveyance	751,912	438,231	102,090	60,000	24,000	50,000			12,881	28,710	-	36,000
Utility and office maintenance	1,274,683	1,006,248		16,500	36,000	50,000				45,935	-	120,000
Phone, Fax, Internet, Postage etc.	369,951	255,241		18,000	24,000	20,000				28,710	-	24,000
Printing and Stationery	330,490	187,540		58,520	35,999	24,431					-	24,000
Depreciation on Fixed Assets	5,338,085	210,655	4,349,969			142,301	493,043	142,117				-
Depreciation on ROU	849,039	849,039										
Donation and assistance	20,000	20,000										
Bank Charges	96,591	24,142	23,180	6,860	6,180	17,994			4,855	1,785	5,083	6,512
Media Monitoring	231,000	-	231,000				-					-
Newspaper & periodicals	25,200	25,200										-
Facility Charges	946,873	-	70,000	300,000	340,645							236,228
Staff Capacity Building	7,058	7,058										-
Annual Retreat	124,585	124,585										
Registration & Renewal	-	-										
Programme Planning & Design	123,977	123,977										
Miscellaneous Expenses	44,584	44,584					-					
Interest expense on lease liability	49,797	49,797										-
Loss on disposal of assets	20,150	20,150										-
Staff Group Health Insurance premium	249,309	249,309										
Overhead/organizational cost	7,804,960		5,038,100	703,633		1,290,513			280,178		492,536	
	107,978,730	12,331,642	49,281,331	9,837,438	6,711,565	15,849,953	493,043	142,117	3,126,742	2,958,651	3,645,934	3,600,314
Excess/(Short) of Income over Expenditure	4,255,260	4,255,260	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Provision for Income Tax	4,992	4,992										
Excess/(Short) of Income over Expenditure	4,250,268	4,250,268	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	112,233,990	16,586,902	49,281,331	9,837,438	6,711,565	15,849,953	493,043	142,117	3,126,742	2,958,651	3,645,934	3,600,314

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of Combined Statement of Receipts and Payments
For the year ended 30 June 2024

Particulars	Total 2023-2024	MRDI Operational	FOJO-IQJB	Internews (PFCCMB)	TARA-CEM	EU-MSD	TAF-JSMA	TAF-MIMA	TAF-MIMA Phase II	TAF-JFD	CIJ-JCCCR	TCC-AWRTI	Gaon Swapna
	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
Opening Balance													
Cash in hand	14,184	9,184	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,000
Cash at bank	30,470,379	4,040,344	12,486,265	3,039,319	1,685,089	9,070,666	-	-	-	-	-	-	148,696
	30,484,563	4,049,528	12,486,265	3,039,319	1,685,089	9,070,666	-	-	-	-	-	-	153,696
Receipts													
Donor Fund Received	105,852,971	13,122,058	51,935,124	7,589,789	11,396,514	6,987,004			3,227,711	3,279,098	3,877,527	4,438,146	-
Realization of Advance and Prepayments	-												
Interest on Project Bank Account	225,825		115,131	4,744	19,479	15,083			1,830	2,418	2,633	5,668	58,839
Reimbursement of cost against Archiving & facilities	1,138,501	1,138,501	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Expert Support cost received from Project	29,000	29,000	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Capital Fund (Closing from Project Bank account)	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Sale of Gaon Swapna Products	48,613	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	48,613
Reimbursement of cost against MRDI writing pad & folder	69,009	69,009	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Interest on Bank Deposits	15,125	15,125	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income (Sale of scrap of old Assets)	41,000	41,000	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Previous years adjustment Account	646,500	646,500	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Directors entry fees & subscription	9,500	9,500	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Other Receivable: CPF Forfeiture Account	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Overhead/organizational Cost from Project	7,681,826	7,681,826	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
	115,757,870	22,752,519	52,050,255	7,594,533	11,415,993	7,002,087		-	3,229,541	3,281,516	3,880,160	4,443,814	107,452
Total	146,242,433	26,802,047	64,536,520	10,633,852	13,101,082	16,072,753		-	3,229,541	3,281,516	3,880,160	4,443,814	261,148
Payments													
Programme Cost	42,917,924	4,748,880	16,555,171	4,507,327	2,194,200	8,249,837		-	1,893,605	1,582,870	2,458,315	727,719	-
Contribution to Projects	127,054	127,054	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Salary and Benefits	42,678,815	3,503,095	22,911,821	3,613,254	3,283,961	5,228,213			860,223	917,610	600,000	1,760,638	-
Office Rent	3,688,956	919,337	-	553,344	686,580	576,664			-	353,031	-	600,000	-
Lease payment-office rent	-												
Audit fees & other professional fees	595,217	85,000	-	-	80,000	200,000			75,000	-	90,000	65,217	-
Transportation and Conveyance	738,592	424,911	102,090	60,000	24,000	50,000			12,881	28,710	-	36,000	-
Overseas Travel	13,320	13,320	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Utility	548,525	280,090	-	16,500	36,000	50,000			-	45,935	-	120,000	-
Repair and Office Maintenance	677,554	677,554	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Phone, Fax, Internet, Postage	369,951	255,241	-	18,000	24,000	20,000			-	28,710	-	24,000	-
Printing and Stationery & supplies	288,107	145,157	-	58,520	35,999	24,431			-	-	-	24,000	-
Facility Charges	946,873	-	70,000	300,000	340,645	-			-	-	-	236,228	-
Purchase of Fixed Assets	852,191	-	472,271	-	240,690	-			-	139,230	-	-	-
Automation/Software Development Cost (Work in Progress)	360,000	-	360,000	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Payment of Outstanding Liabilities	3,040,137	3,040,137	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Donation & Assistance	50,000	20,000	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	30,000
Advance & prepayments	120,000	120,000	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Newspaper & periodicals	25,200	25,200	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Gaon Swapna operational expenses	782	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	782
Investment in FDR	54,286	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	54,286
Staff Group Health Insurance Premium	249,309	249,309	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Bank Charges	99,266	24,142	23,180	6,860	6,180	17,994			4,855	1,785	5,083	6,512	2,675
Media Monitoring	231,000	-	231,000	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Donor Fund Received	2,443,286	2,443,286	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Reimbursable Cost from projects	261,355	261,355	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-
Income Tax Paid in advance	4,992	1,986	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	3,006

29

Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)
Schedule of Combined Statement of Receipts and Payments
For the year ended 30 June 2024

Particulars	Total 2023-2024	MRDI Operational	FOJO-IQJB	Internews (PFCCMB)	TARA-CEM	EU-MSD	TAF-JSMA	TAF-MIMA	TAF-MIMA Phase II	TAF-JFD	CIJ-JCCCR	TCC-AWRTI	Gaon Swapna
	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT	BDT
Staff Capacity Building	7,058	7,058	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Retreat	124,585	124,585	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Programme Planning & Design	123,977	123,977	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Expenses	44,584	44,584	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stock of MRDI Writing Pad	214,350	214,350	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Previous years adjustment Account	2,976	2,976											
Overhead/organizational Cost to MRDI	7,804,960	-	5,038,100	703,633		1,290,513			280,178		492,536		-
	109,705,182	17,882,584	45,763,633	9,837,438	6,952,255	15,707,652	-	-	3,126,742	3,097,881	3,645,934	3,600,314	90,749
Closing Balance													
Cash in hand	19,200	14,982	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,218
Cash at Bank	36,518,051	8,904,481	18,772,887	796,414	6,148,827	365,101	-	-	102,799	183,635	234,226	843,500	166,181
	36,537,251	8,919,463	18,772,887	796,414	6,148,827	365,101	-	-	102,799	183,635	234,226	843,500	170,399
	146,242,433	26,802,047	64,536,520	10,633,852	13,101,082	16,072,753	-	-	3,229,541	3,281,516	3,880,160	4,443,814	261,148