

Summary - Final Evaluation Report

# Inspiring the Next Generation of Independent Media in Pakistan

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## **Context**

The media sector has undergone profound transformation in Pakistan, marked by notable increase in private news channels and the establishment of PEMRA in 2002. Nonetheless, challenges persist, particularly for women journalists who face formidable obstacles in fulfilling their duties. Cultural norms and absence of training limits women's engagement in the media. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan pose greater challenges due to existing conflict and societal barriers, hindering progress of women. To address the challenges concerted effort are needed to develop the media sector, improve safety, and promote women's participation. Search initiated the project "Inspiring the Next Generation of Independent Media in Pakistan" to boost independent and diverse media in KP and Balochistan. The project core objective was to foster conflict-sensitive journalism, and create a favorable environment for women's to progress in media.

### **PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES**

The project targeted universities to institutionalize conflict-sensitive journalism in the media department curricula and increased access of journalists to resources and capacity building to promote conflict sensitive journalism. The project focused on supporting women in media and ensuring they feel more confident and safer at the workplaces.

### **WHY THIS IS MEANT TO CREATE CHANGE**

The project was meant to create an independent media focusing on young and women journalist from the conflict affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. It is important for a conflict-free democratic society where they will have the ability to report issue and hold public officials accountable for their actions. They will promote healthy public discourse by presenting different opinions and fostering a more informed and tolerant society. Further, independent media will focus on issues related to human rights violations, social injustice, discrimination, and marginalized communities. By bringing attention to these issues, media can contribute to positive change and social progress.

## **About the Study**

The goal of the study was to document the project performance in terms of advancing women- and youth-led independent media in Khyber Pakthukhwa and Balochistan through this project.

### **METHODOLOGY**

To conduct this evaluation a mixed methods approach was used for data collection encompassing primary and secondary information and both quantitative and qualitative data. An extensive desk review was conducted, followed by 20 KIIs, 25 IDIs and 414 surveys with project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Further, case studies were developed to illustrate the project's impact.

## Representations

The evaluation captured the views of all key stakeholders including press clubs, university faculty, participating and non-participating journalists, project staff, partner staff, mentors and fellow. Further, the evaluation collected data from all the 15 target geographical areas. Both women and men were consulted where 28% of the study participants were women.

## Key Results

### OUR APPROACH TO MEASURING CHANGE

To conduct this assignment Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria and Peace Impact Framework was used. To evaluate the project performance the study in particular focused on relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability from the OECD-DAC criteria and three Peace Impact Framework themes namely Violence, Personal Agency and institutional legitimacy.

Intended Positive Outcome	Related Outcome
The Conflict Sensitive Journalism Trainings led to the improvement in knowledge and skills regarding conflict sensitive journalism and promoted the practice of conflict sensitive journalism among participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 92% of the participating journalist confirmed enhancement of knowledge and skills related to conflict-sensitive journalism.</li> <li>• 77.8% of the participating journalists were of the opinion that that the project promoted the practice of conflict-sensitive journalism.</li> </ul>
Intended Positive Outcome	Related Outcome
The provision of mentoring opportunities and media fellowships helped increase access to resources and built capacity related to conflict-sensitive journalism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 94.4% of participants were affirmative of the project contributing to their overall growth as a journalist.</li> <li>• 92.6% of the respondents affirmed having increased opportunities to practice and grow as an independent journalists due to project intervention.</li> </ul>

### INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

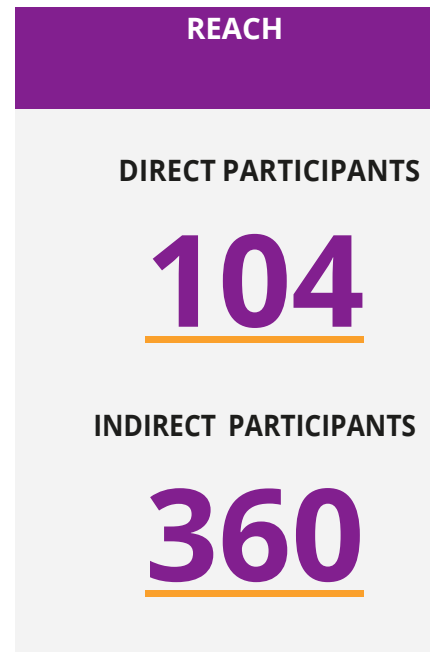
The project has successfully included women and youth as part of its activities who belonged to the targeted geographical areas on Pakistan / Afghan border as well as in other conflict affected areas of Balochistan. Among the most marginalized groups in Pakistan, by including women and youth in the project ensured diverse perspectives, experiences, and insights are considered, leading to more holistic and effective solutions.

These women and youth got unique opportunities for participation in project thus promoting social justice and equal rights.

It overcame historical barriers and discrimination that had limited their involvement in the media sector for them. Inclusion and participation in the project empowered women and marginalized individuals to enhance their skills, knowledge, and confidence. It allowed them to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes and gain a sense of agency and self-worth. Lastly, the project engaged women and youth to challenge traditional gender roles and societal norms. This will contribute to shifts in attitudes and behaviors, fostering more equitable and inclusive societies, thanks to this Search project.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the evaluation findings, the overall project design including the mix of interventions and targeting approaches employed is highly relevant to the overall situation in the country. The geographical targeting of some of the well-known neglected and lagging districts is also indicative of high relevance vis-à-vis situation of women and youth in the media landscape. From relevance perspective, primary data suggests that interventions were designed in a participatory and inclusive manner often involving multiple partners. There is evidence that certain approaches adopted by the partners also increased overall inclusiveness and participation such as the organizing of open house events in three cities (D.I Khan, Quetta and Peshawar). From the coherence perspective, the interventions are well aligned with and responsive towards the priorities and policies for the protection and promotion of journalists at the international, national, and donor level. This project was also very much in line with the priorities of civil society in the country to have a stronger and independent media in the country. The project is viewed to be effective by evaluators as well as all partners because it was able to meet its targets in the time available and without any major deviations. In terms of impact, implementing partners confirmed that the trained journalists and members of the press clubs are equipped with new skills and techniques such as conceptualization and introduction of ideas, conduct interviews, accurate referencing, story production and publication. From sustainability perspective, the young journalist trained as a result of the project are likely to continue working in the field, even though some may drop out eventually due to family reasons like raising a family. At the same time, the universities are likely to make even more changes with respect to teaching the conflict-sensitive journalism in the months and years to follow.



## Recommendations

S. #	Lesson learnt	Recommendations
1	The number of active women journalists in the target areas were far fewer than originally anticipated, thus it was difficult to engage them in the project.	There is a need to continue with similar projects to increase the number of participating journalists. It will also require re-looking into the selection criteria of the participating journalist in the project.
2	The university's media, journalism and communication departments provided an easy and practical way forward in terms of engaging young women from the target districts.	There is a need to work systematically with the universities to not only enroll more young women from these areas but also try to reach out to those who graduated in recent years through tracer studies. This will help to increase the number of practicing young women journalists in these districts.
3	Bringing changes in the university course content required more time and engagement, thus all efforts to make changes to curricula by the project could not be materialized.	To bring changes in the course content at the universities, including on conflict-sensitive journalism, there is a need to extend both the duration and intensity of the engagement with them.
4	Introducing reforms in the press clubs was more challenging given it would have meant reduced power for the existing leaderships of these press clubs.	Introducing reforms in different press clubs will require not only individual power analysis for each one of these press clubs, but there are to clear incentives and community pressures to create momentum for reforms. For example, linking more women members with support with physical infrastructure such as separate toilets for women.
5	Close coordination and weekly engagements with partners in this fast-paced project was a success, which helped to achieve the project in the intended duration.	The current coordination structures should continue in the future as well. This could be further extended to beneficiaries, mentors and others by building quarterly face-to-face meetings.