

NEWS
NETWORK

working for
social change and
empowering people

Annual Report 2021





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social change and
empowering people*

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A development training programme for journalists aimed at promoting tolerant and inclusive society. The programme was held at Rangpur divisional headquarters from 25-26 Sept, 2021 with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021 News Network implemented three projects successfully with the support of Internews and UNDP. The projects were aimed to build up capacity of media people and human rights defenders (HRDs) on digital security and hygiene as well as promoting diversity for peace across the country.

Internews, an international media development organization, supported two different projects titled – “Programme for Promoting Digital and Physical Safety of Journalists and Illuminating New Solutions” and “Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES)”. Objectives of the projects were to improve the professional ability of journalists and human rights defenders (HRDs) on digital security and hygiene. Started in 2020, the project “Programme for Promoting Digital and Physical Safety of Journalists” was completed in February 2021 while the INSPIRES project that began in June 2021 ended in December 2021. Activities of the projects include Training of Trainers (ToT) with a view to developing a pool of trainers to conduct field level trainings on the issues in different districts and divisional headquarters. The planned activities of 2021 were implemented in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Dhaka, Mymensingh and Jashore.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded News Network to implement a five month project titled “Capacity Development of Media People for Promoting Tolerant and Inclusive Society”. The project was completed successfully in November 2021. It has provided better understanding to media people, including journalists and young social media activities, on importance of social diversity for peace that immensely helped them in improving their reporting skills. The project was implemented in the country’s two northern districts -- Dinajpur and Rangpur. About 80 journalists and young social media activists participated in the training.

The budget of the year 2021 was BDT. 5,304.023 (USD. 62,400) and the expenditure stood at BDT. 4,901,055 (USD. 57,658).



Shahiduzzaman
Editor and Chief Executive Officer
News Network

News Network envisions a steady and prosperous nation where the citizens are aware of their rights, enjoy freedom of expression and live with dignity and gender equality and where the media is free.

Partners of the Year



Internews
Local voices. Global change.



A snapshot of a capacity building training for media people on digital and physical safety held at Sylhet divisional headquarters from 12-13 January 2021. The programme was supported by Internews.

Projects of the Year 2021

Projects	Support	Status
Programme for Promoting Digital and Physical Safety of Journalists	Internews	Completed
Illuminating New Solutions and Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES)	Internews	Completed
Capacity Development of Media People for Promoting Tolerant and Inclusive Society	UNDP	Completed



A scene of media training programme on digital safety and security organised at Jashore district town from 13 -14 November, 2021

Progress of Projects

Information about the projects supported by Internews was given below. The projects were developed on the fact that professional and citizen journalists in Bangladesh are experiencing intense pressure and physical threats meant to stifle independent voices. Compounded by this increasingly hostile operational environment, media in Bangladesh is influenced greatly by corporate ownership and political allegiances, resulting in self-censorship at individual and editorial levels. The projects were aimed to foster media independence in Bangladesh by strengthening the capacity of investigative journalism focusing on building skills both in physical and digital safety and security, reducing self-censorship, and addressing lack of media freedom



A group photo of a ToT (training of trainers) participants on digital and physical safety. The training was organised at Rajshahi divisional headquarters from 22-24 March, 2021 with financial support from Internews.

1. Programme for Promoting Digital and Physical Safety of Journalists

The project was launched in April 2020 and ended successfully in March 2021. In 2020 the project was implemented in district and divisional headquarters of Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong and Barisal. Equally, the programme was implemented in Sylhet and Rajshahi in 2021. Key activities of the project included conducting training of trainers (ToT) and holding field level trainings on the issues relating to physical safety and digital security and hygiene.

In 2021, a field level training programme was held in Sylhet on 12-13 January for 25 journalists, who were working for local and national print and electronic media. Besides, a 3-day ToT programme for 12 mid-career journalists was held in Rajshahi from 22 to 24 March.

Under this project, a total 93 of journalists were trained up in digital and physical security procedures in field-level training programmes while 27 mid-career journalists were graduated in ToT programme.



Raqibul Hasan, District Correspondent, Somoy Television, Rajshahi

“The 3-day training on digital and physical security in Rajshahi helped us greatly to develop our confidence and skills to use digital tools at our works. I am really grateful for this opportunity and thanks the organising authorities. During the 3-day training we learnt a lot about the technique of safe communication and cyber security practices in workplace and network security solutions ranging from firewalls to WiFi encryptions. We learnt how to evaluate potential risks and ways to reduce risk, phishing attacks, social engineering, and safe use of social media, internet and email. Learnt how to protect emails and use internet safely, how to protect computer from malware and hackers and how to collect information avoiding physical threats. I have recently applied the techniques of physical safety, which I learnt from the training, while covering the assignments of unrest and clashes between police and demonstrators centering Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Bangladesh”.

“Digital technologies are now widely used in almost all workplaces and it is more relevant in case of media industry. The training gives us the opportunity to learn how we can use the digital devices more effective and safely. We learnt the essential ins and outs of digital security, online threats and Do’s and don’ts and security clauses on social media. Earlier I did not know anything about Malware, Antivirus, encryption and email frauds like phishing, hacking and spamming. Now I know the techniques how to manage and deal with these digital challenges. Thanks to the organisers for introducing us with such an essential technology that we need to solve our professional challenges every day. We have been immensely benefited from the 3-day workshop and hope more follow up programmes in coming days to learn more and hone the new media skills and cope with the rising IT security threats”.



Masuma Akhter, Staff Reporter, Banglar Jonopad, Rajshahi



A snapshot of journalists training session held in Sylhet. About 25 Journalists participated in the three-day training (12-13 January, 2021) programme on digital and physical safety issues supported by Internews.



Aditi Das, Senior
Sub-Editor, Daily
Jainta Barta,
Sylhet

“This is the time of digital journalism as most of the people now-a-days prefer to read reports on online portals or facebook pages rather than print media. From the two-day training programme we learned so many things such as how to encrypt a folder or any report, how to send a secure mail, how to make a strong, secure password, which apps are safe, how to remove meta data. Being an online journalist, the training is very helpful for me. I salute to both Internews and News Network for arranging such a training program”.

“As journalists, we’re facing various challenges in our daily life like threats, physical assault, kidnaping, offline and online harassment etc. In this context, the training on digital and physical safety of journalists in Sylhet, organized by Internews and News Network, was very useful. We learned a lot of new and relevant skills and knowledge that will help how to save us from intimidations, bullying or threats from third parties. Specially, the chapter encryption is very important for journalists. We gained new gears and knowledge that will help us in professional career,”



Shuaibul Islam, Staff
Correspondent,
Bangladesh
Sangbad Sangstha
(BSS), Sylhet



A photograph of a ToT programme on digital security and hygiene held in Dhaka from 27-29 October, 2021 supported by Internews.

2. Illuminating New Solutions and Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES)

NewsNetwork has successfully completed a six and half month long (16 June 2021- 31December 2021) project with the support of internews. The project was aimed to increase the digital knowledge of journalists and human rights defenders which will help them work safely in an increasingly restricted digital environment.



ToT participants exercising group works for presentation. About 12 media people and human rights defenders received the training.

The major activities of the project include organising ToT, field level trainings and mentoring output of trained beneficiaries. The following activities were performed as per the project plan;

- A three-day (27-29 October, 2021) training of trainers (ToT) programme on digital security and hygiene was held in Dhaka. Twelve (12) journalists and human rights defenders took part in the programme. Among them six better performers were selected as trainers to conduct the field level trainings.



Snapshot of a female journalist training programme on “digital security and hygiene” held at Dhaka from 11 to 12 December, 2021. About 20 female journalists and human rights defenders based in Dhaka participated in the training, supported by Internews.



Group photo of female participants including journalists and human rights defenders who took part in a training programme.

- Three 2-day field level trainings for journalists and human rights defenders on digital security and hygiene, were held in Mymensingh, Jashore and Dhaka. ToT graduates conducted the training sessions. Mymensingh training was organised on 6-7 November, 2021; Jashore on 13 -14 November, 2021 and Dhaka programme was held on 11-12 December, 2021. Dhaka training programme was organised exclusively for women journalists, human rights defenders and academicians. A total of 44 person including 23 females participants took part in the trainings. The training was a little bit technical and for many of the participants it was their first experience of having such a technical training. Most of the participants highly appreciated the programme and express their satisfaction, and found the training useful. They have also requested the organizers to arrange a refresher training in near future.



A view of a two-day training session on digital security and hygiene. The programme was organised at Mymensingh divisional headquarters from 6-7 November, 2021. About 20 Journalists and human rights defenders participated in the training.

- The project also awarded six ToT graduates a 3-month mentorship to guide the trained field level journalists. The mentorship worked better by providing all sort of supports to deal with changes as they occur (e.g., software updates, new resources), and share guidance on how to deal with the problems.

News Network believes that the project will have value add to promote strengthening independent media and improve professional ability of the beneficiaries to conduct investigative reporting more effectively.

Feedback of ToT and field level participants;



ToT graduate
Tusar Shikder,
Communication
Officer, ADAB

“It was a great pleasure for me to attend the ToT programme. I have learnt many things from the training. The resource person was very skilled and proficient about the course topics and taught us in very effective manner. Definitely the training has increased my knowledge and sharpen my skills on digital security. I have gathered a vast knowledge on the importance of digital safety and how to protect information from the hacker or unauthorized access. I shall share it with my office colleagues”.

“The learning opportunity this time turned out to be more useful, exciting, interesting and more meaningful than what could be usually expected. It was a great opportunity that enriched and enabled me effectively. In fact, the choice of instructor this time proved amazing, effective and worthwhile. He proved his competence, proficiency, worth and acumen with his dedication, hard work, endurance and wonderful delivery of his assigned tasks. He appeared to be well-informed and practical in his field. He commands a respectable attitude towards and articulation of his work. He is an endearing person”.



ToT graduate Tawfique
Ali, National Consultant,
The Hunger Project



Neamul Kabir Sajal, Staff
Reporter, Kalerkantho,
Mymensingh

“I was really lucky to get an opportunity for participating in this training on digital security issues. It has enriched my knowledge, understanding and capacity for safe browsing, communication, protect the information and documents as well as managing the passwords. Yet we want to learn more on the issues. We will be happy if you organize a follow up programme in near future.”

“I was not much aware of the importance of digital security and hygiene. It's a new experience for me. The training improved my skills and understanding. I have learned a lot about digital security and feel confident to use internet safely and other activities like; digitally communication, keep virus free the computer and phone, and protect information. Sincere thanks and gratitude to the training organizers.”



Suborna Poli Drong,
Executive Director, Santi
Mitra Somaj Kolyan
Songstha, Mymensingh

“I was not much aware that the training would be so useful at present digital context. It has enriched my knowledge and skill to protect information, documents and my communication tools either in workplace or home. But the two days training is not enough, we need more follow-up trainings on it. I am also requesting to undertake similar type of training for young people. Thanks to the News Network and Internews for giving me the opportunity to participate in such kind of important training.”



Smriti Mandol,
Reporter, Ekushey
Television, Dhaka



Ihita Jalil, Senior Sub-
Editor/Staff Reporter,
Bangladesh Sangbad
Sangstha (BSS), Dhaka

“I was less aware about importance of digital security and was always depended on others help. This training has improved my self-confidence to work independently, particularly managing the passwords, secured browsing, encryption and communicating with others. But I need more training on digital security issues for further development. Also seek training on mobile journalism. Many thanks to News Network and Internews for organising training exclusively for the female

“Earlier, I have participated in a short training on digital security but due to language problem I could not follow the course properly. This time the training was far better and understandable, particularly contents of the training, session plan, practical exercise and the technique of trainers’ presentation was good enough for me. I will share my learning to my colleagues and friends.”



Aparajita Sangita,
Human Rights Activist
and Film Maker, Dhaka



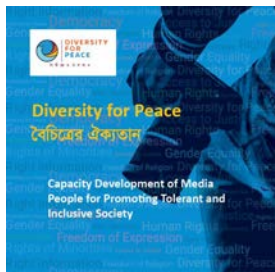
Sabina Yesmin Bina,
Program Officer, Rural
Reconstruction Foundation
– RRF, Jashore

“I am very much lucky for attending such an important training that dealt with topic like digital security and hygiene. It has improved my skill and knowledge to work securely following the digitally safety issues and also learned how to protect computers, mobile phone, information and images. But yet there is more to learn on it. Therefore, I humbly request you to organise refresher training for us. Thanks to News Network and Internews for organising such an effective programme in present context.”



A group photo of Rangpur based journalists participated in a two-day (25-26 Sept, 2021) training workshop aimed at promoting tolerance, inclusive society, freedom of religion and diversity for peace

3. Capacity Development of Media People for Promoting Tolerant and Inclusive Society



News Network with the support of UNDP successfully implemented a five-month (15 June -15 November, 2021) project in the country's two northern districts -- Dinajpur and Rangpur. It was aimed to improve the understanding and professional ability of journalists and young social media activists and to promote tolerance, inclusive society, freedom of religion

and diversity for peace. The programme was also well linked to the country's achievement in attaining the targets for United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16.



A scene of a training session for young social media activists held in Dinajpur district town on September 23, 2021. News Network with the support of UNDP organised the programme on freedom of religion and diversity for peace

The activities were implemented in Dinajpur and Rangpur. The actions included, among others, organising training-workshops for journalists and young social media activists on social diversity and peace.

The Dinajpur training-workshop for journalists was held on 21-22 Sept, 2021 and the programme for young social media activists on 23 Sept, 2021. Similarly, the programme for journalists in Rangpur was held from 25-26 Sept, 2021 while training for social media activists was held on 27 Sept, 2021.



A group photo of young women social media activists participated in a Dinajpur training programme.

The project also awarded seven trained journalists for publishing in-depth reports on social diversity and religious freedom. A total of 80 journalists and social media activists were trained up under the project.



Financial
Statement



NEWS NETWORK**Receipts and Payments Account****For the period from January 2021 to December 2021**

PARTICULARS	Details	AMOUNT
RECEIPTS:		
OPENING BALANCE (01.01.2021)		
Cash in hand	957.10	
Cash at Bank	4871280.98	
		4872238.08
Fund received from :		
Internews	3,005,514.70	
UNDP	480,000.00	
		3,485,514.70
Temporary loan for UNDP project		249,000.00
Bank Interest		5,281.94
Subscription from The Executive Members		2,100.00
TOTAL		8,614,134.72
PAYMENTS:		
Program cost		3,206,318.00
Personnel support cost		1,469,715.97
Operation support cost		225,020.89
Total expenditure		4,901,054.86
CLOSING BALANCE (31.12.2021)		
Cash In hand	171.36	
Cash at Bank	3,712,908.50	
		3713079.86
TOTAL		8,614,134.72



CERTIFICATE GIVEN BY THE AUDITORS

We have audited the accounts of **NEWS NETWORK**, Registration no. FDR-922, dated 20.03.1995 for the Year ended 31 December 2021 and examined all relevant books and vouchers and certifies that according to audited accounts.

1. The brought forward foreign donation at the beginning of year 1st January 2021 was Tk. 4,872,238.
2. The foreign donation amounting to Tk. 3,485,515 was received by the organization during the period.
3. The balance of unutilized foreign donations by the organization at 31st December 2021 Tk. 3,713,080.
4. Foreign donation amounting to Tk. 4,901,055 has been utilized for the following purposes (shown project wise).

NAME OF THE PROJECT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme for Supporting Human Rights Defenders Working for Women's and Girls' Rights in Bangladesh. 2. Strengthening the Capacity of Journalists to Promote Freedom of Religion and Peace 3. Programme for Promoting Digital and Physical Safety of Journalists 4. Illuminating New Solutions and Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES) 5. Capacity Development of Media for Promoting Tolerant and Inclusive Society.
FUNDING AGENCY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. European Union 2. High Commission of Canada 3. Internews, USA 4. Internews, Thailand 5. UNDP



Name of the project (s)	Budget for this year	Amount spent this year	Difference
Programme for Supporting Human Rights Defenders Working for Women's and Girl's Rights in Bangladesh.	185,000.00	183,476.50	1,523.50
Strengthening the Capacity of Journalists to Promote Freedom of Religion and Peace	88,870.00	88,870	0.00
Programme for Promoting Digital and Physical Safety of Journalists	1,040,000.00	1,039,809.65	190.35
Illuminating New Solutions and Programmatic Innovations for Resilient Spaces (INSPIRES)	3,179,903.00	2,854,886.71	325,016.29
Capacity Development of Media for Promoting Tolerant and Inclusive Society.	800,000.00	723,755.00	76,245.00
News Network Own Fund	10,250.00	10,257.00	-7.00
Total Taka	5,304,023.00	4,901,054.86	402,968.14

Total Expenditure in BDT 4,901,054.86(Equivalent to USD 57,658/ EURO49,011)

5. The organization has maintained the accounts of the Foreign Donations in accordance with the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulations Act, 2016.
6. The information furnished above is correct and checked by us.
- 7.

Dhaka

Date: 05 April, 2022

Pinaki Das
Pinaki Das, FCA

Senior Partner

Enrollment Number: 151

Pinaki & Company

Chartered Accountants

DVC: 2204050151AS708123

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF NEWS NETWORK

President

Shahriar Hossain, Ph. D

Vice-President

Kaiser Ali Talukder, Ph. D

Secretary General

Shahiduzzaman

Finance Secretary

Jalal Ahmed

Members

Rasada Akther

Sanchita Sharma

Taslima Tamanna

OUR AGENDA

- To promote freedom of expression, freedom of media, human rights and gender equality;
- To improve professional ability of journalists;
- To encourage young women to take up journalism as profession;
- To promote investigative journalism and ensure right to information;
- To promote safety and security of journalists;
- To promote activities relating to disaster management, climate change and environment;
- To sensitise media on crucial social issues including Right to Information Act, democracy, good governance, transparency and promoting access to justice;
- To support human rights defenders to protect and promote democracy, good governance, transparency and accountability;
- To motivate children and youths to make themselves as good citizens;
- To promote secularism, tolerance and peace in the society, and also the rights of ethnic and indigenous people of the country;
- To organise dialogues, seminars, workshops and discussion meeting on issues of national importance.

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