Independent Mid-Term Evaluation Report – March 2025

Project: *Promoting Excellence in Independent Journalism in Liberia* (2022-2025)
Amount: SEK 6.5m (US$642k)
Grant-holder: New Narratives
Funder: Embassy of Sweden, Monrovia, Liberia
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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of an independent mid-term evaluation of *Promoting Excellence in Independent Journalism in Liberia*, a three-year project implemented by New Narratives between 2022 and 2025, funded by the Embassy of Sweden with a budget of 6.5m SEK.

The evaluation has been conducted by Macroscope, a team of 3 independent consultants, over four months towards the end of the Project's final year of implementation, and included a field trip in Monrovia and Gbarnga in January 2025 by the lead evaluator.

The Context in Liberia

Liberia's status as a democracy has improved according to 2024 indices, both due to changes inside the country, and because others are regressing as part of the wider international democratic recession[1]. As a lower income, post-conflict country, Liberia has received a significant amount of international aid since the end of the conflict in 2003, a portion of which has been dedicated to democracy, good governance and civil society, including a small amount for supporting independent journalism. A 2024 UNU desk study on aid and democracy in Liberia concluded that "Foreign aid has assisted in Liberia's transition to democracy and has helped sustain its democratic progress." This study, conducted prior to the closure of USAID in 2025, notes that "The United States has by far been Liberia's largest foreign aid donor, accounting for more than triple the total aid flows distributed by the UN, Liberia's next largest supporter."

The media environment in Liberia is relatively free and open[2] although there have been incidents where media and journalists are intimidated or targeted because of their reporting. The weakness of Liberia's overall economy means that media that wish to be financially – and therefore editorially – independent face an extremely adverse environment. The advertising market is weak and prone to soft censorship. The government continues to exert control over state-owned media and over government advertising, while local officials often control the content and operations of community radio stations. A law that allows political associates to create or buy media companies has contributed to the proliferation of private and community media outlets in recent years. The nexus of influence between politics and religion further affects media's ability to be independent.

This leaves many media unable to pay their journalists a living wage, if any wage at all. As a result, the most realistic business model for most media outlets and journalists is to take direct payments from 'clients' - NGOs, businesses, government officials and multilateral agencies - to carry content or cover news. Furthermore, low levels of education, and a general lack of formal training means that there are few journalists with the skills and resources to conduct in-depth investigations or research-based reporting.

The lack of revenue models and the absence of a policy environment enabling the viability of media poses a long-term, profound challenge to media independence in Liberia, in line with global trends. As a result, citizens in Liberia lack access to high-quality independent reporting on public interest issues.

The New Narratives project

In this context, the New Narratives project is designed to contribute to building a more sustainable investigative journalism ecosystem in Liberia through supporting Liberian journalists and news organisations. It aims to deliver the following objectives:

[1] The World Bank and the EU's Composite Indicators scoreboard aggregate various indices, including V-Dem, EIU, and Freedom House. Other sources, such as AfroBarometer and International IDEA, provide similar analyses.

[2] Liberia is rated as 'problematic' on the RSF Global Press Freedom Index, but has risen to 60th out of 180 countries, and is only 5 points from a 'satisfactory' rating.

- Liberian journalists are equipped with resources, know-how and support to pursue independent & investigative journalism during & after the project.
- Liberian news organisations and New Narratives Liberia have the resources and know-how to enhance financial viability in a sustainable way to support investigative journalism.

The Project achieves its results primarily through delivering a Fellowship programme, partnerships with four independent media outlets, and capacity building activities for media outlets, focusing on its key media partner, Front Page Africa, the most widely read and trusted news outlet in the country.

The evaluation assessed how well these activities are delivered, the extent to which they are leading to the expected level of results, and the validity of the Project's theory of change. The consultants carried out a desk review of project documentation and conducted in-depth remote and in-person interviews with 38 informants - the journalists, editors, media owners, civil society experts and donors engaged by the project.

Key Findings

The evaluation conducted research and analysis using the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, with a particular emphasis on findings related to Relevance, Effectiveness and Impact. The Key Findings related to these criteria are summarised below.

Evaluation Criteria	Rating	Key Findings
Relevance	Comprehensively fulfilled	Wide consensus that the Project's objectives and activities are relevant to stakeholders and that it's well-designed to address the priorities of beneficiaries – Fellows and media partners. Its journalism is relevant to citizens in Liberia, giving them access to reliable, credible reporting on public interest issues.
Effectiveness	Comprehensively fulfilled	Good evidence that the methodology of the Fellowship program is effective in ensuring that participating journalists - who continue working for their own media outlets - produce at least one story every six months. The effectiveness is due to the combination of critical factors –the commissioning process, mentoring and fair payment for work – which transform female and male Fellows' skills, status and understanding of what it means to be a journalist.
Impact	Comprehensively fulfilled	There is clear evidence that the Project contributes to wider impact as a result of the journalism it is diffusing across the system. It has an impact on the quality of public debate, often sets the news agenda and helps frame discourse on complex or sensitive topics, including by influencing other reporting. Many stakeholders gave examples of concrete changes because of NN's reports – with strong evidence its war crimes reporting contributed to the government's decision to set up a war crimes court.
Sustainability	Overall fulfilled	Some evidence that Fellows use new skills and knowledge in their work outside of the program & when they have left the programme. Some media outlets say they would welcome further support from New Narratives to embed better editorial processes within their own newsrooms.
Efficiency	Comprehensively fulfilled	A highly efficient project, with the small editorial team delivering a high quantity of impactful, quality journalism cost-effectively. Evidence of impact could be captured more systematically. To sustain and scale up activities and impact would require investing in the editorial and management resources of NN Liberia first.
Coherence	Overall fulfilled	The Project is well-designed to complement other projects in Liberia targeting other media actors and avoid duplication of efforts. The management team coordinate well to ensure synergies over training and partnerships.

Key Conclusions

Strengthening the independent journalism ecosystem

1. New Narratives is making a significant and meaningful contribution to the overall quantity and quality of independent journalism in Liberia by producing and diffusing high-quality reporting through media partners and other outlets. The evaluation found good evidence that many stories set the news agenda, strengthen the quality of public debate and have sometimes led to concrete responses from public authorities. Stories and the framing of issues by New Narratives are often picked up by other media in their own reporting.
2. Its reporting on War Crimes since 2017 is widely credited with influencing the government's decision to create a War and Economic Crimes Court; it has transformed public understanding of what constitutes a war crime and ensures that international trials of war criminals are communicated in a relevant and accessible way to audiences in Liberia.
3. The impact of New Narratives' journalism is due to its reputation for trustworthy, accurate, and fair reporting and – critically – for integrity & editorial independence. With its key partner, Front Page Africa, it is seen as one of the only sources of truly independent journalism in Liberia and one of the most effective mechanisms for pushing back on the financial and political capture of the media sector.

The New Narratives Fellowship Programme

4. New Narratives' reputation for editorial independence and integrity is attributed to the quality of its newsroom model, which acts as an engine driving high journalism standards. Editors select, commission, mentor, and pay a fair wage to a cohort of journalist Fellows from diverse media outlets - it is the combination of all these factors that makes it effective.
5. The model leads to the diffusion of high-quality journalism across the wider media ecosystem and strengthens media partners and outlets by enabling them to carry high-quality reporting. The high number of pieces of journalism published by Front Page Africa has helped consolidate its reputation as the most respected private media outlet in Liberia.
6. There is substantial evidence that the editorial process has a significant impact on individual Fellows, stretching them to reach exceptionally high standards that they otherwise would not, and transforming their understanding of their role as journalists in society.
7. The impact for female Fellows is especially pronounced. They experience marked professional growth and many credit the Fellowship program with transforming their professional status as a journalist, in what can be a chauvinistic and male-dominated sector.
8. There is clear evidence that some Fellows use their improved skills outside New Narratives, and when they exit the Fellowship program. Several former Fellows now occupy senior editorial positions elsewhere in Liberian media and seek to integrate the skills in their work.
9. Front Page Africa has benefited from the partnership with New Narratives, through carrying New Narratives' journalism and through investment in strengthening its business operations. It has increased its standing within Liberia as the most widely read independent digital news outlet and developed its online presence and revenue.
10. New Narratives punches above its weight - the scale of its impact outweighs the size of the organisation and its budget. The small editorial team works hard to deliver results cost-effectively. The dependence on a small editorial team and a single editor with authority for sign-off can create challenges to workload and creates risk for the organisation. The evaluation identifies that as a priority New Narratives needs to prioritise strengthening the in-house editorial team, including ahead of expanding the scale of its outputs.

Key Recommendations

Recommendations to Project Donor

- Continue funding to New Narratives for *Promoting Excellence in Independent Journalism in Liberia*, and consider increasing support to include relevant recommendations below
- Increase regular media development donor coordination, including by engaging with regional and international funds and Development Financial Institutions covering West Africa, in light of increased volatility in international aid

Recommendations to New Narratives

1. Strengthen Editorial Capacity of New Narratives Liberia

- Invest in editorial capacity to support Executive Director/Editor-In-Chief with commissioning and sign-off responsibilities, including through the compilation of a New Narratives' editorial handbook
- Develop a structured, transparent pathway for Fellows' progression to Senior Fellow or Assistant Editor status
- Establish quarterly 'Editors' Sprints' to build stronger editorial commissioning skills and culture in Liberian independent media
- Build a sustainable and fully independent Liberian editorial leadership team

2. Enhance Media Partner Support Strategy

- Implement a tiered partnership model based on media partners' independence and potential
- Support key partners (especially Front Page Africa) with targeted organisational and business development support (including audience research) through expert partners
- Establish a media advertising or sponsored content collective of independent media
- Explore coordination and collaboration mechanisms both with other support organisations and among media partners for resource/data sharing and cost reduction
- Develop digital transition toolkit, and fundraise for a media innovation fund to support digital experimentation

3. Improve Financial and Organisational Sustainability of New Narratives Liberia

- Invest in institutional development beyond editorial capacity, including succession planning
- Diversify funding sources by engaging with international democracy and media support organizations, developing corporate and philanthropic partnerships, exploring diaspora support networks, and/or engaging alumni in fundraising campaigns
- Seek support, in the long-term, for a feasibility study for a Liberian Media Fund

4. Improve Monitoring and Impact Tracking

- Implement a streamlined monitoring and evaluation framework
- Create systems to track both Fellows' progress and individual story impacts
- Develop impact case studies for advocacy and fundraising
- Establish feedback mechanisms with civil society and policymakers
- Develop research or other relationships enabling cost-effective audience research

5. Explore Geographic and Thematic Focus of New Narratives

- Continue to recruit more Fellows from counties outside Monrovia
- Establish thematic reporting "beats" aligned with national development priorities
- Partner to create sub-national reporting hubs
- Develop cross-border investigative and/or thematic reporting initiatives

1. Introduction and Context

Project Overview

New Narratives is implementing the *Promoting Excellence in Independent Journalism in Liberia* (the Project) (2023-2025) with funding from the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia (SEK 6.5 million/US$642k). The Project addresses critical gaps in Liberia's media landscape, where high-quality training and funding opportunities for journalists to produce independent and investigative journalism are lacking, and the wider economic, political and social environment, including widespread capture, makes it extremely difficult for media to find stable business models that can sustain or strengthen their financial, operational and editorial independence.

Project Objectives

The Project was designed to contribute to building a more sustainable investigative journalism ecosystem in Liberia through achieving **two interrelated Outcomes**:

- **Outcome One:** Liberian journalists are equipped with resources, know-how and support to pursue independent & investigative journalism during & after the project.
- **Outcome Two:** Liberian news organisations and New Narratives Liberia have the resources and know-how to enhance financial viability in a sustainable way to support investigative journalism.

New Narratives' approach to achieving these results has been to implement a diverse range of activities over the project period, primarily through a core strategy of building the capacity of media partners and Fellows in Liberia. The key activities within this strategy include commissioning & mentoring Fellows, conducting workshops, enabling media partners to publish or broadcast high-quality journalism, and providing support to media partners, particularly to Front Page Africa for organisational development.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

This mid-term evaluation is designed to assess progress towards expected Outcomes, and was conducted towards the end of Year 3 of the project, from November 2024 to March 2025, with primary data collection through remote and in-person interviews from December 2024-February 2025, and a field visit to Liberia from January 8th-15th 2025, including a trip to Gbarnga to conduct interviews at a New Narratives workshop. The evaluation focused on:

- Assessing achievements of the project to date
- Validating the project's theory of change - i.e. the extent to which the project's Outputs and Activities are leading towards expected Outcomes and wider Impact
- Identifying any changes in context relevant to project objectives or future plans
- Providing actionable recommendations to the project team for adjustments and refinements to build on and extend its effectiveness

2. Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation employs a **qualitative theory-based approach** which is designed to assess the extent to which the project's theory of change is validated. It uses the OECD-DAC criteria (**Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, & Sustainability**) as its analytical framework.

The following table presents a summary of the Key Evaluation Questions that informed the research and analysis. (A detailed matrix is available in the Annexes.)

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
Relevance	Are the project objectives relevant to different project stakeholders and are they meaningful?
Coherence	To what extent is the project compatible and coordinated with other relevant interventions?
Effectiveness	To what extent and how well is the project likely to achieve the planned objectives (Outcomes)? Are the Outputs leading to the planned Outcomes?
Efficiency	To what extent are objectives being achieved economically and with efficient use of inputs?
Sustainability	To what extent are the positive effects of the project likely to last beyond the lifecycle of the project?
Impact	To what extent is the project likely to contribute to wider long-term Impact?

In assessing the extent to which the project is fulfilling each evaluation criteria, the following rating system was used:

Colour	Assessment	Comments
Dark green	Comprehensively fulfilled	All results of the evaluation prove that the criterion has been fulfilled.
Light green	Overall fulfilled	Most results from the evaluation show that the criterion has been fulfilled.
Yellow	Partially fulfilled	The results do not show a clear indication on whether the criterion has been fulfilled or not.
Orange	Minimally fulfilled	Most evaluation results show that the criterion has not been fulfilled.
Red	Not fulfilled at all	The evaluation results show that the criterion has not been fulfilled at all.

The evaluation used the following secondary and primary research methods:

- **Desk-based Document Review** of project management documents, particularly annual reports for Year 1 and Year 2, logframe, Monitoring & Evaluation reporting, and sample emails between editor and Fellows that document the editorial process.
- **Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs):** a total of 39 group and individual interviews, both in-person in Liberia and online via Google Meet and WhatsApp
- **On-site Observation:** During the fieldwork in Monrovia, evaluators conducted - where possible - site visits to media organisations to conduct interviews.

Macroscope conducted the evaluation in keeping with the UK Evaluation Society Guidelines, which are aligned with universal ethical evaluation principles: impartiality & independence, credibility, usefulness, participation, feasibility, fairness, & accuracy.

The evaluation included primary qualitative data collected through group and individual interviews. Macroscope conducted a total of 39 interviews with a sample of 38 informants across five groups of stakeholders. These included direct beneficiaries, partners, New Narratives project team and board members, and expert Key Informants (KIs), as summarised in the table below, with a full list of informants interviewed in the Annexes:

Group	Stakeholder Group	Count
1.	Media partners – leaders and senior editors	8
2.	Current Fellows	9
3.	New Narratives team	6
4.	New Narratives donors	3
5.	Non-project stakeholders: donors, INGOs, thematic experts and policy makers	12
	Total	**38**

The draft selection of informants was discussed with New Narratives' management team at the Evaluation Kick-off Workshop, before the final selection was made by Macroscope.

3. Findings

The following sections present the findings for each OECD-DAC criterion. The evaluation placed more emphasis on assessing the Relevance, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability of the project, and less on Coherence and Efficiency.

3.1 Relevance

Relevance	**Comprehensively fulfilled**	**The results of the evaluation prove that the criterion has been fulfilled**

Evaluation Questions: *To what extent is the New Narratives project aligned with the priorities and needs of stakeholders (including Fellows, media partners, New Narratives, funders, and expert Key Informants)? Is it designed to do the right things?*

The Project is awarded 'comprehensively fulfilled' because it has demonstrated strong alignment with the needs and priorities of its stakeholders, particularly its main beneficiaries - the Fellows and media partners.

The evaluation found wide agreement across diverse groups of stakeholders that, in the absence of a robust independent media sector in Liberia, New Narratives' work to improve the independence and quality of journalism, and make it available through diverse media outlets, is highly relevant by filling a critical gap in the overall media ecosystem and meets the needs of Liberian audiences (the ultimate beneficiaries). It is widely acknowledged as one of the only initiatives ensuring an increased flow of independent content through the information ecosystem and plays a unique role in Liberia.

Relevance of Objectives

The evaluation found strong evidence that **both objectives of the Project remain highly relevant**.

- Under **Outcome One**, the objective and activities designed to build the capacity of a cohort of female and male Fellows are well tailored to the needs of journalists that join the programme, and meet their priority to professionalise and ambitions to build their careers as independent journalists inside & outside the programme.
- For **Outcome Two**, the objective to improve the viability of media outlets remains of high relevance, as it is still a significantly unmet need in Liberia. Media outlets and New Narratives are continuing to explore different ways to progress this objective. The results originally included in the original Project plan were found, early in the cycle, to be unrealistic, and the Project has adapted and evolved over the three-year duration to identify a strategy that focuses on the viability of its key partner, Front Page Africa, within the parameters and resources of the Project.
- As part of **Outcome Two**, the objective to strengthen New Narratives Liberia as an organisation is relevant, as it is seeking to build a sustainable editorial and management capacity in the Liberia entity. The overall objectives of the Project are well-aligned with New Narratives' core competencies and expertise.

The evaluation identified that the results of the project are not fully captured in the design and results framework: there is strong evidence that some of the Project's results are produced through enabling a wide range of media outlets (partners and non-partners) to publish/broadcast highly relevant content that is directly supported by the Project and its Fellows, and also the extent to which media editors or owners directly benefit from the increased skills, reputation and status of the journalists that work for them when they become

Fellows in the programme. A revised Theory of Change was articulated as part of the evaluation and used to assess results, and a draft is attached in Annex Three.

Relevance to Fellows

Fellows interviewed unanimously report that the project meets their needs, and that the 'New Narratives approach' aligns with their own objectives to professionalise and grow in their careers as journalists. Many report that although they have participated in trainings offered by other organisations, the Fellowship programme is uniquely valuable because of its focus on exposing them to a 'real-world' commissioning process in a media sector where there are very few opportunities for them to be commissioned - and paid - by a professional editor - which is a tried-and-tested process for professionalising journalists the world over.

This reflects that the project objectives fit with the reality that there is very little practical hands-on education for journalists in Liberia, compounding the already poor quality of education and low levels of literacy and digital skills of Fellows joining the programme.

The fact that New Narratives enables them as Fellows to take part in a programme that pays them to work on stories whilst maintaining their ongoing work at media outlets or as freelancers is also well-aligned with their needs and their professional goals. In addition, the Fellowship programme is well designed to create a cohort effect, where the junior Fellows are able to connect with more senior Fellows and gain from peer-to-peer exchanges, which is considered an important way to strengthen the overall community of independent journalists in Liberia.

The diversity of the current cohort of 17 Fellows reflects the aims of the project to include a balance both between male and female journalists and journalists from Montserrado and Monrovia and from other counties. The gender balance on the programme is 8F:9M, and the project has successfully included Fellows from 6 counties. In addition, inclusion of Fellows from radio stations in the cohort, and by producing most stories for both print and radio, alongside, where relevant, reporting live on Facebook Live, the programme ensures that it takes advantage of the fact most Liberians access radio as their primary source of information.

Female Fellows report that participating in the programme is valuable in a media environment that is still dominated by men, is often dismissive of women journalists and that, they report, has endemic sexual harassment. Participating in the programme helps them achieve the aims to increase their status and be taken more 'seriously' as a journalist. While female Senior Fellows - and former Fellows - demonstrate that there are opportunities to be respected as journalists in Liberia, few women yet take up editorial or leadership roles within media organisations. As an example, all informants in the media leaders and editors stakeholder group were male.

Relevance to the Context for Journalists in Liberia

The Project is relevant to the journalism context in Liberia because it addresses a central problem that most journalists are not paid a living (or any) wage by their media outlet. This is a critical weakness in the overall media ecosystem and leaves journalists vulnerable or accustomed to take payments of various kinds to carry out their work. These payments are endemic across the journalism sector, and can range from a fee to cover a journalist's expenses to participate in a civil society or donor workshop, to a fee to interview a particular person or project, to payments for covering a politician or businessperson, or to publish a piece of coverage based on a press release. This undermines the overall integrity of journalism's ability to hold power to account.

Relevance to Media Partners

The objectives of the project are generally aligned with the needs of media partners in three ways, through:

- the quality of journalism that Fellows produce which their media outlets then publish/broadcast
- the new skills and capacities that the Fellows bring back to their work as a result of their participation in the programme
- the stories that partners draw on to frame and cover stories covered by New Narratives in their own content - such as Talk Shows.

It is worth noting that no payments are made to news media directly in relation to the news and features produced by their journalists participating as Fellows. Front Page Africa is paid to cover the costs of hosting the podcast on their site, and Okay FM is paid a small fee to broadcast the monthly radio programme to ensure that more New Narratives-supported content reaches wider audiences. In addition, a network of 30+ radio stations, mostly outside Monrovia, broadcast the New Narratives monthly radio programme.

Editors interviewed highlighted that, without New Narratives' support, they would not have the resources or editorial capacity to commission or produce such reporting – even though they would like to – and note that their audiences engage with this type of content (although they lack data and means to track this more fully).

At least three of the media leaders interviewed had participated in the digital transformation workshop that New Narratives organised in 2022. While they recognised that a single workshop could not realistically help them incorporate many changes on its own, they confirmed that the focus of that workshop remains highly relevant to their current needs, and they found the content and the connection with other media leaders and Premium Times in Nigeria very useful. They would still like further support from New Narratives in this area.

For New Narratives' main media partner, Front Page Africa, the Project is addressing its priority to develop its business models, audiences and revenue and has been adaptive to changes and new ideas over the course of the project. A wide range of stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation confirm FPA remains the most trusted source of news in Liberia.

However, the findings from interviews with other media partners and some Key Informants highlight that it is still relevant to consider how to support other media partners - or to bring in one or two other media partners that also have a demonstrable commitment to editorial independence and integrity, and an interest in developing a business model that grows their independence (e.g. media that are not, as per New Narratives' policy, owned by politicians, and that refuse to take bribes or payments for content).

Relevance to civil society and experts in Liberia

Key Informants highlighted the wider importance of New Narratives in Liberia, because of the platform it provides to enable **high quality public debate about policy and thematic issues affecting Liberians**. By playing this role, New Narratives' journalism contributes to efforts to increase government transparency, responsiveness and accountability. Several Key Informants explain that there is a strong congruence between civil society efforts and New Narratives' objectives because both have distinct but complementary roles to play in bringing issues to public attention and, therefore, the attention of politicians or policymakers. They identify areas and objectives that are mutually beneficial, and that there could be more structured ways of working together in future. Some Key Informants express that to some extent they are dependent on New Narratives and Front Page Africa to ensure that their efforts reach public and government attention, examples of which are described in the sections below on Impact.

Relevance to Funders

The project aligns well with the strategic priorities of its major funder - the Embassy of Sweden - and other current and past funders in two ways: first, it contributes to efforts to support the independent media ecosystem in Liberia. Secondly, it contributes to wider objectives of

strengthening transparent and accountable government and upholding the democratic gains achieved by Liberia in the last decade.

Adapting to Lessons Learned

The project has demonstrated flexibility in response to lessons learned and emerging needs identified by stakeholders. For example:

- The most notable adaptation has been from an original focus on selecting and strengthening a cohort of six media outlets to providing deeper support to Front Page Africa – this was partly to make more effective use of limited funding. This is relevant as the latter is widely recognised as the most-read, most trusted, most independent news outlet in Liberia, and needs ongoing support so that it can maintain this high standard while it evolves in line with the changing digital environment and explores additional sources of revenue. Another aspect of New Narratives Theory of Change is that what Front Page Africa does and learns in this phase of the Project will influence other media in the market and that they will learn from, adopt or copy its successful experiments or products.
- New Narratives made a targeted effort to select Fellows from outside of Monrovia and Montserrado and now includes 6 Fellows based in different counties. This has increased New Narratives' work to broaden the extent to which locally-produced stories, issues and perspectives from outside of Monrovia reach a national audience and feed in accountability efforts. This is in addition to the reporting that Fellows in Monrovia do outside the capital.

3.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness	**Comprehensively fulfilled**	**The results of the evaluation prove that the criterion has been fulfilled.**

Evaluation Questions: *To what extent is the Project delivering its expected Outcomes and how much are the outputs produced leading to the expected results? How effective are the design and implementation of activities and which activities are the most effective at leading to the results?*

The project is awarded 'Comprehensively Fulfilled' for this criterion because there is evidence that it is delivering the expected results in line with its theory of change. Planned output targets are likely to be met or exceeded by the end of the project and there is clear evidence that these outputs are leading to the planned outcomes, and in turn contributing to wider impact. The evaluation finds very strong results for Outcome 1, with more mixed results for Outcome 2.

Results for Outcome One

To assess the extent to which the project has contributed to its objective to ensure that Liberian journalists are equipped with resources, know-how and support to pursue independent & investigative journalism during & after the project, the evaluation drew primarily on data gathered through in-depth interviews with a sample of 9 Fellows (5 female, 4 male) who are currently participating in the programme, and interviews with 3 male former Fellows. This data was triangulated with data from interviews with both the editors of New Narratives and media partners, and analysed alongside the results of New Narratives' own reporting on changes in the quality of Fellows' articles, included in the narrative reports for Years One and Two.

The evaluation found clear evidence that all Fellows who sustain participation in the programme improve their journalism skills and are applying these skills to produce high quality independent reporting as part of the programme, and often outside of the programme. Given the post-conflict, economic and social context in Liberia of relatively low educational standards, the lack of hands-on journalism training for many, and the absence of in-depth reporting commissioned by media organisations, the **results of the New Narratives approach & the improvements in journalists' skills are significant.**

Key Outcome Targets		
Indicator	**Target**	**Total Achieved**
Number of Fellows supported over three years	12 a year	12-17 a year
Number of stories supported by SIDA	75	135

All Fellows reported that the New Narratives approach has **completely transformed their understanding of journalism and of the critical role that journalists play in society.** Many Fellows report that they did not know what it really meant to be a journalist before they joined the programme. They have greater understanding of the professional code of conduct for journalists, especially in respect of the critical importance of not taking payment from interested parties. Several Fellows – particularly female Fellows – report that working with and having a byline for New Narratives has increased their status and gained them new respect within their media organisations, including from male colleagues, and has also helped them secure access to interviews with senior and important sources.

The **core journalism skills** of Fellows improved due to their participation in the Fellowship programme. To keep their place on the programme, all current Fellows are producing at least one story every six months to the standard required, and some are producing more than one. It's clear that Fellows require customised levels of editorial support to hit this target. The evaluation found **evidence that most Fellows required less support in pitching and writing stories over time**, and Fellows themselves report that they require less support over time (bearing in mind that support required may also go up depending on the complexity or sensitivity of an individual story). What is also clear, however, is that to really shift the dial, and to enable Fellows to permanently consolidate new skills both within the New Narratives programme and in their other work, many Fellows require **multi-year investment in their core skills and plenty of opportunities to practice them under the guidance of a professional editor.**

Fellows say that as a result of the insistence on standards by editors they have **gained greater confidence in their own professionalism.** For example, their awareness and use of practices such as double- or triple-sourcing information, checking facts and figures, giving interviewees and sources the right to reply, and - where appropriate - including the voices and perspectives of people affected by the story are described by many Fellows as completely new skills that help them feel proud of their professional qualities.

Some Fellows report that they want to emulate the success of New Narrative's senior Fellows by pursuing reporting on a **specific thematic issue** - most notably they see the success of the reporting on War Crimes and Environmental beats. The New Narratives approach is seen as a chance to help them build their contacts and networks around a specific theme or 'beat' and to get better access to stories and sources, and to work more quickly as they gain expertise on the issues. Civil society experts also say that Fellows specialised in a thematic area provide a clear and trusted contact for them when they want to share story ideas, data or news. Other Fellows do not feel ready to specialise in this way, and the individualised and customised support that each Fellow receives from the New Narratives editorial team enables this multi-track & multi-speed progress.

Enhanced Outcomes for Female Fellows

While many Fellows report that being able to say they are working with New Narratives has increased their Status and Access as journalists, **this is particularly important for female journalists** because of the barriers they face. Female Fellows were able to give examples where they have been granted access to interviews that they would never normally be granted - for example one Fellow was only able to get access to a country attorney after saying she was working for New Narratives. They feel that they are taken seriously as journalists, often for the

first time in their careers and some experts talk to them because they trust that they will cover the story in a fair and factual way and will not take payment. Their own reputation grows by association with New Narratives - and well-known Fellows report that they are also supporting the New Narratives 'brand'.

Critical Success Factors:

The most important factor contributing to the success of the Fellowship programme is the combination of the following:

- the rigorous, exacting on-the-job professional editorial process
- the fee paid to Fellows for their work
- the fact that their expenses are covered

The editorial process for a sample of recent stories reviewed for the evaluation shows that New Narratives' rigorous editorial process often requires multiple rounds of email exchanges and instructions to improve the story. This process is credited by Fellows as driving not just the quality of individual stories, but also their progress in general. It's something that many of the Fellows have not experienced before; as noted there is a **general lack of editorial commissioning expertise and training in the wider Liberian media ecosystem**. Training and workshops by other actors have been beneficial in the past but have not been sufficient to address their training needs. The New Narratives editorial model has provided Fellows with **valuable exposure to 'on-the-job', 'real-world' training** as part of its newsroom and the Project is demonstrating that young journalists – whether or not they have any formal journalism training or have participated in skills-oriented workshops - have benefitted from the exposure to and experience of this kind of editorial and commissioning process, and that this model is effective.

There was also a consensus across the Fellows and editors interviewed that the formal **'story pitching' process** for each story within the overall editorial process has brought significant benefits both for the Fellows and the editorial team. The research and planning required as part of the pitching stage means that once a story is commissioned, this increases the speed and quality of story development, and - in theory - reduces the overall burden on New Narratives editors. Over time, individual Fellows are encouraged to deepen the pre-reporting elements of the pitching process to put more details in place and a strong hook before it is commissioned. There is some evidence that Fellows require less support over time to get a story idea signed off by the editorial team, and this is something that can be tracked in the results framework.

The story pitching process is integral to the success of the programme. It has evolved since it began, such as by articulating some requirements more explicitly (e.g. requiring an interview with a CSO or expert to be secured or a strong hook before the piece is commissioned). The depth and expectations of the process also grow over the time, so the pitching process is proving more demanding in year 3 than in in the first two years, requiring more pre-reporting, for example.

The fee that New Narratives pays **provides Fellows with a fair income for their journalistic work, along with expenses covered** (all on condition that they **do not take any third-party payments** of any kind when working for New Narratives) cannot be underestimated. Many Fellows are participating in what is a demanding and exacting programme, requiring a lot of work to produce each New Narratives story, on top of their full-time jobs (and other responsibilities) for which, as noted, many do not receive a proper income. They report that without the New Narratives fee, they would not be able to stick with the programme. The New Narratives fee - coupled with its associated prohibition - has been a **vital ingredient in insulating them from being vulnerable to outside payments** and **protects the integrity of their journalism** when working for New Narratives.

The **flexibility to drop** underperforming Fellows from the cohort and replace them with new Fellows throughout the Project cycle is also considered an important factor for maintaining standards and maintaining the pace and quality of stories produced. While it may risk creating tensions, New Narratives is transparent & fair about the requirements.

The bi-annual workshops are also reported to be successful for Fellows both in terms of building specific skills and introducing them to thematic expertise, but also as a mechanism for ensuring all Fellows are integrating within the programme cohort. Participating in these workshops has afforded Fellows the opportunity to **'deep-dive' into practical issues affecting real-world stories they are currently working on or pitching**. They provide practical ways to hear from Senior Fellows and editors, and to share information and tips. Fellows rated these workshops highly compared to workshops provided as part of other projects, partly because they feel they are in an active 'community of practice', and the sessions help them connect with the community. More recent Fellows joining the programme also felt that the workshops helped them to integrate better and to feel more confident.

Many journalists that stay in the New Narratives programme are **taken to participate in events or cover/observe processes outside of Liberia**, such as the war crimes trials, or investigative journalism conferences. Through this, they gain valuable exposure to peers internationally, to other kinds of journalism practices and cultures, and to other kinds of settings in which journalists operate.

Challenges and factors that may affect results

As noted, this is a challenging programme that demands a lot of participating Fellows, and as such, it can create difficulties for individual Fellows. The New Narratives' team is aware of many of these challenges, and make efforts to address them, but they are noted here as an important factor for the team to continue to bear in mind. While the sample of current and former Fellows interviewed for this evaluation agreed that the high standards are essential, and produce the right results, they also highlighted challenges inherent to the process:

- **Workload of the Fellows:** Many Fellows report that the level of effort they need to invest in each story creates challenges for them, especially if they are participating on top of a full-time job and/or other responsibilities. There was agreement across the interviews that Fellows require particularly intensive support during the first story. Some Fellows reported that they found it very useful when senior Fellows or assistant editors accompanied them to interviews, or they worked as part of a team with Fellows working on the same story for other formats.
- **Workload of the New Narratives' editorial team:** Because the editorial team commissioning and producing the high number of stories from a large cohort of Fellows (currently 16) is small, this has sometimes given Fellows the sense that their work is delayed due to a lack of editorial capacity in the organisation.
- **Feedback:** the learning curve can be very steep for some - especially new - Fellows. All recognise that sometimes robust feedback is required to ensure a Fellow can make the step-up to meet the standard required. Several Fellows reported, however, that the feedback they receive can sometimes be overwhelmingly negative and discouraging, particularly in their first year.
- **Access to technology:** Some Fellows have challenges in accessing PCs or laptops to work on their reporting for NN (e.g. writing and editing of text or audio), and have to stay behind at their place of work to use equipment there. (New Narratives has managed to increase access to computers for Fellows based in Monrovia, but even then, usage rates of this equipment are not high, which suggests that there may be other barriers, or other creative solutions that could resolve journalists' access to technology.)

- **Divergent editorial feedback:** Some Fellows report occasional confusion within the editorial process when they receive feedback from different editors (though including more subject matter experts has helped somewhat) and say they are sometimes confused when working with two different editors or mentors.
- **Pathway to Senior Fellow status:** Fellows would benefit from greater clarity in understanding the benchmarks required to attain Senior Fellow status, given the greater benefits and increased pay rates that this status affords.

Results for Outcome Two

Results for achieving the objective that *Liberian News Organisation and New Narrative Liberia staff have the resources and know-how to enhance their viability and support investigative journalism* show a more mixed picture. In the last two years, New Narratives has invested primarily in strengthening the viability of its key partner, Front Page Africa, and this strategy will continue in Year 3 and the next phase of the project. Front Page Africa reports that this support has been valuable and results are reported below.

Front Page Africa Achievements

Front Page Africa, founded by Rodney Sieh in 2005 as a digital media for the Liberian diaspora, and since 2008 as a print newspaper within Liberia itself, has received regular international coverage (e.g. Pulitzer Center, jamlab, CPJ) and recognition for its independent reporting and impact.

During this Project period, FPA has maintained its strong reputation for editorial integrity, including through its partnership and association with New Narratives. NN has strengthened FPA's online presence through support to develop its website and it is clear that the regular publication of high-quality in-depth reporting NN drives traffic to and expands the reach of the FPA website, especially on content related to war crimes, but also on other issues. The leadership of FPA gave an example of a story on sex workers that was produced by New Narratives and was one of their most popular ever, sparking considerable public debate and a response from the government. FPA publishes a version of each long-form print story produced through New Narratives and the podcast series hosted by Anthony Stephens and Evelyn Kpadeh Seagbeh. FPA's editorial quality and approach is now applied in the newsroom by their News Editor, a former New Narratives Fellow, and half of the newsroom reporters today are former Fellows.

According to an Internews-commissioned GeoPoll survey in August 2024, FPA had the highest online readership of any Liberian independent news outlet, with an average monthly readership of 325,000. New Narratives has supported FPA's redesigned website, which is showing encouraging signs that it is generating increased revenue through programmatic advertising - though it is too early to tell if this is a consistent trend.

FPA has increased its business management capacity with the support of a dedicated Business Manager and is exploring how to diversify revenue streams among Liberian diaspora communities in the US. While domestic reader revenue within Liberia is a non-starter, FPA has discussed the possibility of investing more in its efforts to develop a structured scheme for diaspora Liberians, including events with Rodney Sieh, exclusive video content, and other premium or targeted offers.

Challenges for Front Page Africa

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to conduct a detailed organisational analysis of Front Page Africa, but through interviews with senior leaders and other KIs, it is possible to make some potentially useful observations. While FPA as a digital-native publication has a strong digital foundation, its current online presence continues to face limitations. It is not clear, for example, to what extent the team is able to consistently monitor and improve site performance

across different device types, for example, alongside a capacity to keep up with ever-changing platform policies and requirements related to the discoverability of their content (which might also help with increased potential for ad revenue).

Greater investment in user experience (especially in respect of the quantity and placement of mobile ads), greater optimisation for mobile devices (if supported by metrics), improved integration of audio/video/social content, and user engagement metrics might provide valuable boosts to audience engagement, retention and perhaps even conversion (to paying donors). FPA has reported on the Digital Transformation Project targeting 10,000 young people across Liberia - and there may be value in exploring a focus on younger, more digitally- and platform-native Liberian and diaspora audiences through creating bespoke or re-versioned content for social media.

Results for Other Media Partners:

The project began in 2022 with six media partners - Front Page Africa, OK FM, Prime FM, Daily Observer, Radio Gbarnga and News Public Trust. Since then, Daily Observer and Prime FM have withdrawn from the programme as their Fellows were not producing the required content - although they still engage with the Project and carry content. The leaders and editors interviewed for this evaluation say that the Project does support their independent reporting - through development of the Fellows that work for them, and through the stories that the Fellows produce that are edited by New Narratives, and radio stations value the news reports and packages that New Narratives produces. As noted before, New Narratives does not pay these stations to carry this content (with the exception of Okay FM, which is paid only to air a monthly 30-minute radio programme), and will not work with other stations that request payment to air this content.

However, these stations have made small, incremental steps to introduce changes in their business models over the last few years. An evaluation that was conducted in 2023 for New Narratives found that following the workshop in Year 1, media leaders had not introduced any changes and felt that they didn't have the in-house expertise or resources to do so. However, this evaluation found that 2 years on from the workshop, media leaders interviewed said that they did eventually introduce some small changes that are generating small amounts of revenue - such as YouTube channels and Facebook Live - and credited the New Narratives workshop for introducing these ideas. This is additional to the technical and financial support they have received from Internews, which has also been helpful and highly customised. As importantly, perhaps, they valued the opportunity to discuss ideas with their peers from Nigeria, highlighting that even occasional sessions or workshops with peers from inside or outside of Liberia could be valuable. Just as New Narratives supports a range of media partners to publish/broadcast high quality independent content (even if not *all* of their content is independent), it could also continue to explore cost-effective ways to work in a light-touch way with media partners on innovation and business development.

With the agreement of the project donor, New Narratives has focused its strategy on providing in-depth support to strengthen Front Page Africa. The Project continues to act as an important business development tool for other media partners and outlets whose journalists participate in the Fellowship as this provides them with a revenue stream for their independent journalism.

The evaluation heard significant anecdotal evidence that there remains a significant unmet need related to providing business development and/or financial support to small *partially or largely* independent outlets in Liberia that express a commitment to producing independent public interest content (and meet other criteria, such as not taking outside payments, and not being owned by political figures). The withdrawal of US funding for projects implemented through Internews is likely to exacerbate this situation, and while some of Internews' previously-funded work will continue, it is not clear how this will affect their work with the wider spectrum of its Liberian media partners.

Gender Considerations

As noted, there has been excellent progress made in recruiting female Fellows, and both senior and junior female Fellows report improvement in status, including within their own media institutions.

However, the overwhelming gender imbalance in the media sector in Liberia and the systemic challenge this presents is exemplified by the fact that **all the media leaders interviewed were male**. Continuing to work both on the pipeline of new female Fellows, and with female Senior Fellows past and present is essential, as some of these Fellows could go on to lead or create their own media outlets or services.

Challenges to Outcome Two

The difficulty for selecting media partners in Liberia is that many are comfortable with the model of taking payments for content or from individuals with vested interests, including media owners, and see no incentive to reduce or abandon this dependency. Whether through grants or through supporting them to increase their revenue from sources that allow them to be independent, there is little evidence to date that this would incentivise them to change, even if it helped them to increase revenue overall.

The evaluation confirms that New Narratives' focus on Front Page Africa, with its clear commitment to independence and its reputation for integrity, alongside lighter touch partnerships with other media outlets, is an effective strategy for ensuring that independent journalism is produced and flows through the media system. It is also pragmatic to continue to track and work with other media outlets in a light touch way to explore new ways to engage audiences and generate income, where at least some of their output is considered an 'island' of independent, public interest content.

New Narratives does not have binding agreements that can be enforced with partner media, and it would not be possible to track their compliance with ethical standards (though there are examples of this elsewhere in media development). In an environment where a large majority of individual journalists have to take outside payments, and where media outlets have relationships with or even are owned by politicians, religious bodies or figures, or government-aligned individuals or businesses, it is extremely difficult to define, measure and gauge what constitutes true or sufficient independence.

Reviewing the Theory of Change and Logframe

The evaluation constructed and tested New Narrative's Theory of Change - based on its logframe and narrative descriptions of the project. The results of this evaluation validate the theory of change, because New Narratives is implementing activities that are leading directly to outcomes for Fellows and for media partners, which are contributing to the Project's long-term goal and leading to wider impacts. A draft revised Theory of Change (attached in Annexes) suggests a visual representation of the chain of results discovered through the evaluation and, once finalised, could form the basis of a results matrix or logframe. New Narratives has already adapted the Project's original logframe, which was considered difficult for staff members to use for monitoring purposes. It was not possible to test some of the working assumptions, such as the idea that other media outlets would imitate Front Page Africa as it develops.

A revision of the logframe could move away from the focus on assessing the quality of stories that Fellows produce as a way to track improvements in capacity. The New Narrative model means that all journalism published is of high quality. It is clear that some Fellows require a lot more support than others to reach the required standard consistently and therefore a more realistic measure will be to track whether over time an individual Fellow requires less intensive editorial support, and whether they are able to move from pitching to finished product with less editorial support (bearing in mind that there are many factors outside of journalists' control

that may slow down investigations). This would involve an editor capturing the level of support needed on a basic 1-5 scale.

In addition, the logframe could be revised to make sure that it captures some of the results of the project that are not being captured in the current framework. For example, absent from the logframe are indicators for which this evaluation found evidence: the extent to which the journalism supported by New Narratives is amplified through and strengthens the overall independent journalism ecosystem, and the extent to which this leads to improvements for New Narratives' media partners.

Finally, Fellows, as part of their work, are encouraged to collect and share notes about the impact of their individual stories, and, in particular, they are required to submit an initial impact report before their payment is approved. This data is used in NN's narrative reports, but, if more systematically stored and accumulated, could over time enable New Narratives to document and communicate richer evidence of impact. (It is worth noting that, even with a system in place, Fellows – in common with journalists worldwide – do not always remember to share examples of impact of which they are aware, and do not always have access to those who could provide them with evidence of impact.)

3.3 Impact

Impact	**Comprehensively fulfilled**	**The results of the evaluation prove that the criterion is fulfilled.**

Evaluation Question: *To what extent is there evidence that the Project is contributing to wider, or longer term impact?*

The evaluation awards a 'comprehensively fulfilled' to the Impact criterion, because there is good evidence that journalism supported by the Project is contributing to wider, long-term or substantial changes in Liberia that ultimately are likely to benefit the public.

The starting point for assessing Impact is to consider the contribution the Project is making to its own stated goal '*To strengthen local independent journalism in Liberia to actively contribute as part of a whole-of-society effort to combat corruption and support good governance and human rights*'.

The data gathered to draw conclusions about Impact is relatively limited in scope and was not the main focus of the evaluation. In terms of the sample of Key Informants, the number who are completely independent of the project was relatively small (10), and furthermore it was not possible to interview relevant policy makers or 'duty bearers' in government or parliament to 'prove' if or to what extent decisions taken by them were directly or indirectly influenced by New Narratives.

While direct causal attribution is challenging to prove, there is sufficient triangulated data to describe an 'impact pathway' for New Narratives, showing that the journalism it produces is leading both directly and indirectly to changes. A key recommendation will be to find a way to more systematically collect this kind of data going forward, which would make it possible to periodically verify and evaluate the scale of the project's contribution to impact.

To assess impact, evaluation asked informants across each stakeholder group to identify which stories produced had been impactful and how, and then triangulated this information. All journalism produced by New Narratives was considered (rather than just the journalism supported through the grant from the Embassy of Sweden). Most informants – particularly external Key Informants - do not know the source of funding for particular pieces of journalism or which project it is part of. In some interviews, for example, informants referred to content that was produced before the start of the project. New Narratives includes numerous examples of the impact of individual stories in its annual reporting, so the evaluation team sought to verify examples of impact with non-project stakeholders. New Narratives could systematically track,

categorise and communicate the impact of its journalism, including through making it simpler for Fellows to follow up on direct or indirect impacts of their own stories.

Impact Case Study

The most commonly cited example provided was New Narratives' persistent and consistent reporting on war crimes & justice since 2017 through its West Africa Justice Reporting project, which has led to both indirect & direct impact.

It has led to an overall increase in the quantity and quality of reporting on this issue in Liberia, through its own articles published on Front Page Africa, podcasts and other audio and through the extent to which other outlets have picked up and covered the story.

The reporting has led to an improved public understanding of what constitutes a war crime, for example, and a greater level of public commitment to the justice process. New Narratives' reporting from the international trials - including live reporting by Facebook – was widely picked up by other media. It has successfully 'brought home' the purpose and significance of the prosecutions to people in Liberia and may even have led to an increase in witnesses being prepared to come forward to give evidence. It is widely considered to have helped frame the national conversation and set the news agenda, enabling Talk Show hosts to frame the conversations adequately.

New Narratives secured exclusive interviews with government figures & is holding the government accountable for their commitment to set up the war crimes tribunal. More than one Key Informant said that **the War Crimes Tribunal would not have been established without the work by New Narratives.** Going forward, it is improving the quality of debate about how to include the perspectives of victims in forthcoming trials – including women that were victims of sexual violence.

The quality of reporting is considered very high compared to similar reporting in other countries according to knowledgeable informants interviewed.

"I wish every post-conflict country had a New Narratives' (Key Informant).

"The experience in Liberia is unique. What the Liberians have achieved is one of the most innovative, cutting-edge quests for justice in the world and New Narratives has been reporting every inch of it."

Impact Pathways

When asked to identify stories that had an impact, informants between them named over 30 different reports that they felt had generated wider debate or helped galvanise a concrete action or reaction. The following table shows a selection of a few of the stories that were identified more than once and draws on work being done by other actors to create categories of different types of impact that journalism can contribute to.

Story/Beat	Examples of Impact			
	On public debate	On individuals	On institutions	On civil society
Justice for War Crimes	Helped frame debate; improved understanding of what constitutes a war crime; ensured international trials relevant and clear to public in Liberia; ensured reporting widely amplified by other media.	Coverage of trial in US encouraged more victims to testify; Witnesses in time gave interviews;	Government set up War Crimes Tribunal	Shone a spotlight on work to prosecute criminals through international courts and seek justice for victims
Trafficked women	Wide public debate	4 girls returned home	Efforts to prosecute traffickers	Calls for action
Land Rights				Led to demands by civil society to speed up land rights process
Illegal work in the forest sector	Improved framing about a complex issue, included perspective of communities most affected		Catalysed donors to engage with government on issue	Elevated the work of activists and researchers to the public level

Story/Beat	Examples of Impact			
	On public debate	On individuals	On institutions	On civil society
Female Genital Cutting	Long term impact on quality of public debate on sensitive issue;			Began to do advocacy and campaigning that continues today
Fake drugs	Public debate		Prompted govt to take action on out-of-date drugs on sale	
Salaries of lawmakers	Wide public debate			
Abortion Law	Improved understanding of taboo topic; Talk Show hosts supported by NN frame topic in sensitive way			Provides accurate information for researchers and others seeking to understand conflict
Teenage prostitution	Public debate Drove higher traffic to Front Page Africa		President got involved	

Critical Factors of Impact

The most commonly cited factors that ensure New Narratives' journalism frequently contributes to wider Impact are the following:

- **Reputation and Trust**:

  The quality of New Narratives' reporting has established its reputation as a trustworthy source of information. Key Informants feel that NN gets its facts right & that there haven't been any cases where this trust has been broken.

  The New Narratives brand is considered by some to be linked to the trustworthiness of Front Page Africa – for some KIs, Front Page Africa, seen as New Narratives' partner, is understood to be the main publisher of the stories. For others, it is the reputation and quality of New Narratives that is cited, and some consider it as a media brand in itself.

- **Frequency and quantity of articles across many topics:**
  This is an important factor in building the reputation of New Narratives as a trustworthy source, and in helping to set the news agenda in Liberia. Some informants in different stakeholder groups felt that stories sometimes take too long to be published – though they appreciate that this is due to the careful and diligent editorial process that requires a story be right before it can be published

- **Accessible and accurate reporting on complex issues:**
  Informants see it as a core strength that New Narratives manages to frame stories that are complex and nuanced (such as Carbon Trading) in an accessible way and include the perspectives of ordinary people or communities affected by the story. This also means that onward use by other media outlets, such as influential talk show hosts at radio stations, is based on clear accurate reporting and framing, which further amplifies the stories and reaches much wider parts of Liberia's population.

3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability	Overall Fulfilled	The results of the evaluation prove that the criterion has been fulfilled.

Evaluation Question: *To what extent are the positive effects of the project likely to last beyond the lifecycle of the project?*

The evaluation awarded the project an 'Overall Fulfilled' for Sustainability because there is evidence that the results of the Project will be sustained beyond the project for both individual Fellows and media organisations engaged by the Project.

Sustainability for Individual Fellows

The evaluation found evidence that Fellows consistently apply New Narratives standards in their regular media work outside the programme. At least half of interviewed Fellows provided concrete examples of how they are using their improved understanding, knowledge and skills in other contexts. For example, one Fellow who was assigned to covering weekly press conferences at the Executive Mansion now makes sure that he follows up on statements made by the President's spokesperson with further questions by email or telephone. He also includes clarifications or additional information and context in his reporting to explain the implications of the President's statements, rather than just reporting the statements.

Editors and media leaders report that they value the skills that their reporters gain through working with New Narratives. Several observed that once their reporters join New Narrative's programme they noticeably improve – e.g. in the quality of their story ideas and research.

New Narratives' reputation has been built in part by the hard work of Fellows (many now Senior or former Fellows), and this has created a positive cycle whereby younger Fellows benefit from the foundations laid and credit cumulatively built by previous Fellows. As noted elsewhere, Fellows report that their reputation is automatically boosted as a result of joining the programme, and that they are able to gain access to interviewees and information that they would otherwise not be able to access, even when not reporting for New Narratives.

Sustainability for Organisations

Some former Fellows are now in senior journalism roles, as part of which they integrate the professional journalism standards learned during their time working with New Narratives in their ensuing work. Three media leaders interviewed are former Fellows now working as editors at media outlets (Front Page Africa, OK FM, and Prime FM). As noted in the section on FPA earlier, its News Editor has embedded core journalistic practices such as double-sourcing and avoiding editorialising in FPA's news coverage. These editors also say they are integrating newsroom management approaches learned working with the editorial team at New Narratives.

Fellows working as Talk Show hosts are also improving the quality of how on-air discussions are framed – this is extremely valuable, as radio shows of this kind are critical to how large parts of the Liberian population get information and news. According to informants interviewed for this evaluation, the quality of news published and talk shows hosted at those organisations has correspondingly and noticeably improved as a result.

Factors Affecting Sustainability:

Informants from across the stakeholder groups mentioned that there is a lack of editorial commissioning capacity and expertise across the wider independent media, which means that relatively few journalists are exposed to the high standards and rigour encoded in the New Narratives process. They suggested that they would like to see capacity building for media

editors drawing on the New Narratives model to strengthen their skills to help improve their editorial commissioning and production of journalism.

3.5 Efficiency

Efficiency	**Comprehensively fulfilled**	**The results of the evaluation prove that the criterion is fulfilled.**

Evaluation question: *How well is the Project using resources to deliver its results?*

The project is awarded 'comprehensively fulfilled' for Efficiency because it has demonstrated that it is using resources cost-effectively and in a way that is closely aligned with delivering its core strategy and achieving its expected results.

It is very clear that the leadership and management team are achieving an exceptionally high level of results with the resources at their disposal, and they are able to adapt to changed circumstances in order to ensure the most efficient use of resources. The productivity of the small editorial team is very high, and it is punching well above its weight. In essence, New Narratives has established a lean operational model that, in its current form, maximises impact while maintaining cost-effectiveness.

New Narratives, as a hybrid 'international' NGO with a national entity, has strengthened its national team and board in recent years, and navigates its hybrid status well. There is a clear and stated intention to further increase local ownership and control over the entity, a direction of travel that this review strongly endorses. New Narratives should continue to strengthen and sustain the local elements of its editorial, management and wider team.

The management team have instituted good communication systems for ensuring productivity amid the challenge of the editor working remotely, with weekly meetings, and clear, shared objectives and task lists.

The structure and model of the Fellows programme provides excellent value, generating high-quality independent journalism that would be significantly more expensive to produce through traditional staffing models. On-the-job, real-world training and mentoring is highly valued by the Fellows, and may be more efficient at helping them develop and enhance their skills compared to other kinds of more formal training. This is also true of the bi-annual workshops, which help to build a wider community of practice and reinforce standards, skills and confidence in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Further evidence of efficient and adaptive use of resources is shown by the decision to focus resources on areas with greater potential impact, and in particular the strategic decision to concentrate organisational capacity-building efforts on Front Page Africa.

Risks and challenges

While New Narratives has made strenuous efforts to increase capacity at the editor level through training and hiring, all quality control during the editorial process still relies heavily on the Executive Director acting as Editor-in-Chief (EIC). In practice this entails the EIC signing off all pitches and finished articles, albeit with support from the assistant editor and *ad hoc* editor. This inevitably places a long-term strain on efficiency, risks a single point of failure in the system, and creates a potential bottleneck, particularly if the volume, pace and formats of stories increase.

New Narratives continues to address this by exploring different options for how to build greater local editorial capacity within the organisation, both as an end in itself, and in order to reduce reliance on the EIC. One option, for example, involves hiring more senior editors and Fellows specialised in particular beats, so that more editorial work can be done in a way that requires

less input from the final editor. This will be a priority in the next phase, both to deliver the current level of quality of journalism and frequency of publication more sustainably, and to be able to take up any opportunities to grow the scale of the project without overstretching existing resources or staff.

An area of improvement that would require dedicated staff time, but would also bring further efficiencies, is for New Narratives to build a more streamlined system for monitoring and learning, and for collecting data about outcomes, outputs and impact (including as noted elsewhere, by providing periodic check-in points or prompts for Fellows to be responsible for proactive or passive data collection on impacts they are aware of - 'the story of the story').

A minor change that would increase the efficiency of using the New Narratives and parts of the Front Page Africa websites (e.g. podcasts) is to ensure that all stories are given a publication date and are made more searchable.

3.6 Coherence

Coherence	**Overall Fulfilled**	**The results of the evaluation prove that the criterion has been fulfilled.**

Evaluation Question: *To what extent does the project complement the support that partners are receiving from other media development actors (if any)?*

The project scores 'overall fulfilled' for Coherence, because it has demonstrated that it provides a unique and complementary contribution to the overall media ecosystem in Liberia, has a clear and coherent strategy, and is not duplicating the work of other organisations. It coordinates well with other actors providing capacity building support to journalists and media organisations. There is room for reassessing coordination and for improving coordination of support to media partners, particularly given that Internews has lost a significant part of its funding for media development.

In terms of coherence with the external field, New Narratives fills a distinct gap in Liberia's media development landscape by focusing on high-quality independent journalism production alongside capacity building. Across Outcome 1 - with its focus on individual journalists - and Outcome 2 - focused on outlets and the organisation itself - this presents a holistic approach. This complements and adds value - as Fellows and other KIs report - to other actors' efforts to support community radio, work on media policy and provide short-term or targeted training.

In terms of internal coherence, as noted elsewhere, the theories of change and strategic objectives are clearly and coherently designed and expressed, and mesh well with donor priorities on governance, human rights and transparency, and Liberia's own development priorities related to anti-corruption and accountability for war crimes. The consistent and rigorous New Narratives editorial process establishes clear and consistent standards - including probity of conduct - across all journalist Fellows, giving them coherence and clarity, and helping to underpin the good reputation of the organisation, its Fellows and its journalism. The added benefits to female Fellows in particular could be more clearly addressed as a distinct category of support or even fundraising in the future.

4. Conclusions

1. There is strong evidence that New Narratives is making a significant contribution to the quantity and quality of independent journalism in Liberia through commissioning and producing high-quality journalism (approximately 135 stories by the end of Year 3) and wide distribution via media partners, including Front Page Africa (Liberia's most widely-read digital news outlet) and popular radio stations.
2. New Narrative's reputation for trustworthy, accurate, fair and independent reporting has been firmly established. Alongside Front Page Africa, it is regarded as one of the few truly independent journalism sources in Liberia. During a period where the government is perceived to be relatively responsive to public debate, pressure and civil society advocacy, this provides opportunities for such independent accountability-focused initiatives.
3. The impact of NN's reporting is substantial. Many stories set the news agenda and influence public debate, frequently eliciting concrete responses from authorities. The most significant systemic impact has been the government's decision to create a War and Economic Crimes Court, which stakeholders attribute to NN's persistent and consistent reporting on war crimes since 2017. This reporting has also transformed public understanding of what constitutes a war crime and brought coverage of international trials to Liberian audiences.
4. The bedrock of New Narrative's quality journalism is its rigorous newsroom model, which acts as an engine driving high journalism standards across the wider sector both directly and indirectly. New Narratives selects, trains, commissions, mentors and, crucially, pay a fair wage to a cohort of 12-17 journalist Fellows annually from diverse media outlets. This model produces stories that are carried by both Fellows' own outlets and other media partners, reaching a wide cross-section of Liberian audiences, serving as an effective mechanism for countering financial and political capture in the media sector.
5. New Narrative's demanding editorial process is a major organisational asset, ensuring accuracy, quality and integrity of all its reporting. As the model relies heavily on the Executive Director/Editor-in-Chief it creates a risk to the organisation, and potentially a brake on potential growth or scaling up of the programme's capacity and output. This challenge is recognised by leadership but is taking longer than anticipated to address. The restricted talent pool in Liberia's media ecosystem makes recruitment efforts more difficult, despite some successful hiring, and bringing additional international expertise in does not always match the needs or constraints of the Liberian media environment. Creative solutions might include splitting planned roles or developing alternative arrangements to acquire the necessary combination of skills needed.
6. The Fellowship program significantly impacts individual Fellows by building their journalistic skills and capabilities through its uncompromising standards and continuing to stretch them as they progress. It transforms their understanding of journalism's role in society and professional ethics, enabling some to apply improved skills beyond New Narrative's scope and maintain these standards in future roles and for wider audiences. Former Fellows now occupy senior editorial positions throughout Liberian media, integrating New Narrative's standards into their work and improving media quality for audiences beyond NN's direct reach.
7. Female Fellows experience particularly pronounced benefits. Beyond core skill development and professional growth, they report transformed professional status in an extremely male-dominated sector. They gain increased access to sources and information, greater professional respect including from editors, and some report achieving greater financial independence.
8. Front Page Africa has grown substantially through its association with New Narratives. Over half of its newsroom team has participated in the New Narratives' Fellowship program, and

has benefited from stronger newsroom management and journalistic standards. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to provide specific advice to Front Page Africa, but as it approaches its 20th anniversary in 2025, specialised strategic advice on growth, staffing, monetisation, and other kinds of revenue will be beneficial to help it prepare for its next period of growth.

9. New Narrative's impact significantly outweighs its organisational size. The small editorial team works efficiently through close collaboration and task allocation. Increased editorial capacity within New Narratives Liberia is a major priority, so that it can more sustainably distribute responsibilities across the team and provide sufficient support to Fellows. With expanded capacity, New Narratives would be well-positioned to leverage its excellent reputation and effective Fellowship model to scale up its impact in multiple ways.

5. Recommendations

Recommendations to Project Donor

- Continue/renew funding to New Narratives for the Promoting Excellence in Independent Journalism in Liberia project
- Increase aspect of donor coordination focused on media development/support in Liberia, including engaging with the multi-donor West Africa Democracy Fund or its constituent donors, and the International Fund for Public Interest Media
- In addition to donor-to-donor coordination, establish quarterly coordination meetings both with other donors and with media development actors, initially to assess impact of changes and continued volatility in international aid

Recommendations to New Narratives

1. Strengthen Editorial Capacity of New Narratives Liberia

Near-term:

- Prioritise a long-term plan to invest in the editorial capacity of New Narratives Liberia, creating role/s to share responsibility for commissioning and signing off content with the Executive Director.
- Develop a structured pathway, and set mid-term target, to identify, train and retain promising Fellows to become Assistant Editors on dedicated thematic 'beats' or recruit additional Assistant Editors. [Re-engage with, for example, Report For The World (in light of their new strategy) or similar source of support and funding]
- Establish clear criteria for progression from Fellow to Senior Fellow with transparent benchmarks of professional development
- Explore options for providing equipment (laptops, recording equipment) directly to Fellows to address resource constraints - evaluate feasibility of schemes for loans, insurance, security and backup options

Mid-term:

- Create a formal editorial handbook documenting New Narratives standards, processes and policies
- In order to strengthen commissioning capacity across the sector, and to help build a stronger pipeline of potential editors for New Narratives, create a regular (e.g. quarterly) 'Editors' Sprint', modelled on the bi-annual workshop, to bring together editors from across Liberia's independent media to help improve their editorial commissioning skills of in-depth and investigative content. Focus on real-world, practical issues and actual stories, with small story-based grants.

Long-term:

- Develop pathway and milestones to building a sustainable Liberian editorial leadership team capable of operating with maximum autonomy or independence

2. Enhance Media Partner Support Strategy

Near-term:

- Further develop/formalise tiered partnership model for different types of media partners based on their capacity and commitment to independence, and potential impact of interventions:

    - Tier 1 - fully independent - e.g. Front Page Africa (also potential for eventual direct international donor support?)
    - Tier 2 - existing and recent media partners - OK FM, Prime FM
    - Tier 3 - new partners, partially independent media, with potential for increasing independence
- Establish quarterly coordination meetings with other media development actors and donors, initially to assess impact of changes in international aid
    - Explore agreement to pool data/mapping/needs assessment of current media partners and associated data to identify priority support areas and to help understand ongoing and changing needs

Medium-term:

- Under Tier 1 above, support Front Page Africa to conduct a diagnostic sprint, and then to conduct a comprehensive organisational review, including an innovation and sustainability plan that can be supported by, e.g. a regional partner like Premium Times in Nigeria, or trainers associated with MDIF-NAMIP – an initiative for which NN could approach Macarthur Foundation's Office in Nigeria for financial support,
- Explore providing support to 2-3 additional media partners in Tier 2 - e.g. develop needs-based proposal and fundraise to donors to support targeted areas of business such as marketing, distribution, sales, tech, again provided by, e.g. Premium Times, or regional trainers/media associated with MDIF-NAMIP, FT Strategies or other regional or international media support actors.
- Support the establishment of a media advertising or sponsored content collective of independent media to increase revenue potential, transparency and ethical practices (similar to models established in other communities and sectors worldwide, such as Brazil and Ukraine/Belarus (see archived page here)
- Fundraise for support to media partners to develop audience research capacity to inform content strategies, improve advertising offer, & to pool audience data
- Commission or co-fund a "digital transition toolkit", including audience engagement, specifically for the Liberian media context, partly learning from the start-of-project Hacks/Hackers workshop - as a series of videos or even podcasts before becoming a print product (consider reprioritising remit for audience/revenue consultant?)

Longer-term:

- Fundraise for/partner on a targeted media innovation fund to support digital or other experimentation by partners of NN and other media development partners
- Explore opportunities to develop a collaborative mechanism or platform for media partners to share resources and reduce operational costs - including tech stack, digital security, marketing, accounting or other potentially shared resources/back office functions, or co-operative funds (as in the Indonesian small independent media sector)
    - Map or audit current provisions and costs across key partners to estimate potential shared savings, risks, obstacles and benefits
    - Start with focus on shared practical challenges, and, if appropriate, evolve over time into an alliance of independent media/sector body (consider whether there is value in creating a formal network of New Narratives-affiliated media organisations as an interim step)
- Support or facilitate strategic planning processes for key media partners in Tier 2 above to develop 3-5 year sustainability plans

3. Improve Financial and Organisational Sustainability of NN/NN Liberia

Near-term:

- Invest in and fundraise further for institutional development of NN/NNL, beyond editorial capacity - specifically for capacity to do project management, M&E, donor engagement - without need to upskill or redeploy other staff
- Review New Narratives' organisational risk mitigation plans, including succession planning for key leadership roles
- Explore case for support beyond existing donors, e.g.
    - Rationale for targeted investment in Liberia's independent media as a key front in the protection of democracy in West Africa, independent of election cycles - engage with e.g. IFPIM, West Africa Democracy Fund or ECOWAS, to increase visibility of New Narratives & the Liberian independent ecosystem
    - Develop prospect pipeline of potential corporate or foundation partners aligned with mission within African philanthropic, corporate & HNWI contexts
- Explore potential role of alumni Fellows in advocating for or building sustainability

Mid-term:

- Explore the potential for campaigns to engage Liberian diaspora in US (Minnesota, Maryland, and other significant clusters) to support a fund to provide core operational stability for NN and key partners

Longer-term:

- Approach IFPIM for support for a feasibility study to build a fund and/or endowment for independent media in Liberia, or a regional fund covering countries not on donors' radar (c.f. Sierra Leone process, involving thinktanks, research institutions, civil society, election monitoring bodies, business, ministries)

4. Improve Monitoring and Impact Tracking

Near-term:

- Implement a streamlined M&E framework with fewer, more meaningful indicators, covering:
    - Organisational productivity and efficiency (e.g. speed and inputs of editorial process)
    - The individual progress of each Fellow during and after the Programme
    - The impact journey of each New Narratives-supported story ('the story of the story')
- Train Fellows to document impact pathways of their stories through a simple template, or even through sending voicenotes, or monthly calls, or short sprints
- Create a searchable database of stories with impact tracking data
- Establish a regular more structured "impact review" session during bi-annual workshops
- Develop section of website to highlight examples of impact

Mid-term:

- Develop case studies of high-impact stories to use for advocacy and fundraising (learn from, e.g. Report For The World's new Pathway to Impact report format)
- Create a more systematic approach to follow up on published stories after e.g. 3, 6, and 12 months

- Assess digital analytics system to track story reach and engagement (growing advice and expertise is available on this, e.g. Brazil's Agencia Publica who have helped other newsrooms adopt their Publica IQ tool)
- Explore (potentially low or *pro bono*) relationships with research, industry or academic partners to conduct focused audience research

Longer-term:

- Establish a formal feedback mechanism with civil society organisations and policy makers to capture wider impacts of media work (beyond the scope of Fellows and media partners) on governance, accountability and the lives of Liberians (See, for examples of peer collaboration structures between civil society and journalism organisations in this report.)

5. Explore Geographic and Thematic Focus of NN

Near-term:

- Develop and fundraise for a strategy to recruit more Fellows from counties outside Monrovia (perhaps through a targeted donor campaign depending on diaspora Liberians' counties of origin?)
- Establish and seek additional funds for thematic "beats" (and associated specialised training for Fellows) aligned with Liberia's development priorities

Mid-term:

- Explore and seek funding/social investment for establishment of sub-national hubs in 2-3 counties to find and support Fellows outside Monrovia, and to help develop pipeline of Fellows
- Explore cross-border reporting initiatives with peers in neighbouring/West African countries
- Participate in or create thematic reporting networks around key issues covered by "beats" above (e.g. environment, economy, aid, justice, health)

Longer-term:

- Aim to develop a nationwide network of Fellows covering all counties
- Experiment with specialised investigative units focused on high-priority national issues

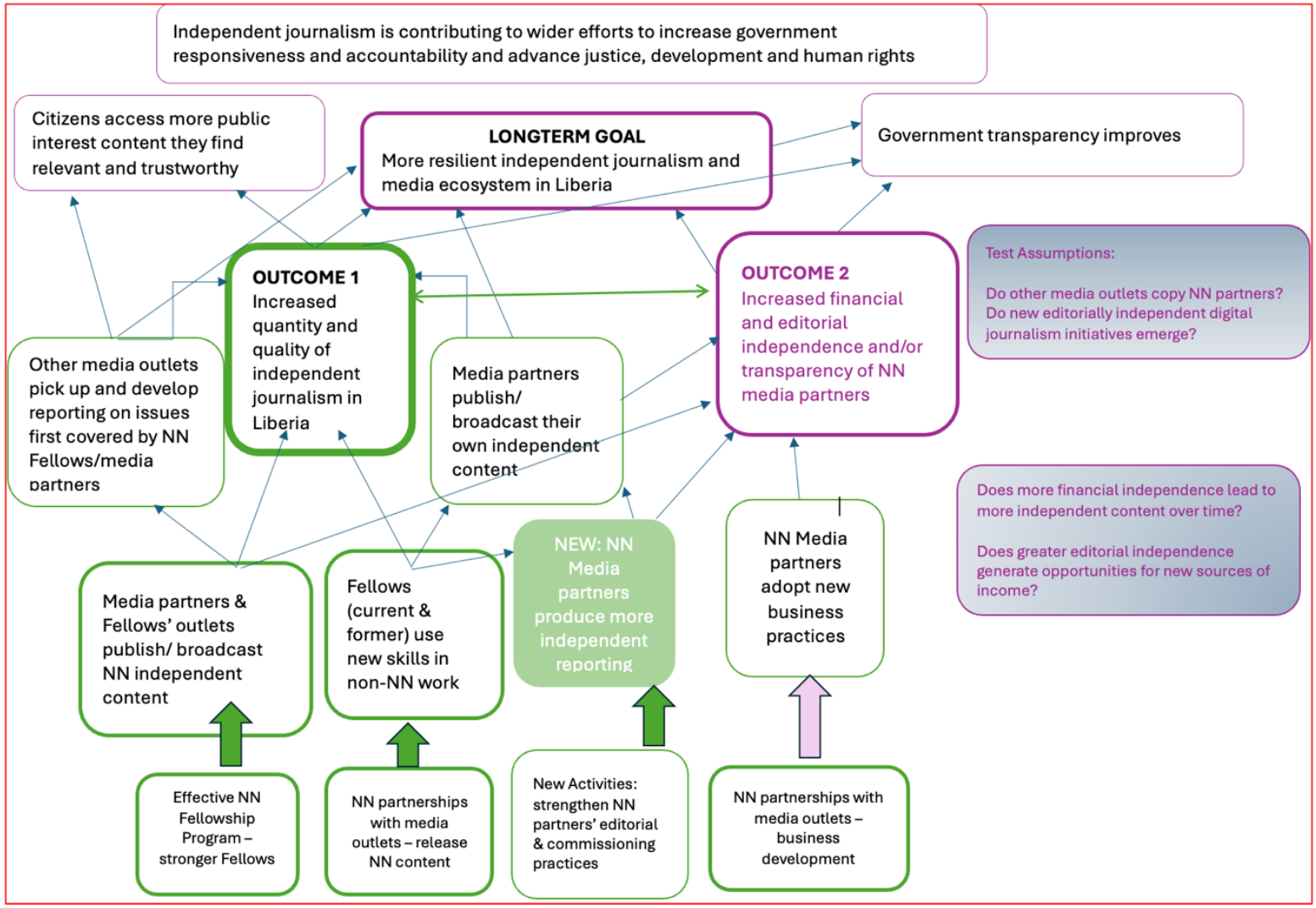
Annexes

Annex One: Informants Interviewed

	NAME	Gender	Media/Organization	Location
	Group 1: Leaders of media outlets (current and former participants)			
1	Rodney Sieh	M	Front Page Africa (FPA)	Remote
2	Gerald Koinyeneh	M	FPA	In-person
3	Kirk Porte	M	FPA (Business Manager)	Remote
4	Urias Mitchell	M	Radio Gbarnga, Gbarnga	In-person
5	Clarence Jackson	M	OKAY Radio, Monrovia	In-person
6	Bai Best	M	Observer, Paynesville	Remote
7	Kelvin Demey	M	Prime FM, Monrovia	In-person
8.	Vehzelee Sumo	M	Prime FM, Monrovia	In-person
Group 2: Current Fellows / Beneficiaries				
9	Eric Opa Due	M	FPA / Radio DCN River Cess	Senior Fellow- In-person
10	Cyrus Harmon	M	Spoon FM / FPA	Senior Fellow- In-person
11	Garmai Tarnue	F	Radio Gbarnga	GROUP INTERVIEW – Female Fellows – In person
12	Gloria Wleh	F	Lux / FPA	
13	Fatu Kamara	F	Okay FM, Monrovia / FPA	
14	Evelyn Kpadeh Seagbeh	F	Freelance Journalist and fmr Assistant NN Editor & Podcast producer; FPA / Okay FM / Prime	
15	Jerome Saye	M	Nimba Radio / FPA	In-person
16	Joseph Daniels	M	OKAY FM / FPA	In-person
17	Tetee Gebro	F	FPA / Okay FM / Prime	
Group 3: Key NN Informants				
18	Prue Clarke	F	Executive Director	Remote
19	Anthony Stephens	M	Assistant editor/Senior Correspondent	In-person
20	Samakutu Kargbo Junior	M	Director Admin & Finance	In-person
21	Lonnie Isabel	M	Editor/mentor	Remote
22	Nina Blackwell	F	Chair of International Board	Remote
23	David Kortee	M	Treasurer of Liberian board	In-person
Group 4: New Narratives Donors				
24	Johanna Suberu Svanelind	F	Embassy of Sweden	In-person
25	Dayugar Johnson	M	Former AJWS Country lead. Funder	In-person
26	Godfrey Odongo	M	Wellspring Philanthropic Fund	Remote
Group 5: Selection of Non-project Stakeholders: Donors, INGOs, thematic Liberia experts, policy or civil society actors				
27	Makmid Kamara	M	IFPIM	Remote
28	Lien Bech	F	Chief of Party Internews, LMEP	Remote

29	Andersen Miamen	M	CENTAL, Liberia	Remote
30	Jefferson Massah	M	Media Business Development Expert	In-person
31	James Otto	M	Sustainable Development Institute	Remote
32	Adolphus Satiah	M	Former head of Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, Labor Ministry	In-person
33	Hassan Bility	M	Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP)	In-person
34	Sean Boda	M	Former Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy, Monrovia	Remote
35	Mmonbeydo Nadine Joah	F	Organization for women and children, women's rights, Liberia	Remote
36	Alain Werner	M	Civitas Maxima	Remote
37	Dr Kole Shettima	M	Macarthur Foundation, Nigeria	Remote
38	Heather Gilberds	F	National Endowment for Democracy	Remote

Annex Two: Draft Theory of Change



Annex Three: Matrix of Evaluation Questions

OECD-DAC criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Data collection tools
Relevance: Is the project doing the right things?	• To what extent does the project address a significant problem for the independent media sector in Liberia? • To what extent is the project consistent with the objectives of the partners and stakeholders of the project? • How well is the project responding to changes in the broader economic/political/social context in Liberia or support media and journalists to respond to changes and opportunities? • Have gender aspects been identified, discussed, and integrated within the project and its results framework? • Are different aspects of the project more/less relevant to men/women stakeholders or different groups of stakeholders?	• SSIs • Group IVs • Document review
Coherence	• Are there synergies, duplications or interactions with other media development programmes in Liberia? • To what extent does the project complement the support that partners are receiving from other media development actors (if any)?	• SSIs • Group IVs • Document review
Effectiveness: how well and to what extent is the project achieving its objective?	• Is the project contributing or likely to contribute to the overall objective? • To what extent are the Outcomes likely to be achieved? • To what extent are the Outputs likely to be achieved? Is there evidence they are contributing to the expected or other Outcomes? • Which Outputs are most likely to lead to Outcomes? Which activities are most likely to lead to Outputs? Which activities are missing? • Which internal/external factors are influencing the achievement/non-achievement of expected results? • To what extent are activities effective differently for men/women and other groups where relevant? • To what extent are results evidenced for individual media organizations and/or journalists? (For example, evidence linked to changes in journalism quality, audience engagement, digital transition, financial resilience, newsroom management, editorial innovation). How effective is the Monitoring framework designed and implemented? • Are any unintended positive or negative effects of the project identified? • How effective was the process for selecting media organizations and journalists supported by the project? • How do partners assess the quality of the project team's style of communication & responsiveness when listening to concerns?	• SSIs • Group IVs • Document review
Efficiency: Are the objectives being delivered economically?	• Were the funds used economically? • Was the project's use of resources appropriate in view of the Outcomes achieved? • Were the objectives achieved within the planned timeframe?	• SSIs • Document review
Sustainability: will the positive effects last after the project?	• To what extent have partners taken ownership of the objectives of the project and willing and able to maintain changes in practice after the project? • Can structural, long-term improvements and/or institutionalization of changes in practice be observed by project stakeholders? • Given the limitations on external funding, what is the most effective way that donors can support Liberia independent media in a sustainable way?	• SSIs • Group IVs
Impact	• How likely or foreseeable is it that the project will contribute to long-term changes that strengthen the overall ecosystem for Liberia media and ultimately citizens? • To what extent will journalism supported by the project contribute to long-term changes in the wider context?	• SSIs • Group IVs