



POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND

EVALUATION REPORT

Project No: UDF-17-763-BHU
Empowering Rural Communities in Bhutan through Mass Media

19 December 2022

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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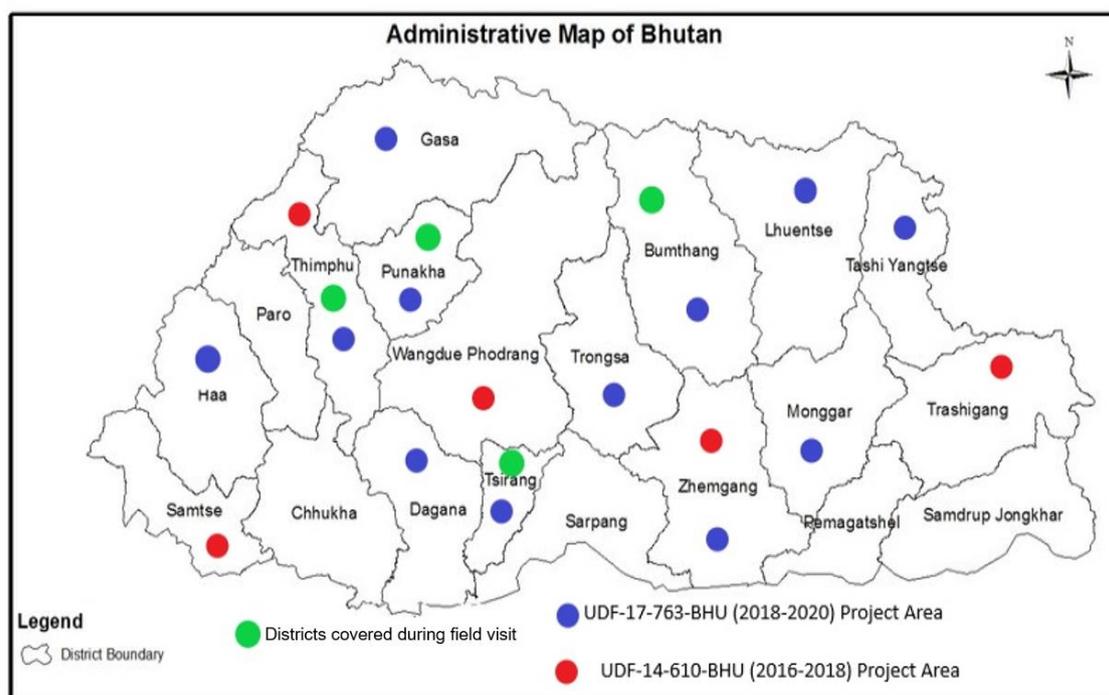


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I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This report mainly evaluates the ‘Empowering Rural Communities in Bhutan through Mass Media’ Project (UDF-17-763-BHU, hereafter R12 project), which was implemented by the Journalists’ Association of Bhutan (JAB) from 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2020, with an extension of 14 months and with a total UNDEF grant of US\$ 154,000. The project’s goal was to address the low level of media knowledge and social media awareness among Bhutan’s rural population, the urban-centric news media, and the lack of viable, private and free media coverage on rural issues. While the evaluation’s focus is this project, the report also examines the impact of the first UNDEF grant to the grantee broadly, ‘Journalism Development in Bhutan’ (UDF-BHU-14-610, hereafter R9 project), implemented from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018 to build the capacity of journalists and a journalist association in Bhutan. The R9 project trained journalists to report on local issues in traditional and social media and encouraged rural communities to engage in active and fact-based reporting.

The intended outcomes of the R12 project were to see that: (1) The rural communities gain relevant skills and knowledge on mass media (focusing on traditional media); (2) The Bhutanese journalists ensured excellent coverage of issues in remote, far-flung areas and brought the marginalized into the mainstream national discourse; (3) Rural communities’ relevant skills and technical know-how in using social media and online apps and tools increased (focusing on new media).

The primary intended functions of the project were to: Educate 400 rural community members and prepare them to get their voices heard in the mainstream media; Inspire Radio Jockeys(RJs) to create content from community stories in local dialect; Assist Community Media Forums in identifying issues and challenges and using social media to disseminate them; Provide guidance of mentors for young journalists in the production of high-quality stories from diverse regions and remote locations across multiple media platforms; Provide Rural Reporting Grants to support the production of investigative reports and to promote professionalism; Recognize and reward media professionals for their stories from rural areas that bring the urban reader closer to rural levels and bridging the gap between urban and rural readers; Prepare rural community members to become citizen journalists through the use of online applications and social media sharing, and Community-based social media platforms remain updated with local news and information. Small grants were awarded by a jury to recognize excellence in local journalism and to encourage continued meaningful contributions to free media in Bhutan by individual journalists.

The project objectives were directly **relevant** in Bhutan’s environment, where the functions of media outlets were severely hampered by a lack of financial and trained human resources, making these initiatives crucial in assisting the journalists in their professional capacity development. Although Bhutan has moved from monarchy to electoral democracy, the marginalization of its majority rural population in democratic participation and a culture of silence remains embedded. Urban-centric elitism remains visible in every sphere of Bhutanese lives. The rural lives remained discriminated against based on geography,

technology, access to information and active democratic participation on a day-to-day basis. The state supported Media's monopoly constrains Bhutan's claim of an independent press. Private media, not backed by market forces, has a symbolic presence. Rural Bhutan remained a media dark area without a media watchdog and competition. Through capacity development activities, the project encouraged the rural community and journalists to report and promotes stories from the most interior regions of Bhutan, compelling the mainstream media to publish and change the dominant perception that news coverage is predominantly urban-centric. Providing rural reporting grants, establishing community media forums, and the emergence of a generation of trained citizen journalists addressed the demand for an increase in rural news coverage. Within a short duration, rural people understood and realized how the media works and how to utilize social media responsibly to highlight their stories. Such training was essential given the expanding reach and usage of mobile and Smartphone in the country, especially among young people who use them as a source of news and information.

The project activities and outcomes were **coherent** with JAB's organizational objectives and priorities. The project activities aligned with other programmes carried out by JAB. These were consistent with the government's media policies and the country's aim to create a dynamic democracy and sustainable society through decentralization (National Key Result Area 13, 12th Five-Year Plan). Externally, the project objectives are in tune with the Bhutan government's commitment to the charters in SDG.

The project reports, feedback from the beneficiaries during field interviews, and post project developments of professionalism among the members of various rural communities and media persons cross the country indicate that the project was **effective**. They have been sharing their stories on as many social media platforms as possible and sending them to mainstream reporters, demonstrating an innate ability to recognize news and report on it. The mentorship and Social media training were the most popular among participants, with a large proportion of women beneficiaries, including many from rural areas using WeChat, and Facebook. The rural-based reporters and community members developed an amicable agreement with reporters from city-based news agencies, local administration, and elected representatives of their areas. It helped both sides obtain leads for their stories and, in turn, assisted them in addressing and resolving media-related issues. In the news editor's rooms, every rural report displaced several urban stories in a fierce competition for space, as a senior journalist admitted, proving the initiative's effectiveness.

The project was **efficient** in delivering anticipated outcomes within the assigned budget. The project management undertook necessary and timely measures to rationalize available resources—the allotted funds spent according to the approved budget line. The project received no contributions from any other sources. The actual number of participants was more than the planned number. The female participants outnumbered the male in every programme. JAB's previous experience in implementing the UNDEF project helped it to incorporate the lessons learned into its efforts throughout this time. It developed a relatively efficient module for programme planning, resource allocation, and follow-up with the beneficiaries.

The **impacts** of the project were visible on the ground. Social media as a tool provided an opportunity to the citizen journalists from the rural community representing different ethnic groups, dialects, religions and regions into the public domain, raising voices and asking questions to the state representatives which would have otherwise been unthinkable. It gave a voice to traditionally marginalized groups like religious minorities, women, economically poor, raising their issues at local levels. Their views, perspectives, and questions are all in the public sphere without the patronage of mainstream city-based media. Beneficiaries of Media grants independently investigated rural stories produced and re-produced in several media and online portals. Those in the media business realized that rural stories sell, and one needs to capture them from the popular perspective. Urban Bhutan also wanted to listen to the voices from other parts of the country. Social media brought responsibility, fearlessness and commitment to democratic values in content creation and dissemination. Online and offline networks of media persons and community members opened up enormous opportunities for information sharing, content enhancement, social media use of mutual benefits and generating a viable business model for the private media groups. However, JAB still needs to do a mapping of beneficiaries' impact data. Undoubtedly, the community-level reports have woken the government machinery to address the community demands. There was also evidence of rural stories increasing in the national-level traditional media. One of the possibly most significant impacts is the emergence of strong and professionally determined women journalists in the community and established media space. The project through training, workshops, mentorship, field visits to rural areas, collaborations with governmental, non-governmental institutions and community-based organisations, publications and advocacy work gave each beneficiary an opportunity to earn a name, respect, visibility, appreciation, income and a professional sense of identity that most would not have had otherwise.

The project helped JAB increase its organizational profile at every level resulting in more applications for its membership. This took JAB a step closer towards **sustainability** as an organization. However, it is improbable that the continuation of initiatives, like the critical and much-needed capacity-building programmes, would be possible without external grants. But, media grants, annual awards for best reporting and locally formed community media groups will likely continue to exist.

To **conclude**, the project demonstrated that adequately designed training and mentoring could transform active citizens into citizen journalists and realize their role in strengthening the ongoing democratic process by using media as a tool. The training also helped the media to scale up their knowledge on how to treat a story from rural Bhutan for a universal audience. The networks of community members from rural areas and the media helped promote collaborations and bridge the gaps in their perspectives. Many beneficiaries had to work in challenging environments and face physical, cultural and social constraints to highlight stories from faraway villages so that people understand the lives on the margins and respect diversity. The volume of news produced from rural Bhutan at the community level contributed to public accountability. However, it is improbable that the project can continue in its present form without an external grant.

Based on the above findings, the evaluation team **recommends** that JAB and its members consider the merits of data-driven journalism since it brings credibility to the stories and

news. Emphasizing ethical reporting enhances the profile of the reporter and the media. An online campaign to generate public awareness and dialogue about community issues should keep the financial challenges in mind. Any new media and community capacity-building project should have added focus on building empathy for gender rights, rights of persons with special needs and rights of national minorities and rights of the LGBT community in its awareness component. Future project planning should also add marketing and advertising training.

Lessons Learned

Bhutan is ambitious to "make the cultural perspective visible in all development co-operation and projects", which suggests a "mainstreaming" approach. Nevertheless, it would be highly relevant to systematically include the roles of culture in media development and the promotion of democracy and democratic institutions.

Mentoring as a model for capacity strengthening has worked. However, after starting the mentoring, trainees expressed that some of the more difficult techniques, such as editing and content packaging, self-censorship and other technical and editorial skills, were better understood and practised due to timely advice and guidance from their mentors.

As digital technologies take hold, two ways media- community audience engagement will only become richer and more complex. There is also a need to remain alert about new technology and devise innovative forms of audience research online and offline.

II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

i. Development Context

Bhutan transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional democracy in 2008. The constitution necessitated the creation of democratic institutions and mandated the devolution of power and authority to locally elected government organizations. The country promotes the Gross National Happiness (GNH) development concept, which emphasizes combining economic progress with cultural and environmental well-being within good governance. Its development policy goal (2018-23) seeks a “Just, Harmonious, and Sustainable Society through Enhanced Decentralization”.

Acknowledging the role of media in democratic reform, His Majesty the Fifth King, at the concluding ceremony of the 3rd session of Parliament, 2009, underlined the crucial role of media in informing the public and fostering citizens’ participation in making a democracy vibrant. The establishment of the Bhutan Media Foundation by a Royal Charter on 21 February 2010 marked the beginning of the government’s initiative to develop robust and responsible media. Subsequently, the Media and Information Policy, the Social Media Policy, 2016, and the Information and Communication Media Act, 2018 came into force to govern, develop and promote the media sector, protect modes and sources of communications and information, and professionalize evidence-based reporting. It also created government entities like the Media Council of Bhutan, the Bhutan InfoCom and Media Authority, and the Department of Information and Media under the Ministry of Information and Communication for monitoring policy implementation. Simultaneously, civil society organizations (CSOs) engaged in media promotion were encouraged. Citizens formed organizations like the Journalists’ Association of Bhutan (JAB) to promote professionalism in the field of journalism, uphold freedom of expression, protect and promote the right to information, maintain high ethical standards in journalism, and safeguard journalists.

According to the Freedom House Report titled “Freedom in the World, 2020”, Bhutan is a partly free country¹. According to the report, the country has made significant progress in consolidating democracy over the past decade by holding multiple credible elections. There are ongoing problems like discrimination against Nepali-speaking and non-Buddhist minorities, media self-censorship, and the use of libel and defamation cases to silence journalists. By cornering near total advertisement revenue, the state-sponsored media had subjected the private media to financial fragility since its inception in 2006. The Bhutan Media Impact Studies, 2008² and a study titled, ‘The Media Development Assessment, 2010³’ underlined other serious challenges before media, such as lack of media professionalism, uncertainty over media sustainability, difficulties in accessing public information, coverage of predominantly urban stories, and lack of media literacy programmes.

1 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bhutan/freedom-world/2020>

2. <https://www.bmf.bt/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Media-Impact-Study-2008.pdf>

3. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000214729>

The main goal of the preceding R9 project “Journalism Development in Bhutan” (UDF-BHU-14-610), implemented between 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018, was to develop professionalism in journalism by building the competency of the journalists. For the first time, professional training courses prepared by media experts at introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels were offered to media persons by a media organization to fill the critical knowledge and skills gap left in the newsroom by the high turnover of newsroom staff. These training modules continue as reference material for all future training programmes.

ii. The project objective and intervention rationale

The R12 Project (UDF--17-763-BHU), presently under evaluation, aimed to address low levels of media knowledge and social media awareness in Bhutan’s rural population, urban-centric news media, and the lack of viable, private and accessible media coverage on rural issues by training journalists to report on local topics in both mainstream and social media. Small grants were awarded by a jury to recognize excellence in local journalism and to encourage continued meaningful contributions to free media in Bhutan by individual journalists. Given that the rural population is a vast democratic force in the young democracy, the grantee expected that a rise in awareness about the role and function of media would enhance people’s democratic participation. The urban-centric media stories would give way to reports from the farthest corner of the country. People would have more say in the development priorities of their area and simultaneously seek state accountability under access to information. Citizen journalists would forge healthy partnerships with mainstream media representatives due to media and social media tools and higher media literacy. The issues and challenges of the rural communities would get highlighted more often in popular mainstream media through unique initiatives like rural reporting grants, awards, and the publication of Bhutan Press Mirror highlights rural issues and stories.

UNDEF extended this two years project by 14 months due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The total grant approved for the project was US \$154,000. The disbursed amount was US \$116,607. This project has no additional funding other than the UNDEF grant. Overall, the project contributed to developing and enhancing free media in Bhutan. It targeted 12 selected remote communities for media awareness, advocacy, and training on social media and online apps and tools. This helped them effectively use the media, including community radio, as a powerful force for social and democratic transformation. The Implementing Agency – Journalists’ Association of Bhutan (JAB) engaged the media experts among its members to deliver the training. JAB also encouraged the community members to report on the issues emerging from the training, including how community radio has impacted their lives.

iii. Project strategy and approach

JAB’s R12 application to UNDEF was aimed at building on all the milestones it reached at the end of the preceding R9 project. Through the R12 project, JAB planned to introduce rural

journalism pro-actively into mainstream journalism making the media outreach more inclusive and diverse. Despite the reasonable success of R9, JAB had identified some risks for the second project. Members from marginalized communities were seen as highly vulnerable to social pressure and resistance to acting as independent citizen journalists. The challenge was how to encourage and keep them positive. JAB focussed on the Community Media Forum, which was the information hub in the rural areas and where it made an effort to identify literate, an active social media user and a good communicator and encouraged the person to document the discussion in the forum. To continue two ways communication, JAB kept sending journalists among the trainees or rural reporting grant recipients to the meetings of the Community Media Forum as a facilitator who helped the members structure the issues, document them and also report back to JAB about the progress. In contrast to its apprehension, there were overwhelming responses to its Rural Reporting Grant initiative. Low literacy levels among potential readers were also a risk that the project addressed by using simple language in the newspaper and by undertaking promotional activities to reach readers in remote rural areas.

There were three expected outcomes of the project. 1: Rural communities gain relevant skills and knowledge on mass media (with a focus on traditional media); 2: Bhutanese journalists ensure greater coverage of issues in remote, far-flung areas and bring the marginalized into the mainstream national discourse; and 3: Rural communities gain relevant skills and technical know-how on the use of social media and tools (with a focus on new media). The expected results at the outcome levels were clearly defined (Annexure 1: Results at the Outcome Level).

III.EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was completed by Dr Mohanlal Panda from India, and Mr Lekey Wangdi, from Bhutan. Both are experts in civic participation and democratic governance. Due to the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions for foreign nationals, Mr Wangdi, the local expert, travelled to the project areas and interviewed the beneficiaries between 3 July and 7 July 2022. Since the UNDEF evaluations follow OECD development assistance criteria that focus on the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, as well as the specific criterion of value added from UNDEF funding, the evaluators prepared the report following the same structure. The evaluators undertook desk research on the issues related to democracy, development, electoral participation, government policies, and the state of media, including the role of private players in the context of Bhutan. Both national and foreign sources of information were referred to understand contextual and cognitive factors influencing every relevant issue. They also reviewed all project documents like reports, videos, issue-based short stories, short films and press clippings provided by the grantee to UNDEF and to the evaluators directly. The grantee cooperated in providing all necessary documents sought by the evaluators during the evaluation process (Annexure 1,2,3,4 and 5).

The persons interviewed were representatives drawn from beneficiaries, trainers, mentors, local administration, political executives, media owners, project staff, radio jockeys, bloggers, CSOs and UN agencies. The interviews were conducted both in person and over the telephone. A total of 49 persons were interviewed depending on their availability and consent. There were 29 males and 20 females among the interviewees.

While no restrictions could have significantly influenced the review's results and conclusions, the evaluation team would like to mention that the scheduled field trip occurred during the monsoon season. Travelling to remote settlements through damaged roads with poor mobile networks was exceedingly time-consuming. As a result, some beneficiaries could not reach the interview meeting point despite confirmation. Unfortunately, those who came to the meeting points left early as they needed more time to cover the same distance to go back home through the hills in fading day light (Annexure 6).

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

i. Relevance

The project was directly **relevant** to the mandate of the grantee, the JAB, which focuses on issues of capacity building of media persons and the promotion of professional and inclusive media in the country.

The responses from the beneficiaries to the first UNDEF-funded project (UDF-BHU-14-610, also called R9), motivated JAB to prepare an application for a second project, (UDF-BHU-17-763, also called R12). JAB wanted to consolidate the gains of R9 and saw this as an opportunity to bridge the information gap in remote areas; a means to empower media communities and create an atmosphere conducive to changing the existing media practices, which was entirely favourable to the state-run media agencies. This project design focused on extending JAB's effort to connect the media fraternity online and offline, making the individual location irrelevant. Networking of rural and urban media persons was an appropriate decision for consolidating resources, news and information sharing on a real-time basis and availing the services of the experts and mentors already present in the nearest locations. JAB's website and individual blogs were relevant as they provided a wider choice for the readers and built a relationship with the authors to expand the efforts to mainstream the rural stories on social media platforms.

The field activities in the design were focused on capacity building of the new groups of media persons and community members and reinforcing the knowledge and technique of the previous project participants, especially in using social media, which they would need for networking and online activities. The social media training also appeared directly relevant to the interests of many beneficiary reporters, who used the skills to open and operate their email, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. Other activities, like networking forums, were intended to link the community reporters' efforts with the mainstream media and to provide a follow-up for the stories reported. The strategy was to

give synergistic programming and activities that would increase the project's relevance. The activities were also directly relevant to the project's objectives and in line with the need to strengthen the democratic participation of rural communities and women from every part of the country. Although Bhutan is a nascent democracy, the issues of linguistic and ethnic discrimination remain embedded in its polity. Women and marginalized groups remain isolated from mainstream democratic participation due to social status, geography, education level and language, which limit their voice and role.

The training programmes addressed the employability of the media persons at a time when media houses faced challenges of hiring qualified human resources due to unstable financial situations. As a result, the media houses were forced to hire inexperienced and multi-tasking journalists and witness a high rate of attrition. The training classes on advanced reporting and editing, photojournalism, extended story writing, mentorship programmes, essential journalism for young reporters, and lengthy narrative writing helped many young reporters enhance their professional skills. These trainings indeed helped many participants receive good job offers based on their professional competencies.

In the absence of media literacy, the government, other agencies, and society as news consumers had to deal with misinformation, fake news, incorrect information, and the proliferation of graphic materials. According to a private media owner, the advent of social media has altered the dynamics of the media industry in promoting freedom of expression, content creation, and information sharing. Therefore, the project intervention was timely, and the objective for the media community to remain involved, engaged, and fact-check information is highly relevant.

ii. Coherence

JAB adopted an integrated and build-on approach to project formulation and implementation, and the R12 project was in alignment with it. Even today, JAB remains a lead CSO formed by the journalists, for the journalists and of the journalists in Bhutan. All of its activities followed a non-discriminatory clause towards gender, religion, language and ethnicity. Members were periodically oriented to various gender sensitization programmes to uphold this view.

JAB collaborated with other funding agencies to increase its reach in rural areas so far not covered by UNDEF-supported initiatives on mutually acceptable terms. These collaborations also ensured measures to ensure non-duplication of project objectives and activities. The website of JAB published⁴stories submitted by rural communities for which financial support came from Helvetas. The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) offered to collaborate to publish the Bhutan Press Mirror, originally initiated during the implementation of the first UNDEF project and two rural reporting projects on gender. Likewise, the South Asia Small Grant Fund collaborated to publish a special edition of

4. www.meeserlay.com

Bhutan Press Mirror on managing disinformation. JAB also built collaborations with Delhi Union of Journalists, Indian Journalists Union as well as Press Councils of India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

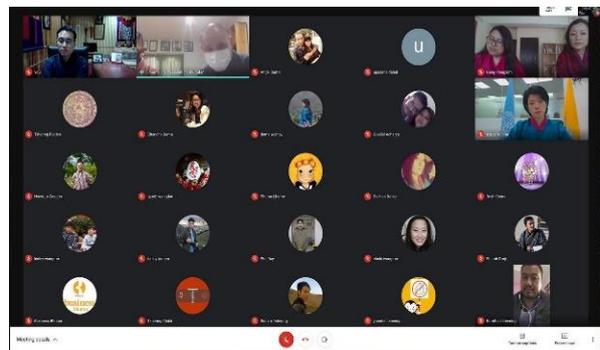
The UNDEF project objectives complemented Bhutan's policies and priorities towards global processes like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The participants from the media considered the project having high synergy with the government programmes to address SDGs.

They stated that there were alignments between the training they attended and other ongoing initiatives of the government and other United Nations agencies like UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women. The beneficiaries also informed that their stories often refer to the statistics and indicators of the SDGs.

Implementation of two successive UNDEF-funded projects raised the profile of JAB among the CSOs working in the media sector and those in government agencies. It not only became a resource centre for media-related training and advocacy works but also extended support for all kinds of collaboration for sharing its expertise. The Ministry of Health and UN Bhutan often partnered with JAB for their media-specific programs.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)⁵ offered to assist JAB in setting up a training program on digital safety and advocacy. Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung Media Program⁶ Asia collaborated with JAB and provided support to create an investigative journalism manual. Such collaboration enabled it to strengthen **coherence** across projects and use the available resources more efficiently and effectively.

During the interviews, the evaluator observed that while JAB made efforts to deliver quality Media Literacy Trainings to the participants, the same is not true in case of many other trainings with the same title. Organisations without previous experiences and competencies are following different training modules targeting different groups of beneficiaries. Due to the longitudinal nature of these courses, there was a demand for competent and qualified resource persons to remain engaged with the beneficiaries. At present, there is absence of established mechanism to verify and certify the qualifications and competencies of the trainers/resource persons. For instance, the Bhutan Media Foundation, Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy and the Department of Information and Media (DoIM) organized media literacy activities in schools to help people comprehend the function of the media in a democracy and be technologically literate. Also, there was a total absence of convergence of these programmes with any national policy goal.



6th Annual Journalism Awards ceremony held virtually

5. <https://www.ifj.org/press-card/nepal.html>

6. <https://www.kas.de/en/web/medien-asien>

iii. Effectiveness

The lack of post-training survey data made it difficult to permit an evaluation of successful knowledge transfer or participant empowerment. Nevertheless, based on the anecdotal evidence obtained during the evaluation and the beneficiaries' responses on various social media platforms, the **participants seemed adequately trained and ready to take up their job**

with improved skill sets. Some mainstream media persons during the interview named male and female reporters and a few rural community members stated that, post-training, they had developed an innate ability to identify news and report on it. The interviewed female reporters appeared confident in their ability to cover and report on local events. During the interaction, **many members of the local media community agreed that the capacity-building programme gave participants a professional advantage.**



Meeting of Mentorship Programme

Outcome 1:

Media friendly members from Rural Community and Urban Media reaching out to Media Dark Areas: The physical interactions with the resource persons from the media gave the active members of the rural community an idea and a purpose to serve their own and communities living in their periphery with a mobile phone, lots of patience and willingness to work as a team.

By studying tactics for success on Twitter, Facebook, and Blogs, **they enhanced their capacity to utilize new media tools for building an alliance** with traditional media practitioners for issue-based advocacy. This could encompass not only the community members but also other institutions of importance in the area. For example, the training team of the project reached out to a school with only eight kids and two instructors in Soe, one of the country's most remote highlands⁷. The interactive training session with the media was the first to be held in that village that piqued people's interest. It was a ground-breaking moment for the community members who are rarely visited by government officials. They seized the opportunity to build a relationship for mutual benefit with the training team and mainstream media contacts.

"The readers and their views were always in the mind of all capacity building activities"

-Community Member

⁷<https://bit.ly/2Hr1eB1>

It was the beginning of a process in which the community's **unheard voices became popular**. The beneficiaries from the rural communities started realizing and assessing their information needs and managed to locate and access the needed information in a timely fashion. Following the training there was a rush to highlight and broadcast rural issues in the WeChat groups of the forum. But with time, all **members realized that the forum is a collective reflection of individual aspirations, democratically and professionally moderated by JAB** and linked up with the mainstream media so that the community issues are properly structured and communicated to the mainstream media and other social media platforms.

Effective Mentorship: In a culturally conservative society such as Bhutan, **mentors guided the participants in presenting stories on themes that conflict with cultural values**, such as the attire favoured by the younger generation, without offending the elder generation's faith. JAB believed in drawing a line between journalistic activism and reporting while ensuring that it covered all viewpoints to stay non-partisan. This **understanding of objective reporting and respecting the present and potential audience sensibilities was an accomplishment**. Using experienced and expert media persons to mentor was an effective way to train new media persons, as most of the learning was done "by doing". All have benefitted from their discussions on having a clearer, more detailed understanding while making a story of the demographic characteristics, linguistic composition, information needs, media access and usage habits and preferences, and aspirations of their existing and potential audiences.

Community and Campus Radios building Generational bridges: The community and campus radio hosts (RJs) promoted listener groups and encouraged their followers to listen to the radio together. Both comprised of members of different age groups and **fostered socialization, constructive dialogue, and the convergence of ideas and development priorities at different levels**.

"Training has assisted me in enhancing radio material and re-organizing my programmes effectively"

-Radio Jockey

The hosts also allowed the group members to post comments on the Facebook page and develop a discussion thread. The audience responses were documented more methodologically for discussion and editing which helps reworking of several show components to **improve audience comprehension**. For example, sensing an increase in community members' well documented expression of discontent during various interactive programmes, local officials began joining live radio debates not only to hear the citizens' voices but also tell their side of stories on behalf of a responsive government. These engaging dialogues marked the beginning of a healthy democratic process and facilitated citizens' access to information. **The participants were now more aware of the importance of their voices**.

Outcome 2:

Sensitising the Media to tell a Long Narrative 'Rural Story' to an Urban Audience: It was necessary to orient and upskill the urban media to create demand for a long rural story which the consumer buys and shows interest in other such stories. Reports like 'The story of local Lime producers', 'Human Wildlife Conflict' and 'New farm road a blessing for the farm producers and Health emergency' published by the participants of the 'training for long narrative story writing' **brought concern and empathy** among both urban and rural new consumers towards the rural population. These news items received feedback like 'can we see more such stories. Long narrative stories need patience, research and a demand to live with the story as it develops which many journalists have learned to adopt in course of time. During the project period, all the thirty participants wrote a piece of rural story while only ten stories were published by various media outlets. However, none of them have stopped writing rural stories. If the stories were not published in the traditional media, they share them in their blogs.

Connecting Media persons and News consumers: The **rural outreach rewarded media organizations** by undertaking formative research for their programmes or stories. During fieldwork, the recipient of a media grant discovered that community members had varying interpretations of the term 'governance'. Regardless of its significance in the capital Thimphu for some, it was all about fast redressal of their complaints against the local administration's indifference to their demands and prioritising distinct developmental priorities of their areas. Some other residents viewed 'governance' as ensuring that their local schools have sufficient numbers of teachers and study materials or timely availability of vital community health services. Regular and reliable communication between the media and the public helped the consumers of information in assessing the value of the media's current activities from the audience's perspective. It also helped media **securing the involvement of the diverse groups** that the media outlet must serve to be self-sustaining.

Capacity Building: From Practice to Praxis:

During the interviews, the beneficiaries spoke about expanded understanding and the use of new technical production abilities. Some senior journalists hosting talk shows on radio and television **admitted that the training helped them understand how to identify issues, perform in-depth research, ask proper questions to the relevant parties, and pursue them strategically to get them to commit and end with an inclusive note.**



Field visit of the participants during training of the Long-form story writing

8. www.facebook.com/humansofthimphuofficial

Among the 1605 beneficiaries of R12, the LGBT community had a representation of 5 members, which showed the **diverse and non-discriminatory practice of JAB** in finalizing the list of beneficiaries of various capacity building programmes. Most of the LGBT participants were members of JAB and actively participated in its rural outreach components.

Unfortunately, the JAB reports to UNDEF did not give detail which representatives the 'others' beneficiary category included. It is understood that this was in part due to the unwillingness of the same participants to be identified during the training. However, after their association with JAB through successive UNDEF projects, the LGBT community members have been running a Facebook page⁸ which carries the testimonies of community members from every part of Bhutan.

By validating different sources one can conclude that the **project effectively contributed to developing the Media's capacity to generate accurate, fair, balanced, and impartial material.**

This training method psychologically prepared the reporters for a tough road ahead and pushed them to prove their market worth every day. It required them to stray from their comfort zone of depending on official news releases or secondary sources and search and secure sources which would make them stand out. The **technique of documenting issues and concerns of a diverse society and representing it in the public domain in a non-partisan way is becoming a practice among the serious professional reporters both from rural and urban background in recent years.** However, there are practical obstacles to obtaining information from many sources, particularly for citizen journalists or media professionals representing tiny local media outlets, who may need more time and money to afford it. Due to cultural factors, it may not be practicable for a female journalist to do so for every story. JAB has also effectively mobilized the entire media fraternity to **adopt a Journalism Code of Ethics**, which served as a reference point for journalism ethics, principles, code of conduct, and challenges/barriers confronting Bhutanese journalists. The training successfully conveyed that journalists continue to be independent, not neutral, and serve a social function.

"We want to bring the lives of rural Bhutan to life through their voices and words, their stories handed down through the generations."

-A young journalist

Consolidating Professionalism and Democratic diversity: Rural Reporting Grants', which incentivised and honoured 47 media persons for highlighting researched rural stories in various media and social media platforms and 'Monthly Press Club Dialogue', which brought together policymakers, experts and public figures, including the then Prime Minister, to speak on various national and global issues and interact with media professionals were **two of the project's sustainable and landmark initiatives.** Over a thousand hard copies and electronic versions of 'Bhutan Press Mirror', the publicity and advocacy tool of JAB, which carried articles of rural reporting grantees and other invited

media persons who wrote on specific issue, were distributed among decision-makers, academic institutions, local governments, and opinion leaders. Through R9 and R12, JAB was able to establish a **critical mass of media professionals of various genres** across Bhutan that transcends the country's geographical, social and linguistic limitations. Its training modules have carved out a niche for the entire media professionals community and have been a reference point for other training programmes.



Former Prime Minister, Bhutan during the launch of Bhutan Press Mirror, Issue II

Outcome 3:

Social Media as Information multiplier: The training on social media appeared to be quite practical, as the participants learned how to use their Smartphone to capture images for their stories, which they could download whenever they wanted. Many discovered the advantages of owning a Smartphone, which allows them to **conduct online research, snap pictures and send their reports** immediately to the office, rather than travelling there and using the office computer.

JAB played a crucial role in ensuring that social media groups it helped in forming at several levels in various communities operate in a coordinated manner and remain active through local participation and timely intervention by professionals. As the number of **mobile phones outnumbered computers** in each household, media houses hired qualified specialists to create focused content and keep their social media platforms more engaging, dynamic, and audience-centric. The live discussions and debates now have representation of participants from diverse regions, economic backgrounds and social groups. The organizers of such programmes have recently observed that government officials stationed in rural areas were joining the programme live to listen to the varied perspectives of the audience.

According to a report titled, "Social Media Landscape in Bhutan"⁹, published by Bhutan Media Foundation, 2021, about 90% of people are active members of at least one social media. The high penetration rate is supported by widespread ownership of smartphones and greater access to the internet. Multiplatform membership is a defining feature of the social media landscape in Bhutan, with Facebook, WeChat, and YouTube being the three most popular platforms, many community members admitting to using at least one. Some of them were also members of the social media groups established by several government

9. <http://www.bmf.bt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Social-Media-Landscape-in-Bhutan.pdf>

sectors at the village level, such as the Chiwog Group led by Tshogpa, the Health Group led by the village health assistant, and the Children’s E-Learning Group led by school teachers. Videos shared within the groups linked to government departments highlighting local issues are resulting in **spreading status anxiety** among the local administrative representatives. While all the community media forums formed under the project are generating information, raising voices on local issues and remain connected with the traditional media, evaluators observed that post project very few are alert and active. Some are trying to rework strategy to respond and cope up with the uneasiness of some elements within the local bureaucracy and elected representatives and move ahead with their contribution to the society and democracy at large, some were increasingly confronted with difficulties in coordination, direction and management of the group and the loads of information at their disposal. They required constant facilitation, advice, timely feedback and recommendations from JAB.

The training taught the community members not just to consume news and information but to also act as responsible citizen by using social media platforms to access online apps and tools, particularly Government to Citizen Services (G2C) apps such as Educational Services, Security Clearance, Audit Clearance, Business Services, Judicial Services, Passport Services, Labor and Employment Services, and G2C Online Payment.

iv. Efficiency

JAB developed a capacity-building training model during the implementation of R9, the previous UNDEF-funded project. And it continued to improve on various aspects training, reporting and publication activities over a period of time with learning from other projects.

Execution of training and other activities appeared efficient given some rural communities’ local conditions and isolated nature.



Participants in the workshops for Citizen Journalism and Social Media in Bardo Gewog in Zhemgang

JAB finalized the list of mentors and resource persons for the training from its network of media persons. Often the trainers were chosen from the nearby areas of the training centre. As a result, the overall expense per resource person was less, since the local resource persons maintained lower professional profile and fees and had to travel less distance. Being a nodal organization for the media, JAB’s project activities received priority coverage in the print and electronic media at reduced publicity costs. Many participants also prepared small videos to spread information about the training without asking for financial compensation from JAB.

The review and scrutiny of project reporting documents indicates that the funds spent on the project were well-targeted and provided value for money. The project used the resources effectively to produce a wide range of outputs. The budget was consistent with the delivery of the outcomes. The project grantee made systematic efforts through its existing network to promote the stories from the rural areas in the regional and local newspapers. On the economy side, JAB has done sound financial management despite the period around the Covid-19 pandemic which also made the grantee extremely careful on the expense front while simultaneously winding up the project activities.

The project had a robust administrative and supervisory structure. The Board of Directors, led by the President, oversaw and reviewed all JAB activities, including the UNDEF-funded activities. The JAB board members, consisting of the President, the Executive Director of Bhutan Media Foundation, and other media-related members representing print, radio, television, and freelance journalists, supervised and advised the project staff from time to time during review meetings. The Program Officer of JAB maintained regular contact with all JAB members and journalists working in the Bhutanese media industry, like reporters, editors, camerapersons, photojournalists, freelance journalists, bloggers, social media influencers, and rural community members. For a smooth functioning of the project, the weekly in-house meeting regularly reviewed the preparedness of the planned activities and budget before authorising spending. The Board members, as a part of the agenda of their quarterly meeting took stock of the project progress.

v. *Impact*

Trainings created a platform for progressive cooperation and collaboration between rural community and media: By

continuously exchanging information, clarifications and notes on various rural centric issues, the rural communities and the media demonstrated a greater dedication to engaging and including project beneficiaries in exploring uncharted territory in the media realm. Such participation provided valuable opportunities for the people interested in encouraging various

forms of civic participation within their communities and had the potential to increase public ownership of media. The mainstream media covered only some stories or videos from the community due to various compulsions and constraints. Still, their presence in the open space symbolized the **growing aspiration and demand to be heard** and fulfilment of community needs and interests. The network of like-minded journalists from rural and urban areas raised the bar of reporting on socio-economic and development issues from every part of the country. To improve the quality of their articles, several rural journalists



Monthly Dialogue between with Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (A political party) and the Journalists

have benefited from acquiring new skills, including utilizing the proper terminologies, presenting or referencing accurate data to advance results, and conveying civil society and government perspectives on potential solutions. The positive responses to some stories brought a huge appreciation for some journalists, followed by **better job offers and requests for more work**. When reporting on gender-related topics, most female journalists emphasized oral testimony above expert opinion, which is a significant impact of the training. A critical mass of media people became knowledgeable about reporting citizens' rights and the difficulties of providing fair political coverage. This crucial factor determines the relationship between the media and the government.

JAB helped the publication of articles written by media professionals and community members on their social media sites and other news platforms. As opposed to reactive media coverage, a senior media expert described some of these articles as impactful. He acknowledged and appreciated that engaging and **non-traditional content of high quality** had risen from non-established sources. Those looking to hire promising talents could no longer overlook this pool of competent candidates.

Terminology was culture sensitive. I understood it when interacted with ethnic groups in rural areas".

-Female Journalist

Strengthened Equal Opportunity and Gender Discourse among Media Professionals: Traditionally, news reporting was considered a male career, particularly at the level of field reporters. Some women who would not have had the chance to broaden their viewpoints and advance their careers had access to new opportunities due to training in reporting skills and exposure. Sharing the same training area with other reporters eliminated typical senior-junior and male-female comparisons in the thoughts of women trainees. They carried this idea of gender equality and equal opportunity into their professional careers, which ultimately rewarded them with financial stability and a **sense of journalistic identity**. This was **liberating for some women**, particularly those with less education. They felt empowered because they could communicate with others, especially public officials and male newspaper readers. These women felt respected when they were out working and able to report an issue in a village. They displayed their published or recorded news pieces or films with pride. Some even indicated how much they were compensated for this. Their confidence earned immense respect from their male colleagues. Often the women journalists carry a sense of fear inside themselves while travelling in the rural areas, as they know that not all in the community feel happy to see a woman carrying out an investigative story. With the formation of rural based community level media groups and growing presence of citizens' journalists they have physical support and a mechanism to have access to verified information. They are now accomplishing their tasks within a time frame due to community backing and media fraternity solidarity. These rural female reporters stated that their coverage strengthened local governance and ongoing political processes. In turn, this facilitated people to contribute to the growth of grassroots democracy.

Using technology for promoting diversity of opinions and perspectives in story telling: Through peer-to-peer exchanges, capacity-building activities, and local advocacy, the project functioned as a forum for conversation, the exchange of experiences, and the dissemination of best practices among media practitioners and communities. In addition, they increased the quality of information and the **diversity of media narratives**, emphasizing shared responsibility to provide an informed and critical public opinion, the backbone of democratic, pluralistic, and diverse communities.

Increased professionalism also paved the way for adherence to the journalism code of ethics specific to Bhutan's socio-cultural norms. For instance, Kuensel, the largest newspaper in Bhutan, ceased publishing articles on the rape of minors and stopped naming and shaming individuals under arrest by posting their photographs.

Reports on dying colloquial languages, effects of new fabrics and designs on traditional costumes, the problem of generational transitions in musical preferences, issues of nationalism and sub-nationalism and assessments of the implications of globalization mirrored the various moods of the nation. All carried a message and viewpoints from the **most remote regions** of the country. The local community congratulated certain media professionals and community members whose images appeared alongside their tales in newspapers or online news platforms.

"Community radio owned and run by the communities for the benefit of the communities will be the future of rural empowerment."

-A Government Official

Various project reports suggest that citizen journalists, community members, and direct beneficiaries produced stories and films from rural locations on various topics. Several of them were widely disseminated and broadcast on local stations and YouTube Channels. These rural-based journalists assisted the mainstream media in verifying the accuracy of evidences behind the reports. The regional coordinating strategy had the most substantial influence at the national level. Regional news centres collaborated to promote content exchange and boost internet visibility for the first time. This network also extended to Bhutanese living overseas to create and share content.

My videos are popular because I shoot it in a natural environment. I do not fake it. That is why people immediately connect with my message."

-Community-based Citizen Journalist

Transformed Community Lives: Greater use of information and communication technologies among the media persons, local leaders, community members, and members of CSOs reduced generational and gender gaps among news creators and consumers. It also enabled women to enter the world of social networking, expanding their personal, family, and community prospects. Citizen journalists and community radios impacted the right to free expression and the demand of accountability from those in authority. Traditional electronic and print media reporters and proprietors have been challenged

by informed online debates, data-based interventions, real-time story updates, and social media comments. ICT improved **awareness of social media's potential** advantages for building and confirming relationships within a dispersed and highly mobile social group.

Recognition for JAB as knowledge centre for Media and Media persons: The increased visibility helped expand JAB's membership base, giving it a **broader representation among the media fraternity** and other CSOs. Capacity building of journalists was a key objective for JAB due to the increased demand for journalists who could provide specialized services and bring in more revenue. The effort helped **build a culture of excellence** within Bhutan's media community. It augmented JAB's membership drive from 137 in 2018 to 167 in 2021. Its Facebook followers increased from just over 10,000 in 2019 to 15,200 in 2021.

Advocacy for Media Literacy for All: The Community Members' Training on social media was a significant one. During the evaluator's interview many of the participants admitted that due to the trainings they learned to choose what to watch, read and listen to and understood the benefits of remaining media literate. Although the trainings were basic, the participants realised that the technologies they were using were interactive in nature. It not only empowered them to use it responsibly, but also made them responsible to educate the community about what ethical standards should be expected from news and information providers. Setting and adhering to standards at least by some participants helped educate many other community members to press for trustworthy, reliable, and fair information from news outlets. Many community members admitted that whenever they see any state sponsored advertisement or policy related



Rural Reporting Grantee during research work in Western Bhutan

statement by persons with authorities they immediately verify its authenticity. Increasing discussions at community level about the benefits of media literacy motivated some rural based citizen journalists produce small videos and initiate sustained campaign by creating awareness about ethical, privacy and safety issues, and increasing incidences of exposure to insidious or negative content targeting the Generation Z (age 13-29) and Millennial (age 30-44). The direct impact of this campaign was that it forced the school administrations to initiate awareness programmes for the students on how to do content verifications on various social media platforms. Many schools approached different organisations and the government to initiate media literacy programmes in the schools. However, the unprecedented level of spread of fake news during Covid-19 pandemic alerted everyone about the need of media literacy programmes at every level.

vi. Sustainability

Interviews with the beneficiaries and the grantee during field visit provided an insight into how the project has impacted them as a beneficiary and as an implementing agency. The impact of Covid-19 has immensely affected the planning of JAB as it has affected the availability of resources for everyone including JAB. The grantee was expecting the country's economy to pick up and the donor organizations to receive more funds



Meeting of the Community Media Forum

with a mandate to spend on media-related activities, recognizing the crucial role media

played during the pandemic. Neither the economy is picking up nor are the funds available for the organisations like JAB. From its existing resources, JAB is likely to continue the annual ceremony for the best journalist award and research grant for rural reporting.

The idea of community media forums was the backbone of the entire project strategy. It was planned to function as a local content hub, breaking the rural and urban information divide, functioning as a nursery for democratic engagement and reconciliation from bottom up and neutralising any outbreak of misinformation causing mass anxiety and uncertainty. At the time of field visit all the twelve forums were functioning and were likely to continue to do so for a reasonably longer period. Their future survival lies on its ability to innovate ideas to collaborate and bring in various stakeholders by trading ideas and how democratically it uses social media. A community can never be automated. Growing an audience takes time and constant listening and monitoring. JAB and the forum members must build a functioning idea for them, and with that idea in place, all will come to join that audience.

vii. UNDEF Added value

UNDEF added value to the efforts of JAB for media development in a country with less than a decade and a half of experience with electoral democracy. As newspapers and television were seen as political efforts and not eligible to receive bilateral development funding, two consecutive project grants by UNDEF helped the collaborative efforts of CSOs, media and the Government to promote good governance and accountability. It also encouraged citizens to amplify their voices and have a say in strengthening democracy in Bhutan. These initiatives recognized both the role of traditional and social media.

UNDEF funding also greatly encouraged the media to play a constructive social role in the global campaigns on education, health, water and sanitation in Bhutan. In the media sector, it vigorously endorsed the ideas of equal employment opportunity and payment for women

in the media and all other professions. The two projects provided JAB with a considerable opportunity, establishing credibility and recognition among journalists as a focal point to address and platform to reflect their needs and concerns. That increased its membership base and improved the organization's financial security and legitimacy to lobby with the state agencies for more freedom to the press and equal opportunity to private players in the sector. Overall, the UN brand helped JAB to grow as a credible and hugely representative voice for the media in Bhutan.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

i. Conclusions

The project was **relevant** and bridged the rural and urban gap in the media landscape in Bhutan. Ensuring free flow of information from rural based media persons to the urban based media outlets was the first major step to ensure mainstreaming of rural news and ending the monopoly of urban news makers in Bhutan. Capacity building through customised training modules created a new generation of amateur media persons and citizen journalists at the community level in rural Bhutan. They understood how the traditional media functions and realised the need to build their own narratives through extensive use of social media while collaborating with traditional media for common objectives. The professional and independent journalists through specialised trainings for production of data driven and evidence-based reports, support from the mentors and media grants skilled themselves to remain competitive in the media market and bring the diverse faces of rural lives to the other parts of Bhutan through their stories and blogs.

The project was **coherent** and remained consistent with both organisational and national policy priorities. Being active in working with media and media persons for such a long time, JAB has made important social investments in Bhutan. It has a deep understanding of the problems presently confronted by the media fraternity. JAB has a large network among CSOs, particularly those related to media across the country and has a strong and trusted reputation among authorities at every level. Over the time it has also developed an internal learning system to promote learning from implemented projects and has developed strong managerial and financial capacities. The project activities were complementary to those of other projects and aligned to play a constructive role in promoting the media's role in good governance and strengthening democracy. Because of its non- partisan conduct, it remained as a major stakeholder in various dialogues between the State and CSOs. JAB has extended its outreach and collaborated with other NGOs and funding agencies. It shared its expertise in media training and policy advocacy and ensured that the project remained consistent with Bhutan's policy priorities.

The project was **effective** in achieving its planned objectives. The project beneficiaries through their evidence-based reporting marked the emergence of a new generation of informed media persons. The capacity building activities transformed many community people into trained field communicators. Professional media persons, bloggers, community

members and citizen journalists are writing about issues ranging from local developmental challenges to indifference of government both in traditional media and social media. Formation of online groups on social media platforms helped exchange of ideas, opinions and building consensus on issues concerning group members. The training strengthened media persons' capacity to report on complex development issue and contribute to public dialogues. It also provided many media persons and community-based citizen journalists a direction on articulating their demands most effectively for their social and professional missions by using information technology as a perfect tool.

The project was **efficient**. Resources were appropriately allocated, and minimum standards for accounting and accountability of partners were respected. The project management made successful efforts to use available resources efficiently. Staff and management were efficient in transforming resources into output. Engaging local resources persons and identifying locations for trainings were drivers of efficiency. The use of social media contributed to the cost efficiency of communication particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project had a positive **impact** on both participants and communities. The media landscape in Bhutan improved as a direct result of this project. Live streaming from places of incidence, interviews, and real-time reporting from remotest villages by the project beneficiaries changed the traditional reporting practices and challenged the functioning of the conventional media. They contributed to developing an environment of responsible, informed, objective and evidence-based journalism. The fact that journalists used their new skills in their existing work in their respective news outlets has created an improved work environment for them and their colleagues. Affected individuals, families, and communities, were able to contribute to the scope of the project, and follow-up stories resulted in increased citizen dialogue through the strengthened media. The number of reports, news and views in traditional and social media, participation of powerful people from politics and bureaucracy in various programmes made incremental difference to the impact of this project. There was a clear distinction between news and views. This strengthened the voices of good media, demanding more freedom for the press and level playing field for state and private media houses.

Continuing the much-needed capacity-building programmes like those developed under the UNDEF project would only be **sustainable** with follow-up funding. JAB's acceptance as a focal point for quality trainings has grown in the media circle. There will be continuous upgradation of the training manual as it was referred as an essential reference for the media persons of all ages. The rural reporting grants and annual journalism award will continue to be sponsored by JAB.

UNDEF's support had **added value**. Like in most developing countries in the world with less media freedom, foreign funding of NGOs in the media sector is a matter of concern. UNDEF's support had value added as it provided a neutral, credible, and legitimate source of funding. The UNDEF funding is meant to be spent for journalists representing various political, religious, and social backgrounds without any discrimination and promotes meaningful collaborations.

ii. Recommendations

To further enhance relevance, JAB should develop a long-term strategy for Bhutan, including improved outreach to more geographically and politically difficult provinces and providing different level workshops according to journalists' experiences and expectations. The training module needs to add on intensive discussion on subjects like evidence-based reporting and data-journalism. The strategy should make an assessment to include potential partners among the rural community and ensure their ability and capacity to implement the agreed set of activities and targets.

For enhanced coherence and to promote effectiveness and efficiency, JAB should collaborate with other civil society organizations and coordinate the production and publication of stories in many other ethnic languages. A network of CSOs from urban and rural areas would help JAB extend its strategic engagement like building synergies with local right-based non-profit campaigns and ensure its broader media coverage to influence relevant government officials.

To achieve lasting impact, JAB should consider refreshers training on use of social media. According to DATAREPORTAL's Digital 2020 Report¹⁰, till January 2020, Internet penetration in Bhutan stood at 59%, Social Media at 56% and Mobile connection was equivalent to 95% of the total population. With huge penetration of mobile phones in Bhutan the media organizations are realising that audiences are the future and their role and preferences are changing very fast. Such changes offer enormous opportunities for participation in public life and the sustainability of media development initiatives, as the public protects the media they value. As digital technologies take hold, audience engagement is becoming more complex and the media fraternity beginning from the community level must adapt to new technology and the accompanying challenges it offers. Interactive technology on social media allows journalists to provide background information for their articles, reports which can help them build a network of professionals comprised of journalists, citizen journalists, and other engaged professionals.

As a way to address the sustainability concern, JAB should consider programs for the mentoring of journalism students. Mentoring young journalists turned out to be one of the most successful models of the project. It should consider using its capacity building expertise and mentoring programmes for the young students of journalism. Many students were doing internship with the beneficiaries of the UNDEF projects and understand the impact of such trainings in the career of a media person.

For continued UNDEF added value, future capacity building projects for media persons in Bhutan could consider an added focus on building empathy for gender rights, rights of persons with special needs and rights of national minorities and rights of the LGBT community in awareness raising components. **To further address sustainability concerns,** future project proposals to UNDEF should also address marketing and advertising training needs.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

The policy of UNDEF in promoting and strengthening democracy by providing grants is a thoughtful and progressive view that is still "cutting edge" in the international development context. In a country like Bhutan, where culture is overwhelmingly dominant in every aspect of life and policies and seen separately from democracy, implementing a project that promotes democracy through strengthening media is not without challenges. Bhutan is ambitious to make the cultural perspective visible in all development co-operation and projects, which suggests a "mainstreaming" approach. Since culture is a complex concept and naturally varies considerably from country to country, mainstreaming is difficult. But, at the project level, it would be more appropriate to address culture using a rights perspective that focuses on freedom of expression and information. Nevertheless, it would be highly relevant to systematically include the roles of culture in media development and the promotion of democracy and democratic institutions.

Mentoring as a model for capacity building has worked. It was found during the interviews that most of the trainees had learned techniques and applied new skills in reporting and engaging with audiences. After the trainings, the Mentors therefore continued to guide and teach the participants on subjects not covered during the trainings like techniques of editing and content packaging, self-censorship and other technical and editorial skills.

As digital technologies take hold, two ways media- community audience engagement will only become richer and more complex. New technology can upset the methodology and content of any capacity-building programme approved and designed by the grantee. Therefore, there is a need to remain alert about new technology and devise innovative forms of audience research online and offline.

Both mentors and participants demonstrated that knowledge sharing works vertically and horizontally in- and outside the media organisations, mainly in four ways. One, most of the participants shared their knowledge and experience by training the co-workers; Two, they shared their knowledge with other media professionals through a variety of interactive as well as informal forums; Three, participants took opportunities to share their knowledge with students in media training institutes; Four, participants also shared their knowledge and experiences through a variety of media, most commonly by writing blogs, articles for professional journals.

ANNEX

Annexure 1: Results at the Outcome Level

| Intended Outcome | Outputs | Activities | Summary of Grantee Report Results |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outcome 1: Rural communities gain relevant skills and knowledge on mass media (focusing on traditional media) | 1.1: 400 Community members in rural areas informed on how to use and engage with traditional media through eight one-day community workshops | 1.1.1: Contact local government leaders and seek approval for the conduct of workshop 1.1.2: Identify local trainers to conduct the workshop 1.1.3: Conduct four workshops twice over two years in a total of eight communities in rural pockets of the country 1.1.4: Train the members of community media forum on conducting subsequent meetings and reporting | 343 Community members in eight rural areas informed on how to use and engage with traditional media through eight-one-day community workshops. Initially, we targeted to train 400 community members; however, due to the government's restriction on gathering during the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to train 343 community members only. Following the community media workshops JAB formed a community media forum consisting five to seven members in eight districts. |
| | 1.2 :One 5-day Training for 12 community radio Radio Jockeys (RJ's) | 1.2.1: Identify community radio stations 1.2.2: Identify local trainers for the training 1.2.3: Conduct the training 1.2.4: Conduct the survey on use and impact of community radio | 15 community/campus Radio Jockeys (RJ's) from six community radio stations trained on knowledge about community through one-three-day training. It was supposed to be a five-day training, however, most of the participants were students and they had their trial exams approaching, the school management requested JAB to make it three-day training and instead of 12 we have trained 15 RJ's. |
| | 1.3 Eight Community Media Forums established and their semi-annual meetings (total 24) | 1.3.1: Discuss the formation of Community Media Forum with local leaders 1.3.2: Identify Community Media Forum members 1.3.3: Held two annual forum meetings facilitated by journalists. (total 24 meetings- 4x4 and 2x4) | Eight Community Media Forums created for identification of community issues at the second day of the Community Workshop (1.1) and held semi- annual meetings and subsequent meetings with participants of a journalist and five community leaders/members per forum (total 24) were held in eight districts Soe (west)Dungkhar, Lhuentse (east), Dhur, Bumthang (Central), Gesarling (south), Khatoe (west), Banjar (east), KungaRabten (central) and Sombaykha, Haa (south) |
| Outcome 2: The Bhutanese journalists | 2.1: 30 journalists trained on long-form narrative story writing (15 each in a year) in | 2.1.1: Announcement of the training through local media outlets 2.1.2: Identify a local | 30 journalists trained on long-form narrative story writing in Thimphu (15 each in a year). 30 media products produced |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ensure greater coverage of issues in remote, far-flung areas and bring the marginalized into the mainstream national discourse | Thimphu by two-five-day training and 30 media products produced and 10 published. | trainer and develop training program 2.1.3: Invite the participants and conduct the training | and 10 published. |
| | 2.2: 16 Rural Reporting Grants awarded (8 each in a year) and 30 in-depth stories from rural areas across the country produced | 2.2.1: Invite proposals for the Rural Reporting Grant 2.2.2: Form an evaluation committee 2.2.3: Selection and announcement of grantees 2.2.4: Invite the grantees to sign a TOR and contract for the grant 2.2.5: Collect and verify 30 stories/programs published/broadcast in the respective media houses | 17 Rural Reporting Grants awarded and 32 in-depth stories from rural areas across the country produced (aired/published) |
| | 2.3: Publish stories in two issues of Bhutan Press Mirror | 2.3.1: Select topics, identify writers, and invite articles 2.3.2: Form a 3-person editorial board to oversee and manage the publication 2.3.3: Compile and edit stories 2.3.4: Print 1,000 copies of the journal 2.3.5: Launch of the journal 2.3.6: Distribute the journal (both hard copy and soft copy) | Published stories in issue of Bhutan Press Mirror: <i>JAB Occasional Journal</i> in 2019 and issue iv in 2021. 1,000 copies of the journal were printed and distributed to JAB members, various government offices, parliament, CSOs, media houses, colleges, schools, monastic schools, rural communities and notable individuals. The e-copies of the journal were also distributed to all the JAB members including journalists, freelance journalists, photo journalists and bloggers via email and uploaded on the JAB website. |
| | 2.4 : 20 Rural Reporting Awards | 2.4.1: Announce the award through local media outlets 2.4.2: Form evaluation Committee 2.4.3: Evaluate and select best stories, including best rural- based stories | JAB organized the Rural Reporting Award under the banner titled fifth and sixth Annual Journalism Award which is observed annually to celebrate the World Press Freedom day. 20 rural reporting award were awarded to 20 journalists in 2019 on 3 May and 2 June in 2021 respectively. |
| Outcome 3: Rural communities gain relevant skills and technical know-how on the use of social media and tools | 3.1 : 120 rural community members and local leaders (30 per training) gained their knowledge on social media and online apps through four two-day training | 3.1.1: Contact local government leaders and seek approval for the conduct of training 3.1.2: Identify the trainers 3.1.3: Conduct the training two times in one year | 100 rural community members and local leaders (25 per training) gained their knowledge on social media and online apps through four two-day training. We targeted to train 120 community members, however, due to the government's |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (focusing on new media) | | | restriction on gathering during the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to train 100 community members in four districts. |
| | 3.2: 4 Community-based social media platforms created and actively disseminating local information and news | 3.2.1: Identify active social media users among the trainees of social media apps training 3.2.2: Form the community-based social media platforms 3.2.3: Train the members on the use of social media platforms 3.2.4: Monitor the regular dissemination of community news by community platforms | After the training on social media apps, JAB facilitated the formation of four community-based social media platforms. Four WeChat group were created in four communities of Bardo (Center) and Jamkhar, Tashiyangtse (East), Mendrelagng, Tsirang (South) and Lingmukha, Punakha (West) consisting at least five to seven members were formed accordingly. |

Annexure 2: Detail of Evaluation Methodology and Interview Questionnaire

Post Project Evaluation- Empowering Rural Communities in Bhutan through Mass Media

(All information will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study)

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Responder's Name | | | |
| Date of Interview | | Age | |
| Sex | | Contact No. | |

| Q.No | Questions | Code | Variable Code |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Media establishment at which I work | | 1. Press/Print Media 2. Radio 3. TV 4. Electronic Press 5. News Agency 6. Freelance 7. Mixed |
| 2 | Highest qualification | | 1. Ph.D 2. Master 3. Bachelor's Degree 4. Diploma 5. Secondary |
| 3 | Ownership of media establishment at which I work | | 1. Government 2. Public shareholding 3. Private 4. Community 5. Others, specify..... |
| 4 | Membership of Journalist Association of Bhutan | | 1. Active member 2. Not a member 3. Provisional member |
| 5 | How old is your membership | | 1. Less than 1 year 2. Less than 3 years 3. Less than 5 years 4. More than 5 years |
| 6 | Which training or program did you participated or engaged under UNDEF project? | | 1. Training on Long-form Narrative Story Writing 2. Rural Grant Reporting 3. Others (specify)..... |
| 7 | Field of Training (Check all applicable) | | 1. Writing and editing skills 2. Radio Skills 3. TV production 4. Producing video reports 5. Digital Media 6. Media Management 7. Investigative Journalism 8. Others, Specify..... |
| 8 | Was it relevant to your profession and empowering rural communities in Bhutan through social media? | | 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Neutral |
| 9 | Did the training program responded to the needs and requirements of Journalist? | | 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Not sure |
| 10 | Training has taken into consideration transfer of democratic values and | | 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree |

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| | principles and role of media in democratic participation | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Disagree 4. Not sure |
| 11 | Did the training provided a reasonable level of transferring the skills of investigative journalism and the oversight role of the media | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Not sure |
| 12 | Did the training keep up with technology and is up to date? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Not sure |
| 13 | Does the training reflect on the professional performance of media people? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Not sure |
| 14 | In last 6 months, are you in touch with any local community members regarding stories related to rural communities? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No |
| 15 | Do you think rural issues were covered adequately in mainstream media in last 5 years? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Not sure |
| 16 | What are the challenges faced in covering rural issues? (Check all applicable reasons by order of importance to you) | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of writing skills 2. Lack of field reporters 3. Not able to get information 4. Lack of local government support 5. Lack of community support 6. Lack of management support (organization) 7. Others, Specify |
| 17 | Are you motivated to write stories on rural issues? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No (Skip question 18) |
| 18 | What motivates you to write on rural issues? (Select Top 3 Reasons) | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local issues 2. Accountability 3. Easy access to information 4. Rural Development 5. Community interest and request 6. Others, specify..... |
| 19 | How many stories you covered in last one year identified by the Community Media Forums? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None 2. Less than 5 3. 5 to 10 stories 4. More than 10 stories |
| 20 | How often do you contact with local community members? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regularly 2. Once a week 3. Once a month 4. Not at all |
| 21 | What are key issues and stories from reported by the rural communities? (Check all applicable in order of highest reporting cases) | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural Development 2. Social issues 3. Public Service Delivery 4. Corruption 5. Social accountability |

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| | | | 6. Success stories 7. Others, specify..... |
| 22 | What are the preferred modes of communication between you and rural communities (Check applicable in order of common usage) | | 1. Telephones and SMS 2. Community Media Forum 3. Social Media 4. Email 5. Others, Specify..... |
| 23 | Has the editorial team shown improved interest and in its publication of the rural stories/ issues? | | 1. Yes 2. No |
| 24 | Are you aware of Rural Reporting Grants? | | 1. Yes 2. No (skip question 25) |
| 25 | How did you know about the Rural Reporting Grant? | | 1. Media 2. Social Media 3. Websites 4. Colleagues |
| 26 | Did you apply for Rural Reporting Grant? | | 1. Yes 2. No (skip Q.27) |
| 27 | Did you receive any support from JAB while applying for the Rural Reporting Grant? (Select top 3) | | 1. Facilitated 2. Coordination 3. Clear information 4. Motivation and encouragement 5. Financial support 6. Advice and expert views 7. None 8. Others, specify..... |
| 28 | Briefly, mention one case example of rural stories/issues you or your organization reported and its impact. | Response: | |
| 29 | How can media engage and protect the rights of the vulnerable groups (youth, women, elderly citizens, PWDs etc.) and represent their interest? | Response: | |
| 30 | What changes you observe with over all landscape and space of media roles in rural community? | Response: | |
| 31 | What did you like most about this program? | Response: | |
| 32 | How could this program be improved? | Response: | |
| 33 | Do you have any recommendations? | Response: | |

The evaluation was carried out in **two phases**. One, Desk Review of pertinent papers and, Two, Field visits, questionnaire based interviews, recording observations and submission of the report. **Desk Review of Relevant Documents:** During the initial phase, the evaluators analyzed documents like Reports of the visits of UNDEF and UNDP representatives, Project Proposal, Closure checklists, Links of Documents, PD Evaluation Notes, Project Extension Requests, Narrative Reports, Milestone Verification Report, Budget and Fund Utilization Documents. (**Annex 3: Reference Documents**). **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire (**Annex 2: Interview Questionnaire**) was developed based on an evaluation matrix (**Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix**) and sent to the responders. Some of them sent back the duly filled questionnaire by e-mail. Some agreed to a personal interview. Based on the beneficiaries' consent and availability, the evaluators compiled a final list for telephonic and

individual/group interviews. (**Annex 5: Names of Persons Interviewed**). *Interviews and Focus Group Discussions*: In-depth interviews were done with respondents in chosen rural areas through in-person meetings and telephone talks, which aided in gathering qualitative data on the evaluation's parameters. Two FGDs helped the assessment team integrate information with diverse and converging perspectives on the project and triangulate conclusions from the desk review and questionnaire responses. *Field Visit*: The evaluator visited the villages of Limukha, Dhur, and Mendrelgang in Punakha, Bumthang, and Tsirang, where the project was implemented and interviewed the beneficiaries. (**Annex 6: Field Interview Travel Schedule**)

Summary of the respondents:

| Category | Number of Respondents |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Journalist | 7 |
| Bureau Correspondent | 3 |
| Community Members | 19 |
| Local leaders | 3 |
| Campus Radio Jockeys | 2 |
| Community Radio | 2 |
| Resource Person/ Trainers | 2 |
| Government agencies | 2 |
| Media houses | 2 |
| UN | 2 |
| Other CSOs | 3 |
| JAB | 2 |
| Total | 49 |

Annexure 3: Reference Documents

1. Participants lists
2. Press Clippings
3. Photos and Videos
4. Pre and post-activity Press releases
5. Survey and feedback forms
6. The approved project extension form
7. Screenshot of WeChat groups
8. Contract agreement and Terms of Reference
9. Soft copy of Bhutan Press Mirror (Volume I to IV)
10. Three Financial Utilization Reports
11. Three Narrative Reports
12. Evaluation of UNDP contribution to strengthening local governance, UNDP, 2010
13. The World Happiness Report, 2021
14. Bhutan National Human Development Report, 2019
15. Bhutan Media Impact Study 2008
16. Bhutan Media Impact Study 2013 (<https://www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/media-impact-study-2013.pdf>)
17. Media Development Assessment Study, 2010 (<https://www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/MDA-Book.pdf>)
18. National ICT Household Survey, 2021 (<https://www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Final-ICT-HH-Survey-report.pdf>)
19. Final External Project Evaluation- Strengthening Media and Civic Education to Enhance Democracy in Bhutan (BCMD)(<https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/6536>)

Annexure 4: Evaluation Matrix and Questions

Please reformulate questions to make them specific to the project and its outcomes

| DAC criterion | Evaluation Question | Related sub-questions | Indicator | Data Source | Data Collection Method | Limitation /Risk |
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| Relevance | To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness among rural people on the role and relevance of media in setting up democratic framework, particularly JAB. ▪ Reach of the project in rural areas in terms of people contacted. ▪ Young (inexperienced) RJs, journalists contacted and trained ▪ Coverage of social issues in rural areas ▪ Special efforts of JAB to recognize and encourage reporting of rural issues | Primary & desk review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail Interviews of rural community members and JAB staff • FGD with Journalists • Desk Review of all reports | Language barriers and limited accessibility to rural areas/ people due to COVID |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Coherence</p> | <p>How well did the project “fit”; i.e. to what extent was the project compatible with other projects and programs in the country, sector or institution?</p> | <p>Internal coherence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the project and other initiatives carried out by the Implementing Agency? <p>External coherence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent is there consistency with other actors’ initiatives in the same context? ▪ To what extent is there complementarity, harmonization and coordination between the Implementing Agency/the project and other organizations/projects working in the same context and on the same issue? ▪ To what extent is the project adding value while avoiding the duplication of efforts? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies used to identify the needs of the target groups ▪ Analysis of project activities in contrast to the identified needs ▪ Examining the planning tools developed by JAB such as SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) analysis of the stakeholders in relation to the objectives of the project Interaction (collaboration /bargaining /conflict) with other State and Civil Society Organizations) in similar geographical/ functional areas | <p>Primary & Secondary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail Interviews with JAB staff • Desk Review of documents of JAB | <p>No expected risks identified</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Effectiveness</p> | <p>To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project’s objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of trainings and their contents for journalists, RJs, rural dwellers ▪ Change in nature, type, & number, locale (urban-rural), of cases reported by Journalists ▪ Coverage of rural issues Awareness about constitutional right to information, freedom of media and free speech among target groups | <p>Primary & Desk Review</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mail questionnaires to journalists/ RJs ○ FGD with journalists ○ Detail Interviews with journalists • Detail interviews of rural community members • Detail interviews with JAB staff • Desk Review of documents | <p>Language barriers and limited accessibility to rural areas/ people due to COVID</p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Efficiency</p> | <p>To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of human resource (hired, voluntary), engaged in project implementation ▪ Examining financial cost incurred and project outcomes to find cost effectiveness ▪ Analysis of project activities in relation to time line to gauge time-effectiveness ▪ Financial audits and records in place ▪ Collaboration with other State & CSOs) for resource sharing | <p>Primary & Desk Review</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: Document verification with JAB • Desk Review of financial statements, audit reports, staff recruitment related documents, etc. | <p>No expected risks identified</p> |
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| <p style="text-align: center;">Impact</p> | <p>To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization , or to direct promotion of democracy?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples? | <p>For rural community dwellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change in their digital literacy levels, usage of traditional & social media since the beginning of the project ▪ Change in their levels of awareness regarding constitutional rights, democratic values & processes <p>For trained Journalists/ RJs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change in their expertise, skills & competence in reporting social issues, highlighting issues of rural and marginalized people in traditional & social media since the beginning of the project ▪ Their efforts in institutionalizing democratic values & processes <p>For JAB staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change in situation of target groups in terms of needs & problems, their response to social issues, usage of traditional and social media, their belief in democratic values & processes since the inception of the project ▪ Challenges and problems encountered in implementation of the project & how they were resolved ▪ Catalytic effect of JAB | <p>Primary & Desk Review</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail interviews of rural community members • Detail interviews of trained journalists/ RJs • FGD with journalists • Detail interviews of JAB staff • Case study of successful and insightful cases • Desk Review of documents of JAB: monthly, six monthly and annual reports, minutes, etc. (for all sub-questions) | <p>Language barriers and limited accessibility to rural areas/ people due to COVID</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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| Sustainability | To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)? | <p>For rural community dwellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to independently raise their voice against undemocratic events and highlight social issues in their social environment <p>For trained Journalists/ RJs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using their expertise and knowledge diligently and efficiently in reporting social issues faced by rural and marginalized people; making consistent efforts in institutionalizing democratic values & processes <p>For JAB staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of people’s participation ensured by JAB; creating democratic systems where target groups are empowered to independently question the unjust structures, raise their concerns in traditional and social media. | Primary & Desk Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail interviews of rural community members • Detail interviews trained journalists/ RJs • FGD with journalists • Detail interviews of JAB staff • Case study of successful and insightful cases • Desk Review of documents of JAB: monthly, six monthly and annual reports, minutes, etc. (for all sub-questions) | Language barriers and limited accessibility to rural areas/ people due to COVID |
| UNDEF value added | To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF’s comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies used in the project that facilitated and ensured institutionalization of democratic values processes in the project area ▪ Empowerment of weaker sections through the project reflected in their ability and confidence to raise their voice against unjust, undemocratic practices in their socio-cultural milieu by utilizing traditional and social media platforms ▪ Challenges and beneficial aspects of the project | Primary & Secondary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail interviews of JAB staff • Desk Review of documents of JAB | No expected risks identified |

Annexure 5: Names of Persons Interviewed

TashiDukpa, Representative, UNDP
NamgayZam, Executive Director, JAB
NeedrupZangpo, Executive Director, Bhutan Media Foundation and Trainer
SangayChoki, Programme Officer, JAB
Rinzin Wangchuk, Former President, JAB
Tashi Dema, President, JAB
ChenchoLham, Executive Director, Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy
SitherDorji, Banjar, Community Member
Sonam Choden, Banjar, Community Member
ChokiLhamo, Banjar, Community Member
TashiChenzom, Gesarling, Community Member
UgyenPem, Dungkar, Community Member
Ugyen Tshering, Dungkar, Community Member
Peldon, Dungkar, Community Member
SitherPenjor, Dungkar, Community Member
KenchoDorji, Soe, Gup, Elected Local Leaders
Pema Wangmo, Gesarling, Former Gup, Elected Local Leaders
Sonam Tobgay, Limukha, Gup, Elected Local Leaders
Nidup Tshering, RJs/ Rural Blogger, JAB Members
Tshering Dorji, RJs/ Rural Blogger, JAB Members
Phub Gyem, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
DechenDolkar, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
LhakpaTsherring, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
Sonam Pem, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
Phub Dem, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
Dema Yeshe, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
Sumitra Pradhan, Thimphu, Journalists/ Bureau Correspondents
Kinley Tshering, Thimphu, Resource Person/ Trainer/ Senior and freelance journalists
Karma Dorji, Thimphu, Campus Radio Jockey
PhurbaSithub, Thimphu, Campus Radio Jockey
LekiChoden, Thimphu, Ministry of Information and Media
RikuDhanSubba, Thimphu, , Ministry of Information and Communication
Karma Wangchuk, Thimphu, Representative, Tarayana Foundation
Namgay Tshering Doya, Thimphu, Representative, Tarayana Foundation
NamgayZam ,Punakha, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum
Tshering Gyeltshen, Punakha, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum
Guma Rai, Punakha, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum
KezangPhuntsho, Bumthang, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum
DhendupThinley, Bumthang, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum

UgyenThinley, Bumthang, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum

Tshering, Mendrelgang, Local Elected Leaders

Mangmi, Mendrelgang, Local Elected Leaders

Chetan Zangmo Kinley, Mendrelgang, Tsirang, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum

KunzangWangdi, Mendrelgang, Tsirang, Community Members and member of Community Media Forum

Kipchu, Bumthang, Bureau Correspondent

ChokiWangmo, Tsirang, Bureau Correspondent

Pema Tshewang, Tsirang, Bureau Correspondent

Annexure 6: Field Interview Travel Schedule

| Day | Station | Destination | Activity |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day-1 03/07/2022 | Thimphu (Morning) | Punakha (Afternoon) | Meeting with beneficiaries of Limukha in Punakha district |
| Day-2 04/07/2022 | Lingmukha Punakha (West) | Bumthang (Central) | Travel to Bumthang |
| Day-3 05/07/2022 | Dhur, Bumthang | | Meeting with the community Media Forum members in Dhur in Bumthang district |
| Day-4 06/07/2022 | Bumthang | Mrndrelgang Tsirang (South) | Travel |
| Day-5 07/07/2022 | Tsirang | Thimphu | Morning -Meeting with the Community Media Forum members in Mendrelgang in Tsirang district Evening -Travel back to Thimphu |

Annexure 7: Abbreviations

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| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| BCMD | Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy |
| GNH | Gross National Happiness |
| CRS | Community Radio Stations |
| CSFF | Civil Society Fund Facility |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| EU | European Union |
| FGD | Focus-Group Discussion |
| G2C | Government to Citizen |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| IFJ | International Federation of Journalists |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| JAB | Journalists' Association of Bhutan |
| LGBT | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender |
| MoH | Ministry of Health |
| RJ | Radio Jockey |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNDEF | United Nations Democracy Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| Dzongkhag | Districts |
| Gup | Elected village head |
| Gewog | County |
| Çhiwog | Cluster of villages |
| Tshogpa | Elected head of chiwog |