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EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-SIL-07-154 / Democratic Dialogue through Media in Sierra Leone

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All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

Disclaimer

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

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I. Executive Summary

(i) The project

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled "Democratic dialogue through media in Sierra Leone". It was implemented by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), a Canadian non-governmental organisation (NGO), from August 2008 to December 2009. The overall goal of the project was "to build the capacity of the local media in Sierra Leone to facilitate a national dialogue between civil society, government and citizens". The project targeted primary beneficiaries that included: a) journalists from radio and print media houses that were awarded fellowships and trained in investigative journalism through production and publishing human right stories; b) NGO grantees; and c) local communities targeted through forums and workshops to increase public knowledge on the role of the media in human rights protection and promotion.

(ii) Assessment of the project

Relevance

The project **responded to a need** for improved democratic dialogue. JHR, using available research, correctly identified the need for enhanced democratic debate as a precondition for entrenching democratic values and policies in post-war Sierra Leone. It also correctly identified the media as a key player, both as a space to "host" that debate and as a provider of substantive information.

However the project's relevance was reduced by its failure formally to engage with editors/publishers and with relevant high-level institutional actors. The project document lacked an explicit stakeholder analysis. Indeed, the "Project Strategy" section was largely reduced to a list of activities that did not explain how the activities would contribute to the overall objective.

The project had a consistent, strategic approach to **gender**: women's rights were clearly an issue that JHR intended to highlight. There were consistent attempts to reach approximate gender balance in the pool of trainers and in the pool of mentored journalists, beneficiaries of fellowships and participants in community forums.

Effectiveness

The project was generally effective. Virtually all the **planned activities** were carried out: although fewer articles were produced than originally planned, this was adequately explained by a focus on quality rather than quantity. Journalists who received training and met the evaluators displayed a good understanding of the role media can play in the promotion and protection of human rights and in democratic dialogue. Editors, too, demonstrated awareness of the role of the media in democratic development and noted that journalists who had undergone training or mentoring by JHR gained an understanding of this issue.

However they also noted that the media face challenges in encouraging debate, partly because of their economic model, which involves substantial dependency on advertisement, paid for by corporate and institutional clients, which therefore wield significant power.

The beneficiaries also clearly understood the link between balanced reporting in the media and democratic, free and fair elections. Indeed, in view of the politicisation of the media, reinforcing this link was an important element of the project, on which progress appears to have been made. However a slightly tighter, more rigorous project strategy would likely (as mentioned under the "relevance" criterion) have ensured that more achievable results were sought and were therefore more fully achieved.

Efficiency

The project was run efficiently. The proposed budgets were reasonable and in line with planned activities, there have been no particular concerns about the way resources were spent. Indeed, the projects have generally been executed in a responsible way, with a clear concern on the part of JHR to make good use of available funds.

However, project management appears to have been a significant challenge: the JHR Country Director at the time of the project needed the assistance of staff at the Toronto Headquarters of JHR to administer the project, including budget monitoring. That approach reduced the efficiency of the project.

Impact

The project achieved a number of positive impacts, including:

- Dozens of journalists have gained exposure to human rights reporting techniques, through the training provided within media outlets, workshops and seminars held by JHR trainers, as well as through mentoring and fellowships.
- Editors and publishers have also gained some awareness of the issue of human rights, through the work of the trainers assigned to their own outlets and through wider efforts, such as JHR's work with the IMC to promote human rights reporting awards.
- The grants to NGOs have helped them to enhance the profile of their contribution to human rights debates.
- The training and community forums have also reinforced the expectations of some participants (journalists and civil society representatives in particular) about the role that media can play in democratic debates.
- In some instances, articles published with JHR support have resulted in improvements to individual situations. For example, a series of radio stories on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission contributed to improving access by some victims to compensation.

Sustainability

JHR's project contributed to establishing a critical mass of journalists aware of human rights reporting and of the challenges of balanced political reporting. However the project's engagement with institutions was too weak to encourage anything but short-term interest on the part of the government. As a result the sustainability that was achieved was virtually entirely related to the component of the project that addressed journalists. This is a testimony to the quality of the training provided, which the beneficiaries noted. However, as with the other evaluation criteria, sustainability would have been enhanced by more systematic engagement with the range of key stakeholders.

(iii) Conclusions

- The project was an appropriate response to a clear need. It identified an important peace-building and democratisation need, and addressed it with expertise and credibility.
- The project strategy was broadly adequate but weakened by its failure to include a sufficient degree, and appropriate methods, of engagement with the government authorities and the legislature. The failure to propose training or other forms of awareness-raising to government officials and Members of Parliament weakened the impact of the activities that did take place.
- The project design was generally appropriate, but it lacked a complete analysis of the stakeholders, their respective needs and the various messages that should be addressed to them.
- The project was well managed, thanks to the dedication and commitment of the JHR trainers and managers. However, the effectiveness of the project was sometimes challenged by the relative inexperience in this field of the JHR Country Director.
- JHR's reporting to UNDEF on project activities was satisfactory, but UNDEF noted that financial reporting was not provided in full accordance with its demands.
- The activities contributed to the development of a critical mass of well-trained journalists able to research stories on human rights and to cover democratic development in a balanced manner. However there was scope for the achievements of the project to be reinforced by engaging in a more sustained manner with relevant institutions, such as the main journalists association and the Independent Media Commission.
- As a result of training a body of journalists in rights-related reporting and raising awareness of rights and democratic accountability among NGOs and communities, the project has contributed to raising expectations of balanced, rights-related reporting in the media. Follow-up media development projects should help meet these expectations.
- There remains much to be done to enhance the accountability of Sierra Leone institutions and the role played in this regard by the media. The capacity of the media to investigate government actions remains weak – enhancing it is a key challenge that can be met by following up on the UNDEF-funded project.
- The fact that JHR benefitted from two rounds of UNDEF funding helped put JHR in a position to seek funding from other donors to continue the activities initiated with UNDEF support.

(iv) Recommendations

These recommendations stem from the conclusions of the evaluation. It is to be noted that some of the recommendations have been implemented already by JHR in their current work in Sierra Leone.

- JHR should address institutional stakeholders in its follow-up project. The *objective* of engaging with these stakeholders could be *to ensure that the government becomes more transparent and that the legislature better discharges its obligation to keep the executive to account*.
- JHR should address flaws in the project design and strategy. The project should, in addition to addressing journalists, NGOs and communities, have a more direct engagement with editors/publishers, and more generally with media management levels.
- JHR should build field-level project management capacity. It is important that the project be reactive to evolving needs and demands in Sierra Leone, and that its credibility be reinforced among media actors at senior level. To achieve this a Country Director is needed, with an appropriate level of administrative support.
- JHR should encourage Sierra Leone stakeholders to maintain the momentum gained. To the extend possible, JHR should work with appropriate local stakeholders to entrench key project gains.

II. Introduction and development context

(i) Project and evaluation objective

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled "Democratic dialogue through media in Sierra Leone". The project was implemented by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), a Canadian non-governmental organisation (NGO), from August 2008 to December 2009. The project followed a similar one, also implemented by JHR and funded by UNDEF, entitled "Democracy, human rights and media in Sierra Leone", which was implemented from April 2007 to December 2008.

The four-month overlap between the two projects means that, in practice, they merged into a single project lasting from April 2007 to December 2009. As a result, this evaluation report generally refers to the two projects as one. However, the evaluation focused on the second project (2008-09) in discussion with project stakeholders because that period was obviously more present in people's minds (most stakeholders external to JHR were understandably unaware that there had been two project cycles). Where specific references are needed, this report uses the project numbers assigned by UNDEF: respectively 108 (for UDF-SIL-07-108) for the earlier project, and 154 (for UDF-SIL-07-154) for the latter one.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to '*undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipate project outputs have been achieved*'.

The evaluation took place almost one year after the end of the UNDEF funding, at a time when JHR was implementing a similar project building on the UNDEF-supported one, with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The CIDA-funded project drew on lessons learned by JHR from the UNDEF-funded activities: some of the recommendations of this report have therefore already been implemented by JHR. It should also be noted that the evaluators only met journalists based in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

Two experts (one international and one national) carried out the evaluation. The methodology of the evaluation is set out in the Operational Manual governing the UNDEF-Transtec framework agreement, with brief additions in the evaluation Launch Note. In accordance with the agreed process, a set of project documents was provided to the evaluators in November and December 2010 (see list of all documents consulted in Annex 2). On that basis, they prepared the Launch Note UDF-SIL-07-154 setting out issues to be considered during the visit to Freetown, which took place from 10 to 14 January 2011. During their visit, the evaluators conducted interviews with a range of stakeholders (see list of people met in Annex 3), including:

- The JHR Country Director (who was the Community Facilitator in the latter part of project 154) and his predecessor, who was in office at the time of the project implementation and is now the Director General of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC, known until early 2010 as the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service);

JHR's "toolkit" approach

In Sierra Leone as in other countries, JHR implements projects based on a common framework. This includes the following elements – adapted in each country according to local conditions:

- Workshops. Whether conducted within media outlets or with other groups of relevant participants (journalists and other professionals, students), training workshops cover topics related to human rights in the media.

- Other training. On-the-job training for journalists on human rights journalism occurs in media outlets, sometimes in combination with workshops (for example on community radio development).

- Fellowships. JHR provides a small number of journalists each year with a fellowship, which allows them to research and produce a story on an agreed topic. In addition to a financial grant, the fellowship includes mentoring by a JHR trainer.

Other activities involve work with other NGOs, such as small grants, or participation in implementing a Human Rights Reporting Award.

- Participants in training sessions;

- Journalists at the relevant media partners (radio and TV), including recipients of fellowships;

- Other journalists, editors and publishers, including a representative of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ);

- Academics and a representative of the Independent Media Commission of Sierra Leone (IMC);

- A representative of an NGO that received a grant under the project;

- Representatives of international NGOs and organisations active in supporting media development in Sierra Leone.

The evaluators also met with the one JHR trainer who was still in the country at the time of their visit. They contacted other trainers and staff by email and phone, and used their responses to a brief questionnaire. The evaluators also gathered reports on media development in Sierra Leone, as well as reports on the human rights situation in the country.

Towards the end of the mission in Freetown, the evaluators met the JHR Country Director again and outlined preliminary conclusions, which they reiterated in an email to the JHR office in Toronto, Canada. Feedback on these preliminary findings was taken into account in the preparation of the present report.

(iii) Development context

The Constitution of Sierra Leone recognizes and protects the fundamental rights and freedom of citizens. However the country has seen massive and repeated human rights violations from the days of one-party rule in the 1970s and 80s, which led to civil war between 1991 and 2002.

Before the April 2007 start of the first JHR project, human rights awareness in Sierra Leone was low and human rights work a relatively new phenomenon to the media. Until then, state supported intimidation and repression had often made it difficult for individuals to comment on, or take action against, violations of human rights. The police force and judiciary suffered paralysis and ineffectiveness, which promoted discriminatory systems and practices[1] in the country.

Members of the Indigenous Photographers' Union of Sierra Leone, one of the seven NGOs awarded grants under the JHR project. Photo: © JHR

The culture of human rights violations and impunity had reached gruesome proportions during the civil war, with near consensus in most accounts that some of the most widespread violations and abuses of human rights committed in conflict in recent memory had taken place in Sierra Leone[2]. While the rebel forces probably committed the most horrendous crimes against humanity, the post-war truth and reconciliation process provided evidence to the effect that all sides to the conflict were responsible for atrocities and human rights violations.

In January 2002, the war in Sierra Leone ended. The UN was instrumental in setting up the Special Court for Sierra Leone to try human right violations; it trained Sierra Leoneans in human rights monitoring and supported their work. The UN also assisted the government in setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, tasked with healing the wounds of war by bringing together perpetrators and victims of atrocities.

In a 2008 assessment of human rights in Sierra Leone, the US Department of State asserted that "the government generally respected the human rights of its citizens", and that Sierra Leone scored high in areas like protection against arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of human life, disappearances, safeguards for religious freedom and against arbitrary arrest or detention, political detentions, internet freedom, academic freedom, cultural rights and freedom of assembly. The report further observed that the right of citizens to change their government was generally respected in Sierra Leone, and this right was exercised in practice through periodic, free and fair elections based on universal suffrage[3].

[1] See Frontline & Campaign for Good Governance, 2003, on the discriminatory nature of traditional systems.
[2] These abuses and violations are referred in the Gender Laws and Child Rights Act of Sierra Leone.
[3] See US Department of State: 2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2009. The 2010 report reiterated these views.

However, the report criticised Sierra Leone's performance in a number of other human rights areas. They included abuse and use of excessive force by security forces; prolonged detention, excessive bail, and insufficient legal representation; police theft and extortion; harsh conditions in prisons and in jails; official impunity; some restrictions on freedom of speech and press; the use of force to disperse demonstrators; harassment of opposition party supporters by ruling party members; prevalent official corruption; discrimination and violence against women in society; rampant child abuse, including child labour; the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM); and people trafficking.

Similarly, in its maiden report launched in August 2008, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) of Sierra Leone painted a grim picture of human rights in the country: poverty was grinding and economic justice eluded the people of Sierra Leone; there was inadequate prosecution for rape and domestic violence, widespread corruption and discrimination against women. The report further highlighted the mandatory death sentence for treason and murder and criticised the continued existence of the 1965 Public Order Act. Under this archaic libel law, journalists could (and still can) readily be criminalised and imprisoned[4].

Sierra Leone's 2011 report (unpublished) for the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) indicates that despite this gloomy picture, Sierra Leone is moving into a new phase in the area of human rights. There are noticeable developments in key areas such as: the proposed amendments of the Human Rights Chapter of the Sierra Leone Constitution; establishment of a Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights; establishment of a Human Rights Commission to oversee the implementation of recommendations contained in the 2005 Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report[5]; passage of the Gender and Child Rights Acts; law on human trafficking; progress on public education against gender based violence and FGM; and increased donor support to the justice sector reform.

However, because of the growing political and ethno-regional divide in the country, Sierra Leone could reverse the gains it made in human rights. As the UN Secretary General commented, the elections in 2007 "exposed a deepening political schism and highlighted the increasing dominance of ethnicity and regionalism in the politics of Sierra Leone, which, if not addressed, could have a negative impact on peace consolidation efforts in the country".[6] The main opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) boycotted the inauguration ceremony of the new president. The majority of the SLPP's supporters are from the south-eastern regions of Sierra Leone, underlying the geographical and ethnic dimension of the political divide. The media, especially newspapers, have adopted strong partisan positions.

There are over 35 radio stations and 25 newspapers in Sierra Leone. The IMC is playing a lead role as a link between the media, government and the public. However its work is hampered by the failure of some journalists and media outlets to meet professional standards and by the political polarisation of many media outlets. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, though improving in representativeness, is poorly resourced to

[4] Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, 2008.
[5] The Commission's budget is managed by the UNDP and its capacity building project is funded from the UN Peacebuilding Fund
[6] Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, UNSC S/2007/704, 4 December 2007, p. 8.

regulate its 600 - 800 membership. In March 2009, partisan radio broadcasts are believed to have fuelled political violence that led to burning of opposition parties' offices in Freetown. The need for an effective and functional IMC and SLAJ is crucial.

Picture of one of eight awareness-raising sessions on domestic violence conducted by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, one of the NGO grantees under the project, in cooperation with JHR. The sessions included a 30-minute drama skit played by actors, which was turned into a radio drama aired on Radio Tombo. Partly as a result of the JHR grant, the Red Cross subsequently produced a documentary on domestic violence. Photo : © JHR

The UN and bilateral donors have provided technical and financial support to establish an independent Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation. The former JHR Country Director is the current head of the Corporation. Opposition politicians and some major media actors are critical of the SLBC's stance, alleging it fails to report on current affairs in a politically neutral manner.

Target population

The project had a national focus, targeting primary beneficiaries that included: a) journalists from radio and print media houses that were awarded fellowships and trained in investigative journalism through production and publishing human right stories; b) NGO grantees; and c) local communities targeted through fora and workshops to increase public knowledge on the role of the media in human rights protection and promotion.

The primary beneficiaries were used to reach the broader public. The JHR trainers worked with the fellows within the various media outlets, which were expected to benefit from the work of trainers and fellows through publications and peer-to-peer learning. Through the work of fellows and trainers, JHR was able to develop a vital relationship with editors and

media owners across the country. JHR grantees on the other hand organized national media events on human rights that involved participants from the four regions of the country.

At a strategic level, JHR had a relationship with the IMC and the University. Support was provided to the IMC to hold an annual human rights journalism award (the award was originally made by JHR itself, but this was subsequently done in cooperation with the IMC to ensure sustainability and enhance its visibility as a national event. The JHR community facilitator provided pro bono teaching services to students at the Institute of Mass Communication at Fourah Bay College.

Other relevant initiatives

There have been a number of media development programmes in Sierra Leone over the years. The UK's Department for International Development ran a large programme until 2004. Other donors active in this field have included USAID, CIDA (initially through the NGO Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, since 2010 through JHR) and the Government of Germany (through Deutsche Welle). In addition, the European Union and other donors have funded Switzerland-based *Fondation Hirondelle* to establish and manage Cotton Tree News (CTN), a radio station covering Freetown and relayed in provincial centres. Some of these projects had a similar training-based approach to the JHR ones, but most focused on a small number of media outlets, or on establishing separate media organisations (such as CTN). Between 2007 and 2009, the JHR project was the only one focusing on training journalists on human rights reporting. A BBC World Service Trust project, started in 2010, took a similar on-the-job training approach, though it went beyond human rights reporting.

III. Project objectives, strategy, and implementation

(i) Logical framework

The table below summarises the project's logical chain from activities to results contributing to the ultimate development objective. The table is based on the results framework of the original project document.

Activities*	Results/outcomes*	Development objective**
JHR trainers work in Sierra Leone media outlets.	**Result 1** Sierra Leone journalists and civil society leaders have an improved understanding of the role of the media in democratic development.	To build the capacity of the local media in Sierra Leone to facilitate a national dialogue between civil society, government and citizens.
Trainers conduct on-the-job training sessions.		
Trainers mentor journalists in media outlets.	**Result 2** Increase in the number of human rights-related media stories in Sierra Leone.	
Support by trainers to journalists for the production of human rights-related stories.		
Trainers conduct thematic workshops on researching human rights issues, for journalists.		
Trainers conduct workshops for journalism students		
Training on the role of the media in dialogue facilitation, for journalism students.	**Result 3** Journalists acquire a better understanding of the role of the media in dialogue facilitation and use this understanding in their work.	
Fellowships awards to journalists to research and produce human rights-related stories.		
Awards to NGOs for activities related to dialogue facilitation.	**Result 4** The Sierra Leone public has greater access to media that encourage and facilitate dialogue.	
Trainers conduct community fora to raise awareness of the role of the media in dialogue facilitation.		

Notes:* The activities and results/outcomes are described in the results framework table in the project document.
** The development objective is a summary of different formulations used in project documents.

(ii) Project approach

The table above has some limitations:

- It presents a synthetic, necessarily simplified overview of the project;
- It does not account for some differences between projects 108 and 154, mainly related to project management and relationships with outside stakeholders:
    - Project 108 involved the hiring of a Country Director and establishment of an office, thus devoting more project resources to organisational aspects – this benefited the second project;
    - The relationship with the Institute of Mass Communication of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone developed only during the second project.
- The project document did not link activities to specific results. The links made in the table should therefore be understood with the caveat that the same activity may contribute to more than one result.

However, the table illustrates aspects of project approach that the evaluation has confirmed:

- The overall objective of placing the media at the centre of a dialogue process between government, civil society and citizens was overambitious because the project was not designed to address the government and other state institutions. The project had the means and methodologies to address the media and NGOs but was relatively ill-prepared to address government officials and elected Members of the Sierra Leone Parliament.
- The project approach makes clear that JHR was conscious of the structural challenges faced by the media in Sierra Leone, and knew that those went well beyond a need for human rights training. This is illustrated by the baseline data in the project document, which quotes from relevant studies to demonstrate the weakness of the media sector as a whole.
- JHR's awareness of these sector-wide weaknesses influenced the approach to the training, in that this went beyond researching/producing human rights stories and included general research skills and issues of government accountability.
- The four results were in themselves relevant to needs. However none addressed the issue of government responsiveness to public views. In fairness, this is also an issue that is not widely covered by the various studies used as a basis for the project design. For example, a 2005 study by Search for Common Ground, which identified patterns on the transmission of information, showed that information dissemination was personality driven, that the government packaged information for delivery to the public, and that there were no substantive provisions for civil society feedback. But it included little consideration of the reasons why these patterns were present, and of the perceptions and policies of the authorities.[7]

[7] See Search for Common Ground: "Sierra Leone Media Sector Mapping Study", 2005 (www.scfg.org). It is important to note that the study was written before the 2007 legislative elections, which observers widely considered to have been freer and fairer than the previous ones in 2002. The Parliament elected in 2007 was

The project implementation approach was centred on the JHR trainers. The trainers were journalism graduates of Canadian universities who had professional experience in their country of origin or as a result of travel to other countries. Following a selection process in Canada the trainers were given information on the project and on JHR's policies and techniques and encouraged to inform themselves about the situation in Sierra Leone. They were given a one-week induction briefing upon arrival in Sierra Leone and were then assigned to media outlets (and where relevant to other work such as community liaison, etc.).

Speakers at a JHR Community Forum event, 2009. Photo: © JHR

For the most part the trainers reported to the evaluators that they found the information given by JHR in Canada and Sierra Leone to be adequate – though some indicated that they were still surprised at the low level of technical development of the media and at the low level of skills of some journalists. For their part, journalists and editors generally welcomed the trainers and underlined their constructive approach and eagerness to share ideas. However some editors and publishers said they were unsure about the exact role the trainers would take – trainers confirmed this, indicating that some media outlets had treated them like additional staff members without recognising their role as trainers and committing time and staff resources to support their work.

It was also suggested by some editors (and acknowledged by some trainers) that the position of the trainers was not always comfortable: they were sometimes more skilled and better educated than editors, but lacked the seniority that would have allowed them to speak with more authority to media managers and owners.[8] This ultimately led some trainers to switch media outlet, though it did not hamper the implementation of the project as a whole because the key relationships, built and nurtured by the project, were between trainers and individual journalists, not trainers and media outlets.

therefore a more legitimate stakeholder than its predecessor at the time of the study. Project 108 started before the 2007 elections. The current Parliament's mandate runs until 2012.

[8] Although they did not say so, it is clear also that gender played a role in the way invariably male editors viewed trainers, many of whom were women.

(iii) Strategic aspects

The project strategy was two-pronged: on the one hand if sought to enhance the skills of journalists in researching and producing human rights stories (this can be called the "supply side") and on the other hand, work was done with civil society organisations, journalism students and the broader public to raise awareness about the role that media can play in enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights (the "demand side"). This strategy was justified in the 154 Project Document, which stated that newspapers were not regarded as a credible source of information and did not provide information in a way that enable citizens' engagement in political debates.

The strategy was adequate, but incomplete. It lacked engagement with media editors and publishers, and with state institutions (government and Parliament):

- The project design did not ensure that media editors and publishers would support journalists' training on human rights, and would follow it up with a commitment to publish relevant stories or to enhance the visibility of themes and approaches developed as a result of the training.[9]

- The project design also failed to include an explicit institutional dimension, aimed at raising awareness among institutional actors of the role of the media in democratic dialogue and in debates about human rights. This was understandable because adding such a dimension might have to some extent constituted a departure from JHR's traditional area of expertise. The development of a relationship with the IMC was a step in the direction of engagement with state institutions, but the relationship remained distant through most of the project period (it has improved more recently) and it was not followed up with direct links to the government and the legislature.[10]

Partly to counter-balance these comments, it should be noted that JHR did engage editors and publishers by seeking formal expressions of interest from media outlets prior to sending trainers, and by briefing them on the role of trainers and on the expected follow-up of their input by beneficiary media. There were also approaches to government officials, who were included among the almost 600 participants in 14 community fora during project 154. However this level of engagement was not sufficient to ensure the commitment of these stakeholders to the objectives of the project.

[9] Media outlets had to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with JHR prior to receiving a trainer, but this document did not impose specific follow-up obligations.

[10] The CIDA-funded project addresses this issue to some extent, and devotes more resources to work with the IMC.

IV. Evaluation Question answers / findings

The evaluation is based on a set of evaluation questions or EQs, designed to cover the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability; plus the issue of UNDEF value added. The evaluation questions and related sub-questions are presented in Annex 1.

(i) Relevance

There is ample evidence that the project **responded to a need** for improved democratic dialogue. At the time the project was designed, Sierra Leone had already gone some way towards democratisation following the years of civil war and had in particular gone through an initial round of parliamentary elections. JHR, using available research, correctly identified the need for enhanced democratic debate as a precondition for entrenching democratic values and policies in post-war Sierra Leone. It also correctly identified the media as a key player, both as a space to "host" that debate and as a provider of substantive information.

However the flaws in design and strategy highlighted in the previous section hampered the relevance of the project: lack of explicit engagement with editors/publishers and with relevant high-level institutional actors.[11] These weaknesses were already visible in the project document: the "Situation Analysis" section appropriately identified the needs summarised above, as well as the views of civil society about the media, but did not provide an analysis of the causes of the identified weaknesses. The project document lacked an explicit stakeholder analysis that would have identified the project's planned level of engagement with each stakeholder, the message directed at them and the engagement techniques to be used. In other words, the project document was built on the (implicit) assumption that improving journalistic skills in human rights reporting, together with activities such as NGO and community training, would lead to enhanced democratic debate. But there was no explicit description of *how* these results would derive from the planned activities.

Indeed, the "Project Strategy" section was largely reduced to a list of activities that did not explain how the activities would contribute to the overall objective. The strategy also did not say how the different activities would be linked with each other. For example, the description of community forums suggested that journalists would be able to use these forums to meet civil society and government officials. But it did not explicitly say whether the contacts established through the community forums were expected to form the basis for subsequent research by journalists on human rights. A project strategy section with a more explicit stakeholders analysis and a clearer justification of the intermediary results would probably have identified government officials and elected representatives as target audiences needing to be addressed with specific techniques. This was regrettably not the case.

It would have been possible, for example, to hold workshops with government officials (Office of the Prime Minister or senior officials from individual ministries) to address specific community concerns and complaints raised in the media. Such sessions could have helped

[11] In comments on the draft version of this report, JHR agreed that better communications and stronger relationships need to be formed between JHR and editors/owners. However JHR also highlighted that any relationships with government institutions that may be construed as partnerships could jeopardise the organisations' neutrality and credibility among the media. The evaluators agree with this point, and note that engagement with institutions should remain at the level of advocacy and advice.

officials find better ways to respond to citizens' demands and develop more effective accountability channels.

Similar sessions could also have been held with Members of the Sierra Leone Parliament. In Sierra Leone, as in many post-conflict countries, the oversight function of parliament is often insufficiently developed:

- Partly because parliamentarians lack awareness of their rights and responsibilities with regards to demanding accountability from the executive branch;
- Partly because parliamentarians do not have sufficient access to qualified support staff able to conduct the kind of enquiries necessary to supervise government action.

For these reasons, parliamentarians often need the media to provide them with information (the techniques that parliamentary research staff are similar to those used by journalists).

In addition to government officials and parliamentarians, the project design should also have included a more explicit strategy to address editors and publishers, particularly those of media outlets to which trainers were assigned. JHR sent trainers to selected media outlets, which had made a formal expression of interest and had received a briefing about the tasks to be carried out by the trainers and the support that the media outlets were expected to give. In addition, each media organisation was asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with JHR setting out each side's key responsibilities. This MoU covered a range of practical issues, but did not require media outlets to commit themselves to enhance their coverage of human rights issues, or otherwise to facilitate the fulfilment of the project's objective.

The evaluators found that this level of engagement did not achieve sufficient buy-in on the part of the media outlets, which tended to see trainers as extra staff resources (this issue is further developed in the effectiveness section below). The lack of explicit buy-in also led to some weaknesses in terms of sustainability (see the relevant section below).

The project had a consistent, strategic approach to **gender**: women's rights were clearly an issue that JHR intended to highlight. There were consistent attempts to reach approximate gender balance in the pool of trainers and in the pool of mentored journalists, beneficiaries of fellowships and participants in community forums.

The **risk assessment and mitigation** aspect of the project was appropriate. The project document correctly identified key risks (interference with media independence, political instability, threats to individuals and cultural sensitivity); in the even these risks either did not materialise, or could be mitigated. For example, the issue of media politicisation was addressed by ensuring that JHR trainers advocated a balanced approach, particularly in relation to such topics as election coverage. There has been no evidence that the political leanings of individual media outlets impacted negatively on the JHR project as a whole.

(ii) Effectiveness

The project was generally effective. Virtually all the **planned activities** were carried out: although fewer articles were produced than originally planned, this was adequately explained by a focus on quality rather than quantity. The other activities were carried out in accordance with plans. In terms of the attainment of expected results:

- Increasing journalists' and civil society leaders' understanding of the role of the media in democratic development. Interviews conducted by the evaluators showed that these project beneficiaries have a good understanding of this issue. However, partly because the evaluation took place almost a year after the end of the project, it is not possible to attribute that change unambiguously to the project activities.

    - Paradoxically the project, by raising awareness about the role the media can play in democratic debates, may have also enhanced journalists' awareness that the media currently do not fulfil expectations. Several of the journalists interviewed indicated that they were not expecting the media to change sufficiently to meet expectations (some noted that stories they had researched with JHR support were never published by their media outlets, and had to be published elsewhere, for example on websites).

    - Editors, too, demonstrated awareness of the role of the media in democratic development and noted that journalists who had undergone training or mentoring by JHR gained an understanding of this issue. However they also noted that the media face challenges in encouraging debate, partly because of their economic model. With small print runs and low cover prices, newspapers rely for funding on advertisements, largely paid for by corporate and institutional clients, which therefore wield significant power. They also noted that publishers did not necessarily expect newspapers to engage in substantive debates.

    - Radio stations, which receive more institutional funding (from donors and/or the government under statutory arrangements) may be in a better position to foster debate, which is probably one reason the public trusts the radio more than newspapers as a source of news[12].

    - The beneficiaries also clearly understood the link between balanced reporting in the media and democratic, free and fair elections. Indeed, in view of the politicisation of the media, reinforcing this link is an important element of the project, on which progress appears to have been made.

  In sum the project probably met this result, and by doing so highlighted further structural challenges faced by the media in Sierra Leone.

- Increase in the number of human rights-related media stories. This result was doubtless reached by the project. Indeed it is one of its key successes: there are numerous examples of press articles, radio and video reports that were researched and produced with support from the project – in the form of training for journalists, mentoring support, fellowship grants, etc. Many of these stories and reports would not have been produced or published without JHR's support, and highlighted issues previously given very little visibility in the media (see for example the box on the next page).

[12] The Search for Common Ground study confirms this, as do other studies. Another factor influencing this is the relatively low rate of literacy in Sierra Leone: those who can read newspapers being better educated than the population as a whole, may also be more inclined to be critical.

- In addition to individual articles, the project also contributed to creating conditions for more such stories to be published. For example the JHR trainer assigned to one newspaper was able to prompt it to establish a weekly column on women's issues, which reportedly continued to be published after the end of her stay with the paper.

- The establishment of media human rights awards was designed to encourage journalists to produce more human rights-related reports. Though statistical data are not available, the awards did enhance the visibility of human rights to the profession.

- Better understanding of the role of the media, and use of this in journalists' work. This result was most clearly achieved in relation to the journalists who worked directly with JHR trainers (in media outlets or by winning a fellowship). This is demonstrated in the contents of the articles and reports.[13] Some journalists also indicated that the project widened the range of their contacts among civil society organisations, encouraging them to include NGOs among their sources of information.

- Sierra Leone public has better access to media that encourage dialogue. It is difficult to find evidence that this result has been achieved. The community forums have probably raised awareness of the role of the media among participants and may have raised their expectations in relation to the media. The awards to NGOs for human rights-related activities may also have raised awareness of human rights concerns that should be debated in the media. However, these activities did not lead to a measurable improvement in access to media in general.

A human rights-related story produced with JHR support : the issue of women candidates for elections

The 2007 parliamentary elections, though democratic, were marked by a low percentage of women candidates. A JHR-mentored journalist produced stories on this issue in June 2007, and again in October, after the elections that took place in August. The articles noted the low number of female candidates (the major parties presented only 9 to 15% of female candidates) and quoted from politicians, candidates themselves and from relevant observers. In the events, 19 women were elected (15% of the parliamentary seats).

The JHR website noted that, partly as a result of the stories it helped produce, other media also took an interest in the issue of women's representation in state institutions.

    - Access to media is difficult to measure. The global print run of newspapers in Freetown has certainly increased since 2007, but this cannot be linked to the JHR project. Radio audiences have also grown, both as a result of an increase in the number of stations and of growth in the number of transmitters outside Freetown – also factors outside the scope of the project.

    - The human rights contents of the media may have increased, partly as a result of the activities of the project. However it is difficult to say by how much,

[13] A selection of reports is published on JHR's website.

though most stakeholders the evaluators spoke to felt that some progress had been made.

- Together, the increase in news sources (radio station and newspapers) and in human rights-related contents probably led to greater exposure of the public to "dialogue" on rights, but the project was not equipped to record and measure this overall trend (see also section on impact).

It is always difficult to assess (particularly many months after a project's end) the *quality* of activities. In terms of training, however, JHR has developed relevant, good-quality materials that were available to the trainers for use in Sierra Leone. This must have contributed to beneficiaries' perception that the training contributed to enhancing their understanding of key rights-related issues.

In conclusion, the evaluators found that the project's effectiveness was satisfactory in that activities were implemented, in some cases beyond what was planned, and in that results that were achievable in the project's framework were achieved. However a slightly tighter, more rigorous project strategy would likely have ensured that more achievable results were sought and were therefore more fully achieved.

(iii) Efficiency

The project was run efficiently. The proposed budgets were reasonable and in line with planned activities, there have been no particular concerns about the way resources were spent. Indeed, the projects have generally been executed in a responsible way, with a clear concern on the part of JHR to make good use of available funds. One expression of this was the organisation's reluctance to pay "per diems" to participants at training sessions and workshops. JHR did reimburse participants' attendance-related expenses, and provide appropriate hospitality (such as meals during sessions) but avoided direct payments to participants merely for attending. This healthy practice, which contrasted with the practices of many other organisations, contributed to ensuring that participants attended activities because they were interested in them, not because of financial motives. The allocation of funds to the various activities was sensible: budget changes made between the planning and implementation stages were reasonable and appropriately justified.

The evaluators noted that the UNDEF financial report forms were very simple, listing budgeted allocations and spending to date for each key budget heading. Such simple forms facilitate reporting by NGOs because they are easy to complete. However they are relatively uninformative because they do not list the detail of expenses: it is therefore difficult on the basis of these reports to assess whether specific areas of spending were appropriate.

Project management appears to have been a significant challenge: the JHR Country Director at the time of the project (now head of SLBC) admitted to the evaluators that he was not an administration expert. As he was running the country office on his own, he needed the assistance of staff at the Toronto Headquarters of JHR to administer the project, including budget monitoring. It is questionable whether that approach was the most efficient: hiring an administration officer in the JHR country office would possibly have helped achieve efficiency gains by reducing the time spent by Canada-based staff on day-to-day project management.

The Country Director was, on balance, considered to have played a positive role in the project, by developing links with newspapers and electronic media outlets, networking with

relevant stakeholders and generally advocating for a greater focus on human rights in the media. He certainly contributed to building the credibility of JHR as an actor in democratic media capacity building in Sierra Leone. To some extend the fact that he was later hired to head SLBC is an indication of the credibility JHR's work gained among the country's media. However, there were suggestions by trainers that he was not effectively engaged in monitoring and supporting their work – these functions were effectively fulfilled from Toronto. There were also indications that the Director was not present full-time to support trainers, and that the quality of his project management was inadequate. There were indications that Toronto-based staff had to correct some of the steps incorrectly taken by the Country Director.

With better management skills the Country Director could have further contributed to the efficiency of the project by being more directly engaged in strategic direction and day-to-day management and in supporting the activities of trainers. On the other hand, JHR had taken the view that, as the first Country Director in Sierra Leone, he should spend time networking and enhancing the visibility of JHR as a whole. In practice, it was the commitment and attention to detail of the Toronto-based team that contributed most to the efficiency of the project's management (including in terms of reporting to UNDEF) – together with the quality of the trainers' input.

(iv) Impact

The central question about the project's impact is whether the media in Sierra Leone has enhanced its role as a facilitator of democratic debate, in particular in relation to human rights. Though that question is vast and raised many issues of attribution, the following points can safely be made:

- Dozens of journalists have gained exposure to human rights reporting techniques, through the training provided within media outlets, workshops and seminars held by JHR trainers, as well as through mentoring and fellowships. If the exposure gained by students in mass communication and by others who may not be full-time journalists is added, a minimum of 100 members of the profession have gained exposure to human rights reporting. This is significant in a country with perhaps 600 to 800 journalists (this is the rough membership of SLAJ, the largest professional association in this field).

- Editors and publishers have also gained some awareness of the issue of human rights, through the work of the trainers assigned to their own outlets and through wider efforts, such as JHR's work with the IMC to promote human rights reporting awards. Although (as noted above) the projects would have benefitted from more sustained activities directed at editors, the activities have had an impact at their level, at least according to some of the editors met by the evaluators.

- The grants to NGOs have helped them to enhance the profile of their contribution to human rights debates. Though the grants were one-offs (and therefore not designed to have a sustained effect), they appear to have encouraged some NGOs (such as a press photographers' union) to see their own work as contributing to democratic and human rights debates, while other organisations gained visibility for specific, sensitive work (for example, the Sierra Leone Red Cross, which used its grant to work on domestic violence against women, including the police as a target of advocacy).

- The training and community forums have also reinforced the expectations of some participants (journalists and civil society representatives in particular) about the role that media can play in democratic debates. Though raised expectations do not in themselves necessarily lead to short-term practical change, they may contribute to attitude changes conducive to subsequent evolutions within the media.

- In some instances, articles published with JHR support have resulted in improvements to individual situations. One of the examples highlighted by JHR is that of Matthew Kanu, a radio journalist who used a Fellowship to produce a series of radio stories on past wrongdoing by the government looking specifically at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's role in providing compensation for several thousand amputees and war victims. According to JHR, "as a result of his stories, the National Committee for Social Action decided to extend its registration process by three months. The extension was necessary because, as the series revealed, many war amputees, war widows and victims of sexual violence were not registering due to a lack of information on the process."[14]

These elements suggest that the project has made a positive contribution towards change in the Sierra Leone media. The most clearly identifiable contribution has been in relation to the outlook and the professional development of a cohort of journalists themselves. This impact, and that of the other activities outlined above, is likely to contribute to further change over the medium term. However, the project's impact could possibly have been greater if institutional stakeholders had been more deliberately addressed, as well as editors and publishers.

(v) Sustainability

Sustainability is always difficult to ensure in poor, post-conflict countries such as Sierra Leone. However, JHR's continuing operation, following the two UNDEF-funded projects, contributed to establishing a critical mass of journalists aware of human rights reporting and of the challenges of balanced political reporting.

The section on impact identified elements of attitudinal change that are likely to contribute to a continued demand and capacity for reinforcing the role of the Sierra Leone media in relation to democratic change. The awareness of rights gained by journalists is likely to remain, although it will also remain unused if media outlets themselves do not become more open to democratic debate – a pattern that has yet to appear.

The fact that JHR has established itself as a credible actor in media capacity building in Sierra Leone is in itself an element of sustainability. In the same way, the fact that JHR was able to secure funding from CIDA for a third round of the project (following the two successive projects funded by UNDEF) is contributing to the sustainability of the previous projects' results, by helping JHR maintain links with previously trained journalists and media outlets.

However, there are two specific limitations to the sustainability of the project as designed:

- JHR attempted during project 108 to contribute to sustainability by setting up a structure named Human Rights Reporters Network. However this structure proved short-lived, mainly because its members did not have the capacity or will to maintain it

[14] See Final Narrative Report, UDF-SIL-154

(JHR justifiably did not want to be managing the structure itself). The current JHR strategy, consisting in working with SLAJ and other existing media-related association (women, editors) is more likely to be sustainable. (This example does show, however, that JHR was able to build on and incorporate lessons learned from 108 into 154, and again into their current CIDA-funded project.)

- The project's engagement with institutions was too weak to encourage anything but short-term interest on the part of the government. Again, JHR has now modified its strategy and has an on-going relationship with the IMC. However, the IMC, being formally an independent institution, may not be the most relevant entry point to engage the government and the legislature.

In short, the sustainability that was achieved is virtually entirely related to the component of the project that addressed journalists. This is a testimony to the quality of the training provided, which the beneficiaries noted. However, as with the other evaluation criteria, sustainability would have been enhanced by more systematic engagement with the range of key stakeholders.

(vi) UNDEF value added

The project fell squarely within the mandate of UNDEF, and contributed to the implementation of some of the approaches highlighted in the Secretary General's Guidance Note of 2009, specifically the aspects of the Note addressing encouragement to a culture of democracy and a vibrant civil society.

The project addressed generic media capacity-building in relation to human rights, it cannot be argued that UNDEF brought a unique perspective into play in Sierra Leone, because other donors are also implementing media development projects with a strong rights-related approach. However between 2007 and 2009, the JHR project was the only one focusing on training journalists on human rights reporting. Two other aspects have been identified by interviewees, which point to a more UN-connected added value:

- The link between media capacity building and democratic, free and fair elections has been made more explicit in the project document than it might have been if other donors had been addressed.

- Although the project was not part of a programmatic approach by the UN, it seemed adequately to complement other official UN interventions in Sierra Leone, related to peace building and support for democratic development.

This reflects the view of some interviewees, including at JHR, that the UN's politically balanced approach was particularly appropriate to work on media development.

It is also notable that JHR received two successive grants from UNDEF, essentially to conduct the same project: it appears that it is then easier for NGOs to seek and obtain support from other donors after two rounds of funding – i.e. about three to four years.

V. Conclusions

The conclusions presented here represent a synthesis of the answers to Evaluation Questions given in the previous section.

(i) Appropriate response to a clear need

The project identified an important peace-building and democratisation need, and addressed it with expertise and credibility. The main factors that made the project appropriate to the needs were the following:

- The use of qualified journalists as trainers, backed by JHR's methodology and curriculum, ensured consistent and credible input. This in turn enhanced the value of the training to its primary beneficiaries.
- Engagement with civil society at the level of leaders (for training) and communities (for awareness-raising) contributed to a two-pronged strategies of enhancing both the "supply" and "demand" related to rights-based journalism.

(ii) A significant strategic flaw

The project strategy was broadly adequate but weakened by its failure to include a sufficient degree, and appropriate methods, of engagement with the government authorities and the legislature. The failure to propose training or other forms of awareness-raising to government officials and Members of Parliament weakened the impact of the activities that did take place.[15]

(iii) Some design flaws

The project design lacked a complete analysis of the stakeholders, their respective needs and the various messages that should be addressed to them. Such an analysis could have helped fill the gap mentioned in (ii) above. In addition, there was a lack of rigor in the project design, in the sense that the statement of the overall goal, of the various sub-objectives (results/outcomes) and activities (inputs), were not clearly set out. A more detailed UNDEF application form, requesting more details about project strategy, intervention logic and planning, could probably have helped ensure a more rigorous project design.

(iv) Project management was source of risk

The project management at country level was inadequate. It is thanks to the dedication and commitment of the JHR trainers and managers, and the support of managers in Canada, that the project was eventually implemented appropriately. The JHR Country Director lacked experience in rights media and in day-to-day management. These weaknesses came in addition to the logistical and start-up difficulties inherent in setting up the JHR office,.

[15] In comments on the draft version of this report, JHR generally agreed with this point but also noted that, as a journalists' organisation, JHR had to be "seen by the media sector as independent". It also referred to a forum held in December 2010 by JHR, bringing together editors, publishers and Ministry of Finance officials, to train journalists on how to read and interpret government budget documents. This indicates that the organisation, in the context of the project which followed on from the one supported by UNDEF, is taking steps to address the strategic issues raised here.

In the event, these problems were overcome through cooperation among JHR staff and Toronto-based managers. However the quality of the supervision provided by the Country Director did suffer, with a knock-on effect on the scope of some of the activities (delays, and perhaps lower level of institutional engagement).

(v) Weak systems for project management reporting

JHR reported to UNDEF on project implementation. Although reporting on activities was satisfactory, UNDEF noted that financial reporting was not provided in full accordance with UNDEF's demands. According to UNDEF, this may have been due to changes in the project management team.

(vi) Scope for enhancing the project's impact

The activities contributed to the development of a critical mass of well-trained journalists able to research stories on human rights and to cover democratic development in a balanced manner. However there is scope for the achievements of the project to be reinforced by engaging in a more sustained manner with relevant institutions, such as the SLAJ, the IMC and other professional or trade association bringing journalists or editors/publishers together. This includes collaborating with other international NGOs and organisations working in Sierra Leone on media capacity building.

(vii) A legacy of enhanced expectations

As a result of training a body of journalists in rights-related reporting and raising awareness of rights and democratic accountability among NGOs and communities, the project has contributed to raising expectations of balanced, rights-related reporting in the media. Follow-up media development projects should help meet these expectations.

(viii) A continuing context of weak institutional accountability

There remains much to be done to enhance the accountability of Sierra Leone institutions and the role played in this regard by the media. The situation described in the 2005 Search for Common Ground study, which highlighted the lack of transparency of the government, has changed little. The capacity of the media to investigate government actions remains weak – enhancing it is a key challenge that can be met by following up on the UNDEF-funded project.

(ix) Two rounds of UNDEF funding make strategic sense

While the project fell squarely within UNDEF's mandate and usefully complemented UN interventions in Sierra Leone, the second funding of JHR seems to have helped seeking and obtaining funding from other donors. For its footprint to emerge, UNDEF will need to develop a track record in the country based on a portfolio of projects.

VI. Recommendations

These recommendations stem from the conclusions of the evaluation. All but the last are directed at JHR. It is to be noted that some of the recommendations have been implemented already by JHR in their current work in Sierra Leone.

(i) As it continues its work, JHR should better address institutional stakeholders

(Based on conclusions i and ii). The project was relevant and well implemented, but it failed adequately to address stakeholders in the executive and legislative branches of government. The *objective* of engaging with these stakeholders could be *to ensure that the government becomes more transparent and that the legislature better discharges its obligation to keep the executive to account*. Other project elements, addressing the media, NGOs, etc, are appropriate.

(ii) JHR should address flaws in the project design and strategy

(See conclusions ii and iii). The project should, in addition to addressing journalists, NGOs and communities, have a more direct engagement with editors/publishers, and more generally with media management levels. The *objective* of this engagement should be *to ensure buy-in for rights-based and politically balanced reporting, and to ensure that media generally are more responsive to the demands and needs of the public*. In addition, the project should more clearly formulate its *overall objective*, its *intermediate results or outcomes*, and its *activities or inputs*. Each of these levels should be clearly formulated, with the logical chain between the levels made as clear as possible, as well as the linkages between activities.

(iii) JHR should build field-level project management capacity

(See conclusion iv). It is important that the project be reactive to evolving needs and demands in Sierra Leone, and that its credibility be reinforced among media actors at senior level. To achieve this a Country Director is needed. It is also necessary that trainers and others involved in the project have direct access to a management-level representative of JHR on the ground, with the skills and organisational capacity to steer the project and make appropriate strategic decisions. This should include an appropriate level of administrative support.

(iv) JHR should encourage Sierra Leone stakeholders to maintain the momentum gained

(See conclusions i to viii). To the extend possible, JHR should work with appropriate local stakeholders (such as the IMC and SLAJ) to try and entrench key project gains, such as capacity-building for rights-based reporting and increased responsiveness of the media to public concerns. This may include working with these stakeholders to build their capacity to get and make good use of donor funding for follow-up projects. The run-up to the 2012 elections is also a good opportunity to try and build on the achievements of previous project cycles in relation to balanced political coverage.

VII. Overall assessment and closing thoughts

(i) The project made a clear contribution

By addressing a significant proportion[16] of the 600 to 800 journalists in Sierra Leone through a range of activities, the project has (uniquely among media-related projects in the 2007-09 period) raised awareness and capacity for rights-related and politically balanced reporting among journalists. This has made a significant contribution to addressing a clear need.

(ii) The quality of training benefited from JHR's experience

Beneficiaries and trainers alike have noted the quality of the training and support provided by JHR, even when stakeholders such as editors did not have a clear understanding of JHR's objectives. The resources dedicated by JHR to the development of relevant training materials, its support for trainers and its follow-up (for example by publishing articles and videos on its website) clearly enhanced the quality of the project.

(iii) Project design and management caused weaknesses

In a context of quality activities, it is all the more regrettable that the project design failed to address adequately institutional stakeholders, and that project management during the UNDEF-supported period was hampered by dispersion between Freetown (where capacity was insufficient) and Toronto. These weaknesses have in part been addressed since 2009.

[16] Interviews with the current JHR Country Director and information in the Final Narrative Report (UDF-07-154-FNR, section 6) indicate that between 350 and 400 journalists have taken part in training sessions. The exact number may be difficult to assess because some journalists took part in more than one session and because some of those registered as journalists do other jobs, at least some of the time. But the order of magnitude is correct, and constitutes a significant proportion of the 600-800 claimed as members by SLAJ. We were not in a position to check the reliability of the membership claimed by SLAJ, which itself admitted its registration systems may not be fully up-to-date, but again, the order of magnitude appears to be correct.

VIII. Limitations, constraints and caveats

(i) Evaluating a long time after project end

The key limitation of this evaluation is that it started 10 months after the project came to an end. This had an obvious implication on the feedback given by stakeholders whom the evaluators met in Freetown: many had moved on professionally since they last had to do with the project, some of the trained journalists had left the country. The same applied to JHR managers and trainers: the Country Director had a different job and almost all the trainers had left Sierra Leone by the time the evaluators visited.

It was possible to circumvent some of these problems: feedback could still be obtained from stakeholders after many months, and former trainers gave feedback to the evaluators via an email questionnaire.

A related concern was that some stakeholder did not always indicate whether their feedback applied to the UNDEF-funded project, or to the subsequent one funded by CIDA. This is because some of the CIDA-funded activities are a continuation of the UNDEF-funded ones: it cannot be expected of outside stakeholders that they have a clear understanding of which donor funds the activity they are benefiting from.

To some extent, however, this confusion was not particularly problematic: to the extent the beneficiaries provided feedback on the activities of JHR and could tell when these took place, the evaluators could take the feedback into account as appropriate.

(ii) No visit outside Freetown

A significant proportion of the project activities took place in provincial centres. Since they did not undertake visits outside Freetown, the evaluators did not meet people who had been involved in these activities.

This introduced a certain bias because many of the community meetings were held outside the capital. Another element of bias was related to the fact that some private radio stations whose journalists were supported by the project were based outside Freetown.

These limitations were circumvented in part by consulting trainers and other participants who were in Freetown, and by studying written reports about the provincial activities.

Annex 1: Evaluation Questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	• Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? • Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? • Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	• To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? • To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? • Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? • What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	• Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? • Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? • Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	• To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? • Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? • To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? • Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	• To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? • Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	• What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). • Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

1) Media Code of Practice – Independent Media Commission Sierra Leone
2) The Human Rights Commission Act, 2004
3) UN Joint Vision on Sierra Leone – May 2009
4) Sierra Leone Agenda for Change – 2009
5) Sierra Leone Constitution – 1991
6) Human Rights Commission's Report 2008
7) Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report 2005
8) Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone", UNSC S/2007/704, 4 December 2007
9) An analysis of Basic Human Rights Documents applicable in Sierra Leone – 2004 Samba, Miatta.
10) United States Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-2009, Sierra Leone.
11) Africa Peer Review Mechanism – Unpublished Report -2011
12) Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, UNSC S/2007/704, 4 December 2007
13) Search for Common Ground: "Sierra Leone Media Sector Mapping Study", 2005

In addition, the team received the project documents and reports held on the UNDEF database: in particular it used the 108 Final Narrative Report and Evaluation Report, and the 154 Project Document and Final Narrative Report. It also consulted documents related to the project posted on the website of JHR (examples of news items produced) and saw training and other materials at the Country Office in Freetown.

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

No	Name	Designation
1	Stephen Douglas	Country Director, JHR and former Community Facilitator
2	Elvis Kpanabum Hallowe	Director General, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service
3	Isaac Massaquoi	Lecturer, Institute of Mass Communication, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone
4	Alhaji Umaru Fofana	President, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and BBC Correspondent for Freetown
5	Bernadette Cole	Chairman, Independent Media Commission
6	Olu Awonor Gordon	Proprietor, Peep Newspaper
7	Pius Foray	Proprietor, Democrat Newspaper
8	Joseph Mboka	Editor, Democrat Newspaper
9	Shiek Bahoh	Editor, Global Times Newspaper
10	James Kamara	Journalist, Exclusive Newspaper
11	Bampia Kamara	Journalist, Awareness Times Newspaper
12	Charlie Hughes	Academic, Freelance Journalist and Former JHR Evaluator
13	Wotay Kamara	JHR Fellow, ABC Television
14	Sarah Bomkapre Kamara	JHR Fellow, Cotton Tree News
15	Stephen Momoh	JHR Grantee – Chairman, Photographers Union
16	Shiek Fofana	Kalleone Radio
17	Sulakshana Gupta	Project Coordinator, BBC World Service Trust and former JHR Trainer
18	Linda Mitchell	UNIPSIL, Media manager – SLBC Support Team
19	Graeme Loten	Country Representative, Foundation Hirondelle, Cotton Tree News
20	Mohamed Sidi Sheriff	Communication Specialist, World Bank
21 – 25	Mike Brown, Jennifer Hollett, Marie-Jo Proulx, Nicole Robicheau, Chris Stephenson	Former JHR trainers (responded to email questionnaire)
26	Rachel Pulfer	International Program Director, JHR

Annex 4: List of acronyms

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
CIDA	Canada International Development Agency
CTN	Cotton Tree News
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EQ	Evaluation question
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IMC	Independent Media Commission
JHR	Journalists for Human Rights
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund