

MAPPING DONOR DECISION MAKING ON MEDIA DEVELOPMENT



An Overview of Current Monitoring and Evaluation Practice

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AMB	African Media Barometer
CAMECO	Catholic Media Council
EC	European Commission
FES	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
ICFJ	International Center for Journalists
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
OSF	Open Society Foundations
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report maps the evolution of evaluation and donor decision making in media development over the last two decades. Through interviews with media development donors, implementers and academics, we examine major donor perspectives on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the main challenges within media development M&E, how donors define its goals and methods, and how they incorporate M&E into their funding decisions, if at all. The goal of this report is to aggregate the expertise of those experts with practical experience in all aspects of media development M&E. We find a vast majority of those interviewed believe there has been an increased emphasis on M&E, many report challenges when designing and implementing M&E, and donors do not always tie their funding decisions to M&E.

KEY FINDINGS

- Nearly 80 percent of interviewees describe an increased emphasis on M&E over the past 20 years.
- Donors push for M&E because they believe:
 - There is a need for greater political accountability within their own governments.
 - M&E helps them learn from past failures and strengthen future programs.
 - M&E is a powerful method for showing impact and legitimizing work.
- Both donors and media development practitioners report difficulties in implementing M&E, including challenges quantifying the impact of media development projects, isolating the effect of an individual project, and effectively evaluating for impact in a short funding cycle.
- Few donor organizations have a separate office or division in charge of the media development portfolio. This diffusion makes media development M&E particularly difficult to design and implement.
- Interviewees broached the issue of media development versus media for development. Many feel it is important to articulate the distinction because it can affect how M&E is conducted.
 - Media development tends to focus on the evolution of the media sector.
 - Media for development tends to measure tangible outcomes.
- Though donors disagree on the goals and methods of M&E, nearly all dedicate project funding or internal resources to project evaluation in ways they did not two decades ago.
- Donors emphasized the potential for technology and social media to radically change how M&E is done.
- Although donors say they can describe and put into practice the tools and methods of media development M&E, the large-scale impact of M&E on donor decision making remains uncertain.

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INTRODUCTION

On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia ignited a revolution that led to citizen uprisings and overthrown dictators throughout the Arab world. In these unprecedented events, media coverage, ranging from Al Jazeera broadcasts to posts on Facebook, helped propel social and political change. Governments also used the media at their disposal — broadcasts on state television and nationwide blockage of Internet access — in their attempts to maintain control. But through alternative media outlets, people bore witness to unprecedented public demonstrations, coordinated their own collective actions and continue to do so.

Around the world, a free and functioning media at its best can provide citizens with vital information, hold governments accountable and facilitate democratic transitions. Scholars have documented the link between a robust media and democracy, human rights and economic growth (see Media Map Project Literature Review). For some public and private donors, this link justifies funding media development projects in the developing world. "A functioning media goes hand-in-hand with a more open society and a more economically successful society," explains Tim Carrington, a media development specialist who led media training programs at the World Bank for nearly a decade. "It helps people make informed choices politically and economically," he says. The United States alone spent an estimated \$140.7 million dollars on media development in 2010, according to the Center for International Media Assistance, and international government agencies and private foundations, including the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Open Society Foundations and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have added tens of millions more to the total.

As funding for media development increases so have questions about the effectiveness of the projects being funded. How do we know that money and time spent supporting a robust and independent media has an impact? Is it the best use of money and time relative to the alternatives? Donors have therefore begun to press for greater and more accurate evidence that their dollars have been spent effectively and efficiently. This report begins to map this evolving emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, or M&E, of media development projects worldwide.

Through interviews with media development donors, experts and implementers, we examine major donor perspectives on M&E, the main challenges within media development M&E, how donors define their goals and methods and how they incorporate M&E into their funding decisions, if at all. The purpose of the report is to aggregate the knowledge and practical experience of interviewed experts in media development M&E, in order to advance the field beyond past mistakes.

A vast majority of our respondents — nearly 80 percent — feel that they have witnessed an increased emphasis on M&E over the past 20 years. Donors report three principal reasons for this increase: the need for greater political accountability within their own governments, the perspective that M&E is an opportunity to learn from past failures and strengthen future programs, and the emergence of M&E as a respected and trusted method to show impact and legitimize work. Though donors and practitioners recognize an evolving emphasis on M&E, both report many challenges in implementing M&E. For example, they find it difficult to quantify the impact of media development projects, to isolate the effect of an individual project, and to effectively evaluate impact within a short one year funding cycle. Moreover, the diffusion of media development into many different program areas — governance, human rights, and post-conflict societies, among others — makes media development M&E particularly difficult to design and implement from an organizational perspective. Donors remain hopeful, however, that new technology and social media tools can radically change how M&E is done and make

media development M&E more effective and efficient. Despite the challenges and critiques, it is clear that Western donors are pushing for more rigorous M&E. Yet, the large-scale impact of M&E on donor decision making remains uncertain.

METHODOLOGY

In order to determine how, and if, M&E is influencing donor decision making in media development, we conducted an extensive literature review on the subject and interviewed more than 20 media development professionals from around the world. Our interviews were conducted on the phone from February 2011 to April 2011. While our primary focus was on the perspectives of private and public donors, we also interviewed organizations that carry out media development work and prominent media development experts. We chose these varied viewpoints in order to gain a complete picture of the changing media development M&E landscape.

Organizations interviewed include private donors, such as the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Foundations; government donors, such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID); and organizations that implement media development worldwide, including the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and the Thomson Reuters Foundation. A complete list of organizations interviewed is included at the end of this report. This diverse group provided perspective not only on the increased emphasis on M&E but

SELECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Have you noticed a **new emphasis on M&E**? What impact has it had?
2. How does your organization determine the **impact of a specific intervention**? What is considered to be a success? A failure? What are the complicating factors in determining impact?
3. What **specific tools do you use to carry out M&E**? Reporting templates? Surveys? Focus groups? Do you have any examples you can share with us?
4. How do you decide **what to fund in media development**? What role does M&E play?
5. What are the **forward-looking trends** in the M&E of media development?

"In Tunisia, for example, we would never look at changes in government as an objective of our work, as OSF was accused sometimes by the press. But, we did work there. The country has a vibrant civil society, so we supported different groups to provide information other than state or government influenced available through the existing media or to provide adequate space for debate on freedom of expression. We believe support of media will contribute to understanding, so people can look at their societies in a different way, with different perspectives on the issues."

*Gordana Jankovic
Media Program Director
Open Society Foundations*

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AN OVERVIEW OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Over the past few decades, interest in assessing the impact of the billions of dollars that flow into development projects worldwide has burgeoned. It comes as no surprise that the media development field has also experienced a similar push towards M&E.

Though monitoring and evaluation are two distinct processes, they go hand-in-hand. In a report for the Center for International Media Assistance, Andy Mosher defines monitoring as “the tracking of programs and activities as they proceed,” while evaluation is the harnessing of that data “to assess the program’s impact.” Similarly, Sida defines monitoring as a record of activities, whereas evaluation can probe deeper into “why a particular problem has arisen, or why a particular outcome has occurred or failed to occur.” Moreover, as stated in the 2011 USAID Evaluation Policy, “Evaluation provides the information and analysis that prevents mistakes from being repeated, and that increases the chance that future investments will yield even more benefits than past investments.” Many in the development industry believe that by tracking project progress and rigorously analyzing successes and failures, development organizations can make future development projects more effective and efficient (Mosher, 2005).

“Money is tight and budgetary constraints are real. That makes it inevitable that a fairly strict M&E process must be part of any media development project.”

Tim Carrington
Formerly at the World Bank Institute

A vast majority of those interviewed tell of an increased emphasis on M&E over the past 20 years. “There is definitely a greater emphasis on M&E,” Jo Elsom of AusAID says. She adds, “Now, we’re learning lessons and incorporating those lessons into future designs.” Media development donors point out that

CLARIFYING CONCEPTS

Media Development is the process of improving the media’s ability to communicate with the public, and the process of improving the public’s ability to communicate, using media.

Monitoring is assessing implementation of activities and progress made toward meeting outcomes for the purposes of evaluating effectiveness and efficiency.

Evaluation is assessing the overall impact of a program against an explicit set of goals and objectives. Involves the systematic collection and analysis of data to help discover if, how, and why a particular intervention or set of interventions worked or did not.

Media Development definition from the Media Map Project Literature Review; Monitoring and Evaluation definition adapted from “Capturing Change in Women’s Realities: A Critical Overview of Current Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks.”

this focus on M&E has affected organizational structure. Heidi Arbuckle, a program officer in Indonesia with the Freedom of Expression in the Advancing Public Service Media initiative, reports that the Ford Foundation decided to strengthen M&E and create a new Impact Assessment Division after an internal critique three years ago. AusAID for the first time has a specific initiative to help integrate communication into AusAID programs, and created a communication specialist position

dedicated to researching and developing a strategic “communication for development” focus. Moreover, those responsible for implementing media development projects tell of growing pressure from donors to have sound M&E. Patrick Butler, vice president for programs at the ICFJ says, “there has been a huge increase in the importance of M&E. Funders are demanding it more and we’ve made it a key part of what we do.” Jo Weir of the Thomson Reuters Foundation, a charity that offers journalism training and legal assistance around the world, reiterates this idea — with a dose of skepticism: “Yes, I have seen a new emphasis on M&E over the last few years. Whether all of it is meaningful or not is another question, but clearly donors are looking for M&E. Doing more M&E is often at the expense of having to do less of the actual media development.” Although attitudes toward media development M&E vary, the general consensus is that the focus on media development M&E has increased. In light of this change, the obvious first question is why donors are pushing for M&E.

Explanations are as diverse as the organizations and projects in media development. Yet, donor attitudes toward M&E fit into three main types: M&E is a result of increasing calls for greater accountability; M&E is an opportunity to learn from past failures and to strengthen future programs; and M&E is a method for showing impact and legitimizing work.

A number of government donors and private foundations, primarily those who rely heavily on government contracts, suggest **the need for greater accountability in government has played a key role** in the growing emphasis on M&E. In the United States, there’s a renewed focus on development accountability. Meg Gaydosik, a USAID media development advisor says, “A new major change in policy is that any U.S. government-funded program evaluation is supposed to be made public.” This policy is representative of a larger shift within USAID to improve efficiency and increase transparency. Rajiv Shah, the current head of USAID, announced in January 2011 that “in the spirit of the extreme transparency I promised when I joined USAID, we will release the results of all of our evaluations within three months of their completion, whether they tell a story of success or failure” (Babb, 2011).

It is too early to determine the precise changes resulting from this new direction, but Gaydosik is already taking steps to ensure future media program evaluations conform to the policy. USAID has also taken steps to designate M&E officers in both field-missions and Washington, D.C., to support evaluation processes. The increased transparency efforts are the result of a “broad agreement that there needs to be some way to measure how taxpayer dollars are effectively used,” Gaydosik says.

“Over the last decade, there’s been much greater pressure to be accountable and transparent about how the Australian government is spending taxpayer money when it comes to aid.”

Jo Elsom

*Director, Communication for Development
AusAID*

At AusAID, staff reports a similar atmosphere. AusAID’s Elsom says that “over the last decade, there has been much greater pressure to be accountable and transparent about how the government is spending taxpayer money when it comes to aid.” Development agencies also describe having to show the value of taxpayer money. As Manoah Esipisu of the Commonwealth Secretariat says, “we’re using poor people’s money — money used for development — and we can’t afford to throw money away.” Pia Hallonsten, a Senior Programme Manager at Sida, describes this responsibility as “dual accountability:” when governments in developing countries who partner on projects have a clear accountability to their people, while the cooperation agencies are accountable to the taxpayers in the developed world providing the aid. According to interviews with donors in the United States, Australia, and Germany, demands for dual accountability via M&E in the last decade have increased when domestic political control has changed hands, further suggesting that the emphasis on M&E is, at least in part, a product of political conditions in donor countries.

Many donors also believe the focus on **M&E in media development is intended to improve development work generally. They share the attitude that M&E is an opportunity to learn from past failures and strengthen future programs**, as well as an opportunity to measure the broad impact of funded projects. Using both quantitative and qualitative evaluations to improve strategy, funders insist evaluations do not exist to punish but instead to improve programs. Sida’s Hallonsten echoes several of the interviewees when she explains that much of the value of M&E is its contribution to the success of a project. “When we do evaluations, the most important value is to feed into our partners’ work, so the information can be used for reprogramming, rather than to satisfy formal requirements,” she says. Rebekah Usatin of the National Endowment for Democracy echoes this sentiment, stating, “Program officers spend a lot of time helping grantees hone their projects, including the evaluation component.” Gordana Jankovic of OSF firmly states, “We do not support monitoring for the monitor-

DEVELOPMENT AND GEOPOLITICS

Media development money often tracks with the geopolitical interests of donor countries. JICA is most forthright on this point, saying that official development aid is closely aligned with Japanese foreign policy. "Japan has a comparative advantage in Iran, Iraq or Afghanistan because those countries tend to dislike Western intervention," one of the Senior Advisors for JICA offers as one example. But other donors too acknowledged that media development, like most development aid, is more likely to go to countries and regions familiar to donors.

CASE STUDY: BHUTAN BROADCASTING SERVICE

Donor: JICA
Partner: NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)
Schedule: 1st phase: Jun. 2005-Jun. 2007
2nd phase: Sep. 2007-Sep. 2010
Cost: 1st phase: \$1,384,000/¥117,648,000

The goal of this project was to improve the organizational function of the Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation (BBSC) - the only national broadcasting corporation in Bhutan - in order to establish a healthy media environment in Bhutan and to provide the Bhutanese access to accurate and timely information.

To achieve this goal, JICA set three objectives: to establish a management and monitoring system for the nationwide TV network; to develop the capacity for producing informative TV programs; and to strengthen program scheduling and relay systems outside of the main stations. They sent Japanese broadcasting and production specialists; introduced technological facilities, such as fiber-optic cable systems and broadcasting vans; and took Bhutanese interns to Japan.

This case shows that media development relates to geopolitical interests, especially if donors rely heavily on government contracts. In terms of geopolitics, Bhutan is located in an important region between China and India. Tsuneo Sugishita, former special advisor at JICA, acknowledges, "China obviously begins to use its influence in the Central Asia by donation. Japan has to compete with China especially in such region." Though JICA does not articulate its geopolitical considerations, the Bhutanese project is one media development project that has national foreign policy implications. According to the post-evaluations of the first phase, one challenge to the BBSC is the small size and unstable nature of its revenue stream. The Japanese specialists in the project analyzed if commercial income could be expected in Bhutan, but discovered that the market size could not support the financial needs of the BBSC. The media business models found in developed countries are not necessarily transferable to small, developing countries.

ing purpose only. We only support monitoring if it is linked to follow-up actions to counter negative developments in our freedom of expression and media development areas." These perspectives suggest donors view M&E as an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and implement better programs in the future.

Donors emphasize the role M&E plays in strengthening current and future projects, but most also acknowledge funded programs are expected to attain certain goals and prove their worth. **Thus, donors do view M&E as a method for showing impact and legitimizing work.** As Jo Elsom of AusAID emphasizes, "M&E has largely been driven by the push to demon-

strate that development is effective." Vanessa Mazal, a program officer at the Gates Foundation, says, "The Gates Foundation is very focused on M&E. By the nature of our institution, we must demonstrate intervention has a broader impact on our objectives." Though few interviewees explicitly tie the current push toward measuring success to the influence of the Gates Foundation, many imply this is the case. USAID's Gaydosik says the U.S. Government is "taking a lot of cues from the private sector" in evaluating success via concrete, measurable indicators of progress to meet foreign assistance goals and objectives. "USAID has long employed a results-oriented development approach," she says, "but refined this in recent years to a more

THE CAUX GUIDING PRINCIPLES

An open and inclusive media system is vital to conflict management.


The media play a pivotal role as a conduit for dialogue among dissenting parties and as a purveyor of critical information about available services or potential threats that might make the difference between life and death for those living in conflict environments. In order to improve policymaking and usefully guide future programs, we must continually strive to improve media programs designed to achieve these objectives. Implementers, donors, and methodologists alike need to provide better support for evaluation in order to expand knowledge about what the media can and cannot achieve in conflict environments.

In recognition of this fact, an international group of media experts, media development professionals, international broadcasters, methodologists, NGOs, and government officials met in Caux, Switzerland from December 13 to 17, 2010 to develop a shared set of approaches and best practices for evaluating the role that media and information programs can and do play in conflict and post-conflict countries. This effort was organized by the Broadcasting Board of Governors; Annenberg School, University of Pennsylvania; Foundation Hirondelle; Internews Network; and The U.S. Institute of Peace.

The Caux Guiding Principles for conducting evaluation research in conflict-affected areas are the result of this five-day meeting. They are designed to be evolving rather than confining or exhaustive. The Caux participants hope that other stakeholders will support these principles and participate in an ongoing, open, and inclusive dialogue about how to improve and expand them in order to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of media's role in conflict prevention and peace building. (See <http://www.internews.org/pubs/mediainconflict/CauxPrinciplesFlyer201109.pdf>) and (<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/PW77.pdf>).

In recognition of the challenges of improving both monitoring and evaluation of media development programs, the Caux effort was meant to help stimulate a community of practice organized by and for media development professionals worldwide. The process has coincided with efforts at USAID to reinvigorate evaluation, as put forward in the January 2011 new USAID Evaluation Policy as well as calls for more robust research and evaluation to improve aid effectiveness as discussed at recent OECD DAC meetings in Paris (see [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC/GOVNET/A\(2011\)1&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC/GOVNET/A(2011)1&docLanguage=En)) and at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, 2011.

The Caux Principles were developed as part of an effort to clarify and improve the understanding of the know-how and practice of professional monitoring and evaluation of international development programs, with a specific focus on media, communications, and information systems in environments where there is conflict or post-conflict reconstruction. Many of the principles, however, apply equally to media development programs taking place in non-conflict environments. The process of developing the principles brought stakeholders together in a way that had never done before, and to really work through and problematize how and why research and learning about media development programs is so challenging, and likewise to come up with ways forward to better equip NGOs, donors, and academics to understand and articulate how and why media matters as an international development priority. – Susan Abbott, *Internews*



"The Gates Foundation is very focused on M&E. By the nature of our institution, we must demonstrate intervention has a broader impact on our objectives."

*Vanessa Mazal
Program Officer
The Gates Foundation*

business-like approach of problem identification, solution and results." The Gates Foundation work with M&E in health-related development assistance has proven to be a useful model. The Gates Foundation, among others, believes strongly in the importance of quantifying outcomes.

Others interviewees, however, caution that this sort of measurement only works for certain kinds of projects, such as a project where the goal is to give vaccines or hand out bed nets without coming back later to see if they are being used. Funders working on areas such as strengthening governance

and democracy say gathering quantitative data does not actually reveal very much. "Many newly arrived to philanthropy from successful business backgrounds confuse quantitative measures with impact. In business, activity does have to boil down to the bottom line; in social activity, change is measured in lives changed in ways not always measurable: disease prevented, children engaged with their education, or conflicts avoided," says Drummond Pike, founder and former CEO of the California-based Tides Foundation. Other foundation leaders make the same point in informal conversations held over the last few months. It is worth noting that in a new book, *The Philanthropy of George Soros*, (Sudetic, 2011), Soros describes his philosophy and that of his deputy Arie Neier, "Neither of us believes in quantitative measures for evaluating projects." Despite the debate over how much emphasis to place on quantifiable metrics, most donors feel strongly that measuring impact to demonstrate project success is crucial to the media development field.

For these reasons of accountability, improved project performance, and to show impact, donors have come to expect M&E. Now, together with their grantees, they are facing the practical challenges of measuring media development work and thinking about the tools and methods to overcome those challenges.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT M&E?

Despite general agreement that M&E is a pivotal part of successful media development, many interviewees say it is hard to implement. These difficulties are not unique to the media development field. Rather they resemble the challenges of development M&E more generally.

It is often difficult to quantify the impact of development projects. This obstacle is particularly prevalent in projects focusing on intangible development goals, like media development, where goals are to create a more informed citizenry or to hold the government accountable. As Thomas Huyghebaert from the European Commission points out, “media development is not about building roads. We can’t measure the impact of our projects by measuring the number of roads built. We need to understand the difficulty of determining appropriate indicators.” USAID’s Gaydosik says that despite interest in empirical evaluation to quantitatively measure project outcomes against a control group, this approach has not yet been employed within media development programs. While some express doubts media development can be quantifiably measured, others believe that proper indicators can be created. Tim Carrington, an independent consultant who formerly led media training programs at the World Bank Institute, believes the “measures of impact are going to have to go beyond current measures. They need to be more sophisticated and much more nuanced. They need to go beyond the survey at the end of the training seminar and go beyond the number of stories written about corruption.” While an examination of tools and indicators within media development M&E will be found in a subsequent section, creating reliable, accurate, and quantifiable measures of less-tangible goals — a more open society, a free press or a more informed citizenry — is certainly a difficult challenge.

It is also often difficult to isolate the effects of an individual project, referred to as the “attribution problem.” Development projects are not conducted in isolation, so it is impossible to hold all other factors — the political climate, the occurrence of natural disasters, changing local norms — constant. These factors exist outside the confines of the program and beyond control of any one person or organization. It is therefore extremely difficult to prove a specific program was the direct

“The inputs and the outputs of media development M&E often don’t make sense... They are pretending causality in situations that have multi-causal relationships.”

*Anne Nelson, Adjunct Associate Professor
School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University*

cause or even influenced a measured outcome, according to those interviewed. Sheila Coronel, director of the Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism at Columbia University, explains this common challenge, “If it’s broadly journalism that promotes HIV/AIDS education, how do you isolate the effect of your program? What is the causality? Which part of the impact can be attributed to your program? There could have been a movie about HIV/AIDS outside your program that raised awareness. How can you claim credit?” Attribution is very difficult because media development is not conducted in a vacuum, and outside influences cannot be filtered out when measuring impact.

The short duration of many projects and evaluations makes it difficult for donors and implementers to measure long-term impact. Interviewees note that the standard reporting requirement of six-month or one-year evaluations is too short because impact often occurs over a longer time period, extending beyond the timeline of a typical program. Pia Hallonsten of Sida states, “There isn’t any patience for long-term change.” She adds, “We require six-month updates, but of course, there isn’t much change in six months.” The need to provide evidence of short-term impact can lead donors and implementers to fall back on measuring immediate results, instead of longer-term change.

Although the challenges of media development M&E often reflect those of the broader development field, media development has its own unique set of challenges. Few organizations have a separate office or division in charge of the media development portfolio. In the United States Government, media development falls under USAID's Democracy and Governance Program, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and the State Department's regional bureaus (Mottaz, 2010). This diffusion occurs because many governance or human rights projects have small components relating to media. For example, the goal of media development in the Office of Transition Initiatives is to help post-conflict countries achieve a smooth and peaceful transition to stable governance by training journalists to cover elections fairly. The media development in this program pursues an intermediate goal, establishing a fair and transparent media that contributes to the long-term governance goal. As Tsuneo Sugishita, a former special advisor at JICA, says, "There is no stand-alone media development project that Japan has conducted. Media development is one component in the assistance packages that aim at improving the entire governance of the recipient." At the World Bank Institute, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Commission, and other multilateral organizations, media development work is also distributed among multiple offices.

This diffusion makes M&E of media development especially difficult to design and implement. Thomas Huyghebaert describes his experience at the EC, "The fact of the matter is that the European Commission has basically not had anybody really in charge of media development. We have an instrument for democratization and human rights, but no specific media development program. Unfortunately, our machinery has thus far not been geared to media development and, as such, not geared to specific media development M&E." Huyghebaert is in the process of creating a position for a media development expert at the EC, but until that position is created and filled, media development M&E will continue to be conducted by a division that has little knowledge of it. Lacking training in media development and an understanding of its unique obstacles, determining proper indicators for measuring impact is difficult. At the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, country offices often undertake media development initiatives, so M&E occurs as part of a countrywide assessment. Rolf Paasch of FES states, "We don't have a coherent, single media program that can be monitored or evaluated because the media activities are always part of a country office." The disjointed approach to media development ultimately affects how M&E is designed, developed, and implemented.

Further complicating the issue of M&E of media development is the tension between media development and me-

"Unfortunately, our machinery has thus far not been geared to media development and, as such, not geared to specific media development M&E."

*Thomas Huyghebaert
European Commission*

dia for development. Though the line between these two concepts is often blurry, media development is often understood to be the development of a free and functioning news media, while media for development is seen as the use of media to promote other development goals, such as better health or education. Many interviewees note that donor interest in media for development is overtaking media development. Some donors, such as AusAID and the Gates Foundation, have embraced and propelled this change; others, including the Thomson Reuters Foundation and FES, bemoan this shift. Jo Weir of Thomson Reuters, for example, emphatically states, "I think there is a huge difference between media development and media for development, and those two terms are often confused. It's a huge problem that people cannot differentiate between media development and media for development and it sometimes blurs the lines between journalism and advocacy." Paasch of FES is also alarmed by the perceived growing emphasis on media for development. He says, "I personally find it very problematic to use journalists to drive an agenda. There is value in journalism in and of itself. If I use the media to drive my agenda, the government can do the same. It's actually a bad precedent." On the other hand, many organizations see media for development as a positive evolution. AusAID's Elsom reports that media for development is an emerging field within her organization that is now being "scaled up." The Gates Foundation did not previously see itself as a media development funder, but has funded media for development programs. Vanessa Mazal at the Gates Foundation says, "Media and communication efforts have the goal of having a trickle down affect to impact other issues" because improved communications about health, agriculture and other issues improve advocacy efforts. Though the Gates Foundation is looking to invest more in advancing the media sector, media development projects comprise only a small part of investments, primarily playing a supportive role in other portfolios because the core of the Gates Foundation continues to be global health concerns.

Of course, there are shades of grey in this debate. Some interviewees feel there has always been a mix of media development and media for development within funding priorities. Tim Carrington reports that the World Bank has been imple-

menting media for development projects for the past few decades. "There would certainly be things where the World Bank would say, "Here is a development goal. We want the media to play a constructive part in getting the accurate information out." Other media development professionals believe the very division between media development and media for development has been exaggerated. James Deane of the BBC World Trust says, "I find it more useful to see it is a continuum rather than a tired debate around media development and media for development." Though Carrington and Deane have a more flexible view of the debate, both agree there is, at the very least, an increase in attention to media for development projects. Carrington says, "There is an increased interest in funding media for development programs," and Deane points out, "Nearly all donor funding is moving away from supporting the institution of media in its own right."

"I think there is a huge difference between media development and media for development, and those two terms are often confused. It's a huge problem that people cannot differentiate between media development and media for development."

*Jo Weir
Programme Director
Thomson-Reuters Foundation*

Several funders insist on the importance of this debate to understanding how donors view M&E. Vanessa Mazal suggests that although organizations funding or implementing media for development programs may not describe themselves as doing media development work, they contribute to the advancement of media in developing societies. She gives the example of "organizations that have done development in communications for emergency relief or disaster relief, organizations that have put in place a radio network or distributed mobile platforms to be able to reach the public during a global disaster." Although M&E may focus on measuring other development goals, it can be useful in understanding the impact of media development. The Gates Foundation does not characterize its "[investment] in radio stations and radio programmers" as media development because they had the objective of "better resources to speak about HIV." Though the objective of their intervention did not include media advancement, the intervention expanded radio stations' reach and ability to discuss social issues.

It is important to note, however, the two approaches — media development versus media for development — have different goals that affect how M&E is performed.

Mazal admits the Gates Foundation has not "measured media advancement specifically, but definitely measured communication development." The foundation's past perception of media development as a "more tangential" goal has contributed to their failure to measure the impact of journalism training efforts more systematically. In contrast, Gordana Jankovic described media development M&E as evolving and improving as better evaluation tools become available. For OSF, there is not a one-size fit all approach to M&E. Instead, she says, evaluators "put everything in the perspective of the project's implementation time and social and other conditions at the moment of engagement." These two organizations, the Gates Foundation and Open Society, take evaluation very seriously, but their approaches to measuring changes in the media sector differ tremendously. Gates has focused their evaluation efforts on impact on other development goals, while OSF looks at "impact on the media organizations [and] on the creation of the skill of individuals in the given media organization," says Gordana Jankovic. Furthering the discussion, Sofie Jannusch, coordinator of the "mediaME" Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative at the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO) says media indices are "the most widespread methodology used to evaluate whether there were any changes or improvements" after a media development program. For "media for very specific objectives, most of those projects [are] really linked to communication campaigns," so measuring other societal changes, like condom use after an AIDS awareness campaign, is completely reasonable. This distinction suggests media for development has a greater emphasis on tangible outcomes, while media development looks at the evolution of the sector over the short-term or long-term.

"Media for development is characterized as top-down selling of media to individuals. That's a caricature. Many media for development projects I've been involved in have tended to focus on voice as much as message, building platforms to speak out as much as selling a particular product."

*James Deane
BBC World Trust*

5

HOW DO DONORS DEFINE THE GOALS AND METHODS OF M&E?

Donors disagree about how ambitious M&E should be and what conclusions can be drawn about the impact of media development work. Some caution impact is difficult — if not impossible — to measure and such attempts are an expensive and time-consuming use of resources.

Helmut Osang of Deutsche Welle — Akademie explains, “The gap between media projects and the impact on society? This gap is huge. We in the media business are not in the position to answer these questions.” FES’s Rolf Paasch warns, “The business of evaluating is so complicated that you run the danger of spending more money on M&E and less money on what you are actually doing.” Nevertheless, nearly all donors expect quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the projects they fund. And a minority does urge grant recipients to try to measure the impact of media development projects on governance, press freedom, welfare, and other broad measures. Moreover, donors tend to support methods for M&E that best align with what they want to evaluate and what they believe evaluation can accomplish. This diversity of perspectives on the goals and methods of M&E suggests again the changing media development landscape has made it an unsettled field of practice.

In our interviews, no donor entirely dismissed measurement and evaluation. All or nearly all media development projects produce quantitative measures of output, such as the number of training hours and participants or the results of project stakeholder surveys. This kind of M&E is not new; it has always been a part of media development work and development work in general. The BBC World Trust’s James Deane says this kind of measurement is the most straightforward, “We find it very easy to work out the number of people that interventions reach and the degree with which they value engagement.” He gives the example of a political talk show in Bangladesh designed to increase accountability by promoting public debate of key political issues. The show reached 21 million people, and in a survey 62 percent of people responded that politicians were more accountable as a result. “That kind of outcome measurement is exactly what we should be gauging,” Deane says, but he also recognizes the survey’s limits, adding, “The question is whether that indicator is significantly robust. It’s a perception indicator. It doesn’t actually measure politicians’ behavior.”

Tim Carrington uses an example from the World Bank in the early 2000s to caution against overreliance on simple measures of output. A program in East Africa to improve the quality of investigative journalism was to be evaluated by the number of stories in the press about corruption. “In fact, there were many more stories on corruption at the end of the study period than the beginning,” Carrington says. But many of the stories traded accusations of corruption among politicians and were not based on independent investigations. He calls it an “example of misplaced and misguided measures of impact,” suggesting instead that each story be analyzed for original reporting, a significantly more time-consuming and high-skill endeavor. Similarly, Espisu describes the evolution of M&E in the Commonwealth Secretariat. The organization had previously been using post-training surveys to evaluate the impact of the media development intervention. However, Espisu recognizes the weakness of this method. “I think that you are only likely to have a 100% success rate if you rely on ‘happy sheets’ — the sheets that you give to journalists after training and where you don’t expect anyone to say you did a bad job,” he says. The Commonwealth Secretariat now performs more rigorous and less output-based M&E.

The International Center for Journalists, meanwhile, has trained its staff to support this kind of rigorous evaluation. The M&E training began in the mid-2000s, supported by a grant from the McCormick Foundation. “M&E is the first thing we think of,” on a new project, says ICFJ’s Patrick Butler. For a project on investigative journalism in Arab media, for example, they will do a baseline evaluation of how many investigative reporting units there are, how many stories are being written, what those stories are about, and how many use multiple sources. “Then we measure progress,” Butler says. “We do a very rigorous review at the end of the project, X number of stories produced. Then we look at the quality of those stories.” Perhaps reflecting an organizational focus on accurate and meaningful M&E, ICFJ,

"What we don't do — and what used to be done and that has changed over time — are three-day and four-day workshops, followed by no follow-up. You are trying to grow something and see that it's coming to fruition. You can't just do a one-off training and expect journalism to grow."

Manoah Esipisu
Commonwealth Secretariat

who Anne Nelson describes as being "on the forefront of M&E," is the only media development implementer interviewed to have a full-time staff member dedicated to M&E.

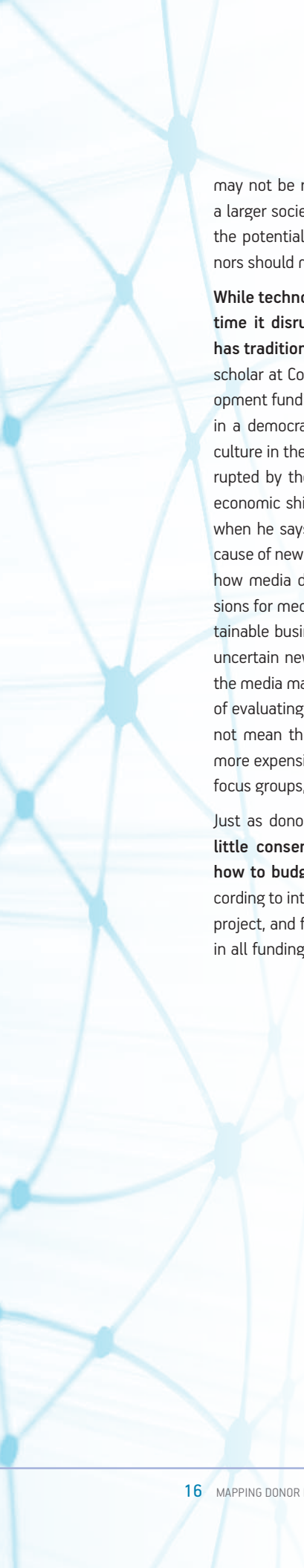
As organizations continue to try and find the right balance between ambition and practical constraints, **when it comes to media development M&E, large-scope, broad-impact evaluations are commonly done independent of individual projects.** The Japanese development agency, for example, does country evaluations to measure the "comprehensive effects of all interventions JICA provided," says Kayo Torii, JICA's director of public policy. Similarly, for Sida, at least 10 to 15 years are needed to measure impact, compared to outcomes measured over the course of a three to five year project. The focus on long-term impact is essential; says Pia Hallonsten, "It's important for us as a donor to relate our programs to Sida's main objective, to help create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives." Likewise, FES uses the African Media Barometer (AMB) to evaluate the success of their projects in Africa. The AMB, as Paasch describes it, convenes a panel of local experts to examine 45 media indicators in a given country. The indicators include such measures as, if "the right to freedom of expression is practiced and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear" and "a wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, internet) is accessible and affordable to citizens." Based on these indicators, the country receives a score. In this way, FES measures the impact of their interventions over time through the country's AMB number. Jannusch of CAMECO says the strength of FES' AMB is in its use as a starting point. All media indices are complex and "have their strengths and weaknesses," Jannusch says. She adds, "The most important point is that [they produce] ongoing discussions," begging the question, "Where do we go from here?" Several other donors, including OSF and

the Gates Foundation, have also funded research to create media development indicators that inform their funding decisions. These donors, according to interviews, also look at the IREX and Freedom House media indices, but understanding the limits of these measures, always use them in conjunction with other tools during evaluation.

Donors also say technology is quickly altering the M&E landscape. "It's tremendously changed the kind of work we do," says Joyce Barnathan, president of ICFJ. In numerous interviews, donors and implementers brought up the potential of technology and social media to significantly change how M&E is conducted. "What's really interesting," says Heidi Arbuckle, talking about Ford Foundation media development projects, "is they're looking at social media and the role of crowd sourcing responses, feedback I find to be more interesting than a standard survey." At USAID, Meg Gaydosik says engagement measurements available with digital media might be considered "audience research in its purest form: blogging, watching, friending, sharing." She warns, however, of the inherent limitation, that digital media users are a self-selected group and

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

1. Digital media can increase donors' ability to measure impact with more (and more precise) data collection.
2. Social media and crowd-sourcing can speed the evaluation cycle and extend the reach of feedback surveys.
3. Projects geared toward information provision are not necessarily using traditional media channels.
4. Despite popular acclaim, real Internet access remains low in many parts of Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean.
5. Digital media facilitates citizen journalism, bypassing professional journalists altogether.
6. Digital media and social media don't rely on the institutions that have long been the focus of media development.
7. The high-profile impact of social media and mobile technology in the Arab world can attract increased funding to media.



may not be representative of how media is consumed within a larger society. While there is widespread enthusiasm around the potential for improved M&E using new technologies, donors should maintain a healthy skepticism.

While technology offers new avenues for M&E, at the same time it disrupts the model on which media development has traditionally been modeled. Anne Nelson, a development scholar at Columbia University explains: “A lot of media development funding has been based on the concept of a free press in a democracy that has been rooted in Western newspaper culture in the 19th and 20th century. This model has been disrupted by the double tsunami of new media technology and economic shifts.” Tim Carrington makes much the same point when he says, “The crisis in the American news industry [because of new technologies] is definitely raising questions about how media development is done.” There are many repercussions for media development M&E. More weight is put on sustainable business models, citizen journalism is a powerful but uncertain new resource, and non-Western media are entering the media market. Second, as with the old survey-based model of evaluating journalism training, easy access to numbers does not mean those numbers are significant, and if they replace more expensive, but more robust M&E methods like in-person focus groups, donors and implementers will lose out.

Just as donors disagree on the goals of M&E, **there is still little consensus among donors and implementers about how to budget for M&E** in media development projects. According to interviews, funding and design varies from project to project, and from situation to situation. The ICFJ includes M&E in all funding requests, even when the donor does not require

it. The BBC World Trust also relies on project grants to cover M&E costs, which comprise about 12 percent of the overall project cost. The Trust’s James Deane says. “My own view is that it tends to make it — and us — more expensive. But the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It makes us more rigorous, robust as an organization.” Similarly, the M&E budget for AusAID’s media development work in the Pacific is “quite a significant portion,” of the overall project, upwards of 10 percent, according to Gnari Michael, the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme program manager.

Speaking from a donor’s perspective, Heidi Arbuckle at the Ford Foundation suggests, “if 20 percent of the [project budget] is dedicated to evaluation at the end of the program, that to me is always a good sign. The organization is thinking about their impact.” For Ford, it is acceptable for the grantee to decide who conducts M&E, but there should be a good balance of self-evaluation and outside evaluators. The Gates Foundation primarily uses grantee-selected third-party evaluators, which the Foundation will fund, says Vanessa Mazal. On the other hand, the European Commission has its own evaluation unit, with its own separate budget and staff responsible for “results-oriented monitoring,” says EC’s Thomas Huyghebart. Most donors use a mix of independent evaluators and grantee self-evaluation. For example, the Open Society Foundations hires content evaluators and auditors and sends staff to do on-site assessments. But, says Gordana Jankovic, “we also encourage and require grantees to provide their own M&E.” She adds, “We sometimes add funding for focus groups to evaluate the impact of media — or hire an outside expertise for that.”

DOES M&E INFLUENCE DONOR DECISION MAKING?

Though donors report they can describe and put into practice the tools and methods of media development M&E, **the large-scale impact of M&E on donor decision making remains uncertain.** We began this project believing that because of the increasing emphasis on M&E, donors would articulate a link between M&E and donor decision making.

We were surprised to find that many donors could not explicitly make that link. Some even caution that an increased emphasis on M&E has the potential to negatively affect donor decision making. Ultimately, we found little evidence that M&E was changing the landscape of funding decisions, other than the now ubiquitous requirement to provide some sort of M&E component to project proposals.


In the best-case scenario, effective M&E helps donors distinguish between successful and unsuccessful projects, and to identify the factors that have led to success or failure. This process of institutional learning ideally allows donors to leverage their funds to accomplish the most effective media development possible. Many donors we interviewed believe that M&E has the potential to do just this. However, the current reality of the impact of M&E on funding decisions is often different. Donors acknowledge, for example, that a reliance on M&E can affect decision making in other, unplanned ways, such as the tendency to fund projects with concrete, observable results. Vanessa Mazal at the Gates Foundation acknowledges that “there probably has been a preference for measurable outcomes, shaping projects so that it is easier to measure the impact.” James Deane of BBC World Trust agrees M&E influences donor decisions, “The fact that the Trust has invested substantially in [M&E] has helped it do more projects,” he says, but he cautions that the trend of preferring projects of measurable outcomes is problematic because it can dry up funding for projects that support media for democracy but are more difficult to measure.

A reliance on data and effective M&E may also lead to geographic biases. Esipisu of the Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledges that it may be more difficult to get the go-ahead

for projects in countries lacking wide Internet connectivity. In the Gambia, for example, few media outlets have an online presence, which makes monitoring the quality and frequency of their stories more difficult. Ultimately, he believes that this may lead to increased funding of media outlets in countries with a stronger Internet culture. Another potential problematic result from the growing emphasis on M&E is less visible in our interviews. In informal conversations, several individuals raised the concern that local organizations and individuals in developing countries are at a disadvantage in receiving funding because they are not trained to conduct M&E. Therefore, the use of M&E in donor decision making has the potential to privilege large, Western implementers. Helmut Osang of Deutsch Welle — Akademie has worked with academic institutions in Rwanda and Vietnam. “Sometimes you would have to train them beforehand, send someone from the U.S., U.K., Germany to train them to be able to make the [evaluation] study on their own,” he says. The absence of local organizations among those interviewed for this report suggests that Western implementers are already favored. Though these potential biases do not eliminate the benefits of M&E, they should not be ignored as media development M&E becomes more prominent and better defined.

“A complex set of issues is taken into account when we decide whom to fund in media development.”

Gordana Jankovic
Open Society Foundations



Beyond some concerns that M&E has negatively affected donor decision making, few donor organizations could draw a clear line between M&E results and funding decisions. We asked each donor we interviewed if M&E has influenced how they choose to fund projects, and few could make a clear connection between M&E and funding. Arbuckle of the Ford Foundation, for example, links organizational capacity to funding decisions, asserting, "Part of our evaluation of a particular organization is their internal structure and capacity to deliver the goals," but not between M&E and funding. At NED, Usatin reports M&E is used less to make funding decisions on specific projects and

more to show the impact NED's funding is having on a specific country or issue area. Others list M&E as one small component of an overall decision making strategy. "A complex set of issues is taken into account when we decide whom to fund in media development," OSF's Jankovic says. Though donors value M&E and reported to us that they now require it of all funded projects, it is also apparent that they look at many different aspects when deciding whom to fund. M&E is just one of many complex factors that influence donor decision making, and perhaps not even the largest.

CONCLUSION

Media development M&E has evolved, and donor perspectives will continue to shift, adapt, and reform as knowledge in the field grows. This report has captured a snapshot of this evolution.

Donors are currently pushing for M&E because of pressure from their governments for greater transparency; a belief that proper M&E can produce future project success through the growth of a “business-like” perspective in development that uses quantitative and qualitative tools to provide evidence of impact. Despite the increased push for M&E, both donors and media development practitioners report many challenges in implementing M&E, from the difficulty of isolating impact to the challenge of choosing proper indicators. Media development professionals are still learning M&E best practices. The challenges of M&E are often exacerbated by the nature of media development work, which is often distributed across programmatic divisions. Without a separate department or portfolio, media development M&E often falls to untrained or

inexperienced practitioners. Furthermore, many in the media development field see precious resources being diverted to media for development projects. The tension between media development and media for development slows progress toward a standard approach to M&E because the two approaches begin with different goals and thus must be measured differently.

Ultimately, although donors disagree on the goals and methods of M&E, nearly all dedicate project funding or internal resources to project evaluation in ways they did not two decades ago. Nevertheless, the large-scale impact of M&E on donor decision making remains uncertain; currently, M&E is just one of many factors that affects donor funding decisions.

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The Media Map Project draws together what we know and precisely defines what we do not know about the relationships between the media sector and economic development and governance. The research also examines donors' roles in supporting the media sector over time and provides an evidence base for their future decision-making about media support. Through research, public events, and the data made available on the project website for public use and extended research, the project aims to engage the development sector in greater understanding and exploration of the role of media and information in development. See www.MediaMapResource.org for more information.



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