MEDIA DEVELOPMENT: AN EVALUATION OF FIVE CAPACITY-STRENGTHEN-ING PROJECTS

ROSIE PARKYN
SONIA WHITEHEAD

Contents

List of figures and tables

Abbreviations

DFID   UK Department for International Development

FM   frequency modulation

IDIs   in-depth interviews

MNCH   maternal, neonatal and child health

NGO   non-governmental organisation

ORTO   Oromia Radio and Television Organisation, Ethiopia

PBC   Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation

PT   Palestinian Territories

SMS   Short Message Service (text)

Unesco   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Caption. © Credit

Executive summary

A strong, independent and plural media underpins all development, enabling people to participate in the debates and decisions that shape their lives. Yet media's potential to play this fundamental role has not been fully realised. In fact, 2014 saw a decline in media freedom globally, with many media sectors across the world remaining weak, poorly resourced and subject to the influence of powerful interests.

The fact that independence is so hard won is all the more reason to try and achieve it: media matters, as much to the powerful as to the average individual on the street. Those involved in media development owe it to the populations they seek to benefit to scrutinise and evaluate their own efforts carefully, ensuring that they continually challenge themselves to improve the work they do.

BBC Media Action has been involved in media development since it was founded in 1999. Over the years, we have designed and deployed a broad range of evaluation approaches and methodologies to assess the impact of and learn from our work. This has generated much internal discussion: Are we measuring the right things? Where can we realistically expect to see change? How much should we spend on evaluation? How can we tell whether that change is sustainable?

This paper is our attempt to bring that discussion to the wider media development community. In it, we set out our working evaluation framework and methodology alongside the findings generated by applying this framework to five different capacity-strengthening interventions. We do so with the hope and expectation of hearing comments and reflections that may help us to improve our evaluation framework and methodology.

The paper takes the following shape. Part one provides a brief history of BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening work, explaining its evolution over the last 16 years and furnishing the reader with a typology of interventions ranging from low to high intensity. Part two identifies the three key principles underlying our approach: first, that audiences are at the core; second, that embedded mentors are the most effective means through which to deliver capacity strengthening; and third, that all interventions should seek to achieve impact at four levels: audience, practitioner, organisation and system.

Part three begins by explaining how BBC Media Action's evaluation of capacity-strengthening interventions evolved, as the interventions became increasingly integrated and complex. In brief, it became necessary to develop a methodology that could better capture and triangulate impact at these four levels through the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. This requires a mixed-methods approach, with a set of indicators and evaluation activities arranged under each level.

Part four explains the decision to adopt a qualitative case study approach for the research design, and describes how five cases were randomly selected for evaluation from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nepal and the Palestinian Territories. Part Five details these cases, setting out the characteristics of each media partner, the aims of each intervention, the evaluation methodology applied, the main findings and the barriers to change.

Part six offers illustrative examples of impact achieved under each of the levels, while part

seven discusses the emerging implications of these findings, linking them to the broader challenges around securing the sustainability of capacity strengthening going forward. We find broad support for the more holistic, embedded mentoring model our organisation has embraced in recent years – one that acknowledges the interdependence between the "four levels" of the audience, the practitioner, the organisation and the wider media system. But our findings also suggest that a number of long-term challenges remain, which will need to be addressed in order to secure sustainable change. These include securing the political will to support independent media, creating a favourable business environment in which media outlets can achieve financial sustainability, and making sure that media development actors can work consistently with the same partners over a multi-year timeframe.

Part eight closes with a series of conclusions and recommendations for the media development sector as a whole. These include that the mentoring model works and thus has great merit for scaling up, that there is great potential for audiences to contribute to sustainability by protecting the media that matters to them, that systems-level factors must be understood and should be addressed where it is possible to do so, and that more time and energy should be invested in co-developing sustainability strategies with capacity-strengthening partners.

Introduction
Media, capacity strengthening and development

Media's potential to play a vital role in international development has long been acknowledged. Media is perhaps best known for its "watchdog" function, helping to hold those in power to account. But media can also provide a powerful platform for debate, discussion and collective problem-solving.[1] Media can build cohesion and stability by giving voice to varied perspectives across all sectors of society. Media can serve as a source of vital information, aiding individuals in making decisions that shape their lives.[2] Media has the ability to influence large-scale political, economic and social outcomes, helping to reduce the spread of deadly disease – such as Ebola – and providing the tools for people to assume control over their own economic empowerment.[3] It can be argued that, by supporting the public ownership and government accountability necessary for development strategies to be successful, an independent media underpins all other development objectives.[4]

Like all aspects of development, however, there is often a large gap between these ideals and the reality. In some cases, media's ability to fulfil its multiple and varied roles in development is hampered by restrictive laws, the absence of editorial independence from governments and other powerful interests in society, and an economy that isn't capable of supporting a broad and diverse media market.[5] In other cases, these broader, structural constraints are exacerbated by ineffective business models and poor resourcing, a lack of editorial or managerial expertise and the limited skill base or specialist knowledge of media practitioners. All of these

limitations are compounded by the generally low status of the journalism profession in many developing countries.

Recognising the gap between media's potential and its reality, a "media development" community comprising a multiplicity of actors has gradually emerged over the past 20 years.[6] This amalgam of international donors, international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and representatives of national media sectors typically funds "activities aimed at strengthening the media to be independent, pluralistic, and professional".[7] These activities take a variety of forms, including legal reform to tackle large-scale regulatory issues, management consultancy to address organisational problems, and journalism and production training designed to improve editorial and production values at the practitioner level.[8] Media development also often results in the co-production of programming in traditional, broadcast media such as television and radio and, increasingly, support for social media platforms and online community management. Some media development actors also work to protect the safety of journalists.[9]

As with all development projects, however, the challenge often lies in knowing whether these interventions are actually working. To date, there has not been a wealth of media development evaluations. Those that exist report some success, but "too few countries are emerging with strong, independent, sustainable media institutions that can contribute to country growth and development".[10] It is not always obvious

whether these disappointing results reflect flaws in the design or delivery of the media support projects themselves, inadequacies in the way in which the evaluations were carried out or – simply – the immense difficulty in measuring impact that extends beyond the capacities of partner organisations and the skills of individual media practitioners. What is clear is that media development specialists need to increase the rigour of their evaluation methodologies so as to ensure the continued relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of their approaches in a rapidly evolving technological context. Improved monitoring is also vital to the construction of a media development evidence base that can be utilised to inform funding allocation and intervention design.[11]

This paper outlines BBC Media Action's attempt to move a step further towards that collective goal of creating a rigorous and multi-method approach to the evaluation of media development assistance programming. The paper has three purposes: first, to articulate BBC Media Action's own evolving approach for evaluating capacity-strengthening interventions; second, to share some findings from the recent evaluation of five different capacity-strengthening initiatives; and third, to use those findings to propose recommendations for the media development sector as a whole, as it seeks to improve the systematic evaluation of its capacity-strengthening initiatives.

We find broad support for the more holistic, embedded mentoring model our organisation has embraced in recent years – one that acknowledges the interdependence between the "four levels" of the audience, the practitioner, the organisation and the wider media system. But our findings also suggest that a number of long-term challenges remain, which will need to be addressed in order to secure sustainable change. These include securing the political will to support independent media, creating a favourable business environment in which media outlets can achieve financial sustainability and making sure that media development actors can work consistently with the same partners over a multi-year timeframe. This paper is thus a call for our organisation – and, indeed, all media development organisations – to continue to refine and improve capacity-strengthening work into the future.

The paper unfolds as follows. Part one provides a brief history of BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening work. Part two describes our organisational approach to capacity strengthening. Part three sets out the framework designed to evaluate our capacity-strengthening work. Part four explains our research design. Part five presents an overview of the cases and their main findings. Part six offers a synthesis of these findings. Part seven identifies some of the long-term challenges for securing sustainability. Part eight concludes with some lessons for the wider media development sector.

Part 1
Background

Before detailing our media development evaluation framework and methodology, it is first important to contextualise BBC Media Action's approach to capacity strengthening.

BBC Media Action has been delivering media development and communications for development interventions since 1999. Since 2011 we have provided capacity-strengthening support to 113 media partners across the globe under a five-year grant from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).[12] These media partners vary in terms of size, ownership, business model, organisational structure, editorial perspective and the local, regional or national communities they serve (see Figure 1).

BBC Media Action defines capacity-strengthening partnerships as enduring, meaningful and collaborative relationships through which we seek to respond to the capacity needs of media partner organisations. In most cases, we have a permanent, long-term presence in the countries in which we work. This enables us to develop an in-depth understanding of the media landscape over time, build trust with partners and recruit a cadre of local trainers and mentors to work in our projects.

The nature of BBC Media Action support for its media partners in those countries depends on the broadcast station's own particular needs and expectations, as well as on the aims and scope of the project that we are delivering together.[13] At one end of the spectrum, we have low-intensity partnerships limited to the broadcast of a single programme output, which has been produced by the BBC Media Action team on one of the themes in which we work: governance, health, resilience or humanitarian response.[14] Partners in this sort of project might be invited to participate in a limited number of training workshops with our staff, but expectations about the extent to which such training will impact on their operations are accordingly modest. These relationships enable BBC Media Action to secure reach, and therefore impact, with audiences on a significant scale. Their success is therefore measured primarily by changes at audience level.

At the other end of the spectrum, we are sometimes involved in high-intensity, high-value projects with a large media outlet partner, with national coverage for an extended period of time. In many cases, this

outlet is state-owned. Activities within such projects are broad in range, but might include a wholesale overhaul of the organisation's editorial values, a long-term organisational development programme involving all departments, the establishment of particular strands of public service programming or the creation of an audience research unit. Here, we would expect to see a more significant and lasting impact on the organisation, its staff and the wider population it serves.

Figure 1: Map of BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening partners 2011–2014
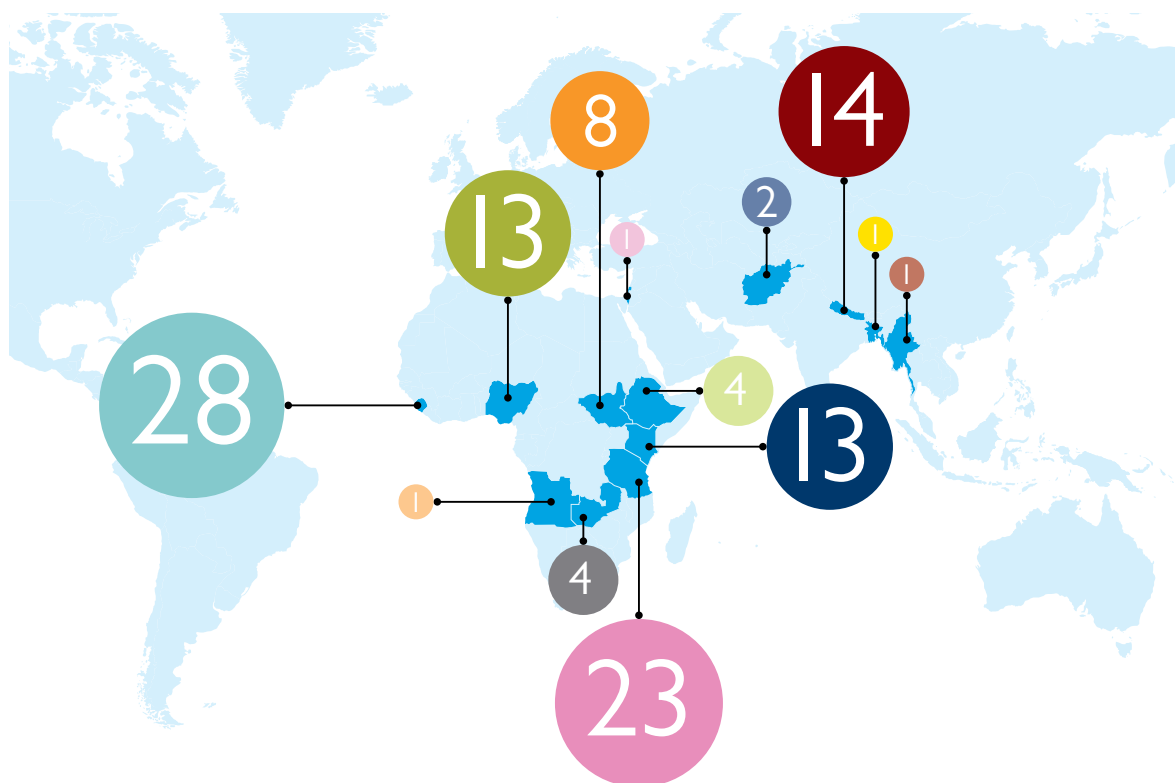
● **Afghanistan:** Radio Television Afghanistan; Afghan Education Production Organisation

● **Angola:** Radio Ecclesia

● **Bangladesh:** Channel i

● **Burma:** MRTV

● **Kenya:** Pwani FM; Radio Mambo; Radio Sahara; Pamoja FM; Kitwek FM, Nairobi; Coro FM; Mbaitu FM; Maata FM; Sifa Garissa; Baraka FM; Mwanedu FM; KBC Radio Taifa; Mayienga FM

● **Nepal:** Saptakoshi FM 90, Itahari, Sunsari; Krisnasar FM 94, Nepalgunj, Banke; Radio Jagaran; Radio Bheri 98.6, Birendrangar, Surkhet; Radio Ramaroshan; Synergy FM; Butwal FM, Rupandehi; Shuklaphanta FM, Mahendrangar, Kailali; Eadio Marshyangdhi FM, Besisahar, Lamjung; Radio Triyuga, Gaighat , Udayapur; Radio Samad; Radio Menchhyayem; Dinesh FM; Kalinchowk FM

● **Nigeria:** Wazobia FM Lagos; FRCN-Metro 97.6 FM Lagos; FRCN Coal City FM, Enugu; Enugu State Broadcasting Service, Sunrise FM, Enugu; Delta State Broadcasting Service, Melody 88.6FM, Warri; Voice of Delta 97.92FM, Asaba, Delta; Nagarta Radio 747AM; FRCN National Station; Adamawa State Broadcasting Corporation; FRCN Fombina FM, Yola; FRCN Kapital FM, Abuja; Radio Continental 102.3FM, Lagos; Raypower FM, Abuja; NOUN FM Lagos

● **Palestine:** Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation

● **Sierra Leone:** Voice of the Peninsula; Voices of Women; Radio Moa; Radio Bontico; Premier Tok Radio; Radio Bankasoka – Port Loko Town; Radio New Song – Bo; CHOICE FM – Freetown; Moyamba District Budget Education and Advisory Network; Grassroots Education and Development for Women; Women's Forum Bonthe; Kambia District Human Rights Committee; Disability Awareness Action Group; Malal Mara Youth Development Association; Radio Kolenten; SLBC Kono; Voice of Peace and Development; Galaxy Radio; Independent Radio Network; Women in the Media in Sierra Leone; SLBC Kailahun; Radio Kunike; Radio Wanjei; SLBC Makeni; Culture Radio; Cotton Tree News; Eastern Radio Kono; Eastern Radio Kenema

● **Tanzania:** Afya FM Radio; Pangani FM; Nuru FM; Jogoo FM; Hits FM; Orkonerei Radio Station; Sengerema FM Radio; Kyela FM Radio; Pride FM Radio; Ruangwa FM Radio; Chem Chemi FM Radio; Radio Kwizera FM; Victoria FM Radio; C.G. FM Radio; Zenj FM Radio; Radui Sauti ya injili; Radio Faraja FM; Ukweli FM Radio; Huruma FM; Radio Uzima; Dodoma FM; FADECO FM Radio; Bomba FM Radio

● **Zambia:** Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation; Radio Chikuni, Monze, Zambia; Radio Liseli; Yatsani Radio, Lusaka

● **Ethiopia:** Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency / Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation; Oromia Radio and Television Organisation; Amhara Mass Media Agency; Southern Nations Nationalities Mass Media Organization (SNNPR Mass Media Organization)

● **South Sudan:** The Catholic Radio Network 1. Radio Bakhita; The Catholic Radio Network 2. Radio Anisa; The Catholic Radio Network 3. Radio Voice of Love; The Catholic Radio Network 4. Radio Voice of Hope; The Catholic Radio Network 5. Radio Easter; The Catholic Radio Network 6. Radio Emmanuel; The Catholic Radio Network 7. Good News Radio; The Catholic Radio Network 8. Radio Don Bosco

Many of our partnerships fall somewhere in between these types and often involve local stations. Typically, we work with local radio stations for a total of six to twelve months, extended over two or more years. These stations do not have national reach, although they are often part of a national broadcast network within which content is syndicated. Activities might include the co-development of low-cost, audience-focused programming, training in basic editorial values or support to create a managing board enabling independence from powerful interests. Because of the relatively small size of the stations involved, we are better able to influence all aspects of operations with this sort of broadcast partnership. Our activities necessarily impact on a smaller segment of the population than some of our national-level partnerships, but that impact may be relatively more significant because of the centrality of that broadcaster to the local community.

The needs of each partner station are unique, so each capacity-strengthening relationship evolves differently. There are, however, three key features common to the approach taken across the majority of our partnerships:

1. The audience is at the heart of all capacity-strengthening activities
2. The training methodology is centred around a mentoring model, which often involves the co-production of a programme output
3. The design of the project considers four levels: audience, practitioner, organisation and systems

These are laid out in more detail in part two.

Caption: Credit:

Caption: Credit:

Part 2
BBC Media Action's approach to capacity strengthening

a) An audience focus

Audiences matter. This is a central editorial principle guiding the BBC as a broadcast organisation and it is also central to our work as the BBC's international development charity. What it means in practice is that, while robust editorial and production standards are vital components of any capacity-strengthening exercise, there is also enormous potential for audiences to engage in two-way conversations with media outlets and to help to create content that best reflects their needs. As Unesco media development specialist Fackson Banda has observed: "In many cases, this entity is not a passive and atomised mass of individuals, but a meaning-making and shaping set of shifting communities and social networks."[15] A focus on audiences is also a key ingredient for the sustainability of any media development intervention. Charlie Beckett, Director of POLIS at the London School of Economics, notes: "As donor involvement recedes… audiences must become the agents of expectation."[16]

"As donor involvement recedes … audiences must become the agents of expectation."

Obviously, a thorough understanding of audience needs is a crucial building block for any evolving media market. In the developing country contexts in which our organisation works, media partners often lack information about exactly who is watching or listening to their outputs, despite the obvious commercial incentive to have this information. Stations can benefit from a clearer, more detailed understanding of the demographic characteristics, linguistic composition, information needs, media access and usage habits and preferences, and aspirations of their existing and potential audiences.

In Tanzania, for example, a combination of a formative audience-level survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews across the country helped local radio partners to understand what "governance" meant to their audiences. Crucially, this research indicated that audiences were not as interested in the distant activities of power-holders in Dar-es-Salaam as they were in local service delivery issues. They identified

corruption as the biggest issue facing the country but said that what mattered most to them was clean water.[17]

This sort of formative research can help practitioners to keep audiences at the forefront of their minds when they are planning programme output. They can assess the relevance of all of their activities in terms of their importance to the audience and identify opportunities to secure audience participation from the range of different groups that the media outlet must serve if it wishes to achieve broad appeal.

Pre-testing also helps partners to ascertain whether outputs are sufficiently engaging, comprehensible or appropriate to a given swathe of the population whom they purport to serve. This is particularly useful when dealing with sensitive or "frontier" issues, such as sexual health. In Ethiopia, for example, pre-testing of our health programme, *Biftuu Jireenya* (Dawn of Life) in the Afan Oromo region, revealed that certain terminology was more sensitive in some dialects within the region and should be avoided.

A measure of the success of the capacity-strengthening intervention then becomes whether the audience feels that the media outlet covers the issues that matter to them in a way that resonates. Conversely, we might assess how far media practitioners have improved their understanding of their audiences. Wherever possible, partners are trained in simple, cost-effective ways of carrying out audience research themselves.

Such research provides an excellent foundation for increased engagement and participation from audiences. This can take a number of forms, including the development of programme formats that feature audience voice and experience. These might include call-ins or pre-recorded items in which people share their personal experiences, a series of vox pops featuring audience members expressing their views, or debate programmes in which audience members pose their own questions to government officials or local leaders. BBC Media Action has learned how powerful this can be:

> "There is somebody like me and you… when you watch, it kind of inspires you… 'if this person is participating, why am I not participating?'… people don't participate because they feel the political process is for the elites."
> Male, 15–24, Nairobi urban, Kenya

Media partners are also encouraged to provide opportunities for audiences to input to programming without appearing on air and are supported to use the most appropriate means – whether SMS (Short Message Service, i.e. text), email and social media or existing community-based networks and outreach activities – to cultivate this input. As digital

technologies take hold in the Global South, audience engagement is likely to become an ever more crucial focus of capacity-strengthening activities.

b) The embedded mentoring model

BBC Media Action's approach to capacity strengthening has evolved significantly in recent years. Historically, training was most commonly delivered as a one-off event in a classroom, away from the trainees' workplace. This training would involve limited prior consultation with participants, who were often unable to practise the learning imparted once back on the job. This was often because management had not bought into the wider purpose of the training, which might even be in conflict with the implicit or explicit editorial perspective of the media outlet. But it was also because more support was needed over a longer period of time in order for classroom-acquired knowledge to translate into the regular and sustained application of particular skills and practices. In addition, classroom-based training was not able to address the day-to-day realities of practising journalism in a developing country (for example, regarding things like corruption), other than at a theoretical level. There was scant evidence from any of our programmes that such training had any long-term impact.

Over the last 10 years or so, BBC Media Action has been experimenting with different approaches to capacity strengthening rooted in a mentoring model, which recognises that capacity is developed and maintained over time. This model always begins with a detailed, participatory needs assessment during the design phase to ensure that capacity-strengthening activities are bespoke to the organisation and that change processes are locally owned and led, a key aspect of sustainability.[18] Such assessments then act as a baseline against which specific objectives can be set and progress can be monitored.

Needs assessments are conducted by a mentor and researcher team who jointly evaluate existing programme output and programme schedules, the skills of staff at different levels, the current management structures and the extent to which management support exists for training and, crucially, the kinds of barriers that may stand in the way of success (for example, censorship, corruption and/or ownership bias). The mentoring programme is thus designed to overcome or work around such barriers. For example, where censorship is too pronounced to be addressed directly, the intervention might focus on improving technical skills rather than aggressively promoting independent journalism.

Mentors embed themselves within the organisation, or – at a minimum – make regular visits, thus ensuring learning is a constant, two-way process closely connected to the daily realities arising within people's working lives. Mentors are then able to provide bespoke, responsive support directly to

individuals selected for the project, but also across all aspects of business, including editorial processes, income generation, business planning and organisational culture. These mentors come to know and understand the organisation in a profound fashion, including the implicit value systems, power dynamics and incentive structures that impact upon the practitioner's capacity to perform his or her job to the standards sought. The objective is to develop practitioners' skills and confidence over time, while also supporting management to – as academics Fowler and Ubels put it – "get to grips with their own business… thus developing the top elements [of the hierarchy]".[19] Where necessary, mentoring is enhanced by the involvement of experts with specialist senior editorial or production skills.

Mentors embed themselves within the organisation, or – at a minimum – make regular visits, thus ensuring learning is a constant, two-way process closely connected to the daily realities arising within people's working lives.

Some mentoring partnerships start with a focus on supporting improvements in editorial, production and wider management systems and processes. Activities here might include the development of an editorial policy or clearer lines of managerial accountability. Other partnerships focus initially on the co-production of at least one interactive programme format and then expand to encompass broader areas of organisational development.

The programme that is typically co-produced between the BBC Media Action team and the partner outlet's team should ideally bring to life the editorial and production values that are central to all BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening interventions. The format selected will be one of the following: a revitalised version of an existing programme already produced by the partner, a local version of a widely distributed BBC Media Action programme for which the outlet is a broadcast partner, or an entirely new, co-designed format. It will not be BBC branded. The output belongs to the media partner, making it much more likely to be continued after the project.

Embedding capacity strengthening within programme production in this way enables skills to be applied and refined in practice, while also fostering teamwork, motivation and pride in performance. This model also provides a space to road-test new ideas and to tackle challenging, unforeseen issues that crop up, while appropriate support is on hand in the form of the mentor. Once on air, the programme serves as an inspiring example to practitioners, management and audiences alike about what is possible. In that way, it builds consensus around the value of high-quality media in that particular market.

By way of closing this section, it is worth noting a simple – yet significant – challenge to evaluating the mentoring model approach. The adaptive nature of mentoring means that mentors will not always note down the support they provide on a given day. They are often reacting to unplanned events and will not necessarily record their response to those events retrospectively. This makes it more difficult for evaluators to know exactly how the mentor's activities relate to other changes they seek to measure.

c) The four levels

BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening approach recognises that media practitioners do not produce content in a vacuum. They are both enabled and constrained by the immediate and wider environments in which they work. Relatedly, we do not seek to strengthen the skills of media practitioners as an end in itself. Instead, we strive to improve the quality of media available to audiences and to ensure, more broadly, that media partners are able to contribute to larger-scale development objectives, such as accountability, transparency and increased social cohesion. The most effective interventions will acknowledge this complexity, seeking to understand and respond to the site-specific interplay between the practitioners, the organisations for which they work, the audiences they serve and the wider media and governance contexts or systems in which they operate.

BBC Media Action thus approaches capacity strengthening with what we call – building on Ball-Rokeach – a "four levels" approach – referring to the four levels of audience, practitioner, organisation and systems; and this shapes both project design and evaluation across all our work. Media sociologist Sandra Ball-Rokeach argued through her media dependency theory that the upward and downward interactions between systems, media and audiences are integral to how audiences use information from the media.[20] This approach does not require that all activities be delivered or impact achieved at each level in every project. But all four levels should be considered at regular points throughout the lifecycle of that project. A needs assessment and context analysis conducted during the design phase can generate important insights about the existing relationship between the levels around which the capacity-strengthening intervention can be fashioned.

BBC Media Action approaches capacity strengthening with a "four levels" approach – referring to the four levels of audience, practitioner, organisation and systems; and this shapes both project design and evaluation across all our work.
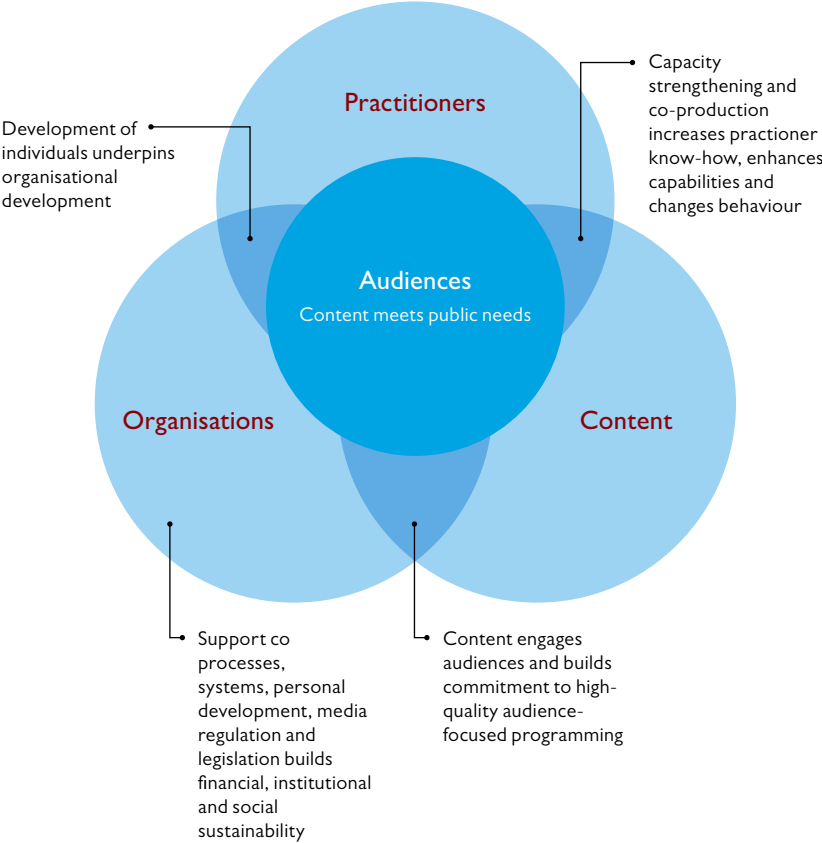
Most projects will include activities specifically targeted at improving the knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence of practitioners (what we call the "practitioner" level). Where possible, these activities are supplemented by activities designed to strengthen the organisations as well, creating an improved enabling environment in which practitioners can practise, maintain and sustain the skills they are developing. Activities at the audience level can broadly be categorised into two strands, although they are not mutually exclusive: first, to support partners to better understand and reflect their audiences in programming and, second, to support partners to engage and encourage participation from their audiences through programming and feedback mechanisms.

Under the current Global Grant, interventions are not specifically focused on creating change at the media systems level in the countries in which we are working. However, structural constraints within the wider media environment can obviously impact on the effectiveness of our work. We recognise the need for additional focus on regulatory and legislative reform work in the future, as we believe this is a critical element for the creation of media environments that are characterised by and support the inclusiveness and social cohesion that underpins wider developmental change. We have engaged in such work in selected countries (Tunisia, Bulgaria, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Iraq) and are currently exploring the potential to do more.[21] For the most part, however, systems-level considerations provide the contextual backdrop against which audience, practitioner and organisational activities are designed and set the societal goals of the other levels, to which the capacity strengthening activities will contribute.

Even when systems are not the explicit focus of an intervention, there are often indirect effects arising from our capacity-strengthening work. When a partner media outlet can deliver concrete results by doggedly pursuing issues raised through programmes – for example, problems in local service delivery – that has wider social and political reverberations (see part six). Media outlets that adhere to basic editorial values or public service principles may encourage other broadcasters around them to do the same. Finally, formats produced by or co-produced with BBC Media Action for national distribution may be replicated by other major broadcasters, creating "emulation effects". We have seen "copycat" programmes spring up in the wake of BBC Media Action audience-led debate shows launching in Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

The rich interplay between the four levels is captured in Figure 2. With those features in mind, we now lay out a framework for evaluation.

Figure 2: An integrated approach to capacity strengthening

Development of individuals underpins organisational development

Practitioners

Capacity strengthening and co-production increases practitioner know-how, enhances capabilities and changes behaviour

Audiences
Content meets public needs

Organisations

Content

Support co processes, systems, personal development, media regulation and legislation builds financial, institutional and social sustainability

Content engages audiences and builds commitment to high-quality audience-focused programming

Part 3
Research approach

This section presents an overview of BBC Media Action's framework for evaluating capacity-strengthening activities.

a) The need for an integrated evaluation framework

As noted in part one, BBC Media Action's approach to capacity strengthening has evolved significantly in recent years, shifting from something that was rooted primarily in one-off training of journalists to an integrated model that is much more embedded within the partner organisations we seek to support.

As this shift took hold, it was incumbent upon our organisation to update its approach to evaluation methods accordingly. For one-off journalist training, the main evaluation tool tended to be self-administered pre- and post-evaluation forms. This technique was often enough to satisfy donor requirements and to provide the trainer with immediate feedback about how well the session had been received. But these self-assessments did not provide conclusive or objective evidence of improved skills.

A clear challenge here was subjectivity: people often rated their skills more highly before the training than after because it left them feeling that they have more to learn than they had thought. These self-evaluations also gave limited insight about the extent to which those skills were applied, maintained or further developed once the journalist had returned to the workplace. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, assessment at a practitioner level only could not evaluate the sustainability of the intervention: these self-evaluations did not assess how these skills were used to produce outputs. We could not show whether content had improved following such training, whether any impact had been felt by the audience or whether there had been any sustainable repercussions in the wider media or governance environment.

Nor can one rely exclusively on audience-level data to assess whether programming has changed before and after an intervention. As van den Berg notes in her assessment of the impact of the Tanzania Media Fund, "What survey respondents claim… does not necessarily reflect the (full)

truth. Listeners of a certain long-running radio programme who claimed that none of the targeted leaders in the programme took any action to address the false promises they had made might have been disappointed at the relatively minor impact [they perceived], compared to more successful earlier episodes."[22]

As we began to move towards a more embedded model of capacity strengthening, it was therefore necessary to develop an evaluation methodology that could better capture impact at the four levels described in part two, through the perspective of multiple stakeholders: audiences and other relevant sources in their communities; practitioners and other representatives of partner media organisations (technical staff, journalists and management); mentors, trainers and BBC Media Action's project staff; and experts within the media sector or the relevant thematic fields (health or governance, for example).

Importantly – and as the van den Berg quote above attests – evaluations also needed to take place at different points of time over the lifecycle of the project so as to enable activities to be refocused if it became clear that they were not having the intended effect, or if partner needs changed or new opportunities arose.

b) Evaluation at four levels

BBC Media Action's current evaluation of capacity-strengthening activities is thus designed with the organisation's four levels approach at its core. While the capacity-strengthening interventions themselves differ, the same evaluation framework and overarching research questions are, wherever possible, used throughout all BBC Media Action's evaluations of capacity strengthening to enable a level of consistency and synthesis of findings.

Under each level sits a menu of possible outcomes and indicators that can be selected according to the specific project design and focus. In this way, the evaluation approach is sufficiently flexible to be applied across a broad mix of different types of capacity-strengthening interventions. The triangulation of information from across the levels is key to understanding change.

Research activities at the audience level
The needs assessments conducted at the very start of a project often outline that a key training need is to understand and represent an audience better. Often, prior to training, content does not reflect multiple points of view. Nor does it showcase how a given topic affects the "person on the street" participating in the programmes through phone-in discussions or social media. BBC Media Action's partners are thus often encouraged to better understand and serve their audience's

needs and to involve their audiences more directly in programming. One way of doing this is to train journalists to conduct their own audience research. Content is tested on individuals in focus groups to understand how the content resonates with them and then mentors help journalists to funnel learning from that research into developing programmes. This creates richer, more interesting, more resonant programming, as well as improving listenership and increasing the likelihood that audiences will demand that the programmes that matter to them stay on air.

Audiences are most likely to detect changes in output as a result of a capacity-strengthening intervention when it is focused on elements that are easy to identify, such as the format and tone of programmes. In such cases, it is worth investing in audience research through focus groups or other qualitative methods. If resources allow, it can also be useful to conduct a survey of a station's listeners to understand the reach of the station, audiences' satisfaction with programme outputs and the impact that programmes are having. In addition, interviews with practitioners and managers noted below can assess the extent to which they focus more explicitly on the needs of audiences as a consequence of the capacity-strengthening work.

2. Research activities at the practitioner level

The majority of BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening interventions are focused on building the skills of media practitioners, including producers and managers of programme outputs. Any method used to assess skill levels among practitioners needs to ensure that it tests skills as objectively as possible. Formal techniques can be employed to test improvements in skills, but these have limitations. For example, it is very difficult to develop scenario exercises that meet a consistent level of difficulty both before and after training.[23] Content analysis can also be used to assess objectively the improvements in quality seen in content produced by trainees. But it is often difficult to determine who was directly involved in producing the content. A journalist working on a given radio programme may have applied their newfound skills, but a manager, who has not attended the training, may subsequently change that content.

One method for ascertaining a trainee journalist's knowledge and skills over time – and the one that we at BBC Media Action tend to privilege – is to take a more qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews (IDIs) with open-ended questions, and then analysing responses to these questions at different points in time. For example: *How would you plan how to produce a discussion programme?* Before training, a respondent may give only a couple of examples, whereas after training, he or she may be more confident in describing the myriad steps needed and talk about them in detail.

Another way to understand changing levels in knowledge and skills as a result of training is to ask trainees how they have applied their skills

to the workplace, and to ask them to provide detailed examples of the skills they have learned and how they have put those into practice. In this instance, IDIs can be used to help practitioners to assess the relevance and quality of the training or mentoring received and the barriers and challenges faced, and to provide an overall perception of the impact of that capacity strengthening on the organisation as a whole.

The interviews described above are conducted before and after the intervention with questions adapted according to the point in time. Where a baseline is not possible because the capacity strengthening is already underway, it still important to conduct interviews at different time points across the project.

3. Research activities at the organisational level

Certain capacity-strengthening activities are aimed directly at achieving organisational-level impact. These might include supporting strategies for income generation, clarifying roles and responsibilities (for example, writing job descriptions, developing an organisational organogram, etc.) or embedding robust systems for who has editorial sign-off on different stages of production. In addition, working with practitioners to co-produce improved output can also have an impact on the quality of the outlet's programming overall.

To assess this level of impact, the following types of research can be conducted:

- **Interviews with management:** These interviews seek to understand management's view on the impact of the capacity-strengthening intervention on staff skills and practices, the quality of output, the station's editorial values and the structure of its decision-making processes. These interviews can hopefully reveal the extent of senior level buy-in to the capacity-strengthening intervention and the challenges and opportunities encountered during its delivery. On this last point, an editorial decisions flow diagram – based on interviews with all levels of staff – can be a useful check on how internal power dynamics within the organisation feed into the way decisions actually get made on the ground.
- **Station assessments:** These are primarily observational exercises conducted by BBC Media Action project staff intended to assess operational issues around the allocation of resources, the availability of transport to facilitate quality reporting and how feedback from audiences is collated.
- **Content analysis:** This methodology assesses whether the skills and knowledge imparted through BBC Media Action training have been applied to the production of programme outputs we are involved in. For example, if training was attempting to represent different voices in a radio programme, a researcher would listen to the output and record

who was featured on the programme (for example, government officials, members of the public, civil society, etc.) in order to assess whether different voices were indeed being used.

4. Research at the systems level

Currently, BBC Media Action does not do much evaluation at a systems level. Our research seeks to understand the broader environment in which a given broadcast partner is working, rather than assessing the impact that an intervention is having on the wider social and political system. It is, in any case, very difficult to attribute systems-level change to a single intervention even where it is detected. But it is sometimes possible to assess whether a station is having impact at the local level. Interviews with government officials who have been panellists on a talk show, for example, can explore whether these individuals have followed up on specific requests made by audiences and taken action as a result.

In some cases, station staff or mentors may report that the station has pursued a particular issue and secured a result for the communities it serves. This sort of "story of change" tends to be more common at the local level. In such instances, interviews should be rapidly organised with audience members, local government officials and civil society representatives to better understand exactly what role the media project in question played within the unfolding chain of events. Ideally, the research team can then follow up a number of months later to find out whether the result endured once the media spotlight shifted away from the issue at hand.

Box 1 provides a list of sample indicators for capacity-strengthening interventions employing the "four levels" framework. Table 1 offers an example of the sorts of questions that might be employed at each level.

Box 1: Sample indicators for capacity-strengthening interventions

Note that the word 'media' below can refer to media in the country as a whole, or be substituted with the name of the partner organisation or the flagship programme in which the mentoring is taking place.

Audience level
- Perception that media content has improved in quality (after training intervention)
- Perception that media content has become more trustworthy
- Perception that media has changed in ways that link to skills transferred by the intervention, for example the presenter is more skilled at interviewing or the media covers a broader range of voices
- Improved knowledge as a result of exposure to media
- Improved trust in media
- Improved opportunity to participate through the media in discussion of issues of most importance
- Increased levels of public and private discussion prompted by exposure to media
- Increased belief that media plays a role in holding the powerful to account
- Improved tolerance towards people from different groups as a result of exposure to media

Practitioner level
Improved editorial and journalism skills
- Improved sourcing and fact-checking, for example the use of two or three sources before story airs/is published
- Improved research skills, for example using a broader variety of sources of information, habitually conducting research as part of programme planning and pre-production

- Improved interviewing skills, for example preparing for the interview, moderating a discussion, questioning panellists
- Reduced self-censorship
- Improved understanding of audience needs

Improved production skills
- Improved sound quality
- Improved editing/mixing
- Improved composition of formats
- Effective use of social media
- Improved audience recruitment skills
- Improved use and inclusion of audience voice

Organisation level
- Improved editorial management and processes, for example regular editorial meetings
- Improved governance structures, for example a separation between areas of responsibility
- Improved strategies for income generation
- Improved programming, for example an increased range of different public service media outputs, which serve diverse views and preferences
- Improved HR processes, with commitment to staff development and clear lines of responsibility within the organisation
- Reduced censorship
- Improved financial management
- Increased understanding of and responsiveness to the needs of diverse sections of the audience, for example systems for audience engagement and feedback, which seek to reach all sections of community
- Existence of an editorial policy,

which enshrines independence and commitment to serving diverse public
- Commitment to sustaining positive outcomes of project

Systems level
- Existence of a legal, policy and regulatory framework, which safeguards independent media and freedom of expression

- Plurality, diversity and transparency of ownership within the media sector
- Media provides a platform for democratic discourse, playing a key role in the achievement of governance outcomes
- There is widespread access to media for populations
- Media practitioners can operate safely

Table 1: Sample questions for capacity-strengthening intervention

Organisational change working across three main areas:

Editorial principles and governance: Editorial principles and culture at management and practitioner level
Technical equipment/resources: Availability of equipment, transport and budget to fund staff
Staff development/support: Personal development of staff, establishment of training, support and mentoring given to staff and HR processes, e.g., creation of new roles

Level	Research question
Practitioner	Have the practitioners' networks and contacts increased or strengthened over time?
	Are people sharing knowledge with others in their organisation?
	Do people feel they can progress in their organisation?
Organisation	Has the organisation improved its financial position (management/advertising revenue)?
	Does the management show improved editorial principles?
	Are there any barriers preventing the capacity strengthening being applied (availability of equipment/transport/budget for staff etc.)?
	Is the organisation actively supporting its staff to progress?
External environment/ Systems	How does the organisation compare with its competitors?
Audience	How does the audience view the station? Have audience views changed over time?

Part 4
Research design

In 2014 and 2015, BBC Media Action evaluated the impact of capacity-strengthening interventions under the Global Grant. The research methods employed were consistent across each intervention and utilised the methodology outlined in part three. Evaluations thus focused on the effectiveness of these capacity-strengthening interventions to achieve impact at the audience, practitioner and organisation level.

To ensure that a range of interventions was evaluated, the 113 broadcast partners that have received capacity-strengthening support between 2011 and 2015 were grouped into the following categories in order to ensure diversity of different types of interventions and contexts:

• Category A: High-intensity partnership with a local partner working at a local level
• Category B: Partner that is working at a state or national level (intensity of intervention varied)
• Category C: Low-intensity partnerships where capacity strengthening was not geared towards producing specific programme output

Partnerships within each category were randomly selected for evaluation. Initially, 10 were chosen, in case any of the chosen partnerships ended unexpectedly or changing contexts prevented the evaluation from taking place. This was to avoid needing to change the chosen partnerships during the course of the evaluation, which would have affected the random nature of the selection. The 10 partnerships varied by theme, and included a mix of stations working on governance and health themes. They also varied in duration; some, when selected, were near to completion (such as SLBC Kailahun, Sierra Leone and the Directorate General of Health Services, Bangladesh), and others were longer-term partnerships (such as the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation). For the partnerships that were nearing an end, this presented an opportunity for us to evaluate the impact of the partnership after completion of the intervention, once BBC Media Action support had been withdrawn.

Table 2: Partnerships randomly selected for evaluation 2014–2015

	Africa	Asia	MEE
Category A	1. Radio Easter, the Catholic Radio Network (Yei, South Sudan)* 2. SLBC Kailahun (Sierra Leone)**	1. Dinesh FM (Nepal)	*No partnerships in this category*
Category B	1. Oromia Radio and Television Organisation (Ethiopia)	1. BTV (Bangladesh) 2. The Bureau of Health Education (BHE), Directorate General of Health Services (Bangladesh)***	1. Palestinian broadcasting Corporation (PT)
Category C	1. Noun 105.9FM (Nigeria) 2. CG FM Radio (Tanzania) 3. Radio Huruma (Tanzania)****	*No partnerships in this category*	*No partnerships in this category*

Details of those partnerships where planned research has not taken place are outlined below:

1) Changes in external environment

* Radio Easter evaluation was postponed due to the conflict in South Sudan and competing priorities. Evaluation is now in progress.
** SLBC Kailahun evaluation in Sierra Leone was delayed as a result of the Ebola crisis. However, the tools and evaluation design have been completed and it is now in progress.

2) Changing capacity-strengthening approach

*** BTV, Bangladesh. An assessment of the partnership showed that at the time (2014), we would not have been able to have the desired impact on the organisation, so the intervention and therefore the evaluation was stalled.
*** The Bureau of Health Education (BHE), Directorate General of Health Services (Bangladesh). An initial baseline was conducted, but the programme of capacity strengthening activities was delayed by a year and only recommenced after the fieldwork period, so evaluation could not happen.

3) Partnership terminated

**** The partnership with Radio Huruma has been terminated and research access was not authorised by the partner.

The changing nature of partnerships and country contexts has meant that in some cases there have been difficulties in conducting the evaluation. As a result, we ultimately decided to evaluate five partnerships, making sure that all three categories of partnership were represented and all three regions in which we work. This change was predicted and accounted for in the initial evaluation design, when 10 partnerships were selected to allow for any problems.

In order to evaluate the impact of the five remaining capacity-strengthening interventions, a case study approach was adopted. Qualitative approaches enable a deeper understanding of the impacts of the programmes and the views of different actors across our four levels (e.g., practitioners, managers, audiences and members of civil society). In this way, we can better identify those aspects of our approach that worked best, the challenges we faced and why some aspects of our approach worked better than others.

As these partnerships had never been systematically evaluated previously (beyond programme monitoring), there was no baseline from which to compare. It was therefore decided to conduct the research at two time points to enable us to track progress over time.

- Time 1 – August/September 2014
- Time 2 – February/March 2015

Part 5
Case studies and findings

This section summarises five BBC Media Action capacity-strengthening interventions, selected randomly for this evaluation as detailed in part four. It gives an overview of the project objectives and specific research activities conducted (building on the methodology outlined above), and main findings. The findings show how well each capacity-strengthening intervention has performed across the four levels: systems, organisation, practitioner and audience.[24]

Noun 105.9FM, Nigeria

This is a university campus station that focuses mainly on educational programming, but also broadcasts news, music, and other programmes to an audience of students and people living in the neighbourhoods around the university. It is owned and solely funded by the National Open University of Nigeria in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city. Noun 105.9FM rebroadcasts two of our national governance outputs funded under Global Grant: the drama *Story, Story* and the magazine programme *Talk Your Own*.

Project aims: This is a low-intensity capacity-strengthening partnership. Noun 105.9FM staff attended two external workshops with staff from other local broadcasters from around the country. The training was aimed at improving practitioners' production and editorial skills.

Methodology: Two rounds of IDIs with practitioners and managers were conducted. These interviews were supplemented with station assessments. During the second phase, audience focus groups were conducted with listeners of the station.

Results
Systems: No change at this level as expected.

Organisation:
- Improved programme production processes within the station: Examples include better teamwork, improved sound quality of public service announcements produced.
- Improved editorial processes: Weekly editorial meetings now established to check programme content.

- Increased emphasis on staff development: Management staff reported that a staff skill development plan is being developed as a result of the training.

Practitioners:
- Improved planning and research before producing output: Trainees reported that they now carry out more research.
- Increased audience engagement: Journalists reported gaining more feedback from audiences through phone calls, social media and SMS.
- Slight improvement in editing skills, although the training was not long enough to establish this definitively.

Audience:
- Perceived improvement in programme output: Listener focus groups reported an observed change in the presentation abilities of the station's presenters.
- Audiences still felt that the target audience for the output was students rather than the general public, which was the target audience the station was trying to reach.

Barriers to change: The research identified some barriers that affected uptake of the intervention.
- Type of intervention: The support centred mainly around training workshops rather than on-the-job mentoring. As such, there was only a slight improvement in those skills that take more time to embed, such as editing packages, use of editorial values in reporting, etc.
- Self-censorship: All staff noted that there is still a high level of self-censorship, which prevents staff from producing the content that they would like.
- Lack of resources: Transmitters only cover a small reach and there is no vehicle/transport available within the station. BBC Media Action has supplied some equipment, but trainees still have to queue to use what is available.

Oromia Radio and Television Organisation (ORTO), Ethiopia

This is a state radio and TV broadcaster run by the Oromia regional state. The station broadcasts exclusively in the Afan Oromo language for 17 hours each day. The station's geographical coverage encompasses 80% of the region. Since February 2013, ORTO also broadcasts BBC Media Action's weekly radio magazine programme *Biftuu Jireenya* (Dawn of Life). *Biftuu Jireenya* is part of BBC Media Action's work to improve maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) through a range of programmes outputs in order to shift knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Project aims: At the start of the project, a needs assessment confirmed that there should be no expectation of influencing the editorial agenda of this government-run station. The intervention therefore needed to focus on improving practitioners' technical skills and having input into management processes that were less editorially sensitive, such as recruitment and financial management.

Workshops and mentoring also took place, focusing primarily on improved production and presentation skills and increasing capacity to report on MNCH issues. A trainer worked with ORTO to produce a production manual that could be used across the station.

Methodology: In November 2014, 12 IDIs were carried out with programme makers, managers who had received BBC Media Action training and a training mentor. These interviews were supplemented with interviews with the project team and a station assessment. Results were compared with the needs assessment carried out at the beginning of 2014.

Results

Systems: As expected, none at the moment.

Organisation:
- Improved working and collaboration between different teams: Staff (producers, editors and directors) reported that they worked more with each other.
- High sense of appreciation and ownership of the training among journalists and managers.
- Cascade effects: Managers felt that programmes produced by BBC Media Action-trained producers and the BBC Media Action programme Biftuu Jireenya were serving as a model for others, encouraging them to produce programmes based on the same editorial principles.
- Technical support: ORTO has received a comprehensive radio production manual which producers refer to for programme-making.

Practitioners:
- Improved health knowledge: Increased knowledge was reported on MNCH issues and covering a wider range and depth of topics/themes.
- Increased understanding of the importance of planning and research before making programmes: Examples include developing questions prior to interviewing.
- Increased representation of audiences: Efforts at gathering more information from audiences through phone calls and internet were reported, as well as an increased representation of multiple voices on programmes.
- Improved technical skills: Journalists and managers reported improvements in use of sound in radio programmes, including using

sounds recorded on location, and improved interview skills as a result of training.

Audience:
- Audience level change as a result of the intervention was not measured as it was thought that improvements in technical skills and overall professionalism would not be picked up by audiences.

Barriers to change:
- Censorship: ORTO is a state-owned station closely controlled by the government. Its output planning is conducted according to the wishes of various government ministries. The government agenda takes priority over impartial editorial consideration. The training had to concentrate on technical skills and areas that were not affected by this censorship.
- Low perceived value of radio: ORTO is a television and radio organisation where more focus is given to TV, making it difficult to produce quality radio programmes. Staff felt that TV production was prioritised over radio production and that this led to a lack of equipment for radio production and a lack of support for collecting audience material in the field.

CG FM, Tanzania

This local FM station reaches approximately 300,000 people. Since 2012, CG FM has been a rebroadcast partner of BBC Media Action's *Haba na Haba* (Little By Little) radio show, a governance programme that broadcasts nationally as well as on BBC Swahili.

Project aims: From 2012 to 2014, station staff undertook training workshops organised by BBC Media Action on management, programme production, news making, interviewing skills, editing skills, script writing and package making. From December 2014, CG FM became a "core partner" of BBC Media Action and a mentor was assigned to the station as part of the capacity-strengthening activities. The mentoring supported the team to produce packages for *Haba na Haba*. These packages showcase content, views and stories from audiences local to the station.

Methodology: In both research phases, six IDIs were conducted with the station manager, station practitioners trained in the station (producers, presenters and reporters), and the project team. These interviews were supplemented by station assessments, which included reviews of programme content, the station's official documents, other documents, noticeboard content and editorial meetings.

Results

Systems:

- Service delivery: Broadcasting about particular issues (such as drug availability) had a positive impact on service delivery in the local area.

Organisation:

- Change in programme schedules: The more intense training and mentoring delivered since January 2015 has resulted in a shift from a DJ-based entertainment programme to a programme that discusses social issues including topics related to the environment, women, children, governance-related issues, road security and health.
- Increased audience engagement: The mentorship has instigated "Open Discussion Days" at the station, in which government officials and citizens are brought together.
- Improved planning: Since the mentoring began, daily staff meetings have been instituted for editorial planning and to hold debriefs on previous programmes. Radio station staff members feel that these meetings allow them to discuss programme ideas, learn from one another and plan for future programming.
- Improved editorial values: Previously, there was self-censorship. During the mentorship, station managers have become less intrusive and adhere to editorial values. If they need to critique programmes, this is done using editorial guidelines to find ways to improve the programme so that it can be aired.

Practitioners:

- Improved editorial skills: There has been an increase in fact-checking and checking of sources.
- Improved interviewing skills: Staff are encouraged to demonstrate their interviewing skills at weekly meetings. Those who do well are selected to conduct interviews. Research also showed that staff felt that they had gained confidence in using and applying the skills since the mentoring.
- Increased use of social media: Trainees reported becoming more active on social media and having created more platforms for their programmes, such as WhatsApp and Twitter, in addition to Facebook.
- Learning practical skills: Although members of staff have undergone training with other organisations, trainees reported that BBC Media Action's hands-on approach has allowed for skills development, rather than relying only on theory, which other training programmes have done.

Audience:

- Improved audience feedback mechanisms, but no research conducted yet to understand impact at an audience level.

Barriers to change:

- Lack of staff: Although there is evidence that the mentorship is improving skills and editorial processes in the station, human resources are limited and this influences the ability of the station to produce additional programming. Staff also mentioned that they were seeking other income-generating activities in addition to their work at the station, and attending training for per diems rather than for skills development due to low salaries.
- Lack of resources: Having sufficient resources – for example, to go out and obtain a variety of sources for a story – remains a challenge, but this has begun to be addressed. Sources are often difficult to reach because they are far away. As such, the station director has provided a motorbike for staff to use to travel to the field. This still remains a challenge for female staff members since, for cultural reasons, women do not tend to ride motorbikes.
- Self-censorship: Although the station staff reported that they did not face censorship from the government, they often face criticism and censorship from the station director and other journalists. Trainees explained how the station manager would at times censor broadcasts on issues that could be considered sensitive to the government.

Dinesh FM, Nepal

This is a commercial radio station in the Far Western Region of Nepal. The station was launched in 2007 with the vision of providing audiences with information on various topics, such as health, education, politics, commerce, agriculture and entertainment. The station broadcasts for 18 hours a day.

Dinesh FM and BBC Media Action formed a partnership in December 2013. BBC Media Action supported the station to produce its own local version of the popular national debate programme *Sajha Sawal* (Common Questions). This was the station's first foray into live, audience-driven discussion programming. In early 2014, the Dinesh FM team spent a week shadowing the *Sajha Sawal* team, later receiving intensive support from a mentor. In 2015, this was superseded by light coaching and mentoring from a distance. During this period, staff were invited to contact BBC Media Action staff with specific issues as they arose.

Project aims: The mentoring was intended to provide practitioners with the editorial and production skills required to produce the debate programme. The station was also encouraged to introduce editorial and management processes for broader application across the organisation. These processes included the establishment of routine meetings and audience recruitment systems.

In addition to mentoring, BBC Media Action also provided equipment and funded 100% of the production costs for the debate show in the first year, deliberately cut to 50% in the second year to prepare the station to find funds to sustain the programme in the long term. Training in marketing, proposal writing and business development were provided as part of this preparation.

Methodology: In addition to station assessments and interviews with station managers and practitioners, two case studies explored what role – if any – local discussion radio programmes had played in bringing about change in the local communities served by the station. These case studies were identified through anecdotal evidence provided by station staff. Interviews with audience members (local community members), panellists (relevant stakeholders) and production staff were conducted several months after the episode had aired to understand the extent to which the impact of the show had endured. The second round of evaluation, which was to include interviews with audiences, was not conducted due to the earthquake in April 2015.[25]

Results

Systems:

- Responsiveness: There are examples where officials have taken action as a result of issues raised in programmes.

Organisation:

- Improved programme output: The status of the programme produced under the capacity-strengthening intervention led to funding from other sources.
- Cascading of skills: Management talked about how staff had applied skills they had learnt from the mentoring to the production of other programmes outside the intervention.
- Improved editorial values: Programmes are now including diverse audiences, and engaging with audiences has improved as a result of the mentoring.

Practitioners:

- Improved understanding of editorial values: Staff applied sourcing and fact-checking to their programmes.
- Engagement with audiences: Journalists understood the importance not only of incorporating audience feedback in programme-making but also of embracing any negative feedback as well as positive feedback.
- Application of editorial skills: Staff and management talked about the improved interviewing and editing skills as a result of the mentoring.
- Improved confidence: Staff spoke of how the training had led to increased confidence in their work.

Audience:

- Programming addressed audience needs: Audiences spoke about how governance programming had led to government officials being more accountable.

Barriers to change:

- High staff turnover: Dinesh FM's high turnover of staff in the *Sajha Manch* (Common Forum) team hampered the programme. Out of five people trained for the local discussion team, two (the presenter and one of the two producers) left the radio station.

Palestinian territories

PBC includes a national TV channel and a radio station, known as *Sout Falesteen* or Voice of Palestine. This organisation reaches audiences across the West Bank and Gaza. PBC has traditionally supported Fatah, the dominant political party within the Palestinian Authority. In recent years, however, PBC has begun to transition towards a less partisan position, defining itself as a public service broadcaster. President Mahmoud Abbas issued a presidential decree in 2010 resolving to convert PBC from a governmental institution into an independent institution in terms of its administration and financing.

Project aims: BBC Media Action has been working with PBC since September 2012 to contribute to this transition to public service broadcasting. This has involved the co-production of two debate

formats collectively known as the "Palestine Debates": a quarterly programme in collaboration with BBC Arabic called *Aswat Min Falesteen* (Voices from Palestine) and a fortnightly programme led by PBC with BBC Media Action support called *Hur Al Kalam* (Freedom to Speak). The production of these outputs is supported by an intensive capacity-strengthening and on-the-job training programme for 30 PBC staff across the organisation. In addition, BBC Media Action has supported the design and implementation of a social media strategy for PBC to enhance audience engagement in a region known to have high levels of internet penetration. These interventions aimed to improve technical skills, such as camera work, floor managing, interview skills, as well as soft skills, such as increased confidence and improved planning for practitioners and their department.

Methodology:
- First phase: Seven IDIs with mentors, managers, experts (from a governance NGO and from a university) and staff who worked on the co-productions in November 2014.
- Second phase: Five IDIs with practitioners and three focus group discussions with audiences of PTV in Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron in March 2015. These interviews aimed to follow up on findings that emerged from the interviews carried out in the first phase (late 2014). An expert panel is being carried out in mid–late 2015, which will look at systems-level change.

Results

Systems:
- Improved programming: PBC produces a national programme Palestine Debates which is considered a flagship programme. There were some examples of how skills learnt in the training had transferred to other programmes across the station.

Organisation:
- New roles and teams put in place: A social media team was set up and new job roles created – for example, floor manager was operationalised.
- Skills learned from training were transferred to other work: Informal transfer of skills to other colleagues and application of improved skills and new working practices to other programmes within the station, for example directing skills, health and safety procedures and editorial processes.
- Diverse live audience in debates: An audience recruitment team was trained to recruit audiences from marginalised groups across the Palestinian territories.

Practitioners:
- Improved production skills: Staff showed improved technical and production skills relevant to their job role, such as scriptwriting, running orders, etc.
- Increased understanding of audiences: Trainees showed an increased understanding of audience engagement, of how to recruit diverse audiences and represent women and youth more effectively, and of how the choice of topic can affect the engagement level of the audience.

Audience:
- Audiences noticed improved presenting and interviewing skills and thought that the presenter engaged with audiences well.

Barriers to change:
The key barriers to maximum impact were:
- Lack of resources: There were limited human, financial and material resources available at PBC to ensure that new skills could be implemented and spread more widely.
- Lack of management support: While PTV management's commitment in principle to capacity strengthening was acknowledged, this did not always translate into effective support in practice.
- Censorship: Political pressures and censorship have restricted the spread of editorial values such as objectivity and balance beyond the programmes directly supported by BBC Media Action.

Part 6
A synthesis of findings

This section synthesises findings across the five capacity-strengthening evaluations outlined above. The findings are organised to evaluate these interventions at the four levels of impact – audience, practitioner, organisation and systems. This will generate key learning for future interventions.

Level one: Strengthening audience engagement

In all cases, the capacity-strengthening interventions were successful at increasing staff engagement with audiences. The PBC case nicely illustrates how training aimed at increasing audience engagement and understanding was taken up in the station and how, in turn, these changes were received by viewers and listeners of the Palestine Debates.

Mentors at PBC worked with a team to produce TV debate programmes where a live audience was recruited to ask questions of a panel. Staff needed to develop a set of skills in how to recruit a diverse audience for a live debate.

> "We learned how to bring in relevant audiences [for the live audience], to make sure that youth and women are represented, that the audience is from various governorates [districts], and has the ability to discuss the topic."
> Female Trainee, PBC

Presenters also had to master the art of interacting with studio audiences at the same time as managing panellists. The role of floor manager is vital to ensuring fluid interaction between the panellists and the studio audience. This role did not exist previously in PBC, so it was created in order to produce the Palestine Debates:

> "This position is new to the station and it is improving. It is being used in other programmes too. At the beginning, I felt it was useless and an easy job, then with time, I discovered how important my role is in producing a good show."
> Male Trainee, Floor Manager, Palestine Debates

Research with viewers and listeners of the debate shows identified the role of the audience in questioning the officials as "very important." The majority of the respondents thought that the audiences of Palestine Debates included all segments of society – the young, the old, men and women. Some were impressed that a government official would come to listen to audience members and pay attention to their views. Others noticed that people who had experienced a problem and/or filed a complaint that had not been acted upon were able to voice their concerns:

> "Both the audience and the officials were well familiar with the topics and issues discussed, because they are part of the problem. The citizens are those suffering from the problem and the officials are the decision-makers and so they had great knowledge."
> Female, 32 years old, refugee camp, Hebron

A social media team was also established at PBC to further galvanise audience engagement. A Facebook page already existed at the station, but it was not well prioritised, well organised or well maintained. Staff received training in the production of content for social media, the use of social media to interact with and get feedback from audiences and as a means of monitoring levels of engagement. This was intended to help them to make the Facebook page more lively, compelling and audience-driven.

Production staff noted how their interactions with audiences had previously been limited to the recording of vox pops, but that now they were able to hear from the audience through Facebook. As of this writing, the number of "likes" for the Hur Al Kalam and Voices from Palestine Facebook pages were 5300, while PBC's Facebook page had approximately 3 million "likes."[26] However, trainees reported that they were only using Facebook to gain audience feedback on the two outputs that BBC Media Action was co-producing with PBC, and had not applied these skills across PBC's schedule. Interviews also revealed a level of censorship in the management of the Facebook page, specifically around two-way conversations with audience members:

> "The social media was something new to the station and I worked on it without any training. The co-operation with BBC Media Action increased my information on it. The big achievement seen is the establishment of the social media unit. The station has its own page that has more than 250,000 "likes". Still, I could not apply some of the skills I gained like responding to the audience on Facebook. I am not allowed to do that from a management point of view."
> Male Trainee, social media team

These findings show that, while there appeared to be management buy-in to start a social media unit, editorial pressures may have been influencing its operation in practice.

Even in stations that were affected by censorship, however, the interventions were successful at increasing audience engagement. Prior to training, the heavily state-controlled ORTO did not have any practice of conducting audience research, collecting audience feedback or recording interviews with ordinary people in the field. After the training, producers mentioned that they had started to incorporate voices of the general public as well as experts. They would set these up by making phone calls and establishing personal contact.

> "I try to create proximity with audiences by searching for stories popular among the audience and using natural sounds in their village."
> Producer, ORTO

In contrast to those at ORTO, staff at CG FM in Tanzania were engaging with audiences prior to BBC Media Action's involvement with the station. Around 100 listening groups had spontaneously formed across the region, where people in the community met to listen to the radio together. Anecdotal audience feedback was also received through greetings cards or by SMS. In addition, the station held an annual audience feedback week where people were invited to share their views. Journalists also mentioned that they always made a point of talking to listeners when they were working outside the station.

As a result of the mentoring, this audience feedback was recorded more systematically for discussion in editorial meetings. Staff reported that this process led to revisions in programme slots and the use of language that was more comprehensible to audiences.

In addition, the BBC Media Action mentor encouraged station management to set up "Open Discussion Days", where officials were invited in to meet with station staff and audience members and participate in lively debate about the role of local radio in the community and the leaders' responsibilities to participate. The result was an improved relationship with local government and better access to officials and information.[27]

Level two: Impact on practitioners – production, journalism and editorial skills

A central thread in all of the capacity-strengthening interventions was the emphasis on improving the editorial, journalism and production skills of individual trainees. Programme objectives, resources and the length of the intervention determined the relevant skills that needed developing and their level of complexity.

a) Technical production skills (such as sound quality, camera work and graphics)

Across interventions, practitioners showed increased levels of knowledge and application of newly learned technical production skills. In some interventions, this was the main area where impact was achieved. At ORTO, for example, technical skills were a central focus of the training because our needs assessment and prior experience working with ORTO made clear that training in editorial values would not be welcomed. BBC Media Action took the view that the best way to strengthen health programming was to make it more interesting, particularly given that the content included life-saving information.

The intervention was effective at imparting these skills. Presenters at ORTO mentioned how they were made conscious of using the power of their voices. They reported that they tried to be more engaged in the programme they were presenting and to link segments in a less formal, more playful and more interesting fashion:

> "Before the training, my voice was slow and not powerful whilst presenting. I now vary the tone of my voice as needed."
> Presenter, ORTO

Elsewhere, technical skills were prioritised in order to achieve the high production values expected of flagship programmes capable of generating high audience reach. The team at PTV (the television arm of PBC) were under significant pressure to make technically complex and demanding outputs different from anything the broadcaster had ever aired before. They were using certain pieces of equipment for the first time and working to particularly high production standards. When interviewed for the evaluation, team members explained that technical issues apparent in earlier episodes were gradually ironed out. Experts interviewed as part of the evaluation also commented that the technical quality of the programmes improved over time.

> "There was improvement in every technical [area], like the sound, lighting, etc… This left impact on the individuals who apply their new technical experience into other programmes at PBC."
> Manager, PBC Programmes Department

b) Basic journalism skills

Where possible, BBC Media Action focused on improving the ability of journalists to produce accurate, fair, balanced and impartial content.

In all cases, the interventions were effective at imparting basic journalism skills, such as how to identify and cultivate sources. Rigorous journalism requires that two or three sources be used to substantiate every story. A wider range of sources not only serves to validate the authenticity

of the reporting, it also forces journalists to move beyond the official, government-issued press releases on a given topic, which can tend to be overly privileged as source material. There were references across all of the projects to staff journalists beginning to adhere more precisely to this principle as a result of support from BBC Media Action. At CG FM, for instance, management required producers to name their sources for peer review at editorial meetings. In the following example, a senior member of staff implies that this practice had been adopted at all levels:

> "We are currently making a story which has no less than three sources. For instance if an issue concerns citizens, then we talk to citizens and then we go to the leaders in the neighbourhood."
> Male, Chief Editor, CG FM

But there are practical challenges in trying to secure the requisite number of sources for each and every story, especially at smaller local media outlets like CG FM. Journalists will have to travel to meet the sources they wish to cultivate, which takes both time and money. The station manager at CG FM supplied a motorbike for this purpose, but for cultural reasons, female employees were not able to use it.

Interviews were also an important element of many of the co-productions. In all cases, basic journalistic principles were conveyed to staff by trainers: understand the objective of the interview, maintain focus and keep the questions simple. Presenters at Dinesh FM in Nepal and PTV in Palestine had the daunting task of conducting interviews in front of live audiences in a way that properly challenged subjects in positions of power. Staff mentioned that they learnt how to ask short questions, to cross-question panellists and to ask questions in a different way:

> "The training has helped us to identify the issue, ask the questions in a right way, get the panellists to make commitments and bring programme to a conclusion."
> Station manager, Dinesh FM

Viewers and listeners of Palestine Debates thought that the moderation in the programmes was good, mainly because it gave a space for the audience to raise their problems, and so there was an open discussion in which people could speak and ask questions. Some commented positively on the moderator's ability to give everyone a chance to speak and allow for more than one view to be expressed, thereby allowing people to talk "openly and explicitly". A couple of respondents described the presenter as "strong" and "courageous", and some commented on the importance of the presenter's role in "enriching" the discussion and being the "link" between the audience and the officials.

> "The moderation of the discussion was good. The presenter addresses the questions to the minister and from time to time she allows the audience to participate."
>
> Male viewer, 28 years old, Hebron

c) Producing content (planning, research, making packages)

Trainers and mentors supported staff to apply the editorial and production skills they had learned to the production of content. This included planning programmes in a more systematic way, researching topics covered in a programme in more depth, and editing content into coherent packages.

Participants across all of the cases mentioned applying these research tools to their work. Before any interview was conducted at ORTO, for example, interviewers fully researched both the topic and the interviewee. This enabled them to conduct the interviews more professionally in advance of the programme.

Staff at CG FM in Tanzania also talked about how research had helped them to broaden their knowledge of available sources on a topic, while a trainee at Noun 105.9FM had this to say:

> "As a presenter, I think the major thing that has actually improved in me is in-depth research and analysis. I have realised that you actually need to know the back and forth of the issues you are discussing so well and so you need to sound authoritative on that thing... people get to know, 'Oh he's right on point, he knows what he is doing,' so no one can actually rubbish [insult] you. Because sometimes it is pretty funny, you are interviewing people and they tell you, 'You are not getting this fact right.' After the training, it has helped in digging deep."
>
> Presenter, Noun 105.9FM

The creation of packages was more difficult to master. It is more time consuming and technically demanding than other aspects of radio production. Staff at CG FM received training in a workshop to make packages for inclusion in *Haba na Haba*. But staff members did not make them at the rate intended. A member of BBC Media Action staff felt that this reflected a problem of ownership:

> "The main challenge in producing this package is more of individual and not a station as a whole. Staff do not own this new style/format and use it in their programme; they will normally do this under our supervision and not person interest."
>
> Producer, CG FM

The length and intensity of the intervention also has an impact on uptake of more complex skills such as editing. Where journalists took part in

shorter interventions (for example at Noun 105.9FM), they complained that they needed more time to master these skills. Staff at CG FM similarly reflected that their editing skills improved noticeably after a mentor came to work at the station.

d) Softer skills – confidence, knowledge sharing and teamwork

An important benefit of the mentoring approach is that mentors can work directly with individuals to build softer skills such as self-confidence, collaboration and teamwork. Across the interventions, staff at all levels displayed increased confidence. This helped them in using and applying the skills in the workplace. Presenters at Dinesh FM talked about how training had helped them to feel more confident when interviewing panellists on the debate programme, enabling them to question people more:

> "Before, I used to be nervous. Now I am confident that we can handle everything. Panellists will try to divert but I know how to bring him on track."
> Producer, Dinesh FM

e) Cascading of knowledge and skills

Capacity-strengthening interventions often train a sub-group of staff in a station – a particular team or those who are producing a particular output. The idea is that once the trained staff buy into the intervention, they will have the confidence to share their new skills and knowledge with their colleagues.

In all of the interventions, there were examples of how individual skills developed through making a programme led to sharing skills and knowledge with others. At PBC, for example, trainees explained that they had applied the skills and knowledge acquired through the project to other programmes that they worked on at the station. These skills included understanding the audience, safeguarding health and safety, the use of social media, and script writing. A manager noted that the technical skills gained through the mentoring on the Palestine Debates programmes – specifically lighting and sound – had been applied to other programmes. The director of Palestine Debates also talked about bringing the skills he had developed to a radio programme he subsequently worked on, including the use of running orders, how to communicate with a big team, how to search for a topic and analyse information around it, how to deal with various kinds of people and audiences, how to try and get answers from the panellists, and how to be objective and credible.

> "I trained the assistant director, in informal way, on how to communicate with other people and work under pressure, how to co-ordinate calls and interviews and in different locations. She is now able to work by herself and she did that."
> Male Trainee, Director of Palestine Debates

Level three: Organisational capacity strengthening

As noted in part two, a journalist or producer can only apply newly developed skills when the organisation enables it. Myriad constraints and opportunities can be found within any working environment.

There were several concrete examples where organisational change had happened and new processes had been put in place. The position of floor manager at PBC was created and funded specifically for Palestine Debates and now exists for other shows.

> "I was told that I'm a success story for the show. I felt it is an important position and I need to work more on myself. I like to work on Hur Al Kalam [Freedom to Speak] because each one knows his responsibilities and we work in professional environment. We are on the same page."
> Floor Manager, PBC

a) Improved HR processes

Training with CG FM staff in Tanzania resulted in the development of clear management structures and an organogram. Prior to this, all staff had been reporting directly to the station director. Following the intervention, there were now separate departments for news, production, entertainment and programming, and a clear delineation between the roles of station manager and chief editor. In addition, the role of marketing manager was created:

> "Yes, there are changes. As I have told you earlier, you know earlier I was holding many roles; I was a Manager, Chief Editor and also News Editor and sometimes I was on marketing issues. So, you can find that everything was on me. But after the training was conducted to radio owners, which have a partnership with BBC, so they were instructed that it is required a single person should not hold two or three positions."
> Male, Chief Editor, PBC

b) Improved programming

Three of the five capacity-strengthening interventions involved the co-production of programme outputs. The co-produced programmes were expected to adhere to high editorial and production standards and to serve as a benchmark for other programmes produced without mentoring support. The evaluations suggest that the capacity strengthening was effective in helping staff to produce a programme thought to stand out against the station's other output. Significantly, in some cases, this has led to some improvements in the quality of other outputs, either because staff took their new skills on to different programmes or because the organisation raised editorial standards across the board.

For example, the Palestine Debates co-produced with PBC were also intended to air on BBC Arabic. Programmes produced as part of BBC Media Action projects are often broadcast on BBC airwaves, but they must meet BBC standards of impartiality. This rule acts both as an incentive – to reach a larger audience on an international platform – and as a way of protecting the output from editorial pressures within the "home" outlet. PBC was able to achieve the required standard with BBC Media Action's support. In fact, the programmes covered issues that might not have aired elsewhere, such as the internal dispute between the ruling Fatah and Hamas factions and issues concerning the refugee populations who live outside the borders of the Palestinian territories.

> "[The producers] were quite receptive to our ideas, and to ideas that BBC Arabic brings to the table in terms of choosing the guests, the line of questioning and what kind of audience to bring in… [The director] was quite forthcoming in asking us what we expected from him – what do we think of certain shots… having a running order ready for him… what works what doesn't work. It was a two-way process, and I think that all of them learned a lot during that year."
> Female Mentor, PTV

Focus groups of PBC viewers showed that, in the last year, audiences noticed a broader range of programming on PTV and particularly an increased focus on youth. Subsequently, PTV approached BBC Media Action to co-develop a new youth programme. This shows the station's willingness to try new types of programming and enthusiasm to further develop the capacity-strengthening relationship.

As with PBC, the capacity-strengthening partnership supported Dinesh FM in Nepal to develop an entirely new area of programming. The radio station had no prior experience of working with a live audience or selecting panellists to represent a range of viewpoints. The station manager reported that *Sajha Manch* (Common Forum) was now considered one of the best programmes produced by Dinesh FM and that it had helped to increase listenership.

Only one station, CG FM in Tanzania, appears to have seen significant impact across the station's entire programming schedule. Since the mentoring began, there has been a shift from DJ-based entertainment programming to a more diverse range of speech-based output, which tackles social and governance issues such as road security, health, education and women's issues.

c) Editorial values and processes

Editorial meetings matter because they offer an arena in which staff can participate in editorial decision-making and reinforce teamwork. They provide a platform for staff to discuss new angles and story ideas, to

decide whether these get accepted or rejected, to review past output, to plan for future programmes and – crucially – to ensure that editorial principles are adhered to. The initial needs assessments revealed that these meetings were not routinely taking place in any of the five outlets prior to BBC Media Action's involvement.

Editorial meetings started taking place at Dinesh FM as a result of the training. These were used to select subjects for discussion on the show and to draw up a list of potential panellists. Tasks relating to research and audience recruitment were also agreed. The station manager participated and provided feedback and suggestions, but most of the editorial decisions lay with the producer. Listening-back sessions were also implemented for the programme:

> "There was no concept of working in a team before, all the programmes were one man show. But now at least in local discussion programme, there is a great sense of teamwork, they discuss things and there is regular editorial meeting."
> Capacity Strengthening Officer, Dinesh FM, BBC Media Action

Editorial meetings started taking place at PBC specifically for Palestine Debates. Previously, it had been customary for the script writer (who was also the presenter) to meet with the director in advance and to agree on the ideas for upcoming programmes. After BBC Media Action's engagement, however, planning meetings involving a wider group of editorial staff began to take place before filming with debriefs afterwards so as to feed into the editing process. Departmental meetings were also set up to discuss which issues would be of most interest to the public and to clarify the key angle for each show.

Nonetheless, this does not necessarily signal a more widespread shift towards appreciation of more robust editorial standards or processes. The manager of Palestine Debates reported that the programmes have now become the "standard-bearer" within the organisation. But interviews with staff suggest a more mixed picture of the extent to which wider management approval exists for trainees to use or share their newly acquired skills elsewhere. It appears to depend on the individual manager or the ability of the trainee to influence those around them. BBC Media Action Country Director for the Palestinian Territories, Walid Batrawi, notes that while support for PBC to operate independently does exist at the highest levels, this goal is more difficult to achieve in practice. Current affairs presenters, for example, may employ the term "Israeli aggression" because it seems disloyal to narrate events in a less emotive way.[28] It is clear that a transition cannot take place overnight. At the time of writing, Batrawi was in the process of familiarising middle management with basic editorial values, recognising that their adoption might take some time.

Level four: Systems-level change

The intervention most likely to impact on the wider media system in a given country was the project at PBC because it formed part a broader transition towards a model of independent broadcasting that had been sanctioned by the government and was already underway. The evaluation suggests that, while the co-produced programmes did manifest some of the values inherent in public service broadcasting, these were not yet evident across all of PBC's output. Audience members and media experts still perceive bias within PBC programmes.

The experiences of Dinesh FM and CG FM suggest that mentoring can have a more significant impact on the immediate governance environment at smaller, local outlets. This has been achieved directly through programming, which enables audiences to question officials on issues that matter to them and to demand that action be taken to resolve them. The chief editor at CG FM explains the impact of a special series on drug availability:

> "Around January and March we conducted six programmes relating to health issues in the village. We did some research and discovered that in the village there is inadequacy of medicine in the dispensaries and not only that but also lack of service providers, laboratories etc. So we made random sampling and chose one dispensary in each district of Tabora which involve: Skonge, Nzega, Urambo, Uyui, and Kariuwa. Our staff went there and made radio packages and conducted interviews with citizens, local government officials, medical doctors in charge, nurses and pharmacists. After the programmes went on air/broadcasted, we got the feedback that there were positive impacts. In Ipole dispensary, Skonge district, there was an increase of medicine and service provider and in the Songambele dispensary, Urambo district, there was an increase of medicine as well. As a result of the programmes being aired we sent our reporter to go and confirm. We were able to follow up in those two regions."
> Male, Chief Editor, CG FM

At Dinesh FM, staff identified two episodes of *Sajha Manch* (Common Forum) from which some accountability had been achieved on issues raised. In February 2014, an episode explored why newly built roads did not include drainage. The Dhangadhi Municipality Executive and the former Mayor of Dhangadi were invited to sit on the panel of *Sajha Manch*. Affected local people sat in the audience. The Municipality Executive pledged to assess drainage needs in the urban areas and to release the budget to meet them. Also, he expressed his commitment to take immediate action in the affected areas in Wards Three and Four.

BBC Media Action conducted research nine months after the broadcast, which revealed that budgets had indeed been released to address the

problems in Wards Three and Four. Drainage pipes had been installed, while roads were gravelled in some places to alleviate the impact of monsoon rain on travel. Listeners talked about how the audience-led format of the programme had contributed to this result:

> "The issue on drainage was covered by media, but this is the first time it was discussed in a public forum bringing together so many stakeholders."
>
> Male, discussion participant, Dinesh FM

> "It was fruitful to communicate between the government body and general public. The programme helped to maintain transparency."
>
> Male, discussion panellist, Dinesh FM

Another edition of the show covered a dispute between two transport companies – *Sudur Paschim Yatayat* and *Malika Yatayat* – in which the former was blocking the registration of the latter. The row led to *Sudur Paschim Yatayat* organising several protests, which affected local people. *Malika Yatayat* was registered three days after the issue was debated. The government official responsible said that the public support created by and expressed through the programme enabled him to resist pressure from *Sudur Paschim Yatayat*. As *Malika Yatayat* started its transport operations, competition ensued between the two companies. *Sudur Paschim Yatayat* honoured a promise made on the show to cut the fare along one travel route by 40% for four months. Again, audiences talked about the role that the programme *Sajha Manch* had played in this result:

> "The situation in the programme pressurised everyone to solve the issue."
>
> Male, discussion panellist, Dinesh FM

Part 7
Towards a sustainable model for capacity strengthening

The four levels approach was designed to increase the likelihood that BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening work would be sustainable. After years of doing one-off training workshops, we realised that if interventions that seek to improve the quality of media available to ordinary people were to take root, it was not enough simply to train media practitioners. Rather, these interventions needed proper buy-in from: i) the media organisations involved, ii) the audiences they served, and iii) ideally, from national governments as well. Below, we discuss the extent to which our research findings suggest that sustainability was secured by the four levels approach.

Audiences

Across the projects, participants reported greater commitment to engaging with and involving audiences in outputs, often unchartered territory prior to the mentoring. Such engagement offers useful lessons for those interested in fostering other forms of civic participation within societies, but also has clear potential to generate greater public ownership of media. As a result, audiences can now demand more programming that meets their interests and their needs. Understanding what this all means and how best to harness this potential is fertile ground for research and may require yet more inventive methods in the future. Collaboration with partners as they continue to develop closer relationships with their audiences will be important.

Where audience research with listeners/viewers was conducted as part of the training (for example, PBC, Noun 105.9FM), there was further evidence that the training on editorial and production skills had led to improved programme output, which was, in turn, appreciated by audiences. This suggests that, where data about the audience is in short supply, surveys or other forms of quantitative research with listeners/viewers can be very useful in helping stations to improve their programming. By demonstrating reach, survey data can also help commercial stations to gain more funds through advertising.

Practitioners

Across the interventions, participants reported that the mentoring had equipped them with new skills. This was particularly notable with technical, production and editorial skills. The interventions also had an impact on how journalists planned their stories and researched their topics. In most cases, people were able to apply technical skills immediately to their work. Doing so helped people both to develop their confidence and to give them a sense that the training had real value in improving their ability to do their job. Knowledge about complex activities such as making radio packages, which involve a range of technical and editorial skills, was more difficult to impart. Learning to create packages is a process that evolves over time through experience and requires additional mentorship. Self-censorship affects practitioners' ability to apply editorial skills, such as using a range of voices on programmes and conducting balanced reporting. In four out of the five interventions, censorship and self-censorship were mentioned as barriers, suggesting that organisational and environmental factors are at play and need to be taken into account.

Organisations

Improved practitioner skills will not lead to improved media content without management buy-in. Indeed, we believe that management buy-in is perhaps the single strongest predictor of sustainability in capacity-strengthening initiatives. Financial resources and the institutionalisation of systems that establish an editorial agenda and safeguard editorial values also matter.

The highest levels of buy-in for improved editorial standards seemed to exist among managers at CG FM and Dinesh FM. These managers recognised the value of such standards for audiences, and *Sajha Manch* (Common Forum) is now Dinesh FM's most popular show. Senior-level buy-in was more difficult to achieve at PBC, where the co-produced programmes enjoyed editorial independence, but this was not always evident elsewhere at the station. This is unsurprising given PBC's size and historical relationship with Hamas. Nonetheless, output managers were more amenable than expected to the idea that PBC should hold officials to account and have expressed a wish to train an additional 30 staff to produce a youth show centred on accountability. Staff trained for Palestine Debates were also using their new editorial skills on other programmes, yielding improved standards elsewhere in the station.

Other skills were more difficult to carry forward to other parts of the station. The Palestine Debates programmes require a large crew and expensive, specialist equipment, neither of which will be available

indefinitely. This was also thought to affect PBC's ability to develop similar programmes elsewhere in the schedule:

> "We have been thinking of producing similar programmes to Hur Al Kalam [Freedom to Speak], with the same production team, focusing on the issue of accountability. But PTV has a very limited budget, and we cannot produce a programme at the same technical level. We thought of producing a programme using the BBC Media Action equipment, still we will not be able to offer the rent fee for the location at Birzeit."
>
> Trainee, Producer, PBC

Having the resources to continue high-quality productions is clearly an issue for maintaining programming of a high standard into the future. In some cases, this comes down to purchasing new equipment; in other cases, low resources translates into difficulty retaining staff and high turnover. BBC Media Action sought to address these financial constraints directly with Dinesh FM: it reduced the financial support provided to *Sajha Manch* (Common Forum) in the second, less intensive, phase of the two-year partnership year and supported the station to develop supplemental income-generation strategies. Dinesh FM then went on to successfully secure funding to cover partial production costs for *Sajha Manch* from other organisations:

> "After listening to our programme, they [funding organisations] have shown trust and confidence in us and approached us to do programmes for them."
>
> Station Manager, Dinesh FM

The prospect of *Sajha Manch* being able to sustain itself financially on its own is clearly a positive outcome. It must be noted, however, that this support will come from NGOs – also funded by external sources – who will invariably want to see coverage of the issues most relevant to their own work. BBC Media Action will support Dinesh FM to negotiate this tricky editorial territory, but we must also explore the potential for the media development sector as a whole to help boost the overall business environment for media in Nepal and reduce reliance on external funding over the long haul.

Systems

None of the projects reviewed in this report was designed to have a direct impact at the systems level. Our work with state broadcasters did not lead to a systemic change in editorial values. Nor is there evidence that the governance programmes produced as a result of those interventions led to more accountability at the national level. But

research with both audiences and experts at Dinesh FM and CG FM showed that both institutions were able to produce programming that secured improvements in certain aspects of local service delivery. We are conscious that such achievements may be more difficult to replicate at the national level, as it would require a more substantial investment in understanding the political environment in which these media organisations operate. We return to this point in part eight.

Overall learning

Above all, we learned that mentoring works as a model for capacity strengthening. In Tanzania, we started with a less intense approach and then went on to mentoring. In the first phase, the research showed that trainees had learned some technical skills and increased their knowledge on how to engage with audiences better. However, after starting the mentoring, trainees expressed that some of the more difficult techniques, such as editing and making radio packages, which involve a range of technical and editorial skills, had improved a lot as a result of the mentoring. Similarly, trainees at Noun 105.9FM, who only attended workshops, felt that they needed more time to practise their editing and editorial skills.

It is clear that, by evaluating findings across the four levels, BBC Media Action's capacity-strengthening interventions have been successful in improving skills and changing organisational processes that may ultimate contribute to sustainability. To be sure, we can only assess the extent to which that sustainability has actually been established by revisiting these partners in years to come and evaluating the success of these interventions using methods similar to those described here. We would also need to measure the quality of outputs over time, using techniques such as content analysis, to be sure that these have also improved. Such ongoing assessments must not only form part of our own organisation's evaluation strategies, but of the media development sector as a whole.

Part 8
Conclusions and recommendations

This paper describes BBC Media Action's first attempt to apply a single evaluation framework to five distinct capacity-strengthening media development projects. Having reviewed the findings generated by that exercise, this section concludes with some broad lessons and recommendations emerging from that work. It is our hope that these recommendations can be employed to shape the design and evaluation of future capacity-strengthening interventions both by our organisation and by the sector at large.

Evaluation methods need to be adaptive: The methodology presented here has proven sufficiently flexible to assess a diverse range of activities delivered in varied contexts. Its primary value is as a means to understand change across the multiple levels that projects need to impact. In some cases, this multi-level perspective on capacity strengthening enables validation of a given finding; in others, it alerts us to the fact that some of the impacts we perceive are not as widely felt or deeply rooted as an interview with a single participant might have led us to believe. This methodology can thus be used as a learning tool as BBC Media Action scales up its capacity-strengthening work in coming years.

Mentoring works: It is clear that an embedded mentoring model involving long-term engagement with the same broadcasting partner is a highly effective model for capacity strengthening. Mentoring facilitates skill development at the level of individual staff at the same time that it bolsters organisational-level change, helping to create an enabling environment in which these skills can be applied.

Objectivity is paramount: The strength of the mentoring model is that mentors can react quickly to changes in the partner environment and incorporate those into their approach. Over time, however, these mentors also become part of that environment and are thus less able to view things from an entirely objective perspective. Nor do mentors always detail the level of support they are delivering, which can make it difficult for evaluators to draw clear links between objectives, outcomes and the work delivered. These links are necessary if media support organisations like ours are to really understand what works. Closer synergies between the project and evaluation teams will therefore be necessary where adaptive approaches predominate.

Size matters: It is easier to impact on a partner's editorial agenda when that partner is small. But it may be more difficult for that station to secure a steady income stream to maintain staff. Larger outlets are more difficult to influence, but inherently more sustainable. Both types of capacity-strengthening partnerships are important, but each requires a different, individually tailored approach.

Audiences are the future: Media sectors in the Global South must recognise how rapidly the role of audiences is changing. Such changes present enormous opportunities for participation in public life, but also for sustainability of media development initiatives, as publics protect the media they value. As digital technologies take hold, audience engagement will only become richer and more complex. Audience research is therefore vital if partner organisations are to keep pace with these technological changes and research capacity must be strengthened accordingly. But we must also be sure to devise strategies for involving those audiences who remain offline.

Systems-level impact cannot be ignored: BBC Media Action recognises the potential to improve sustainability by focusing more explicitly on the level of systems. To do so requires a sophisticated understanding of the complex, often opaque, enabling and constraining factors present here. A more rigorous and consistent application of methods such as political economy analysis as part of the overall capacity-strengthening design could be one means of achieving this.[29]

Continuity is key: The findings from this study broadly suggest that the capacity-strengthening activities BBC Media Action evaluated were moving in the right direction, but that further work is still needed to consolidate the achievements seen and to improve on gaps in capacity strengthening where those exist. At what point can a capacity-strengthening intervention be regarded as complete? There is an argument for focusing on quality over quantity: extending the lifetime of such projects and working more consistently with the same partners, rather than rotating among and between partners in a given country. Nonetheless, each intervention should begin with an endpoint and exit strategy in mind, to be sure that continuity of successful change is always at the centre of the work.

Guidelines for sustainability are needed: This evaluation exercise suggests that certain elements of this framework are conducive to securing sustainability. We cannot, however, know the extent to which any of these projects are ultimately sustainable unless we revisit these media partners in the future with a clear sense of what we hope to find. More work is needed across the media development community to agree what sustainability looks like and how we can properly assess it.

Endnotes

1. Stringer, R. (2014) The Power of Talk. BBC Media Action Policy Briefing [online]. Available from: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/policybriefing/power_of_talk_policy_briefing.pdf [Accessed 27 July 2015].

2. Susman-Peña, T. (2012) *Special Report: Making Media Development More Effective*. The Center for International Media Assistance [online]. Available from: www.cima.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/final.pdf [Accessed 24 July 2015].

3. Stienen, J., Bruinsma, W. and Neuman, F. (2007) How ICT can make a difference in agricultural livelihoods. In *Commonwealth Ministers Reference Book*. London: Henley Media Group.

4. Article 19 (2014) Post-2015: *Access to information and independent media essential to development* [online]. Available from: www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/37435/en/post-2015:-access-to-information-and-independent-media-essential-to-development [Accessed 23 July 2015].

5. Kalathil, S. (2011) *Developing Independent Media as an Institution of Accountable Governance*. The World Bank [online]. Available from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/Mediatoolkit.pdf [Accessed 28 July 2015].

6. Chinje, E. quoted in Beckett, C. and Kyrke-Smith, L. (2007) *Development, Governance and the Media: The role of the media in building African society*. POLIS [online]. Available from: www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/Polis/documents/DevelopmentGovernanceMedia.pdf [Accessed 29 July 2015].

7. Kaplan, D.E. (ed.) (2012) *Empowering Independent Media: U.S. Efforts to Foster a Free Press and an Open Internet Around the World*. Center for International Media Assistance [online]. Available from: www.cima.ned.org/resource/empowering-independent-media-u-s-efforts-to-foster-a-free-press-and-an-open-internet-around-the-world-second-edition-2012/ [Accessed 2 September 2015].

8. Joppart, C. and Baslan, D. (2015) *Assessment of the Media Development Sector in the Southern Mediterranean Region*. MedMedia [online]. Available from: http://stmjo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MedMedia_Media-Development.pdf [Accessed 23 August 2015].

9. Sugg, C. (2014) *Local partnerships: a key to lasting change*. BBC Media Action blog, 10 January [online]. Available from: www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/

bbcmediaaction/entries/4261b61b-ee09-3cbc-8bbb-a8ce890e3999 [Accessed 27 July 2015].

10. Nelson, M. with Susman-Peña, T. (2014) *Rethinking Media Development*. The World Bank Institute and Internews [online]. Available from: www.mediamapresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Rethinking-Media-Dev.web_1.pdf [Accessed 3 August 2015].

11. Moehler, D.C. (2013) *Democracy, governance and randomised media assistance*. BBC Media Action Working Paper [online]. Available from: https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/Democracy_gov_working_paper_4.pdf [Accessed 3 September 2015].

12. BBC Media Action (2011) *Global Grant Business Case*.

13. A broadcast partner is a broadcast station. "Station" here can refer to an individual television station, a radio station and/or both. See part three for more detail on how we classify our partner organisations.

14. BBC Media Action (n.d.) *What we do: Transforming lives through media around the world* [online]. Available from: www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/what-we-do [Accessed 23 July 2015].

15. Banda, F. (2009) Critical review of media development measurements: What are we measuring? In Jannusch, A.S. and Lansner, T.R. (eds.) (2009) *Measuring change II. Expanding Knowledge on Monitoring and Evaluation in Media Development*. Forum Medien und Entwicklung [online]. Available from: http://fome.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/FoME-Measuring-Change-II-2009.pdf [Accessed 27 July 2015].

16. Beckett and Kyrke-Smith (2008) *Development, Governance and the Media*.

17. Stringer (2014) *The Power of Talk*, p. 12.

18. Datta, A., Shaxson, L. and Pellini, A. (2012) *Capacity, complexity and consulting: Lessons from managing capacity development projects*. Overseas Development Institute [online]. Available from: www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7601.pdf [Accessed 6 August 2015].

19. Fowler, A. and Ubels, J. (2010) Multiple Dimensions: The multi-faceted nature of capacity – two leading models. In Ubels, J., Acquaye-Baddoo, N.A. and Fowler, A. *Capacity Development in Practice*. London, Washington, D.C: Earthscan. Cited in Datta et al. (2012) *Capacity, complexity and consulting*.

20. See: Ball-Rokeach, S.J. (1998) A theory of media power and a theory of media use: Different stories, questions, and ways of thinking. *Mass Communication & Society*, 1:1, 5–40.

21. Between 2012 and 2015, BBC Media Action worked with Iraqi stakeholders

to develop the law, passed in May 2015, which established the Iraqi Media Network as a public service broadcaster, independent of government and accountable to Parliament. The process had three stages: first, understanding and defining the challenges in the Iraqi media landscape; second, persuading donors to fund the required support; and finally, working with Iraqi stakeholders to come up with a mechanism that complied with international standards while being workable and implementable in Iraq.

22. van den Berg, S. (2014) From the Field: Assessing the Impact of TMF on the Tanzanian Media: A practical approach [online]. *Global Media Journal*, 4:2, 5. Available from: www.db-thueringen.de/servlets/DerivateServlet/ Derivate-31132/GMJ8_VandenBerg_final.pdf [Accessed 23 July 2015].

23. Say, for example, that you ask people to edit a passage for balance and accuracy and then mark them on "errors" that have been intentionally placed in the text. If you then compare scores pre- and post-training, it is often difficult to ascertain if any change in score reflects an increase in editorial skill or simply the varying difficulty of the passages selected for editing.

24. Note that when looking at impact, we present our findings in reverse order to reflect the fact that audience level impact is a by-product of impact at the systems, organisation and practitioner levels.

25. A nationally representative quantitative endline will be conducted in November 2015 to assess the impact of *Sajha Sawal* and local programmes produced by the capacity-strengthening programme. The sample will be boosted to include samples of listeners of community radio stations, such as Dinesh FM, to understand the impact of the local programme as opposed to the national programme.

26. As reported in an email from Ala Radi, Research Officer, BBC Media Action Palestinian Territories, 1 October, 2015.

27. Stringer (2014) *The Power of Talk*.

28. Interview with Walid Batrawi on 8 September 2015.

29. BBC Media Action conducted political economy analysis in Tanzania for the first time in 2014. Insights generated by the process were used to inform the youth-focused governance project that was then being designed and the capacity-strengthening work already underway. Those uncovering the – often unseen – constraints to independent journalism were particularly useful, including the extent to which self-censorship and deliberate avoidance of untouchable issues exists among journalists and the way in which the government can influence the media by controlling the business environment. While these may not have been novel insights for those who know the country's political landscape, the political economy analysis served to air these issues and enable us to work with local journalists to think about how to tackle them more systematically in our capacity-strengthening work.

www.bbcmediaaction.org