The media and communication sector plays a complex role in post-conflict and fragile states. In states experiencing conflict, violent political upheaval or complete collapse, the media can provide important, reliable, and timely humanitarian and political information in the midst of chaos, helping people to navigate their tumultuous surroundings. Moving toward the longer term, media and communication processes can enable citizens to engage in dialogue, serve as platforms for debate and oversight, anchor governance reforms, and facilitate peacebuilding and poverty reduction. Yet, despite its importance, the media and communication sector is frequently an afterthought in post-conflict reconstruction. This paper calls for a new model in post-conflict and fragile states, one that prioritizes communication’s role in governance and peacebuilding.
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About CommGAP

The Agora was the heart of the ancient Greek city—it’s main political, civic, religious and commercial center. Today, the Agora is the space where free and equal citizens discuss, debate, and share information about public affairs in order to influence the policies that affect the quality of their lives. The democratic public sphere that the ancient Agora represents is an essential element of good governance and accountability.

The Communication for Governance & Accountability Program (CommGAP) seeks to promote good and accountable governance through the use of innovative communication approaches and techniques that strengthen the constitutive elements of the public sphere: engaged citizenries, vibrant civil societies, plural and independent media systems, and open government institutions. Communication links these elements, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped about key issues of public concern. CommGAP posits that sound analysis and understanding of the structural and process aspects of communication and their interrelationships make critical contributions to governance reform. CommGAP is funded through a multi-donor trust fund. The founding donor of this trust fund is the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).
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**Foreword**

In recent years, the development field has fully embraced the challenge of working in post-conflict and fragile states. Much progress has been made in understanding the dynamics of conflict and peace building, and in applying lessons learned to ongoing interventions. Yet one area of post-conflict reconstruction and development remains relatively under-examined: media and communication.

Ironically, nearly every post-conflict intervention involves some aspect of communication, from messaging on distinct topics to encouraging national dialogue to rebuilding destroyed media infrastructure and institutions. Nonetheless, both in research and in the field, communication remains an afterthought, frequently treated as part of public relations strategy rather than an integral and technical component of the post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction process. Because of this, there is very little understanding of the role that communication processes play in the numerous strands of post-conflict reconstruction, including peacebuilding, governance, and long-term development.

This paper, written by Shanthi Kalathil in conjunction with John Langlois and Adam Kaplan, addresses this gap by distilling lessons learned from the media and communication strategies of different donors. It takes as its primary case study the Office of Transition Initiatives at the U.S. Agency for International Development, which has a long track record of media and communication work in post-conflict environments. In doing so, it seeks to present a new model for understanding and working with communication in post-conflict and fragile environments.

This publication is one of a series that will examine media and communication issues in a post-conflict context. While this paper has focused largely on one particular donor model, future publications will examine other models and draw further lessons. Ultimately, this series will seek to analyze the ways in which communication contributes to the crucial post-conflict tasks of managing expectations, building both trust in and oversight of state institutions, aiding the formation of an inclusive national identity, and fostering a participatory and engaged citizenry. I hope that in doing so, the series will contribute to a more informed discussion about the role of communication in these environments, and in turn, to better policy and practice.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The media and communication sector plays a complex role within post-conflict and fragile states. In times of peace, communication processes can enable citizens to engage in dialogue, serve as platforms for debate, anchor governance reforms, and facilitate poverty reduction and development through provision of needed information. In states experiencing conflict, violent political upheaval, or complete collapse, the communication sector becomes even more crucial. Local and international media can provide important, reliable and timely humanitarian and political information in the midst of chaos, helping people navigate their tumultuous surroundings. Moving toward the longer term, media and communication processes can enable citizens to shape state-building processes and contribute to their own long-term development. As the former president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, has noted, “A free press is not a luxury. A free press is at the absolute core of equitable development, because if you cannot enfranchise poor people, if they do not have a right to expression, if there is no searchlight on corruption and inequitable practices, you cannot build up the public consensus needed to bring about change.”

In similar vein, scattered research and field insights show that the media and communication sector can be an important element of stabilization, reconstruction and peacebuilding challenges. Over the last several years, communication-based activities have been utilized—albeit unsystematically—by donors to support humanitarian relief, improve governance, and contribute significantly to the process of reconstruction and stabilization that serves as the first step toward long-term development. In particular, discrete programs have utilized media and communication interventions to help accomplish the crucial tasks of managing expectations, building both trust in and oversight of state institutions, aiding the formation of an inclusive national identity, and fostering a participatory and engaged citizenry.

Yet, in many if not most post-conflict environments, communication interventions remain just that: interventions inserted awkwardly into the stabilization, reconstruction and development process, with little thought given to deep impact. Often, purely tactical and/or expedient choices take precedence over strategic decision-making, and the immediacy of the environment presents few opportunities for institutional learning. Most importantly, communication and media sector activities tend to get funneled primarily toward public affairs or public information divisions, rather than treated as fundamental, technical components of peacebuilding and governance within the broader context of post-conflict and fragile state assistance. This mischaracterization of the role of communication can, potentially, lead to lost opportunities and even negative outcomes.

To examine this issue, the publication will focus primarily on drawing lessons from the experiences of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The OTI “case study” was selected because of its relatively long history, unique mission, flexible operational parameters, and integrative approach; OTI has been able to build a track record of pursuing innovative tactics and non-traditional avenues for communication-based activities. At the heart of the OTI approach is the assumption that a comprehensive combination of flexible, short-term technical activities can ultimately enhance the key components of post-crisis stabilization and long-term development.

To contextualize the OTI approach and demonstrate the breadth of donor thinking on
the relative approaches of two other significant post-conflict actors, the UK and the UN. These two donor institutions were chosen because, like the US, they have accumulated significant experience working in a broad variety of post-conflict environments over the last several years. However, it must be stressed from the beginning that this paper is not meant to be a comprehensive review of all donor experiences with communication in post-conflict environments, although it may eventually form part of a larger endeavor to understand donor initiatives. Rather, it seeks to draw useful conclusions about donor strategy and impact by illuminating one particular example, that of OTI. These conclusions suggest that the type of holistic, three-pronged technical approach to the communication sector employed by OTI—strategic communication support for government, communication to support peacebuilding and good governance, and building independent media—is a potentially useful model for other donors working in post-conflict reconstruction.

The usefulness of this model also points to broader conclusions about donor strategy going forward, which are addressed in the final section of the paper. Rather than continuing to approach the issue of communication in a haphazard fashion, this paper argues, donors should consider pushing themselves to evolve in the ways they approach media and communication in post-conflict and fragile states. They should also, as a matter of policy, consider media/communication programs as a separate technical component of reconstruction and stabilization work in post-conflict and fragile situations. In doing so, they should clearly separate out media/communication as a tool of donor outreach and public affairs, which should be dealt with by a separate bureaucratic entity. Only by making such distinctions can donors begin to take full advantage of the potentially powerful role of communication and media in fostering development and good governance.

1.1. A Note on Terms

A section on defining terms is necessary to proceed with any conceptual or analytical clarity. Specifically, the term “strategic communication” is frequently employed by those working with communication-based activities in post-conflict and fragile states. In fact, this term spans the fields of development, public diplomacy, advertising, military operations, and many other areas. More often than not, the term refers to a set of activities whose precise parameters are known only to the speaker, reflecting the speaker’s own biases and background. This lack of common consensus on the term’s definition as it applies both across fields and within single fields (notably, within the development field) translates into a certain conceptual muddiness in practice.

Until recently, the term “strategic communication” often conveyed a managed message designed to persuade audiences of the information disseminator’s point of view. In military circles, the term often takes on these nuances. For several years, as will be discussed later in the paper, donors in development contexts also engaged in strategic communication primarily to convey their own messages to host populations.

This view of strategic communication, however, is changing. A recent paper on poverty reduction strategies defines strategic communication, in that context, as

the active seeking of the perspectives and contributions of citizens so that they can help to shape policy. It also means ensuring that mechanisms are in place for a two-way flow of information and ideas between the
government and the citizenry as well as making deliberate efforts to build consensus amongst stakeholders about the development strategy the nation wishes to pursue.2

Here, the phrase has shed its more manipulative overtones, moving from monologue to dialogue.3

Even within a military/security context, the definition of strategic communication has moved beyond mere spin. The Defense Science Board, a US federal advisory committee established to provide independent advice to the US Secretary of Defense, issued a Task Force Report on Strategic Communication in 2004. The report notes that strategic communication describes a variety of instruments used by governments for generations to understand global attitudes and cultures, engage in a dialogue of ideas between people and institutions, advise policymakers, diplomats, and military leaders on the public opinion implications of policy choices, and influence attitudes and behavior through communication strategies.4

Notably, this implies a participatory type of process, even if the ultimate aim is influence.

For the purposes of this paper, then, the term “strategic communication” will refer to processes of participatory communication that also include efforts to build consensus around certain policies. What it will not encompass, however, is the field of independent media development, which is sometimes lumped in with the term “strategic communication” in international development parlance. Independent media development seeks to strengthen the media sector as an institutional component of good governance and long-term development. As will be made clear later in this publication, many who work in such environments advocate a clear distinction between efforts to support the development of a pluralistic, independent media sector and strategic communication efforts by donors, governments, NGOs, etc.

2. COMMUNICATION IN POST-CONFLICT/TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

2.1. State of the Field: A Research Overview

It would be inaccurate to define the body of research on this subject as a “field” of its own. To begin with, the “field” itself can encompass such a wide range of activities that few of those engaged in these activities see themselves as working in a specifically defined area of communication in post-conflict environments, per se. This is partly due to a lack of definitional clarity: although many use the term “strategic communication” to define their work in post-conflict and fragile states, the term takes on different meanings from speaker to speaker, as noted in the last section. This means that published research in this area can potentially span widely disparate subjects, from donor public relations strategies to technical processes designed to build independent media institutions.

A review of the various strands of literature shows that academics, donors, and practitioners have arrived at no clear consensus about either the theoretical underpinnings or practical realities of this type of work.
Moreover, the scholarly literature that does exist subdivides into many different disciplines, each with its own strand of analysis and normative underpinning. Part of the lack of conceptual clarity surrounding this topic stems from the fact that there is no natural scholarly silo in which to develop research of this type. For instance, there are numerous strands of academic literature that potentially deal with this issue: communication theory (particularly the discipline concerned with ethnosectarian media), political science and theories of democratization, conflict/post-conflict studies, and development studies. In addition, much of the published work that exists on communication in post-conflict and fragile environments comes from the “aid effectiveness” literature produced by donor agencies and those who evaluate their work; it is based largely on field experiences and anecdotal evidence. (While there is nothing inherently wrong with knowledge gleaned from field experience, the lack of common evaluative frameworks makes rigorous examination and/or codification for future efforts difficult.)

A review of the various strands of literature shows that academics, donors, and practitioners have arrived at no clear consensus about either the theoretical underpinnings or practical realities of this type of work—partly due to the multidisciplinary complications noted above. On the other hand, there are several publications that examine the impact of particular media and communication programs in the field. Much of this type of literature tends to emanate from the field of independent media development, while the rest is from the area within communication for development known as “behavior change communication,” that is, communication that specifically seeks to change behaviors over time, in this case as relates to post-conflict environments.

**Communication for Development/Behavior Change Communication (BCC)**

Usually, the strategic communication that takes place within a development context falls under the rubric of “communication for development.” Originally the phrase was understood as being narrowly limited to helping donors communicate with stakeholders on specific development programs. As noted in a recent report by Panos, a UK NGO, the original analysis underpinning work in the communication for development field tended to view the targets of communication primarily as the receivers of information and ideas, sitting passively on the receiving end of a carefully crafted donor message.⁵

These days, communication for development has taken on a much broader mandate. The phrase is now widely interpreted to include the whole range of communication-based activities that support long-term development. This includes fostering dialogue on development goals, raising awareness, and encouraging long-term behavior change. In fact, much of the writing on communication in post-conflict and fragile settings tends to fall into the area of “behavior change communication” (BCC). Usually, in these contexts, the behaviors sought are those that will mitigate conflict and contribute to peacebuilding endeavors. For instance, the conflict transformation NGO Search for Common Ground has produced a number of studies of its work utilizing media/communication in various conflict-afflicted regions of the world, including such programs as television series directed at inculcating tolerance among youth in Macedonia, radio soap operas promoting peace in Indonesia, and news articles that support bridge-building in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Donors have evaluated the funded work of Search for Common Ground as well as other NGOs dedicated to working with the media in
situations of conflict or crisis, such as Fondacion Hirondelle, which has worked extensively with the UN. Other reports on BCC in post-conflict and fragile environments tend to be donor evaluations focused on the outcomes/impacts of discrete projects, although these are frequently inserted into wider evaluations.

One of the problems with amassing a comprehensive body of research on behavior change communication in post-conflict environments is that many of these donor-initiated assessments are intended for internal evaluation purposes only and remain unpublished. The published work that does exist tends to consist of implementing organizations’ own evaluations of their projects (such as those by Search for Common Ground) and one-off case studies, which are relevant in the specific country examined but not generalizable across a wider sample. For this reason, there are few hard conclusions that have emerged with respect to, for instance, the cumulative impact of BCC programs on conflict mitigation and peacebuilding in the long-term.

**Independent Media Development: Field Studies**

Much of the literature on media and communication in post-conflict and fragile environments comes from examples derived from the field of support for independent media, or independent media development. The literature, as a whole, posits that a media sector (whether community, private, or public-service-oriented) that is editorially independent, pluralistic, diverse, and financially sustainable serves as a critical component of long-term good governance and development. In fragile states and post-conflict situations, many studies (the bulk of them emanating from the donor sector rather than academia) argue that the support for independent media is crucial both on its own and to shore up the development of democratic institutions in the long term. An independent media, several of these studies note, serves as both civic forum and watchdog over powerful interests, enabling the citizens of a post-conflict state to have a voice in the formation of their government and hold it (and large donors) to account in the crucial state-formation period.

USAID, which has devoted perhaps the most significant funding and technical leadership to the field of independent media development since its inception, has commissioned a number of studies that examine the cumulative role and impact of USAID-funded media in post-conflict and fragile states. Many of these reports, such as those on Bosnia, Serbia, and Indonesia, have concluded that donor-funded efforts to employ a range of both short-term programs and longer-term institutional development activities have helped contribute to reconstruction and good governance. Taken as a whole, these evaluation surveys conclude that independent media development should indeed be a priority in these environments.⁶

Other studies have also concluded that independent media development is a necessary component of good governance, particularly in young democracies where it is necessary to develop a citizen culture that supports good governance. Some call for building not only the institutions of a pluralistic, diverse, and independent media sector, but for developing the public’s media literacy, enabling citizens to distinguish between journalism products of varying quality and to think critically about information gleaned from various sources of media.⁷

Various monitoring and evaluation devices also demonstrate the value of continued attention to building the institutions of an independent media sector in post-conflict countries, by tracking media trends over the long term. The indices show that issues that may have received
less donor scrutiny/attention in the immediate post-conflict/rebuilding period tend to rise to the surface in subsequent years. International Research and Exchanges Board’s (IREX) Media Sustainability Index (MSI), for instance, has tracked overall trends in regional media sectors over several years, producing interesting findings for several post-conflict societies. For instance the latest (2006/2007) MSI observes that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the very progressive Freedom of Access to Information Act, which came into force in 2000, has encountered problems in implementation; meanwhile, the media market remains fragmented along ethnic lines.  

Academic Studies  
The scholarly literature on this issue—that is, literature that is either academic in nature or that goes beyond donor/practitioner case studies—is mixed. Most of the theory related to communication in post-conflict and fragile states tends to focus on the role of the international and/or Western media in modern-day war and the perception of conflict. The bulk of the rest is concentrated in the sub-sector of nationalism, ethno-sectarian media and conflict. For instance, Snyder and Ballentine’s work on nationalism and the marketplace of ideas argues that while greater freedom of the press is often prescribed by donors and human rights activists, promoting unconditional freedom of debate in newly democratizing countries may worsen the political situation and may heighten the likelihood of outbursts of violent nationalism. This is partly because, they argue, in cases where democratic institutions are not fully established but civil society is vocal, governments and opposition forces have both motive and opportunity to play the nationalism card.  

This view has been challenged by critics who suggest that over the long term as well as during the process of democratic change, the risks of war are reduced by democratization, while exacerbated by democratic reversals.  

Allen and Stremlau suggest that censorship should not necessarily be ruled out as a policy in post-conflict states, and that the decision to go that route should be taken on a case by case basis. Others also note that “unregulated media may be dangerous and can encourage, rather than calm, nationalistic tendencies.” This strain of argument is mirrored in some scholarly literature on ethno-sectarian media.  

This does not represent a consensus view, however. Others argue that the media can play a key role in encouraging support for stability during various crises, including post-conflict and humanitarian ones. Some argue that there is a distinct relationship between media, public attitudes, and stability. A few area studies scholars note the crucial role of the media sector in stabilization and consolidation of good governance. Some, focusing on regions or states in Africa, point to specific cases—such as the M ecological media transition in Kenya—and argue that the media was important to the new government’s stability.  

Some suggest that the cumulative knowledge regarding media effects in these environments remains slim. Bratic, who has examined the impact of behavior change communication in post-conflict environments, points out that many project implementers share the (unproven) assumption that if the media has the power to move people to engage in conflict, it should have equal power to influence the development of peace. These assumptions, he says, fail to take into account that a) there are few studies that attempt to establish a direct causal link between media and violence; and b) the relationship is complex and cannot simply be taken for granted. NGO supporters of independent media development often maintain that there is no one-size-fits all template for media development, and that context is crucially important in any program.
They also argue that support for an independent media sector does not mean an absence of regulation, particularly in the cases of hate speech or other post-conflict concerns.

2.2. The Post-Conflict/Fragile Environment: Common Challenges

From a donor point of view, post-conflict and fragile states present a particularly difficult set of circumstances. To begin with, while post-conflict and fragile states exhibit many of the same challenging characteristics that exist within more stable development environments, such as lack of capacity or poor service delivery, they also present a host of other challenges. These may include violence and instability (even in “post-conflict” environments), limited physical infrastructure, weak systems of governance, and lack of trust and social capital. Furthermore, in the aftermath of a widespread conflict, countries often suffer from decimated national institutions, no governance systems, and competing, non-state bases of power and authority.

The donor approach is made even more complex by its uneasy existence at the meeting point between military and civilian considerations. The New York-based Council on Foreign Relations notes that

...the transition from war to “non-war” and then to stabilization and reconstruction is particularly challenging. It is a “neither fish nor fowl” period, involving political-military considerations that are often contradictory and always complex. Understandably, managing this shift is difficult because the lines of responsibility are often fluid, with an uneasy division between military and civilian authority. This division is not trivial in scope or consequence.  17

In these environments of high tension and uncertainty, with overlapping and sometimes competing donor reconstruction and security mandates, time frames become significantly more compressed and political pressures grow intense. Although the long-term goals of economic growth and good governance remain, they are generally overshadowed by more short-term needs: humanitarian relief, stabilization and reconstruction, conflict mitigation, and peacebuilding. From the perspective of donors, understanding how—and, perhaps, if—short-term goals (frequently political in nature) link to long-term development goals is crucial. Although many programs are frequently criticized for being too short-term in nature, this does not necessarily mean supplementing short-term solutions with long-term goals, as this itself may carry with it negative long-term effects.

Particular characteristics of post-conflict contexts that follow are of relevance to donor-led programs:

General:
- heightened scrutiny, particularly by international community
- focus on short-term outputs/outcomes, not long-term impact
- more conducive to a risk-taking approach in funding projects (partly because long-term impact is de-emphasized)
- less time to develop indigenous capacity and institutions
- multiple actors
- multiple donors (bilateral and multilateral) and greater potential for overlapping mandates

Logistical:
- security situation may make travel difficult, impeding program design, establishment, monitoring, and evaluation
• donor coordination issues may impede flexibility of program design and implementation; on the other hand, this may also prevent duplication of activities

Political:
• securing political will is necessary for most programs to proceed
• bilateral donors’ agenda is likely to be more “political” than strictly technical, and tied to each donor’s foreign policy agenda (i.e., cementing peace process, resolving IDP issues, etc.)
• programs may need to ensure buy-in by diplomats and other policy actors rather than or in addition to development technocrats
• situations labeled “post-conflict” may still feature various forms of conflict

The need for reliable information cuts across many of these characteristics of post-conflict and fragile situations. The lack of reliable information in a situation of humanitarian crisis may prevent people from obtaining emergency health care, food rations, or shelter. Simmering conflict, whether imminent or in the recent past, complicates the picture, as does an event of political transition. A recent UNESCO report notes, “At any stage of a conflict, lack of information can make people restless, desperate, and easy to manipulate.”

Generally, most post-conflict and fragile state programs fail to fully acknowledge the importance of the communication sphere, much less how to work within it to accomplish these various goals.

In this context, communication and media activities exist in a strange netherworld: while frequently not at the forefront of donors’ considerations, activities utilizing communication and media appear in nearly every sector. Nonetheless, most donors fail to consider communication as anything other than another term for “messaging,” much less a fundamental area that is crucial to stabilization, reconstruction, and other key goals in these environments. Communication is both the HOW of post-conflict reconstruction (in that nearly every activity must pass through the communication space in some form) as well as a very significant WHAT (in that the sector itself constitutes an important structural issue in and of itself). In short:

• To achieve both legitimacy and effectiveness, post-conflict, nascent, and/or transitional governments must be able to communicate effectively with, and seek feedback from, the citizens they represent.

• A vibrant, pluralistic, independent media serves to inform the public, ensure transparency and accountability of government, and provide public opinion feedback to government to ensure effective and legitimate policies, which in turn helps strengthen post-conflict governments

• Specific reconstruction, peacebuilding and governance goals necessitate a comprehensive approach toward communication, in which “message dissemination” is replaced with a more holistic, participatory approach that includes dialogue with stakeholders

Generally, most post-conflict and fragile state programs fail to fully acknowledge the importance of the communication sphere, much less how to work within it to accomplish these various goals.
2.3. Policy and Practice in the Field

Although nearly every donor working in post-conflict and fragile settings engages in media and communication-related work, there tends to be little practical coherence in the field. Some, such as the UN, primarily engage by setting up radio stations as an adjunct to the peace-keeping force. Others, such as DFID and some European donors, focus on building institutions. More details on the approaches of key donors can be found in a subsequent section.

What does tend to characterize most donor programs is a basic continuum of activity that ranges from outright donor public relations campaigns (which generally fall under the purview of the communication officer at post) to technical processes that contribute to long-term reconstruction and good governance, which are generally handled by development/governance advisers. Of these, the latter can be further subdivided into two categories: behavior change communication activities, which instrumentalize media/communication as a tool to achieve outcomes, and independent media development activities, which support the structures and institutions of the media sector, itself seen as a public good and requirement for good governance.

Traditionally, donors have spent more time and money on the former of the technical activities: developing and promulgating discrete message campaigns to address some of the aforementioned overarching challenges in post-conflict and transitional settings. These campaigns are usually concerned with disseminating information on urgent human security needs in post-conflict settings. Due to compressed time-frames, building long-term capacity in the communication sector is usually not an immediate priority. Donors frequently—whether intentionally or unintentionally—prioritize “the message over the medium,” focusing on getting their own messages across rather than building the communication sector as a structural component of post-conflict reconstruction.

In many cases, the scope and scale of media and communication activities are driven by donors. Programs are typically conceived to address a donor-identified media sector issue or need. Occasionally, headquarters-based media specialists are consulted in needs assessments. Development and governance generalists (usually with no direct experience in media programs) often identify the potential program scope under the presumption that a handful of NGOs can adequately implement the program. Although the programming needs are acute and immediate, obligating funds and programming them in the short-term is often a cumbersome process that does not adequately take advantage of windows of opportunity.

Implementing organizations can also drive the program development process. Usually NGOs with experience in development, relief, and media activities, these implementers also identify needs and issues, and they present these to donors as issues requiring funding. When this implementer-driven process occurs, the resultant program often benefits from the organization’s technical and cultural understanding, since implementers frequently already have operations on the ground or in the region. The added advantage to the donor is that start-up costs are usually lower, since the initial burdens have already been borne, and ideally the program is a continuation or follow on from an existing, functional, and productive endeavor.

Although both of these approaches are prevalent in the field, they have certain shortcomings. For instance, under either model, the burden of the contracting process (frequently at least 3-9 months), implementer
interests (guaranteed revenue), and the predisposition of program scope toward long-term development, all argue for longer rather than shorter contract periods. Typically contracts are for as long as the donors’ fund allocation will allow—at least 1-3 years. The details and specifics of the programs and projects including partnerships with indigenous media organizations are usually determined by the implementing organizations and only minimally altered by the donor. This allows for minimal donor flexibility in adapting to changing circumstances and needs, which often happens in rapidly moving fragile and post-conflict environments.

Moreover, many implementing organizations have developed their own diagnostic and conceptual systems, many of which have been based upon each organization’s individual successes and specialties. This sometimes means that implementers with extensive experience in a particular realm of media development have a vested interest in promoting their specialized processes as critical to the advancement of reconstruction, peacebuilding, and/or democratic governance. Donors, who frequently do not view the media/communication sector as a technical area of development and thus do not hire specialists in this field, are thus significantly influenced by the preferred approaches of the implementer involved.

Finally, media and communication interventions have tended to be discrete and unrelated, even those funded by a single bilateral donor. Those synergies that do develop—whether inter- or intra-donor—tend to be accidental. This is partly because many donors do not institutionalize media and communication work as an essential part of achieving reconstruction and stabilization goals. This failure to incorporate means that expertise may be thin on the ground, when and where it’s most needed. Although there are certainly individual field practitioners that can bring their expertise to bear on certain situations, there are for the most part very few institutionalized guiding norms or principles that can be applied by experts and non-media specialists alike to achieve lasting results.

In order to gain more generalizable insights into programmatic and policy choices, the paper will examine the specific communication policy choices of the Office of Transition Initiatives, based in the US Agency for International Development. This examination, while incorporating some survey research work to gain further insight into particular country-specific strategies, has focused on learning lessons from various approaches rather than evaluating the performance of OTI or any other specific donor.
3. THE OTI EXPERIENCE AS LENS: LESSONS FROM POST-CONFLICT AND TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

The Office of Transition Initiatives was created in 1994 as a policy instrument that could nimbly bridge the gap between relief, development, and political assistance within countries in crisis. From the very beginning, OTI was conceived as an explicitly political unit, rather than a development organization, although it was placed operationally within the US Agency for International Development. The policy imperative behind OTI’s founding recognized that the US government needed an instrument that could be dropped anywhere to ensure that post-conflict countries would emerge stronger—economically, politically and socially.19

OTI was intended to work with local partners to: help change attitude and behavior patterns that foster conflict; promote political participation; and strengthen the structures of democratic governance in the short term so that long-term development could rest on solid institutional foundations. As one report notes, “Whereas traditional USAID’s prime focus in the 1990s and subsequently was directed at helping fragile nations create enduring, economically sound institutions and infrastructures, the new office within USAID was intended to respond rapidly to post-conflict opportunities and challenges—to make a real difference without concerning itself unduly about long-term development priorities.”20

By design, OTI does not stay in a country longer than two or three years, recognizing that if it were to extend, it would be undertaking more of a long-term development endeavor. This does not mean that once OTI wraps up its programs in a country, it is gone for good; in some instances, OTI has restarted its programs in countries if the situation deteriorates or if the first program has delivered less-than-successful results.21 To enable OTI to perform swiftly without the usual bureaucratic hurdles, a special contracting mechanism was established to allow it to implement country programs within days of being told to deploy. This mechanism, nick-named SWIFT (Support Which Implements Fast Transitions), consisted of a list of contractors (pre-qualified through open competition) that could be called upon to immediately start programs on the ground. SWIFT has gone through various iterations since its inception, but its basic premise holds true: that funds can be committed quickly and in appropriate quantities (for instance, in the form of direct micro-grants to local organizations), while allowing for rapid redirection from one program to another as circumstances dictate.

Operationally, OTI relies less on direct-hire civil service positions than on a roster of pre-identified specialists who are available to be called up on short notice to work anywhere in the world. These specialists conduct assessments, help design country strategies, and perform other crucial tasks, allowing OTI to staff up quickly on the ground without passing through a cumbersome process of personnel screening and without building up a permanent structure. In its headquarters, the bulk of OTI staff are also personal services contractors rather than direct-hire civil servants. Some maintain that this allows the office to move human resources quickly to where they’re needed, while others have raised concerns about this approach. (See Section 4, Insights and Impact, for further analysis of this and other OTI methods.)

Programmatically, as OTI has evolved over the years, its country interventions have been largely grouped into three categories: transitions to democracy, transitions to peace, and transitional political crises.22
In transitions to democracy, where a catalytic event marks a sudden shift from a long period of military or autocratic rule to democracy, OTI’s interventions attempt to help sustain support for democracy until the necessary underlying institutions and economic growth can take root. In the case of Afghanistan, for instance, OTI disbursed small grants to help increase the government’s responsiveness to citizens, deepen citizens’ participation in the democratic process, and increase the professional skills of Afghan media.

In transitions to peace, classified by OTI as political openings that demonstrate a shift from conflict and instability toward stable democratic governance, OTI seeks to take advantage of windows of opportunity—such as a peace accord or a new constitution—that mark key turning points in the political process. In these types of situations, OTI may work to strengthen peace agreements by involving civil society, or provide technical assistance to the development of national peace-building plans. Frequently, OTI will work through the media to encourage peace and reconciliation themes.

In transitional political crises, a democratic transition may be underway but stalled or unraveling, creating conditions of political fragility. In these situations, OTI works to prevent or mitigate the possibility of conflict while shoring up existing democratic institutions and helping preserve the momentum for change. It typically does this through supporting civil society and media forums where key political issues can be debated in neutral public space, or through grants that help deepen government resiliency and public participation.

In each of these broad categories of intervention, OTI’s communication and media-related work serves to reinforce the specific goals of each program. By employing a three-pronged holistic assessment and programmatic approach, described in further detail below, OTI endeavors to set the stage for longer term development, while acknowledging that its trademark risk-taking “venture capital” style may not necessarily lead to every project paying off.

OTI’s Media and Communication Strategy: A Different Approach

Conceptual Approach
Because donors have tended to focus on short-term messaging designed to achieve immediate goals, and because other activities—such as strategic communication assistance for governments, or independent media development—all fall into their respective silos, donors have largely failed to view the communication sector holistically. In particular, there has been an absence of emphasis on the connective tissue between the interrelated components of media and communication activities, and the importance of these connective elements to long-term reconstruction and good governance. Failure to fully comprehend the connective tissue between government strategic communication, BCC campaigns, and independent media development has sometimes led to duplicative, low-impact, or counter-productive communication interventions.

OTI has attempted to learn from its own past experiences as well as those of other donors. It has thus elevated the media and communication sector to form an integral, technical component of its work. OTI has constructed a strategic vision of the communication sector that emphasizes three interconnected categories: communication in support of humanitarian relief, peacebuilding, and good governance; supporting state responsiveness through strategic communication; and supporting
through building an independent media sector. Within all three categories, the organization engages in a wide breadth of activities, all of them designed with the broader framework in mind. Diagram A illustrates this.

A fuller explication of this three-pronged approach, as well as the programmatic approaches employed within each of the three interconnected areas, is discussed in more detail in this section.

Methods
OTI’s methods for working within the communication sector are honed from, but not limited to, experience working in fluid and often unstable environments where little regulation exists, and rely extensively on OTI’s in-house media and communication technical expertise. Rather than being plugged in as an afterthought, OTI’s in-house media advisers are involved in the strategic planning phases of the office’s involve-

ment in various countries, often acting as key members of OTI’s initial program assessment and design teams or visiting new OTI program countries within weeks of program launch. Media development evaluations and assessments are often built into program objectives and are part of local and international staffing considerations.

Because of OTI’s focus on post-conflict, transitional, and fragile states, it tends not to focus on one-size-fits-all templates with respect to country media and communication objectives. Project scope and timeframes tend toward shorter durations and more concrete project objectives. This does not mean OTI undertakes only micro-projects; where need and resources exist, OTI has undertaken large projects, albeit always through incremental steps. OTI tends to focus on establishment of new and functioning media operations rather than long-term capacity building and sustainability, although it has found through internal and external evaluations
that several projects have gone on to longer-term sustainability. (OTI’s focus on more immediate results has sometimes resulted in criticisms related to the long-term sustainability of its efforts; these and other issues are discussed in more detail in Section 3.5.)

The focus on achievable results and measurable accomplishments requires OTI to not only build projects appropriate to the location, but to identify implementing organizations based on the demands of the project first and existing contracting mechanisms second. When OTI needs to openly solicit competitive bids, its media advisors are deeply involved in the solicitations process and form part of the committee evaluating the responses. Often, the best implementing organization is a local group rather than a large international implementer. OTI has thus built dedicated procurement mechanisms to fund these organizations quickly and directly.

Typically, once donors contract with a media/communication implementer, the donor’s involvement in the actual implementation process is minimal. Aside from receiving quarterly or annual programmatic reports and managing the contract’s finances, the donor remains distanced from the project’s direction and/or redirection if necessary. OTI takes a much more hands-on approach, staying directly involved in project activities and intensely monitoring program progress, thus retaining the ability to immediately terminate an unsatisfactory project and redirect resources to emergent opportunities.

Finally, OTI applies something of a “venture capital” approach in identifying promising local partners and projects, in that it is willing to take risks and endure failure along the way. This is atypical of a long-term development program, which frequently involves more money, planning, and time to obligate funds. OTI’s small size and flexibility enables it to take advantage of windows of opportunity when and as they arise, sometimes combining several of the activities detailed in the following section to ensure a holistic emphasis on reconstruction, governance, and peacebuilding. Therefore, although the following section attempts to categorize various activities for the sake of analysis and description, it should be noted that in practice, OTI maintains a loose, rapid-reaction style that enables it to combine and recombine activities in ways that blur distinctions between these categories.

3.1. Toward Reconstruction and Stabilization: Communication in Support of Humanitarian Relief, Peacebuilding, and Good Governance

3.1.1. Humanitarian Relief

In situations of urgent humanitarian need, there is often a key shortage of information, in addition to shortages of food, water, shelter, security, and so on. Media and communication interventions can greatly aid or hinder efforts to prepare citizens for threats; convey important, lifesaving information during a crisis; assist in rescues, reunions, and relocations; support relief efforts; and promote accountability after the fact. At the same time, journalists are themselves vulnerable to the hazardous situations on which they report.23

Effective service delivery is always a priority in post-conflict or unstable situations. Working with the media and communication sector can help facilitate effective service delivery in a number of ways. In the health sector, for instance, media programs can ensure that wide swaths of the population obtain vital information about key health programs, such as inoculations or prenatal care. In the education sector, distance-learning programs conveyed through
radio may reach otherwise isolated populations in disaster-affected or war-torn areas. Radio programs may also be useful for civic education programs that address key reconstruction or reconciliation issues.

Community radio can also play a role in ensuring that local communities circulate vital information, shaped by local needs. If appropriate (and if the infrastructure situation allows), community radio stations can also be paired with an Internet connection and terminal, which local communities can use as an information kiosk to retrieve necessary information from the government or international sources.

Although in complex emergency situations the content of the message tends to assume greatest importance, developing local capacity (content generation, production, etc.) in this type of environment allows for more effective communication and provides opportunities for long-term skill development. This skill development will prove crucial in laying the foundations for an independent media sector. Often, OTI has found that even when the immediate policy priority is message dissemination, it can find opportunities to build capacity, encourage longer-term skill retention, or lay the foundation for the development of an independent, vibrant media sector.

In Pakistan, following a devastating 2005 earthquake, emergency broadcasting helped, over time, to deepen public dialogue and foster a more democratic public sphere in the affected region (see text box on page 44 entitled “After the Earthquake: Lessons from Pakistan”). In Sri Lanka, OTI’s existing media and communication program, which had been oriented towards peacebuilding, immediately shifted gears after the 2005 Asian tsunami, reorienting toward providing humanitarian information for displaced persons and guiding survivors toward places where they could receive help. As time passed, these programs then attempted to deepen to include more of a capacity-building component, although ultimately the program faced difficulties in implementation.

### 3.1.2. Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding

OTI has in the past employed a multitude of different methods to support the goals of conflict mitigation and peace-building. What follows is a sampling of the various objectives and the types of activities possible under each.

#### Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

Communication and media activities can support the process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). Targeted media civic education campaigns can ensure ex-combatants are aware of DDR programs such as transitional assistance and training, skill development programs, and their role in their communities. Additionally, the media can serve an important function by helping informants understand the various economic and social opportunities available to them during the reintegration process, such as incentives for the private industry to hire ex-combatants.

#### Support for Peace Processes

The media is a critical actor in any peace process, since citizens rely on the media not only for basic information, but also to explain complex negotiations and frame overall issues. Actors within the peace process also rely on the media to provide feedback and disseminate their own positions. A responsible, informed media can play a crucial role in ensuring a democratic process and informed citizenry. An unprofessional, sensationalistic media can skew perceptions of the peace process and fuel expectations that concessions are dangerous, compromise is unacceptable, and negotiations
are constantly on the verge of collapse (Wolfsfeld 2001).

To the extent that there is an existing media sector during conduct of a peace process, potential programs might encourage media outlets to report on the process objectively and responsibly. OTI’s activities have included training journalists on how to cover peace processes without sensationalizing or highlighting only conflict; information dissemination on the nuts and bolts of the peace process; and media packages tied to town hall discussions that encourage citizens to gain a deeper understanding of the process.

In the long term, the media can contribute to peace-building through professional coverage of war crime trials and truth-and-reconciliation commissions. Hence, OTI and others have trained journalists on procedural aspects of such events, as well as sensitivity in covering these issues. Since trials or other related activity may take place far away from the country, it may be worthwhile training and sending local journalists to cover such events to ensure that the citizenry feels a sense of connection to the process.

When training or otherwise interacting with journalists, donors should keep in mind that they and other governments should not dictate to the media how peace process-related activities should be covered. Rather, journalists should be equipped with a range of skills to ensure their coverage is as balanced and professional as possible.

**Peace Journalism: The Debate**

In addition to broad support for the development of an independent, pluralistic media sector, OTI has also supported more narrowly targeted programs that use the media to contribute to specific peace-building objectives.

To accomplish these ends, the programs tend to use many different forms of media, branching out beyond the sphere of journalism: PSAs, jingles, complex message campaigns, songs, and so-called “intended outcome” dramas, in which the storyline is carefully developed to achieve a peace building aim. In Burundi in the mid-1990s, for instance, radio production program Studio Ijambo was set up as a direct response to the hate radio and divided press that had spread through the region. Studio Ijambo produced several products such as a soap opera called “Our Neighbors, Our Selves,” and a magazine show called “Pillars of Humanity” (known as “Heroes”) (Hagos 2001).

It should be noted that many of these programs go beyond support for straight news journalism to incorporate a number of other types of media: radio dramas, television soap operas, and so on. These programs typically use a conflict-resolution approach whose specific objective is to use the media (and, at times, the news media) to build peace and reduce conflict. This inherently normative approach is at times at odds with conventional approaches to supporting the development of independent news media, which emphasizes strict neutrality and objectivity on the part of journalists. Recently, many media assistance practitioners have sought to identify ways to support internationally recognized norms of professional journalism while incorporating a conflict-sensitive approach (see text box).
Censorship, Advocacy, or Impartial Reportage? The Role of the News Media

“The crucial issue in fragile states is how do you constrain certain information flows? You don’t want people to be promoting hate speech. Media intervention means that you keep them going down one route and prevent them going down a certain other route; in other words, censorship is crucial.” – participant, “Development, Governance and the Media”

“Censorship I would not at all advocate, in any circumstances. I don’t see where it works. (In post-conflict Somalia) once radio stations started to appear in Mogadishu . . . after a time they became a platform for people to express their views. I believe those people involved in the fighting—if they can challenge a politician over the radio by phoning in, that can ease the tension.” – participant, “Development, Governance and the Media”

Both conventional support for independent media and use of media for peace-building purposes are becoming increasingly common in post-conflict and other fragile conditions. Their approaches, however, sometimes diverge. Conventional support for independent media traditionally stresses internationally recognized tenets of professional journalism such as fairness, objectivity, neutrality and balance. Newer media-related peace-building approaches tend to stress the use of different types of media to resolve conflict, underpinned by the normative assumption that journalists should actively work to resolve conflict and seek peace.

The idea that the news media should take on an advocacy role is controversial among media professionals around the world. Those who argue that the news media should actively seek to resolve conflict say that it is impossible for journalists to truly remain neutral or objective in a conflict; that all journalists bring to their profession innate personal and cultural values; and that the very act of observing and reporting on a conflict makes journalists and media professionals part of the dynamics of the conflict. Moreover, they argue, even professional reporting on certain news events, such as hate crimes or ethnically charged violence, may lead to an increase in fragility or conflict in certain situations. Recognizing these facts, they argue, journalists and other media professionals should at the very least be sensitized to conflict dynamics, and preferably make an active effort to facilitate peace-building dialogues in their communities (Howard, 2002). A more extreme argument advocates active government and/or journalist self-censorship in post-conflict and fragile environments to prevent hate speech and potential incitement to violence.

Supporters of conventional independent media development programs argue that encouraging journalists to take on an advocacy role of any kind—even one that supports constructive goals such as peace-building—instrumentalizes the media and alters journalists’ own perceptions of themselves from that of neutral observers to that of direct actors. They note that professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict, but that by presenting accurate and impartial news (i.e., good reporting),
3.1.3. Good Governance

Support for Elections

The media can be an important component in the administration of peaceful elections in fragile environments. Elections are frequently complicated, and doubly so in a fragile or post-conflict environment where such processes may be unfamiliar and/or tied to conflict. Information campaigns can play a key role in informing the citizenry about what to expect during an election, and can ensure that citizens know their rights and responsibilities as well as the rights and responsibilities of candidates, political parties, government bodies, and other organizations. OTI has learned that civic journalism-based elections programs can also help bring citizens into the process of setting the election agenda through public forums and publication of voters’ guides in which candidates are asked to address citizens’ concerns.

In addition, the media can play an important watchdog role during elections. Media can help publicize the results of a quick count, ensuring that official tabulation is fair and transparent. A professional and well-functioning media can also point out irregularities in the process and maintain basic levels of transparency. Political parties, civil society organizations, and actors such as the election administration body can all be trained in using outreach to the media to make sure that basic information about their positions, platforms, and processes are being conveyed to the public. An electoral media commission may be established to adjudicate violations of the electoral law involving the media or candidates’ use of the media.

Media outlets themselves have a role to play in covering the election, and media monitoring groups can ensure that coverage conforms to equal-time regulations and allows for fair treatment of all candidates. Because elections
can be tense, particularly in fragile environments, media monitoring groups can ensure that media outlets are not exacerbating divisions or inciting violent behavior.

**Support for Transparent and Accountable Government**
Social accountability mechanisms—designed to promote transparent and accountable governance—are gaining traction among development practitioners. In the context of post-conflict and fragile states, however, the state itself may lack the technical knowledge, capacity and/or political will to implement many of these mechanisms. Working with local and national governments to generate the political will to promote more open flows of information can be an important first step toward larger goals, such as a Freedom of Information Act. In addition, discrete media and communication products can support larger awareness campaigns. In Nigeria, for instance, OTI supported an anti-corruption television program that served as the foundation for a broader campaign.

**Support for Civil Society Advocacy**
Civil society organizations (CSO) can be a strong force for holding governments to account and preventing a slide into corruption, which is an ever-present threat in post-conflict states receiving large sums of donor cash. Yet many CSOs, particularly in post-conflict and fragile states, find it difficult to organize and project their voices onto the national agenda. Using the media effectively for advocacy can be a powerful skill-set for many CSOs, yet the majority of them lack these skills. Partly because of this, some CSOs adopt a passive approach with respect to advocacy, hoping that media outlets will gravitate toward their causes even when there is no “news” to report per se. In these cases, targeted training for CSOs can be helpful in teaching advocacy skills and, particularly, in getting issues of concern into the media and onto the public agenda. In countries such as Indonesia and Peru, for example, OTI worked with both media institutions and CSOs to encourage prolonged contact, information sharing, and journalist awareness of CSO issues.

### 3.2. Supporting State Responsiveness through Strategic Communication
Government-related strategic communication is really much more about building state responsiveness than it is about any particular “message.” Thus, it is crucial to both the post-conflict process of reconstruction and peacebuilding as well as the broader goal of improving governance more generally. As a Panos report notes

State responsiveness is the way governments take account of their citizens’ aspirations, expectations, and need, and respond to them. Responsive states require governments that can communicate with civil society and base the formation and implementation of policy on the needs and concerns of their citizens. Greater consultation and responsiveness increase public ownership and trust in government, and tend to increase the effectiveness of policies.25

Primarily because of capacity shortages, many nascent and/or transitional governments experience difficulties formulating, articulating, and communicating their agenda and vision for the country. Specific needs may include defining a policy agenda; identifying a target audience; developing and implementing a communication strategy; and addressing communication needs in times of crisis or emergency.
Stratcomm: Going Beyond Press Releases

Strategic communication assistance has evolved over time, growing more complex and employing a range of tools. Sample stratcomm programs include such diverse activities as:

- grants to enable VSAT relay and offshore shortwave transmission of national public service radio broadcasts
- technical assistance to executive agencies and parliaments for public outreach
- small grants to local governments to provide equipment/training for public outreach, including help with developing integrated communication plans
- providing equipment for professional press briefing and media facilities for government offices
- assisting local governments (in conflict-affected areas in particular) with outreach to diverse community groups and ensuring equal access of all groups to government services
- encouraging a “national conversation” on broad reconstruction and stabilization goals to ensure that governance provides an accurate picture of timelines for progress and manages (usually high) expectations during reconstruction

OTI assists national, regional and local governments by working with them to devise strategic communication solutions that are adapted to their individual needs. OTI’s overall strategy recognizes that a government that effectively employs strategic communication to engage in dialogue with citizens may improve its chance of success. In the long run, effective strategic communication enables a more inclusive agenda-setting process, one that also manages the expectations of various constituencies: citizens, donors, belligerents, etc. Ultimately, strategic communication helps strengthen the state’s capacity to listen, be responsive to citizen concerns, and communicate important objectives.

Part of this process may entail educating governments by appealing to their enlightened self-interest: that is, going beyond merely disseminating press releases, or even creating a spokesman’s office, to fully incorporate a culture of open communication throughout government. Demonstrating to government officials that dialogue is just as important, if not more important, than one-way communication flow can sometimes be an uphill battle; most governments tend to be inherently secretive, and those in fragile or post-conflict states, already sensitive to perceptions of legitimacy, may instinctively adopt a more guarded communication posture. Frequently, strategic communication work with government entails training in how to deal with an independent press that is unafraid to challenge the government on issues of policy, accountability, and so on. Other illustrative examples may include working with governments to establish disclosure policies, or setting up a governmental communication architecture that encourages information flow within the bureaucracy, as well as to and from the public. All of these activities can be considered part and parcel of changing the culture of communication within government.
OTI’s strategic communication programs, therefore, go beyond direct message crafting on behalf of the target government, focusing rather on technical assistance to develop long-term skills within the host government or relevant institutions. In conducive environments, these projects can be transformed into tools focused on specific communication outcomes, government capacity and promotion of governmental transparency, and mutually beneficial relationships with news media. Care must be taken to ensure that government communication capacity is matched by the development of an independent media sector that can simultaneously hold the government accountable for its actions.

Particularly in this category, the question of political will on the part of government is paramount. Interestingly, this is where OTI’s dual-hatted nature as both a political instrument as well as an aid instrument comes in particularly useful: it is frequently deployed in politically charged situations where governments do possess the political will to reform their internal communication structures. In these cases, a small program may be able to achieve a disproportionately large impact.

There are several challenges to successful program implementation in the area of strategic communication, however. One ongoing challenge is the issue of monitoring and evaluation. Frequently with strategic communication, there is little donor appetite for committing the necessary funds to properly evaluate progress, i.e., commissioning baseline surveys of relevant ministries’ communication capacity, undertaking follow-up surveys to determine if programs have truly built skills or have simply enabled short-term communication fixes, etc. This fits with a wider lack of donor funding for regularized, budgeted monitoring and evaluation work (see Section 7).

A related challenge is convincing donor and host government policymakers that the necessary time and resources are committed toward long-term skill building, rather than “doing the work” on behalf of host governments. Again, the high-intensity political nature of these environments often requires professional, quick and creative government strategic communication – and skill-building is a long-term process. Frequently, OTI has encountered situations in which there is potential to build long-term skills, but political imperatives necessitate more of a “quick fix.” In situations of high political intensity and high policy importance to the US Government, OTI has found its ability to engage in longer-term capacity building to be constrained.

Finally, all the well-meaning strategic communication advice in the world will not help a government that is not prepared to back up its public statements with clear action; that is, doing what it says it will. A “positive message” can go only so far in securing the good will of the populace if it is not backed up with a clear plan to implement stated initiatives. This stark fact, while often dismissed as a truism in this type of work, is in fact indicative of the broader
need for strategic communication to function not merely as empty “spin,” but as an integral component of existing activities.

3.3. Good Governance at the Structural Level: Supporting the Development of an Independent Media Sector

Just as many donors now acknowledge that good governance is crucial for long-term development, there is growing consensus among many development professionals working in this area that a pluralistic and editorially independent media sector is crucial to good governance. While content generation and dissemination can be used as tools to further short-term aims in post-conflict settings, building the foundation for an independent media sector acts as a cornerstone for long-term good governance and, in turn, long-term economic and political development.

This normative approach toward the development of an independent media sector—seeing it as an institutional public good—forms the basis for OTI and others’ work in this sector. In environments where independent media development is possible (i.e., in environments where basic security has been established), OTI has engaged in significant efforts. OTI’s principal media experts note that the programs, initiated in order to create deep, immediate transition-related impacts, are nonetheless designed with the longer-term development of the independent media sector in mind. Moreover, they are often undertaken to take advantage of windows of opportunity, for instance, a (perhaps temporarily) open regulatory environment that allows for the seeding of a pluralistic, diverse media sector.

The fluid, under-regulated and information-poor environments that make up the bulk of post-conflict and transitional situations often allow for rapid deployment of various forms of media that can, in the long-run, serve to strengthen accountability and transparency of governments. It has been OTI’s experience that these forms of media often take on a life of their own, continuing to hold the government to account even when programming does not please political elites in power.

OTI has focused on the sub-sector of building independent media sectors in fragile environments since its inception in 1994, although its strategy has slowly evolved from being loose and ad-hoc toward one that keeps long-term concerns in mind while maintaining a flexible approach. Programs in fragile environments have focused on establishing legal frameworks, assisting new governments in establishing regulatory bodies, training a professional cadre of journalists and other media professionals, and ensuring economic viability and survival of the sector (Kumar, 2004).

Support for independent media, however, does not mean sticking to a single template in all post-conflict situations, however. Although large donors are sometimes accused of employing a “one size fits all” approach, OTI rarely enters a situation presupposing certain courses of action. Its very mandate suggests that its approach toward independent media development take advantage of its small size, flexibility, and ability to quickly implement programs that will fit naturally into the media landscape.

The independent media sector may include a mixture of private media, community media, and state-owned or regulated public service broadcasters. (In this sense, “independent“ refers to editorial independence, rather than structural or financial independence from the state or private sector.) Programs that seek to aid the development of an independent media sector in post-conflict environments typically
work in five interconnected areas: investing in infrastructure and access; strengthening the enabling environment of media laws and regulation; deepening professionalism, skills, and ethics in the media sector; building an environment that encourages financial sustainability in the private media sector; and creating a network of media associations that provide protection for the sector as well as uphold professional standards and promote continuing education.

In post-conflict and fragile states, support for independent media can be broken down roughly into five general categories. While the focus in traditionally developing states may be refining or consolidating key areas, the emphasis in states experiencing fragility generally focuses on building the basics and paying particular attention to windows of opportunity, as well as those areas that are sensitive to the dynamics of conflict.

**Infrastructure, Equipment and Access:**
Restoring, or installing, basic media infrastructure (from transmission towers to production equipment) is often a key first step when implementing media sector programs in post-conflict environments. An initial media assessment, taking into account population needs as well as structural and cultural issues, can indicate the type of media most appropriate for the country. Radio is frequently the first sector that donors turn to in a fragile or post-conflict state, given its low cost and ability to penetrate widely. It is also helpful to think about incorporating the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), such as Internet-enabled computers and cell phones, which are enabling new forms of journalism and accountability mechanisms. At the same time, while much attention has focused on ICT in recent years, these technologies are often most effective when strategically deployed, or when used in combination with older forms of media, to ensure that information is accessible by wide portions of the population.

In states where there is existing infrastructure, it is necessary to consider how the media is being used. If the media is being used to inflame tensions—as was the case with television in Serbia—alternative media (such as Internet-accessible streaming or online content) can be used to counter incitement. This may include building out additional infrastructure, or may incorporate the use of international broadcast outlets if the situation is extremely bad.

**Media Skills, Professionalism, and Content:**
In the most extreme cases, there may be very few media professionals in the country. Those that exist may operate within a divided and/or propaganda-oriented media sector. Such a situation may necessitate a short-term focus on specific content production, transitioning to (or simultaneously incorporating) a broader focus on building professional skills. In conflict situations, the media sector may suffer from problems of professionalism linked to the proliferation of highly partisan media outlets, where the entire media sector may be “captured” by one or two political entities. In addition, there may be specialized training needs in fragile conditions, such as those related to covering elections, peace processes, or overall reconstruction. None of these challenges can be wholly met by short-term fixes or programs; however, this is frequently the window in which post-conflict programs operate. Therefore, post-conflict media programs can instead set the foundation for long-term development of the sector, from university education to mid-career training and certification to working with whole newsrooms or media outlets to ensure that all levels of staff understand the core tenets of professional journalism practice. In the short term, content dissemination may take precedence.
over long-term capacity-building, but even production activities should incorporate an element of training.

**Business Environment and Sustainability:** In an environment of high intensity and extreme urgency, sustainability issues are often considered last. Early funding decisions, however, can have a long-term impact on the development of a financially sustainable private media sector. OTI has found that pouring resources into transforming the state media sector may deprive private outlets of the level playing field on which they hope to compete; at the same time, concentrating on just a handful of high-profile private media outlets may overlook opportunities with community media or the public service broadcaster.

Over the long-term, development of a financially sustainable, independent media sector requires development of the corresponding financial infrastructure: functioning, transparent media markets; a sophisticated and regulated advertising sector; technical skills and executive expertise in media management; separation of business and editorial departments; and so on. None of these are generally within the immediate remit of an OTI media program, but its strategy generally incorporates setting the stage for future development in this area. Non-profit forms of media, community radios and newspapers, must also learn how to sustain operations and raise funds when the initial level of donor interest drops off. OTI generally tries to avoid creating “artificial economies” based on high initial levels of donor funding within the media sector; in other words, it attempts to ensure (with varying degrees of real world success) that the money that flows into a particular media outlet or sector does not overwhelm the entity’s ability to reasonably absorb it, or skew future development in an unrealistic direction.

**Media Enabling Environment:** Developing a functioning regulatory system for media is often overlooked until too late. The enabling environment is crucial to ensure fairly distributed frequencies and open licensing processes. The legal framework forms a significant part of this enabling environment, as it enables policymakers and media outlets to deal effectively with thorny issues such as regulation of hate speech. Regulators may wish to set up an independent commission to deal with media incitement to violence, particularly in a country that has previously experienced incitement. Media-related legislation and regulation, such as freedom of information, libel and licensing laws, should be addressed early and often when engaging the media sector in fragile conditions. In addition, attention should be paid to the institutions that shape the enabling environment: the legislature, judiciary, and occasionally executive. In post-conflict situations in particular, these institutions are frequently unable—due to lack of capacity—or unwilling to take the steps necessary to ensure a completely free and independent media sector.

**Media Association Building:** Media-related civil society organizations (CSO), whether journalists’ unions, professional associations, freedom of the press watchdogs, or media monitoring groups, complement the regulatory system in enhancing the enabling environment. These media CSOs can advocate broadly on issues, push for change in the legal environment, and set the climate for media business development success. In many fragile environments, media CSOs either do not exist or have been tightly controlled by government.
**Supporting Independent Media in Post-Transition Indonesia**

After Indonesia’s political transition in 1998, the country faced several pressing challenges relating to governance, conflict, and territorial integrity. In this fragile environment, the media was seen to play a crucial role in the country’s transition to a more stable, consolidated democracy. OTI, through its partner Internews, supported the transformation of the formerly state-dominated media system into a pluralistic, vibrant independent media sector.

The programs initially funded by OTI worked on a number of fronts to ensure that the transition went smoothly. Media law reform was tackled early and made a priority. Radio stations received not just journalism training, but management training as well. Ultimately, stations began producing their own news programs, an unprecedented development. More media outlets focused on incorporating public views, either through active solicitation of non-expert commentary in news reports, or through establishment of new, interactive programming. Several years after the transition, the independent media sector underpins civil society and contributes to the ongoing push for transparent and accountable governance.

Although these five categories represent the “ideal” programmatic areas for media activities in fragile conditions, this does not imply that the role of the media, or donor programs, is the same in every case. In each country, development practitioners should carefully consider a) what role, if any, the media already plays in contributing to fragility, and b) how the media might contribute to more representative and resilient governance. If the media is already a significant driver of, or party to, conflict, this would considerably affect whether and how donors might engage with the sector.

In Sri Lanka, for instance, OTI repeatedly tried to work on independent media strengthening as well as peacebuilding objectives. Ultimately, however, the existing political stalemate—which was reflected in a polarized media sector—proved infertile ground for a holistic, independent media sector-building effort.

### 3.4. The Holistic Model: Prioritizing the Connective Tissue between Categories

According to the OTI model, the interrelationships and possible synergies among the three categories are perhaps more important than any one category of activity on its own. It is not sufficient to simply consider any of these three areas in isolation. The nexus of these three areas forms the basis of what some call the public sphere in post-conflict countries: that arena of debate and dialogue that shapes public perceptions of citizenry and underpins good governance.27

This strategic logic can also be represented through Diagram A, depicted earlier:
While Diagram B illustrates how these concepts can be further unpacked:

**DIAGRAM B**

![Diagram B Image]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>DESIRED OUTCOMES</th>
<th>LONG-TERM GOALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Communication Assistance for Government</td>
<td>Effective 2-way Communication Between Government</td>
<td>Informed Citizenry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional/Infrastructural Assistance to Independent Media</td>
<td>Reduced Tensions, Support for Peacebuilding</td>
<td>Strong Civil Society and Oversight of Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication for Humanitarian Relief, Development, Good Governance and Conflict Mitigation</td>
<td>Effective Relief, Reconstruction and Service delivery</td>
<td>Legitimate and Effective Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Protection of Press Freedoms; Institutional Base for Independent Media Sector</td>
<td>Mitigated Conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At a practical level, many donors typically think about the elements of the OTI approach separately – for instance, building an independent media sector or communicating peacebuilding messages. Operationally and conceptually, these are treated as separate programs; meanwhile, in the field, different implementing NGOs may be responsible for the separate pieces of work. Because of this, the connective fiber among these programs remains unrealized in practice, potentially leading to lost synergies, missed opportunities, diminished impact, and perhaps even negative governance or peacebuilding outcomes.

This is not to imply that the process of developing an independent media and strengthening government communication capacity should be fused; in fact, it is preferable for these activities to be kept practically separate, with a firewall between government communication and independent media development. Likewise, it is generally considered good practice for independent media sector development to be separated conceptually from behavior change communication or intended-outcome programming. What should be stressed, however, is the strategic nature of planning for communication-sector activities in order to ensure that the three categories, and all their component activities, mutually reinforce each other. Ideally, a holistic communication program would result in balanced interdependence between the three sectors, contributing to the overarching goals of reconstruction, peacebuilding, and good governance.

**Linkages**

**Government Strategic Communication and Independent Media Development:**
Donor initiatives designed to strengthen the independent media sector usually focus on, for instance, training journalists on operating in conflict or post-conflict zones. Part of this training usually includes modules on interacting with government officials, who are expected to answer questions professionally as well as understand the role of an independent media within society. Yet, at the same time, there may not be corresponding programs designed to support the government’s ability to both understand and deal with media professionals who are being trained to ask tough but fair questions. The process of deepening accountability is thus arrested, as journalists find themselves stymied by officials who do not recognize their role, grow discouraged, and quit the sector. Officials, who never grow accustomed to the process of information-sharing and lively debate with civil society, continue to hoard information and resist attempts at transparency. This leads to further deterioration of the public sphere.

**Independent Media Development and Communication for Humanitarian Relief/ Peacebuilding/Good Governance:**
As noted in the earlier example of Pakistan, post-conflict or post-disaster environments frequently present a regulatory or infrastructural vacuum, which can be filled in various ways by various actors. Rather than simply focusing on disseminating messages, a holistic program approach would seek to effectively convey needed information while simultaneously putting into place the structural elements that might seed the development of an independent media sector. For instance, emergency stations that are quickly established to fill immediate information needs may transition into becoming professional media outlets that can enhance the development of a democratic public sphere. Moreover, if these stations are being established in a restrictive information environment, there is a chance that they may be difficult for the government to shut down even when the immediate crisis has passed.
3.5. The OTI Approach: Common Criticisms

To be sure, the OTI approach has garnered several criticisms. These generally tend to be grouped into three main categories: OTI’s prioritization of short-term effectiveness over long-term sustainability, its overtly political activities and approach, and the ability of its programs to transition smoothly into long-term development programs.

Sustainability Issues

OTI’s projects range from short-term political interventions to medium-term technical projects that, if not long-term themselves, are designed to spur long-term development. As such, its approach is frequently criticized for being “too of the moment” and not sufficiently focused on long-term development. Evaluations of OTI projects show that not all of them succeed over the long term, and sometimes only a minority will still be functioning a period of years after the closure of an OTI project.

Political Issues

OTI works in the overtly political space of promoting democratic change, supporting peace agreements, and otherwise involving itself intimately in the political landscape of the host country. While its activities are intended to set the stage for long-term economic development, they do not put “apolitical” economic development at the forefront of mission goals. Many have criticized OTI’s involvement in the political landscape; this criticism stems primarily from the school of thought that conceptually separates economic development from “political” concerns, such as democratic governance, democratic transitions, etc. Critics maintain that because of OTI’s political role, it may damage the prospects for long-term economic development and confuse stakeholders about its role.

There are also certain synergies between communication for good governance programs and independent media development programs, although these must be carefully handled in order to avoid compromising professional norms in the media sector. For instance, if the goal is to encourage awareness of an upcoming constitutional referendum, programs might include strategic communication to inform citizens of their role in the process and encourage public dialogue. In addition to simply communicating messages about the referendum, though, journalists could be trained (by a non-government affiliated institution) in covering these types of referenda as well as the constitution-drafting process. This would then build capacity in the sector as a whole. Radio and other interactive media could encourage call-ins to discuss the constitutional process; this would also develop professional skills among local staff while at the same time accomplishing a strategic communication objective.

Communication for Humanitarian Relief/Peacebuilding/Good Governance and Government Strategic Communication:
The ability of a government to enunciate the status of a peace negotiation, inform the public of a new electoral system, or demonstrate that it is delivering dividends to populations affected by conflict or humanitarian crisis, can significantly enhance the credibility and legitimacy of that government, improving its chances of success in a post-conflict or fragile environment. Yet these strategic communication objectives can sometimes get lost amidst the individual agendas of bilateral and multilateral donors, who are all engaging in their own communication for development activities. A holistic understanding of the complexities of the information space would enable donors to ensure that their own agendas at the very least do not interfere with host governments’ strategic communication objectives, and preferably work in support of them.
It should be emphasized here that although OTI sits organizationally within the US Agency for International Development, it functions in a murkyly defined continuum between the political and the technical. OTI was created as a very specific type of policy instrument to deploy rapidly in a variety of situations to help mitigate conflict, support transition to democratic governance, and encourage sustainable peace. Hence, the office overtly seeks to work within the “political” sphere, which at times appears at odds with a traditional long-term economic development and poverty reduction strategy. Its imperatives lie within overarching US foreign assistance strategy and foreign policy, and it is open about this mandate. Because of these shaping factors, OTI’s communication strategies can be at once more flexible and yet more constrained by political realities.

**Transitioning to Long-Term Development**

OTI is often criticized for the sometimes rocky transition that occurs when OTI programs morph into long-term democracy and governance, conflict mitigation, or other programs (which are managed by other offices within USAID). This is primarily an internal organizational issue, but it speaks to the planning process within OTI and the emphasis the office places on thinking in the here and now.

A detailed study of OTI evaluations and activities was undertaken in order to shed light on these critiques as well as to further illuminate lessons from OTI programs and processes in the field. This is discussed in the next session.

**4. INSIGHTS AND IMPACT: OTI EVALUATIONS SURVEY AND FIELD SURVEY**

As noted in an earlier section, in addition to illuminating the OTI example as one type of policy approach toward communication, this project sought to gather on-the-ground examples of impact, including feedback on which components of OTI programs worked well and which did not work well. Since OTI’s inception, there have been several common critiques of its work and impact, noted in Section 3, which should be addressed in a publication highlighting the OTI approach. Therefore, any thorough examination of OTI’s approach would need to review existing evaluations, as well as engage with relevant stakeholders of OTI programs, including other donors, NGOs working in these environments, and targeted grassroots beneficiaries to seek their input on what they found useful and not useful about OTI’s programs.

This process was initiated by reviewing the existing body of publicly available evaluations of OTI as an initiative. A handful of evaluations have undertaken to assess some combination of OTI’s impact and approach as well as its overall effectiveness as a policy instrument.

One survey, commissioned by the USAID Inspector General’s Office, focused largely on suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of OTI’s activities. These included suggestions to clarify OTI’s roles and functions both within the US government and outside of it, develop controls to ensure that OTI’s “engagement criteria” is consistently used in country assessments, and consider opportunity costs in evaluating countries for potential intervention. The survey also noted that while some believe the flexible staffing approach (i.e., relying largely on short-term contractors rather than direct-hire civil servants) benefits OTI’s quick-response approach, others felt that a disproportionate amount of time is consumed with human resources issues relating to procurement of personal services contractors, and that the system led to a lack of continuity through the loss of institutionalized skills and knowledge, reduced morale, and limited flexibility in
responding to new challenges. Another challenge highlighted by the survey was that of monitoring and evaluation, i.e., employing scientifically sound methods to assess OTI program impact, both during the operational phase as well as at completion. “As it currently stands,” the survey notes, “post-country reviews are either a ‘meaty pat on the back or a qualified pat on the back.’”28 (OTI responded to this criticism by noting that “judging political impact is a subjective process which cannot usually be objectively verified,” pointing out that in difficult security environments, polling and other monitoring efforts are difficult or prohibitively expensive.)

Another survey was conducted in 2004, marking a decade of OTI’s existence. This survey evaluated OTI’s legacy, attempting to determine whether OTI had made a significant contribution in several areas: democratization, conflict reduction, sustainable peace, rule of law, economic opportunity, fighting corruption, strengthening independent media and civil society, civil-military relations, and DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration). The study found that OTI had made lasting contributions in several of these areas, even when some projects fell flat. With respect to OTI’s work with the media, the report notes

This is an area in which OTI has made outstanding, almost unique, contributions to the development of new nations and new societies. If we accept the premise that accountability and transparency, and therefore democracy and good governance, are well served by an informed public, and if one also stipulates that new governments will serve their people best and more completely if they know that knowledgeable and experienced journalists and broadcasters will observe and comment on their activities, then OTI performed extraordinary services in our sample countries by helping to create newspapers and radio stations, TV programming, and opinion polling operations, by training journalists in modern techniques, and by physically reconstructing broadcast facilities. . . Arguably, no other initiatives of OTI have been so transformative and so well sustained as those in the media realm.29

Despite the positive review of OTI’s media and communication work, the report does not go on in great detail to evaluate OTI’s conceptual approach or seek insights from its programs on the ground. Thus, the decision was made to compile a review of all publicly available evaluations of OTI country programs, many of which contained media and communication components.

**Evaluations of Country Programs**
The vast majority of OTI evaluations were commissioned by OTI to evaluate specific country programs after OTI had phased them out. For this publication, the evaluations were gathered and analyzed, with particular attention paid to the media and communication components of programs. In total, evaluations of 18 different OTI country programs were surveyed. Many of these were undertaken by independent survey firms or consultants contracted by OTI, such as Social Impact, Inc.

A chart with a full breakdown of key findings from all the country evaluations can be found in Appendix C. Briefly, findings from this exercise show

- Media and communication, to a large extent, are firmly integrated throughout OTI country approaches and often are a key strategic piece of the overall approach;
- Media and communication programs often demonstrate a short-term impact, but are weak on long-term planning and sustainability;
- Monitoring and evaluation remains inconsistent across programs.
In addition, the review of evaluations shows that OTI’s approach toward media and communication has clearly evolved over time, incorporating learning from past projects. For instance, projects that occurred earlier in OTI’s existence (in the mid-90s, for instance) did not emphasize the three-pronged, holistic approach that OTI developed several years later; earlier activities were sometimes limited to one-off trainings or isolated interventions.

Despite yielding these insights, this review of publicly available evaluations only told part of the story. This was because the evaluations 1) did not follow a standard methodology; 2) did not yield a sufficient quantity of data points and conclusions for analysis; 3) did not sufficiently break down the media/communication aspect of OTI’s work to provide a meaningful assessment of the usefulness of OTI programs to a variety of stakeholders.

**Qualitative Field Research: Survey of Two Countries**

Therefore, in order to glean further insights into OTI’s programmatic approach—with a particular focus on learning from its experiences—a survey was commissioned for this publication. It should be noted that the survey was not designed to produce a comprehensive, qualitative assessment of OTI’s overall impact across the width and breadth of its programs. Rather, it was conceived of as another way to shed light on an interesting and innovative model currently being applied in various types of post-conflict, transitional and/or fragile situations.

The qualitative, questionnaire-based survey was conducted in two countries where OTI has or had programs: Liberia and Sri Lanka. Liberia was chosen because it represented an environment of political transition, in which OTI’s work focused on consolidating good governance and improving government capacity. Sri Lanka was chosen because OTI programs there represented a range of activities, including humanitarian response after the tsunami, efforts to support independent media, and support for the peace process.

The same questionnaire was administered in both countries, to around 20 respondents in each country. The same consultant traveled to each country to administer the questionnaire. Respondents were chosen using a “snowball sampling” method, whereby each respondent provided suggestions for others to contact. The questionnaires were then analyzed by a separate consultant, whose full report is summarized in Appendix B.

**Survey Findings: A Summary**

The survey uncovered several criticisms of OTI’s programs in these two countries:

1) *Sustainability* – many respondents from both countries expressed criticism of OTI’s failure to provide long-term support to both individual projects and institutional capacity;

2) *Preliminary needs assessment* – respondents criticized OTI’s perceived lack of inclusiveness and advanced planning, which in turn had the effect of weakening programmatic quality and effectiveness and of diminishing the credibility and legitimacy of OTI and its project partners;

3) *Excessive emphasis on training* – a substantial number of respondents agreed that OTI places too much emphasis and unrealistic expectations on on-site training and training facilities (to the neglect of more appealing and effective activities and formats);

4) *Government resistance* – respondents shared a widespread conviction that OTI’s communication and civil society objectives will never be approached without far-reaching legal and judicial reform and substantive changes in the attitudes and behavior of public officials.
Factors contributing to the success of OTI activities and services were much more diverse:

1) Face-to-face formats for activities and programs (repeatedly cited as increasing the appeal, relevance and credibility of program content);
2) Participatory activities and programming, including “Q-and-As”, “local voices” in program content;
3) Innovations to increase accessibility to activities and programs (use of traditional local media in remote, rural areas; recommendations for mobile and/or rotating rural training centers, etc.);
4) Activities that provide opportunities for ethnic and cultural exchange among traditional adversarial populations;
5) Emphasizing HOW and WHY messages and information are important (for populations who are traditionally suspicious and/or have low expectations of media);
6) Overall, there was almost universal agreement regarding the importance of the training, resources and programming provided by (or in cooperation) with OTI. According to the survey report, respondents may have used the survey as an opportunity to express frustration with chronic obstacles to communication in their countries (from judicial/governmental constraints to lack of resources and expertise to inadequate infrastructure). OTI’s successful activities may have, therefore, served to highlight all the other issues that remain to be addressed.

It is clear from the survey responses that some of the general criticism of OTI’s focus on immediate results rather than long-term sustainability is shared by a variety of respondents in the field. At the same time, respondents also validated both OTI’s methods (its quick-time, flexible response) and the content of its activities. Interestingly, few survey respondents in either country felt that OTI’s work was “too political,” although this is often raised as a criticism of the OTI approach.

Refer to Appendix B for the full report.

5. CONTEXTUALIZING THE MODEL: OTHER DONOR EXPERIENCES IN POST-CONFLICT AND TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

While the OTI experience in these environments certainly highlights important lessons, it is certainly not the only such approach to dealing with media/communication in post-conflict and fragile environments. Other donors have also worked in these types of environments, and have evolved their own approaches. In this section, we will briefly examine the strategic choices made by two other significant actors: the United Nations and the UK Government. Both have significant experience in post-conflict and fragile settings, and their experiences also highlight important lessons about the role of media/communication in these settings.

This section is not intended as a complete examination of these donors’ experiences. Doing full justice to these donors’ activities would require more space and funding than this particular publication allows. Rather, this section is intended to put the OTI experience into context and to flesh out the picture of donor communication policies and activities. This report may eventually form part of a larger series, in which other publications will more fully examine these other individual donor experiences with communication in post-conflict settings.
5.1. UN: DPKO
The United Nations, as the largest single international organization with a peace operations mandate, has worked extensively in post-conflict and fragile situations with various forms of media, for varying purposes. UN-produced information is frequently the only reliable source of information in the relevant conflict-afflicted area. This means that, whether communication is seen as a vital part of the reconstruction process or not, the UN’s perception of the role of communication and its ability to shape communication in the post-conflict environment can have a profound effect on the conflict landscape.

The UN’s peace operations may be divided into three principal activities: conflict prevention/peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building. Although media and communication are elements of each of these components, this section will focus chiefly on their deployment in peacekeeping (a fusion of both military and civilian efforts to build peace in the immediate aftermath of civil wars) and peacebuilding (activities in the more advanced post-conflict stage that deal with reconstruction, governance, and human rights).

Institutionally, a range of UN bodies may work in the media/communication arena. The UNDP focuses on researching and supporting independent media as a component of democratic governance, as do UNESCO and the UNDP Governance Center in Oslo. However, for the purposes of this paper and the contexts with which it is concerned, we will focus primarily on the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

Evolving Role of Communication in Peacekeeping
In its beginnings, peacekeeping was conceived as a military process that served solely to anchor diplomatic and political processes. Information-sharing in this context was therefore not only de-prioritized, but was viewed with some suspicion. As one commenter notes, “the notion that peacekeeping should involve an informational strategy in support of its mandate was non-existent—although there was some attempt to produce basic public information materials in the Sinai and the Congo.”

This conceptualization of the role of strategic information dissemination in support of peacekeeping gradually evolved. Specifically, public information began to be viewed as a more important part of peacekeeping operations, beginning with the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. UNTAG pioneered the use of radio programs, poster campaigns and civil society outreach in the context of elections, and the efforts were regarded as successful. This demonstrated the value of public information to UN missions more generally, leading to somewhat greater inclusion in pre-mission planning.

In its early inception, nonetheless, public information remained defined somewhat narrowly. That is, public information in the UN peacekeeping mission context was primarily seen to encompass efforts by the UN to disseminate information about its operations and activities, ensuring that the “UN message” was transmitted to domestic inhabitants of the relevant region as well as local and international press. Comprehensively,

...the primary roles of UN information initiatives in a mission area are broadly defined as 1) to inform and facilitate international media coverage of the UN mission, and keep journalists abreast of political, military, and humanitarian developments in the mission area; 2) to disseminate information about the UN mandate, policy, and actions to the
local population; and 3) to inform UN personnel internally about mission-relevant issues and events.\textsuperscript{44}

In keeping with this definition, early missions tended to view communication as solely instrumental to the broader goals of the peacekeeping mandate, rather than seeing communication as a crucial public good in and of itself. To undertake its “informing” mandate, the UN largely set up its own radio stations in mission areas. Issues such as long-term sustainability of communication processes and their relevance to fundamental concepts of governance and rule of law were raised sporadically, if at all.

The most major recent milestone in the development of communication in peacekeeping operations was the publication of the August 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, called the Brahimi Report after its chair, UN Under-secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi. Published in the wake of well-publicized shortcomings in peacekeeping operations, the Brahimi Report presented specific recommendations for reforming the practice of peacekeeping. Included among these recommendations were several that indirectly and directly highlighted the role of communication in peacekeeping operations. The most explicit communication-related recommendations came in the section of the report that addressed public information, noting that credible information was necessary to dispel rumor, counter disinformation, and secure the cooperation of local populations.\textsuperscript{45} Recommendations included

- inclusion of public information strategies and personnel in pre-mission planning;
- integration of experienced spokespeople into leadership teams;
- creation of start-up kits of equipment for rapid deployment of public information teams;
- creation of a roster of pre-screened experts with communication field experience who could be deployed at short notice;
- use of information technology to keep field operations staff up to date on unfolding events
- creation of a distinct unit housed within the Department of Public Information or the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to be tasked with operational planning and support of public information in peace operations\textsuperscript{46}

Since the dissemination of the Brahimi Report, some of the recommendations contained within it have been implemented. Public information has become an accepted part of many UN peacekeeping missions. According to current and former UN officials, some pre-mission planning does now include public information strategies that are more thoroughly integrated with the mission.

At the same time, not all of the recommendations in the Brahimi Report have been easily implemented. Experts say that bureaucratic and political pushback has impeded the creation of additional personnel posts to deal with public
information during peacekeeping. Past and present UN officials stress that while public information has now taken its place in the organizational chart, it is still fairly low down on the list of priorities in peacekeeping operations.

Perhaps most importantly, communication, in the form of public information, is still largely perceived as an offshoot of public relations, rather than as a technical component of the reconstruction process. Although this perception is changing, there still tends to be no set “policy” for dealing with the full range of communication issues that arise during peacekeeping operations, ranging from public information to the more long-term process of transitioning to the long-term development of an independent media sector. Bureaucratic turf battles, as well as deeply ingrained structural and cultural issues, have also impeded information sharing within the UN system. Often, in the absence of coherent policy guidance on communication, effective programs rely on the collective knowledge of expert individuals with experience in post-conflict settings. While this knowledge can be extremely useful on a case-by-case basis, it is rarely preserved institutionally in a form (i.e., strategic guidance or best practice “toolkits” for ground operations) that can be adapted and improved upon with each new mission. In each individual setting, much depends on mission leadership and its understanding of the role of communication.

**UN Radio: Two Examples**

UN-operated radio/television stations and networks have become the most prominent face of UN peacekeeping communication efforts in many cases. The evolution in the role and management of the stations and networks over time speaks to the evolution of the concept of communication itself within the peacekeeping process. The stations themselves are frequently forced to balance differing priorities: for instance, should the primary emphasis at UN radio stations be placed on disseminating impartial news and information (even that which may be negative about the UN itself), or should the emphasis be on generating positive coverage of UN activities? Should sustainability of radio stations over the long term be stressed in the start-up phase, or should stations set up as quickly as possible with available staff to facilitate information flow? Two examples illustrate some of the issues faced by UN radio stations.

In Timor Leste, UNTAET (the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor) set up a radio/television station to disseminate UN-related news and information and serve as a reliable source of information for the local population. While the UN maintained an active presence, the station provided a regular stream of news and information, serving as a key information resource for the local population. During most of the UN mandate, however, the station was staffed and directed by expatriates, with little focus on training local staff to assume responsibility for running the station and producing content after the UN had left. When the UN did eventually leave, there was confusion over whether the station should be bequeathed directly to the government or another entity. Few local staff had been trained to take on either news/content production or management roles, and training was clearly going to be a long-term endeavor. Eventually, additional donor funding made it possible for Fondation Hirondelle, a Swiss media NGO, to help build the capacity of what is now Radio Television Timor Leste as a public service broadcaster. The station is now making progress, although there have been continuing issues with its independence and with the regulation governing its operation.

Another, different example of a UN radio effort can be found in Radio Okapi, a network of stations billed as a joint venture between Fondation Hirondelle and MONUC (the official UN mission
in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Radio Okapi marks a significant departure from the “UN public information” frame that dominated earlier UN radio projects; its stated aim is not to convey UN information but to “enable the people of the Congo to communicate with their compatriots.” From the outset, Radio Okapi was designed not as a short-term UN mouth-piece but as a long-term project that would continue after the life of MONUC. The network’s emphasis on supporting elections and the peace process through provision of credible, non-partisan information makes it much more of an independent media program in style and substance than many of its UN radio predecessors. One continuing issue for Radio Okapi is its future sustainability; even while broadening its funding base to include significant bilateral donor support, it is still working on establishing a working business model that can carry it through the long term. OTI has been one of those donors, providing assistance to Radio Okapi to help it encourage discussion and community involvement.

It should be noted that there are few formal evaluations of UN radio projects conducted by trained staff assessing standardized outcome and impact criteria. Part of this problem is that, ultimately, there exists no common framework with which to assess the effectiveness of various communication interventions from a technical perspective. While some efforts may be able to gauge how widely certain messages are disseminated over UN radio, or what percentage of the population says they have access to UN radio, there is a dearth of analytical assessment models that will show how UN (and other) media efforts contribute to the overall reconstruction, peacebuilding and good governance agenda, and how this can be measured either quantitatively or qualitatively. This is also a question of problem definition: When the media and communication sector is seen solely as a tool to a greater end (i.e., as a “public affairs tool” rather than a development and governance deliverable in and of itself), then the measures of impact tend to be confusing and ill-defined. The next section, Section 6, explicitly addresses the complexities of monitoring and evaluation in more detail.

5.2. UK: DFID and Stabilisation Unit

In general, the various foreign policy/foreign assistance-related organs of the UK government have engaged in a wide variety of communication-related programming. A portion of it has occurred in post-conflict and fragile areas, and there are studies underway to extract lessons from these experiences. The following section outlines the major activities of each department, concluding with a summary of cross-cutting issues.

Often, in the absence of coherent policy guidance on communication, effective programs rely on the collective knowledge of expert individuals with experience in post-conflict settings.

**DFID: Department for International Development**

The UK’s ministry in charge of foreign assistance, DFID drives the majority of the UK’s communication-related work in developing countries. As one of the largest and most significant bilateral donors working in this area, DFID’s strategies and priorities tend to carry disproportionate weight, and can often set the tone for other donors’ actions. DFID has a long-standing history of incorporating communication into its development efforts. It makes regular grants for both communication activities and has funded specialized trust funds to explore the role of communication in governance.
Currently, communication is largely placed within the governance framework at DFID, with emphasis placed on the role of the media in increasing government accountability and demand for good governance. Within the area of fragile states, another area of recurring interest for DFID, communication is seen as important, but there is no separate unit or group of personnel devoted to media/communication in post-conflict or fragile states. However, DFID is one of the “parent departments” of the newly renamed Stabilisation Unit, which specializes in work in post-conflict and fragile states. The Stabilisation Unit is discussed below.

In DFID, a great deal of autonomy and authority is granted to country offices. Although headquarters can provide programmatic guidance, the details are often left to civil servants and advisors on the ground. In-country, the communications issue is generally the province of the office’s press attaché, whose responsibilities may include anything from issuing press releases, to supporting participatory communication activities with local civil society organizations, to working to develop an independent media sector. This blend of public relations with technical issues is both cause and effect of the general murkiness among large donors over how communication should be treated within a development and governance context.

As with the US and other large bilateral donors, DFID generally works with media and communication implementing organizations, such as the BBC World Service Trust and Panos. These organizations tend to shape the practical realities of programming on the ground, but are not in a position to shape policy per se.

**Stabilisation Unit**

The Stabilisation Unit, formerly known as the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit, was created by three “parent” departments: the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development, and the Ministry of Defence. Its primary stabilization goals include preventing or reducing violence; protecting people and key institutions; promoting political processes that lead to greater stability; and preparing for longer term non-violent politics and development. It explains the distinctions between its work and development/humanitarian aid in this way:

The distinction between humanitarian, development, and stabilisation activities is sometimes not clear cut. Stabilisation can be seen as filling the gap between emergency humanitarian assistance and longer term development assistance, though, as the definition above shows, it is more than that. The most fundamental distinctions are between the explicitly political aims of stabilisation (aiming to promote peaceful political processes); the strictly neutral role of humanitarian assistance; and the apolitical poverty-focused rationale for development activity. Sometimes these may be in tension, when, for example the UK is simultaneously aiming to deliver both humanitarian and stabilisation assistance; this needs active management. In other situations, such as where poverty is not a major issue, stabilisation may be needed when there would be little justification for development activity.

In its mission, the Stabilisation Unit tends to address many of the same issues as OTI. At time of writing, the Stabilisation Unit (then PCRU) was attempting to define “strategic communication” for its own purposes, drawing upon lessons from Afghanistan and elsewhere. Each parent department of the Stabilisation Unit has collected its own experiences with communication in post-conflict environments, often with different aims in mind. For instance, the
Ministry of Defense has experience working on psy-ops, polling, and assessing the impact of various operations. The diplomatic side, represented by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) (which has engaged in its own strategic communication projects in Afghanistan and elsewhere) tends to be primarily if not exclusively concerned with more traditional press and public affairs. Finally, DFID has experience building the capacity of local media in fragile areas. The Stabilisation Unit is hoping to triangulate from all these experiences and come up with not only a common definition of strategic communication but to prioritize its importance in operations.

**Overall Issues**

As is the case with other large donors, there is a sense within DFID, FCO and the Stabilisation Unit that “strategic communication” (both in post-conflict environments as well as general development environments) is perhaps less well understood than it should be. This confusion about what the term really means, and the resultant implications for policy and practice, goes back to the issue raised in Section 1.1. With many people using the blanket term “strategic communication” or “stratcomm” to describe virtually any activity with a communication aspect, there is no way to distinguish overt public relations activities from technical independent media programs that bolster governance and accountability in post-conflict and fragile states.

This has implications for human resources, some have noted. Conceptual confusion flows downward into the definition of required skill sets for certain staffing positions. Organizationally, there may be a range of persons, each bringing a completely different skill set, working on communications activities in post-conflict states. Governance advisors, under whose remit post-conflict reconstruction might normally fall, may turn to press attaches for communication-related activities, simply because there are few technical specialists to advise on communication sector activities.

Partly because technical communication activities are sometimes viewed as indistinguishable from public relations activity, those working in post-conflict and fragile states may not view the former as a priority. Some have noted that, even when communication is stated as a policy priority, it nonetheless tends to “go out the window” in high-stress environments. This highlights the fact that there is a clear gap sometimes between policy and practice, and that instilling wholesale change requires more than merely setting a policy at headquarters.
After the Earthquake: Lessons from Pakistan

The following account is adapted from an essay by the chairman of Intermedia, a media consulting organization.

Pakistan’s worst natural disaster struck on October 8, 2005. Over 80,000 died, and the country was immediately faced with huge humanitarian demands, including an estimated internally displaced person (IDP) population of 3.5 million and tremendous physical damage. In addition, large parts of the media infrastructure were destroyed – including newspaper offices, press clubs, and journalists themselves – which meant that affected communities had no way of obtaining crucial information. This led to a proliferation of rumors and unfounded fears.

After pressure by various media groups, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority issued temporary non-commercial emergency licenses, bypassing the usual regulatory process. International media NGO Internews, with funding from the UK and Swiss governments, set about rebuilding media capacities in the affected region through providing equipment, training, and facilities. Eventually, the new community radio network became a trusted source of objective, professional information. Not only could residents quickly obtain reliable information, thus quelling fears and rumors about potential evacuations and health threats, but there were indications that a key news and information program had become a platform for mediating opinions and conflict within the affected areas. Unfortunately, as donor funding for the immediate emergency response period dried up, the program went off the air and emergency FM radio stations were closed.

Lessons from the experience included:

- Information about relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation is critical for survival and recovery in disaster regions. If the local media is disabled by a crisis or lacks the capacity to provide the kind of specialized information needed, outside help must be provided swiftly.
- Government authorities and the international development community lack a policy framework for the role of local media in disaster zones. They need to embed strategies for local media support into the mainstream mechanisms of their relief efforts.
- Media support measures in disaster zones need to go well beyond the immediate emergency response phase and continue well into the reconstruction period.
- Allocating financial support to local media generates concrete improvements in aid effectiveness and in the accountability of governments and relief organizations to affected populations.
- Crises in controlled information environments often present opportunities for the opening up of the public arena that allow a diversity of voices to debate key issues central to the recovery of communities. These openings may prove to be short-lived, however. They are more likely to take hold if external support through local and international media assistance organizations is provided on a continuous basis in the opening fragile phases.
- The abrupt phase-out of emergency stations in the absence of a parallel emergence of a commercial broadcast sector may limit the proliferation of moderate messages in a conflict-prone zone.

6. COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Program monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in fragile environments is still an evolving science. The characteristics of these environments make the M&E process challenging at best. With behavior change communication programs, tracking long-term impact can be extremely difficult and cost-intensive, involving baseline attitude surveys and repeated follow-up surveys. Evaluating the impact of programs to support government strategic communication as well as those to develop independent media is similarly challenging.

Several complicating factors are present in these environments. For instance, in situations of high public interest/scrutiny and particularly high donor interest (for example, in countries where bilateral donors may have a military or other foreign policy-related interest), the increased scrutiny may lead to added resources for monitoring and evaluation. However, that same situation may simultaneously mean higher reporting pressures and an increased desire on the part of the donor for spin control, which may compromise the technical basis of the M&E program.

The constantly shifting post-conflict environment usually entails rapid shifts in donor strategy. This, in turn, can result in “moving the goalposts,” making monitoring programs’ results somewhat meaningless. A suitable approach toward M&E in these environments is able to take into account the fluidity of the situation and adapt. This, however, sets up a conflict between donor funding mechanisms, which require reporting against certain benchmarks, and the necessity of adapting to changing circumstances.

Monitoring in Difficult Environments

Monitoring and evaluation in post-conflict and fragile settings is particularly difficult. The following characteristics of these settings may affect M&E:

- Pre-eminence of political and military considerations
- Confused objectives
- Shortened timeframes
- Weak or missing baselines
- Varying assumptions regarding change
- The need for spatial precision
- Institutional complexity


Monitoring and evaluation in the media and communication sector has developed considerably over the last several years, but is still far from an exact science. Different groups—implementers, donors, and academics—have come up with various ways of monitoring a program’s progress, as well as attempting to evaluate its impact. The larger community is still engaged in an ongoing discussion about monitoring and evaluation, as well as about the types of indicators that should be used at both the country level and the program level.

Some parts of the communication picture already possess broad standardized measures. Broad-based indicators such as IREX’s Media Sustainability Index and the Freedom House Freedom of the Press study do provide an overall look at the state of a country’s media sector. There are, however, no corresponding global indices that can measure the effectiveness of a
government’s communication capacity, or the success of individual communication for governance or peacebuilding programs.

Moreover, broad-based indicators can only go so far. The Freedom House and IREX indices are generally not specific enough to determine the impact of a particular media assistance program. Country indicators can, however, be combined with extremely localized indicators and feedback to produce a balanced evaluation report. For instance, in a situation where the objective is to develop professional journalism, progress on broad country indicators can be measured against analysis of media content from outlets that have received training. These can also be compared against content from outlets that have not received training; and all of this data can be combined again with participant feedback, independent media monitoring reports, and firsthand observation by implementers.

The constantly shifting post-conflict environment usually entails rapid shifts in donor strategy. This, in turn, can result in “moving the goalposts,” making monitoring programs’ results somewhat meaningless.

Particularly in post-conflict and fragile situations, easy metrics are tempting. In volatile circumstances and situations of tense security, it is logistically difficult to collect a rich database of indicators on program progress and impact, and in practice, programs tend to default to the most easily collectible measures. For instance, a program designed to bolster independent media in a post-transition state might identify how many journalists have been trained over the life of the program. But measuring how many journalists pass through a specific program is one thing; determining the overall effect of this program on the media sector is another, while determining the impact of the sector on the country’s overall political situation is another yet again.

The picture is equally cloudy with respect to measuring the impact of government communication programs, including strategic communication programs as well as those designed to increase government communication capacity. Activities such as adopting and implementing disclosure policies, setting up government communication offices, etc., can be unitized and even evaluated—but there are few standardized measures for “success.” Programs, therefore, must strike some sort of balance to ensure that pre-determined metrics provide value without becoming burdensome.

Pre-determined metrics are also appealing because they are less costly than, for instance, compiling survey research data on baseline and subsequent attitudes. But even when using polling and other public opinion data-gathering methods, attributing results to specific projects can be tricky. A communication project aiming to increase understanding of a new peace plan might, for instance, poll a population to identify how many people had heard a specific message. If it wanted to go further, it might ask whether or not people had changed their opinions or activities as a result of the message. But such studies still rely on self-reported attitudes to measure program effectiveness, which can often lead to flawed conclusions about impact. As the literature review in section 2.1 showed, there is still a lack of conclusive data regarding the effectiveness of certain types of behavior change communication programs in post-conflict and fragile environments.
As technical evaluations have shown, failure to collect good M&E results can frequently be traced to faulty program design. This has led many donors and their partners to focus on DM&E as a package – design, monitoring, and evaluation. However, even designing a program that incorporates M&E may not present a perfect solution in high stress environments. As a USAID report notes, “truncated timeframes are incompatible with results-based monitoring that stresses the importance of monitoring outcomes rather than simply outputs.”

Rather than simply collecting outputs, a thorough M&E approach to a specific communication program—say, an independent media program—would combine basic metrics and benchmarks with participant feedback on training effectiveness, as well as follow-up content analysis and audience/readership research to determine if journalists who enrolled in the training program subsequently produced articles that demonstrated a sustained increase in professionalism. Incorporating a variety of evaluation measures can help ensure that the M&E component reflects not merely program effectiveness but overall program effect at both the sectoral and broader country level. Contracting an overall assessment out to an independent analytical firm may be one option for donors who do not have the in-house capacity or funding to do it on their own.

In general, conceptual and practical tussles over M&E in post-conflict and fragile settings highlight the “art vs. science” nature of working with media and communication in these environments. These types of situations necessitate a heightened sensitivity to political realities and the ability to fluidly respond to unexpected situations. At the same time, many M&E systems de-prioritize this type of specialized ability, focusing instead on the ability to deliver on pre-negotiated standards and benchmarks. This is perhaps why those who have spent a great deal of time in these environments encounter problems in trying to describe their approach to M&E.

This basic conundrum does not necessarily absolve donors and NGOs of the need to develop more sophisticated M&E measures. After all, donors must demonstrate accountability and transparency themselves, particularly when working to promote these goals in other countries. Nonetheless, these issues suggest the cut-and-dried, output-oriented approach that works in other sectors and in other environments may simply not be suited to this type of work, and more creative thinking is required to devise approaches that are effective yet not cumbersome.

7. LESSONS LEARNED I: APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

This section explores lessons learned regarding the types of media and communication activities appropriate for different environments. It should be noted that the illustrative lists of activities and suggested timeline/sequencing described here is in no way intended to be a “one size fits all” template. Although the following suggested activities are deemed to be more appropriate for one type of situation than for another, in all cases, specific country context should determine the appropriateness of each activity.

While many reports tend to call for separating activities according to types of states or types of situations, this report will use just two categories: “post-conflict and fragile states,” and “states in crisis.” The latter category refers to states that are actively experiencing widespread violent conflict or that are otherwise ungovernable.
Post-Conflict and Fragile States

For states that may be fragile (including pre- or post-conflict) as opposed to actively in crisis, there are a number of options for working within the media and communication sector to consolidate peace, stability, and more effective and legitimate governance. Illustrative activities might include

- **Targeted dialogue built around issues**: In states vulnerable to conflict and instability, issues such as service delivery, post-conflict elections, anti-corruption/transparency, and DDR (demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of combatants) may be paramount. Multi-level and multi-stakeholder communication around all these issues can help build consensus and encourage participation in state-building goals.

- **Training in basic journalism**: Particularly in situations where there are few or no guidelines and journalists/editors may be isolated from their international professional counterparts, holistic training (emphasizing all aspects of the newsroom) in the basic principles of professional journalism may be an important first step. There may be little or no existing capacity in the country.

- **Peace communication training**: Sensitizing media content producers and journalists to key concepts in conflict resolution may make them better able to portray the complexities of conflict, as well as cover key aspects of conflict more thoroughly, such as peace-building, dialogue, and so on.

- **Content production in support of peace stability goals**: Productions may consist of TV or radio programs targeted at a specific issue or audience, and may form a flagship element of a comprehensive media program. They can be produced by local staff hired for the purpose, or subcontracted out to local production teams when possible. Production activities can play a major training role, as trainees must deal with real-life scenarios and audiences.

  - **Community radio**: In situations where there is little or no media infrastructure, a community radio initiative may be appropriate in order to ensure that communities have a voice and can inform themselves. Community radio stations are low-cost, and can serve as a springboard for local community mobilization.

  - **Public service broadcasting**: A well-run and regulated public service broadcaster can play an important role in providing quality news and entertainment, addressing minority viewpoints and concerns, and examining issues of national identity not taken up by profit-oriented private sector media. In some cases, it may be crucial to lay the regulatory groundwork for reform of the state broadcaster as soon as possible, particularly if there is room to transform it into a genuine public service broadcaster. Care should be taken, however, not to develop the PBS at the expense of all other types of media.

- **Media sustainability**: Although grants and direct equipment transfers may be necessary to seed efforts in the beginning, donors should work to ensure that for profit and community media outlets develop the skills to function on their own, after external funding disappears. For private sector media outlets, this means strengthening their capacity to draw advertising revenue and function as businesses while maintaining editorial
independence and integrity. For community media outlets, it means working to find a not-for-profit model (community contributions, etc.) that allows the station to remain viable in the long term.

- **Media regulation/legislation**: Particularly in post-conflict situations, where the state is trying to re-establish norms and draw up guidelines, guidance on media legislation is crucial. Donors may consider bringing in international experts who can advise on how to craft an internationally acceptable, locally appropriate set of media laws that create an enabling environment for free and independent media. In cases where hate speech has been prevalent in the media, it may be necessary to devise a temporary media regulatory body to act as an independent arbitration body in resolving media-related disputes.

- **Media legal cadre**: Developing an indigenous legal cadre proficient in international and local media law and precedents is crucial to ensuring that there is domestic capacity to create and protect the enabling environment for media once international support pulls out. It may also be necessary in cases where the government is inclined to harass or threaten journalists with legal action; creation of a legal defense fund may also be warranted.

- **Association building**: Communication and media professionals and organizations that exist in fragile conditions may come under threat from both state and non-state actors. Professional associations that link into a wider global network are one way to ensure that any abuses are brought to international attention. Moreover,
Learning from Hurricane Katrina: Media Objectives During Humanitarian Disasters

Unlike the post-conflict and fragile situations mentioned in this section, humanitarian disasters may require a slightly different emphasis when it comes down to concrete activities.

2005’s Hurricane Katrina was a crisis of unprecedented humanitarian proportions for the US city of New Orleans. Although the lessons are derived from a developed setting, many are highly applicable to generalized humanitarian relief settings following complex emergencies in a global context. The Aspen Institute, an international affairs think tank, put together the following checklist of objectives for the media and communication sector, slightly modified for the purposes of this paper.

**Before:**
- Provide constant flow of information, weather, and news
- Reach out to disadvantaged populations:
  - Host community forums of journalists, experts, and leaders
  - Engage alternative and ethnic media
  - Enlist religious organizations and community groups
  - Print and distribute guides for food and medical needs
- Identify and promote information clearing houses, including web sites and alternative forms of media

**During:**
- Assure constant flow of news across all media platforms
- Accelerate the two-way flow of information from citizens
- Police information for error and exaggeration

**After:**
- Disseminate information to address immediate and critical needs
- Locate medical emergency sites
- Locate food and water distribution locations
- Locate fuel and other resource outlets
- Provide realistic expectations of further assistance
- Provide experts with answers
- Outline application process for emergency housing
- Direct to assistance in relocation and temporary housing
- Identify environmental and health hazards
- Work hard to identify unmet needs


**States In Crisis**
When government is either nonexistent or unable to control territory, and where conflict may be violent and intense, the options for working within the communication sector are more limited. For one thing, the sector itself is more vulnerable: media professionals and large pieces of equipment, such as transmission towers, may come under attack. Equipment disbursed by donors may end up in the wrong hands, so tracking key pieces of infrastructure is important. In addition, individual media outlets can be at risk of being co-opted by actors in the conflict, and programs must be careful not to compromise
or endanger individual staff and participants. Finally, the political space and dynamics of conflict may limit what can be productively done in terms of working within the communication sector.

At the same time, the very urgency of the situation may mean that working within the communication sector is even more necessary than usual. Despite the increased constraints, there are still several options for working with the media in such situations.

- **Measures to counter hate media**: In situations where the mass media incites violence, international actors may need to step in to provide alternatives, or, in the most extreme scenario, effectively shut down hate media. For media donors and implementers, the latter step is generally outside their scope; however, the former is one that can be accomplished through identifying alternate means of content transmission, reconciliation programming, and content that specifically works to achieve conflict resolution—as the situation permits.

- **Humanitarian broadcasting**: In situations where a collapsed state has left behind an information and service-provision vacuum, basic humanitarian information can fulfill a much-needed demand.

- **International broadcasting and alternative media**: When the existing political or infrastructure situation makes it impossible to work with local media, it may be necessary to use international broadcasting to reach local populations. In these cases, care should be taken not to turn international broadcasting into a long-term remedy that supplants or crowds out fledgling local independent media.

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**Laws on Incitement: The Model Codes for Post-Conflict Criminal Justice**

The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in most countries’ constitutions, and is protected under international law in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and various regional charters. This right, however, may be limited in certain circumstances, particularly with respect to incitement to a criminal offence, or, less widely, “hate speech,” referring to spreading or inciting racial, religious, or ethnic hatred.

Some argue that in post-conflict states where ethnic groups are using the media to spread hate speech, hate speech should be criminalized alongside actual incitement to a criminal offence. Others argue that this provision would impinge too much on a person’s right to freedom of expression. The drafters of the Model Codes for Post-Conflict Criminal Justice, a UN-sponsored criminal law reform tool tailored to the needs of post-conflict countries, generally sided with the latter view. These drafters, many of whom had witnessed firsthand the phenomenon of ethnic hatred, believed it would be dangerous to introduce hate-speech legislation into a post-conflict situation where the criminal justice system may not be functioning and may lack adequate controls.

One way to deal with this is by providing local media professionals the opportunity to broadcast externally. Alternative media, such as the Internet and satellite broadcasts, may also be useful in reaching certain audiences.

- Training for journalists in reporting from war zones: Assuming the country already has a professional media cadre, training and equipping reporters for reporting on and from war zones is an option. This might include provision of necessary gear and protective equipment, as well as training in what to expect upon encountering belligerents.

8. LESSONS LEARNED II: PRACTICAL THOUGHTS ON PROGRAMS AND POLICY

8.1. Think Long-Term, Act Short-Term

Timelines in post-conflict and other unstable situations are shortened, and the pressure to get programs up and running immediately is intense. In such situations, donors may need to act quickly, without ample time for assessment and planning. Nonetheless, they need to consider carefully how to ensure that immediate interventions incorporate local ownership and set the stage for long-lasting positive impact. Donors should also weigh the possibility that their short-term actions may leave a negative impact on the media and communication sector, such as putting journalists and others at risk, or causing long-term sustainability issues in the sector.

For instance, some media development programs in fragile environments have focused exclusively on training journalists how to be conflict sensitive, or how to report on pressing issues such as elections or security issues, while neglecting the fact that basic professional skills have been left unaddressed. Ultimately, bypassing basic skills to focus on specialized skill—even when well-intentioned—can be counterproductive if the goal is to establish a basis for long-term development and good governance.

Meanwhile, a preponderance of targeted, “behavior change communication” campaigns may contribute to the creation of a culture of “pay for play,” where the media becomes accustomed to solely producing information on demand for donors, political parties, or other entities. Short-term media interventions, such as BCC messaging campaigns or intended-outcome programming, can be designed to build local media capacity and help, not hinder, the development of an independent media sector in the long term. For instance, a development communication project might include a capacity-building component to train staff how to cover or produce such programming on their own in the future. If journalists are involved, donors and program developers should ensure that, if necessary, basic skills are passed along.

Media regulation and legislation should be incorporated into communication planning from the beginning. Collective wisdom gleaned from media and communication programs globally shows that it is crucial to a) develop the legal framework early, incorporating input from the local media community; b) seed a cadre of media law experts that can provide continued advice to parliament, local councils, NGOs, etc. If there are none existing, think about developing media law curricula as part of legal education reform efforts, and whether there may be existing pockets of relevant expertise (returning expatriates, for instance) who can be tapped in the short term. On the regulatory side, it is important to encourage the emergence of a credible, professional independent broadcast regulator to handle process-intensive (and
The Role of International Broadcasting

At times, it may be impossible to work within the communication and media structure in a fragile state, particularly if violent conflict is ongoing. There may be no domestic infrastructure, or the infrastructure and outlets may be wholly controlled by parties bent on fomenting conflict. In this case, international broadcasting—television, Internet and (usually) radio signals broadcast from outside the country's borders—assumes an elevated role. In places such as Sudan, for instance, international broadcasting has played an important role in keeping the country's population informed.

As always, however, care must be taken to ensure that international broadcasting is both appropriate and does not crowd out relevant local efforts. As one commentator pointed out in the case of an international broadcasting effort in Somalia, “The first problem arose when the programme was broadcast out of Addis Ababa by people speaking Somali with Ethiopian accents . . . the Ogaden war between Ethiopia and Somalia was still foremost in the minds of the local radio audience. The project was for all these reasons wholly impractical, and may well have been counterproductive” (Hieber 2002).

Once a fragile situation stabilizes and the environment for working with media becomes more favorable, there may still be a role for international broadcasting. Privately owned satellite channels and advertisers are increasingly partnering with donors, particularly in media messaging campaigns. International advertising agencies have become partners with some donors in finding media placement for PSAs on avian influenza in Asia, for example. However, donors should be aware of the sustainability issues involved for local media, and ensure that the presence of international broadcasting or advertising agencies does not hamper the development of an independent local media or advertising sector.

content-sensitive) issues such as frequency allocation, broadcasting license requirements and applications, and dealing with incendiary broadcasting.

In general, although there will be early pressure to focus on equipment distribution (radios, transmission towers, printing presses) and direct grants to media outlets, donors should take care to maintain a long-term emphasis on building local capacity in the communication sector. Moreover, donors should avoid focusing on “hot spots” in the news, then moving on before fledgling programs are able to stand on their own.

8.2. Whenever Possible, Ensure Locally Appropriate and Locally Owned Activities

When it comes to content, the lesson is a very simple one: Know your audience. Behavior change communication programs cannot be cut and pasted from one cultural environment to another (even, frequently, within the same country). Allowing local consultation and input into design and implementation of these programs, i.e., radio shows or intended outcome dramas, enhances the legitimacy of the activity as well as the credibility of any programming or message generated. Understandably, this is more difficult in a post-conflict or fragile
environment; often, the right-now imperative precludes substantial participatory communication processes. Nonetheless, this is about more than simply following a prescribed normative process for program design, for when a participatory approach underlies even rapidly executed BCC or other communication activities, it is more likely to find receptive audiences and a chance for genuine program success.

When the goal is to support the development of a pluralistic, independent media sector broadly, through training and other activities, it is still vital to incorporate local expertise into the design of activities. Donors should make every effort to seek local partners who possess detailed local experience as well as legitimacy. The best training efforts can fail if they are perceived to be dictated from abroad or from a local source that lacks the trust and respect of the grassroots community it serves.

8.3. Work with Credible, Appropriate Implementing Partners

Once credibility in media activities is lost, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reclaim. For that reason, selecting communication and media partners—whether international or domestic—with relevant expertise in communication is paramount. In immediate post-conflict environments, there is often a blending of military and development-focused activities, and the resulting conceptual blur may allow contractors and implementers with specific expertise in military-focused strategic communication or psychological operations to become involved in activities such as supporting an independent media sector. Experience has shown that these types of organizations generally do not have the appropriate skill sets for transforming state media and fostering the development of an independent media sector. Because the media sector is so high-profile, missteps or inexperience on the part of contractors will not only be visible but likely highly publicized and detrimental to donor efforts.

In many post-conflict contexts in particular, there may be multiple bilateral and multilateral actors engaging in a variety of activities in the communication sphere: public diplomacy, psychological operations, development communication, etc. While recognizing that these activities often take place simultaneously during complex emergencies, donors focusing on development communication and media development programs should ensure that programs in this sphere are securely walled off from psychological operations and other persuasion campaigns. This is crucial for maintaining the integrity and credibility of the programs, their participants, and the donor.

8.4. Carefully Consider Contextual Factors

Contextual factors are always important, but even more so under conditions of fragility. Any media activity, from working with national and local governments on strategic communication to using communication activities to build peace, should be sensitive to not merely the local conditions, but the timing (and timeline) of the proposed activity. Being sensitive to historical and current perceptions of conflict are also important in ensuring that any initiative is grounded and credible.

Another issue that requires nuanced understanding of context is branding. Some donors require clear labeling of projects to highlight their involvement. Although funding sources should never be concealed, highlighting the presence of specific donor funding for communication and media projects can give the appearance that the independence of organizations receiving assistance may be compromised. Particularly with respect to media development activities, any perception that a media outlet
or media activity is merely a public relations exercise by a particular donor will immediately undermine the credibility of the endeavor. A low-key approach can provide a good balance between transparency about the source of funding and sensitivity to these issues.

### 8.5. Balance Short-Term Opportunities with Long-Term Sustainability Concerns

In some cases, direct funding for media outlets may be the only means available to jump-start a media sector in the beginning. Taking a “venture capital” type of approach can encourage the type of entrepreneurialism necessary for a private media sector to flourish. The downside is that some practices may not support financial sustainability of the sector in the long term. For instance, donors need to be sensitive about transferring large amounts of funding to a small handful of media outlets that may not be able to absorb that amount of inflow. Moreover, donor patterns set at the beginning of the media funding process can set expectations for the future in the media sector, including expectations about equipment provision, inflated staff salaries, etc.

Radio programming that is intended to reach a certain population within a certain time frame to communicate specific information – for instance, on voter civic education, or specific peace-building initiatives – need not necessarily be stretched out into a long-term activity if the activity itself does not warrant it. A key lesson in the beginning, then, is that donors try not to set precedents for donor dependency, even though there will be immense pressure to immediately disburse large amounts of funding. At the very least, communication with other donors will ensure that bilateral donors understand how to act in complementarity with other funders in the sector.

While international broadcasting may be a necessary feature of media activity in the early stages (or even the latter stages) of post-conflict reconstruction, it does not necessarily inculcate local capacity in the media sector. Donors should try to ensure that international broadcasting initiatives also have an element of long-term capacity building.

That said, not all media activities must be geared towards being indefinitely maintained over the long-term. Radio programming that is intended to reach a certain population within a certain time frame to communicate specific information – for instance, on voter civic education, or specific peace-building initiatives – need not necessarily be stretched out into a long-term activity if the activity itself does not warrant it. Only those activities that show promise of building long-term capacity in the sector should feature a built-in sustainability component.

### 8.6. Avoid Donor-Driven Projects and Overlap

In fragile environments, where the local government is likely to be both weak and unresponsive, donors need to be careful not to assume they’ve been given a blank canvas upon which to program various activities. While some degree of donor direction is likely and probably necessary in fragile conditions, it is still important to ensure a participatory process of consultation and program design when considering media activities. Overly
donor-driven projects may suffer from conceptual weakness, problems in implementation, and low levels of effectiveness and sustainability.

In the wake of a conflict or natural disaster, multiple donors tend to rush in, all brandishing the same great idea. Whenever possible, it is best to share information on activities and if possible ensure that programs do not overlap. Too much concentration of funding in one area may lead to sustainability problems in the sector, as noted above. It may be particularly useful for donors to pool and share resources on various assessment needs, so that at the very least all donors share some baseline knowledge about the media environment.

8.7. Don’t Confuse Distinct Activities within the Media and Communication Sector

Although it may seem self-evident, too many donors, practitioners and other in-country participants are confused about the respective roles of such conceptually distinct activities as strategic communication and independent media development. Particularly when working in fluid, post-conflict situations, it is all too easy to blur the practical distinctions between strategic communication, communication for development, and independent media development. While certain synergies can and even should be emphasized, as noted in Section 3.4 on “connective tissue” (including, for instance, training both journalists and government officials about how to handle each other), it is important not to cloak one in the guise of the other. Particularly with respect to independent media development, the perception of objectivity is crucial to media’s credibility. Often, donors may seek to fund media outlets to act as a “voice” for a particular military, peacekeeping, or state-building objective; but care must be taken not to compromise the independence and objectivity of the journalists and media professionals involved, lest the long-term foundation of the media sector be compromised at an early stage.


Often, experts who have long worked in post-conflict environments gravitate toward certain “accepted” communication activities, usually established over several years of working in different countries. While there is nothing inherently wrong with sticking to accepted best practices, this may blind expert practitioners and donors to the opportunities presented by new communication technologies. Making use of these technologies in post-conflict and fragile situations requires a certain measure of
entrepreneurialism and creative thought; this is sometimes at odds with a donor culture of top-down planning. However, examples relating to effective use of new information and communication technologies are beginning to emerge (see text box on page 58), and it will be important for donors to stay abreast of new trends.

9. CONCEPTUALIZING A NEW POLICY MODEL FOR COMMUNICATION IN POST-CONFLICT AND FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS

The strategic importance of media and communication in post-conflict and fragile environments has been highlighted here, in the case study of OTI and in the work of other donors. Yet for too long, donors have treated the issue of communication in post-conflict and fragile environments as something that can be dealt with on a tactical level, by viewing communication solely as an instrument toward another end goal rather than a worthy goal in itself. This manifests in the tangle of banners, signs, radio advertisements, and other one-off events designed to broadcast messages rather than engage in dialogue and build institutions.

Thankfully, this is slowly changing throughout the various disciplines that intersect within the communication sector. Specialists in communication for development now make the case for treating communication as a public good in itself, not merely as a means to an end. Strategic communication specialists are going beyond simple government messaging to incorporate notions of state-citizen dialogue and government responsiveness. Independent media development specialists are thinking holistically about the link between the media sector and related programs, like media literacy and citizen dialogue. All three developments speak to the advance of a structural view of communication—one that sees a distinct role for the media and communication sector in the key challenges of governance reform.

The field of post-conflict reconstruction, however, has been slow to adopt this more structural view of the role of communication. Thus, this paper calls for a new policy model for communication in post-conflict countries. This policy model would make media and communication a technical priority in post-conflict and fragile states, on par with other fundamental building blocks of governance, with its own dedicated financial, bureaucratic, and human resources. More specifically, this paper argues that donors must divide their approach toward communication in these environments into two distinct categories: communication as a technical component of governance, as stated above, and media/communication as a tool of donor outreach and public affairs. At present, many donors conflate the two, while in fact they are and should be separate.

But why should the media and communication sector qualify for a policy-level shift? After all, just about any technical discipline can make a case for increased attention when it comes down to funding and resources. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, the media and communication sector is truly unique: it is both the HOW of post-conflict reconstruction (in that nearly every activity must pass through the communication space in some form) as well as a very significant WHAT (in that the sector constitutes an important structural issue in and of itself).

- To achieve both legitimacy and effectiveness, post-conflict, nascent, and/or transitional governments must be able to communicate effectively with, and seek feedback from, the citizens they represent.
The Growing Role of Information and Communication Technology

There are often competing strands of thought with respect to using new information and communication technologies (ICT) in post-conflict and fragile settings. One strand (typically coinciding with new technological advances in the developed world, such as podcasting, etc.) argues that new ICT capabilities can radically transform reconstruction, peacebuilding, and long-term development in post-conflict and fragile environments. Another argues that overreliance on “shiny” new technology ignores fundamental issues of access, cost, literacy, and usability in developing and particularly post-conflict states.

Both of these approaches may contain an element of truth in any given situation. As always, context should determine the appropriateness of deploying any particular piece of technology in the field; for instance, dropping laptops into a village with no computer-literate, or even literate, population is not likely to result in the desired result of keeping the village informed of key security developments. On the other hand, technologies that take account of people’s (sometimes pre-existing) ability to make use of them (including cost/access questions) may be extremely useful, enabling populations to access information quickly and make use of it in productive ways. Mobile telephony, SMS, and blogs may all prove of use in post-conflict situations under the right circumstances. For instance, SMS may enable diaspora populations to engage with relatives and others inside post-conflict and fragile states, providing informational lifelines and a sense of community. In areas where pockets of conflict exist and physical travel may be difficult, Internet access paired with community radio stations may help isolated populations hear important news and information, from both within and outside the country.

Of course, there is no single “right” answer to the technology issue. However, as newer forms of ICT develop and continue to radically transform how people across the world acquire, disseminate, and understand information, donors will no longer be able to simply rely on old tools, methods, and frameworks. At the very least, policymakers and practitioners will need to stay on top of technological developments to ensure that the potential benefits (and a thorough understanding of potential drawbacks) can be realized.

- A vibrant, pluralistic independent media serves to inform the public, ensure transparency and accountability of government, and provide public opinion feedback to government to ensure effective and legitimate policies, which in turn helps strengthen post-conflict governments.

- Specific reconstruction, peacebuilding and governance goals necessitate a comprehensive approach toward communication, in which “message dissemination” is replaced with a more holistic, participatory approach that includes dialogue with stakeholders.

Certainly, it would be easier to simply advocate for a more thorough “mainstream-
ing” of communication into donor post-conflict policies. But in examining the experiences of OTI, it became clear that their approach did not mainstream, or comprehensively integrate, communication into other post-conflict activities so much as recognize it a separate and worthy technical component of post-conflict reconstruction in itself. Based on the evidence examined here, this paper asserts that there is utility in calling for this type of approach among a broader cross-section of donors. At the very least, such a call may stimulate debate at the donor policy level about the role that communication does and should play in these environments.

Calling for media and communication to be emphasized as a matter of policy is not sufficient, however. In the field, there remains substantial confusion about whether the very phrase “communication” denotes something that involves press releases or “spin” on the part of donors. Therefore, as noted, donors should divide their approach toward communication in post-conflict and fragile environments into two distinct categories: media/communication as a tool of donor outreach and public affairs, and media/communication as a technical component of activity in post-conflict rebuilding situations. This important distinction is necessary to ensure that media and communication technical activities (including independent media development, communication for development and other goals, and government strategic communication assistance) are not conflated with donor public relations.

The muddling of these conceptually and programmatically distinct activities can have detrimental effects. For instance, donors who conflate the two types of media work tend to hire public relations professionals to undertake all communication-related work in the field; however, the types of media and communication approaches detailed in this paper requires the technical capabilities of a governance and/or conflict specialist, preferably one with deep experience in media. One also needs look no further than the initial, disastrous US government forays in transforming the media sector in Iraq, in which a defense contractor experienced mainly in psychological operations was tasked with transforming the state media into a public service broadcaster, to understand the distinction between treating the media as part of a public relations apparatus and treating it as a separate technical area deserving of specialized skills and attention.

Merely calling for policy changes, of course, does not necessarily translate into practical, programmatic change on the ground. There is a gap sometimes between policy and practice, and half the challenge is ensuring that the bureaucracy is prepared to respond to policy shifts with the requisite personnel, funding, and technical expertise. Unfortunately, many donors may not go far enough in this area: while they may call for different policies and even allocate more money toward these new policies, the lack
of specialized personnel, operating within well-defined institutional parameters, to carry out the policy can impede actual implementation.

As part of the policy shift recommended, therefore, donors should ensure that dedicated staff, with the requisite background and experience in governance, conflict, and communication, are available to address media and communication sectoral activities in post-conflict and fragile states. This cadre of trained specialists should function either as a sub-division of donors’ post-conflict response teams or perhaps form a separate organizational unit of their own. They should also possess dedicated financial resources so that the functional emphasis on media and communication also carries bureaucratic relevance and programmatic weight.

This is where learning from the OTI experience is valuable. Although not every aspect of OTI’s methods and programs has proved successful, it has shed valuable light on an important conceptual and practical approach toward working with communication and media in post-conflict and fragile environments. Operationally, it affords unique flexibility of both thinking and programming on the ground, and is clearly (and bureaucratically) separated from the work of “donor public relations,” which is handled operationally by other units. The “OTI model” affords two advantages, both of which are crucial in fragile states: concentration of specialist expertise in media and communication, and the flexibility of approach to ensure that program development is creative, savvy, and thoughtful.

It is certainly possible to apply an OTI-like approach without creating a separate unit to focus specifically on media and communication. Yet, at present, many donors have failed to institutionalize media and communication work as an essential part of achieving reconstruction and stabilization goals. This failure to institutionalize specialization means that expertise may be thin on the ground, when and where it’s most needed. Although there are certainly individual field practitioners who can bring their expertise to bear on certain situations, there are for the most part very few institutionalized guiding norms or principles that can be applied by experts and non-media-specialists alike to achieve lasting results.

Clearly, there are trade-offs in employing a policy approach like OTI’s. While the “venture capital,” window of opportunity type approach may seed a hundred projects, OTI clearly needs to work on making more of its efforts sustainable over the long run. Failure to employ long-range thinking may necessitate repeat visits and longer engagement, with fewer tangible results. Moreover, OTI’s overt political orientation has found several critics within the development community, who argue that reconstruction and stabilization activities should follow more of a long-term development model, leaving “politics” aside for diplomats.

To some extent, this latter type of rebuke misses the point: OTI, although functionally within a development organization, is fundamentally concerned with the more politically complex work of maneuvering within post-conflict, fragile, and transitional environments. But the larger issue is that these environments themselves are inherently political, requiring a pragmatic mix of solutions and an approach that blends art and science. If donor governments are trying to “put Humpty Dumpty back together again,” why not be up front about the political nature of that endeavor, as well as the consequences?

Thus, the call for a more technical approach to communication and media in fragile states does not necessarily mean that a solely
technocratic, or apolitical, approach should apply in every situation. Working in post-conflict and fragile states by necessity requires a fusion of the technocratic and the political, often a very delicate balance to achieve. It also requires the ability to think on the spot and work with the elements at hand, even if there is no “toolkit” on the subject. The skill set for this type of work will necessitate a particular type of expertise in governance, political, and communication issues, as well specialized training. It also requires a certain type of entrepreneurial thinking among donors that is not the norm in long-term development environments.

There is no single correct answer to these larger issues. There is no doubt, however, that post-conflict and fragile state issues will continue to form a significant part of the global development, governance, and security agenda for the foreseeable future. It is in the interests of all concerned to continually re-examine what we know, allowing practices and policies to evolve. This paper ultimately seeks to secure a place for open, participatory media and communication processes in the evolution of mainstream thinking on governance and peacebuilding, in the hopes of devising more effective solutions to the challenges of post-conflict and fragile states.
### Appendix A: ACTIVITY TEMPLATE

#### Illustrative Sequencing Approach

The following sample framework for working with media and communication in a post-conflict environment is intended to be **illustrative only**. It is NOT intended as a blueprint for sequencing media initiatives. It lays out some of the broad issues that donors and media implementers should be considering, according to general phase and type of activity. Clearly, not all the activities suggested will be relevant in every case. Country context should always determine the exact sequencing and scope of activity.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Initial Post-Conflict Response</th>
<th>Reconstruction and Stabilization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Conduct quick media assessment informed by overall conflict assessment, population information needs, and audience research. As programs are designed, develop monitoring and evaluation plan.</td>
<td>Conduct monitoring and evaluation of initial response efforts to ensure local feedback, fine-tune information delivery, and set stage for long-term program design. As appropriate, conduct audience research to gauge effect of content-related programs.</td>
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<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>If needed, put in place or distribute enabling infrastructure (i.e., transmission towers, hand-crank radios, printing presses, etc.) to ensure population can access information.</td>
<td>If needed, re-visit infrastructure issue to ensure needs are being met; conduct maintenance and begin to train local personnel in maintenance.</td>
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<td><strong>Strategic Communication: Humanitarian Relief, Peacebuilding, Good Governance</strong></td>
<td>As needed, provide national/regional/local humanitarian or security-related news and information, through appropriate mix of media: radio/TV talk shows, radio/TV drama, PSA/jingles, billboards, posters, handbills, theater, video-on-wheels, newspapers/magazines, satellite, the Internet, cell phones. As appropriate, utilize international broadcasting in a way that does not undermine future local efforts.</td>
<td>Engage in tactical information campaigns on specific issues as appropriate: voter registration, human rights, development information. Engage in spot media campaigns to reduce tensions in hot areas. Involve local communities (including but not limited to civil society organizations) in production of local information to demonstrate tangible results in early phase. If appropriate, implement media-related conflict transformation activities, such as “intended outcome programming.”</td>
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<td><strong>Support for Independent Media</strong></td>
<td>Provide direct grants and equipment transfers to individual media outlets, keeping in mind absorptive capacity and long-term sustainability. Provide basic training to media professionals, focusing on main-streaming relevant issues in news coverage. Assess condition of state broadcaster (if relevant) and, as appropriate, consider next steps for possible transformation into public service broadcaster. Facilitate communication between media, civil society, and government groups, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Provide basic training to media professionals. Work with journalists on conflict issues – “peace journalism” approach to encourage conflict-sensitive but professional reporting. If relevant, plan for transformation of state broadcaster into public service broadcaster; lay groundwork for developing private media. Support indigenous media-sector associations to enhance enabling environment. Ensure developing legal framework enables development of independent media; synergies with constitution-drafting and other rule of law activities. Consider, if appropriate, models to deal with incendiary speech, such as monitoring boards (caveat: proper board composition, implementation, and monitoring are key to ensure board functions independently and responsibly).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transition to Stable, Good Governance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Long-Term Governance and Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue monitoring, evaluation, and research efforts, making adjustments to programs as needed. If situation has changed significantly, a more thorough media/communication assessment and program redesign may be appropriate.</td>
<td>Continue monitoring, evaluation and research efforts, making adjustments to programs as needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ensure sustainability in infrastructure provision and maintenance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ensure sustainability in infrastructure provision and maintenance</strong></td>
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<td>As appropriate, continue to engage in tactical development communication and other activities. Ensure that communication programs contain progressively more capacity-building components, complementing programs undertaken to strengthen the independent media sector.</td>
<td>As appropriate, continue to engage in tactical development communication and other activities. Ensure that “behavior change communication” activities contain progressively more capacity-building components, complementing programs undertaken to strengthen the media sector.</td>
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<td>Develop institutional capacity to train journalists domestically. Foster university-level (if appropriate) and other institute-based journalism and media programs. Support other ways to ensure long-term development of sector – foundations, trusts, professional associations, etc. Support the emergence of media-sector CSOs to act as media and freedom-of-expression watchdogs. Train media law experts; engage in continual work on media legal issues. Promote the development of a pluralistic media: public service, community, and private outlets. Ensure regulation encourages the emergence of diverse voices.</td>
<td>Support the continuing education and skill development of the media professional cadre. Assist development of advertising markets, ratings systems, and media financing. May include working with the advertising sector, publishers, banks and other lenders, independent audit boards, etc. Assist with legal, regulatory, and—if necessary—constitutional reform to enable a free media environment; further expand cadre of media legal experts. As appropriate, complete process of transforming state broadcaster into public service broadcaster. Raise general public awareness of the role and importance of independent media; introduce idea of media ombudsman at individual outlets.</td>
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Appendix B: Survey of OTI Activities in Liberia and Sri Lanka
Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Qualitative Research Report
Design, Analysis and Report by David Shirley, CommGAP Consultant; Interviws by Ed Rackley, CommGAP Consultant

I. Background and Objectives
The following qualitative research study was commissioned by the World Bank’s Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) as one part of a comprehensive study of an innovative, post-crisis development model that has been implemented globally by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) since 1994. Under the direction of USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives, this groundbreaking development initiative was designed to promote government accountability, open communications, and active support of humanitarian and other public concerns in countries recovering from violent political conflict, natural disasters and other socially and politically destabilizing events. To achieve these objectives, the OTI model features three integrated areas of concentration:

• Strategic communication assistance for governments;

• Institutional and infrastructural assistance to broadcasting, print, and other independent media;

• Communication for humanitarian relief, development, good governance and conflict mitigation.

Research for the study was designed to examine the recent implementation of the OTI model in two post-crisis settings: Liberia and Sri Lanka. The overall objective of the research was to assist in the refinement and enhancement of the OTI model for implementation in future post-crisis settings. With this in mind, a qualitative survey was conducted to provide information about the following issues and concerns contributing to the OTI model’s success—or lack of success—in meeting the needs of partners and beneficiaries (government officials, media professionals and CSO representatives) in post-crisis environments:

• An identification of the contextual issues (attitudinal, regional, professional, etc.) that inform the perceived quality and effectiveness of OTI assistance;

• An examination of respondents’ overall attitudes toward and assessments of OTI training, support, and expertise (including the social, political, economic, professional, and other factors informing respondents’ attitudes and assessments);

• An identification of specific program-related factors that increase and/or inhibit the perceived quality and effectiveness of OTI training, support and expertise (including specific examples of program successes and failures, along with the factors contributing to those outcomes);

• An identification of external obstacles to or facilitators of OTI program success.

II. Methodology
Research for the study was conducted among key program constituents (government officials, media professionals, CSO representatives) in

The sample for the study included 37 respondents (16 from Liberia and 21 from Sri Lanka), including the following breakdowns by profession and type of exposure to OTI assistance:

**Profession**
- Media professionals – 24
- CSO representatives – 11
- OTI representatives – 2

**Exposure to OTI**
- Program partner – 23
- Regular beneficiary – 14
- Occasional or as-needed beneficiary – 11

The qualitative survey instrument was designed, in collaboration with CommGAP staff, by an independent research consultant with extensive experience conducting similar projects for the World Bank and other multi-national institutions. As described above, the survey instrument was designed to generate suggestions for refining and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of future implementations of the OTI model. The survey featured open-ended questions examining respondents’ awareness of, attitudes toward, and evaluations of the OTI model as implemented in their communities, along with the various factors (social/cultural, political, economic, professional, regional, etc.) that informed their receptivity to and assessments of OTI assistance.

The interviews were conducted in-person with respondents in both countries by an experienced interviewer with extensive experience at the World Bank. All interviewees were assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity.

Once the interviews were completed, transcripts and summaries were then provided to the research consultant, who was responsible for analyzing and reporting the overall findings.

**III. Research Findings**

Findings from the study have been organized into four key areas that informed effectiveness of the OTI model among partners and beneficiaries in Liberia and Sri Lanka. The key areas are:

A. Preexisting attitudes that provided the context for respondents’ expectations of, receptivity toward, and assessments of OTI training, support, and expertise;

B. External factors (political, legal, social/cultural, economic, regional, generational, etc.) that facilitated or inhibited the effectiveness of OTI assistance;

C. Program-related factors that enhanced the perceived effectiveness of OTI assistance (including specific examples of successful activities or events);

D. Program-related factors that decreased the perceived effectiveness of OTI assistance (including specific examples of unsuccessful activities and events).

**A. The Impact of Preexisting Attitudes on Respondents’ Assessments of OTI Assistance**

A key finding from the study was the extent to which respondents’ preexisting attitudes informed their expectations and assessments of OTI training, support, and expertise. As the remainder of the report will demonstrate, respondents’ frustrations with the current situation in their countries and urgency for sustainable, substantive assistance frequently overwhelmed their attentiveness to and concerns about more specific features of program assistance. Assistance that they contributed to, received, or learned about indirectly was consistently (and, for the most part, exclusively) evaluated in

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1The discrepancy in numbers results from the fact that several respondents had interacted with OTI both as partners and beneficiaries.
terms of its ability in terms of its ability to address the overall needs and aspirations of respondents themselves—with little or no attention to the rationale or objectives of specific programs or services. In this context, OTI was most frequently evaluated for the scope, accessibility, and sustainability of its assistance, rather than for the actual content and presentation of its work in the field.

Research revealed a variety of preexisting concerns and perceptions that were widely shared by partners and beneficiaries from both countries and that contributed (both positively and negatively) to respondents’ overall expectations and assessments of OTI assistance. These concerns and perceptions include:

1. Overall importance of OTI assistance;
2. Unrealistic expectations of OTI assistance;
3. Lack of clarity regarding OTI mission and objectives;
4. "Entitlement mentality" that defers responsibility for national and local challenges to outsiders.

1) Overall Importance of OTI Assistance
Respondents demonstrated almost universal agreement (among both OTI partners and beneficiaries) regarding the importance of the training, resources, and support provided by OTI and its program partners for enhancing communications and governance in their countries. As the remainder of the report demonstrates, respondents raised recurring, at times highly critical concerns regarding the planning for and the execution and sustainability of OTI assistance. However, respondents’ specific criticisms and recommendations presupposed the importance of the training, resources, and expertise provided by OTI, and demonstrated strong support for the OTI model’s three areas of emphasis (assistance to independent media, assistance to humanitarian and other public information campaigns, and strategic communications assistance for public officials).

Most respondents described the OTI program activities with which they were familiar as essential to their ongoing communications and/or governance-reform activities. In this context, attention to conventional effectiveness measurements (quality, professionalism, responsiveness, etc.), along with criticisms and concerns about specific aspects of program implementation, were repeatedly outweighed by the urgency for assistance.

2) Unrealistic Expectations of OTI Assistance
Respondents’ emphasis on the ongoing importance of the type of assistance provided by OTI in addressing communications, governance-reform and humanitarian needs was paralleled by an emphasis on the difficulty and enormity of the problems to be addressed. Throughout the interview discussions, respondents enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to express longstanding frustrations about chronic obstacles to communication and government accountability in their countries (judicial/governmental constraints to independent media and public discussion, lack of resources and expertise, inadequate communications infrastructure, financial limitations, etc.). Predictably in this context, respondents’ unwavering emphasis on the overwhelming problems facing their countries—combined with their urgency for broad, substantive, sustainable solutions—resulted in extremely high expectations of the assistance provided by OTI and other external assistance programs.

As previously mentioned, the overwhelming majority of the criticisms identified by the research were informed by respondents’ general dissatisfaction with the current state of communication and governance in their countries—and the inability of OTI (and other
assistance organizations) to provide broad, far-reaching, sustainable solutions to the problems they face. In interview after interview, respondents were unwilling or unable to distinguish between their chronic frustrations and their more immediate responses to OTI-sponsored programs and services; specific activities and events were consistently regarded as either part of the solution (defined as a long-term and strategically integrated solution) or part of the problem. This all-or-nothing attitude provides the setting for respondents’ repeated complaints about the lack of sustainability, inclusiveness and geographical reach of what were otherwise generally described as high-quality and effective activities and training.

In this context, OTI may be viewed as a victim of its own success in identifying and responding to the critical needs and concerns of partners and beneficiaries. Reflections on each specific OTI activity and achievement reminded local partners and beneficiaries of the countless other things that still remain to be done, and heightened their expectations of OTI going forward. For a substantial majority of respondents, OTI activities were evaluated less for their fulfillment of specific, short-term objectives (professional instruction, technical advice, broadcast and/or event coordination, etc.) than for their commitment, or perceived lack of commitment, to contribute to long-term, substantive change.

“*This radio program created wider awareness that mob justice is wrong, and why: you can be held liable for the death of the ‘suspect’ under criminal law, most people don’t know this. Mob justice incidents have now decreased. Our justice system is still dysfunctional, though.*” (Liberia)

“*This has represented a missed opportunity for OTI to experiment with sustainable models and financial viability of an important grantee.*

Operating costs are $36k a month, ad revenue is $3k a month = completely unsustainable. OTI assumes that other long-term development actors/donors will materialize and pick up where OTI leaves off. This is not happening, USAID has refused, and no other donors are coming forward. To secure proper handover with another donor requires intensive effort, no one in their office is doing this.” (Liberia)

“We’re impressed by OTI, but we’re also concerned about the upcoming phase-out in September 2007. People have high expectations for development of country, so when donors do good work but leave so quickly, this is very difficult and discouraging to people. It contributes to their general sense of despair and abandonment.” (Liberia)

3) Lack of Knowledge about Overall OTI Mission and Objectives

Research indicates that respondents’ often unrealistic expectations of OTI assistance (along with many of their subsequent criticisms of specific aspects of OTI assistance) are sustained and exaggerated by their general lack of knowledge about OTI’s mission and objectives. Many respondents in both countries reported a general lack of knowledge of OTI and the scope of and rationale for its projects—apart from the limited information gained from their own direct involvement in or use of specific OTI or OTI-funded initiatives.

“There is no formal dissemination of information about OTI and its activities.” (Sri Lanka)

A number of respondents (including program partners with regular access to OTI programs and services) cautioned that this overall lack of knowledge has fueled general suspicions about and mistrust of OTI and its projects.
“They need to do better public relations about what they do. They need to interact more with media, get out and meet with business leaders, visit people, have consultations. They’re holed away in the embassy compound, and no one knows what they do.” (Liberia)

Many of the most frequently cited complaints about OTI assistance (e.g., short-term approach, claims of favoritism, top-down approach, lack of accessibility, etc.) were directly correlated to lack of knowledge about OTI and its mission.

Research revealed that respondents’ direct exposure to OTI programs and assistance (as either a partner or beneficiary) increased both their knowledge of OTI and their tendency to evaluate OTI assistance favorably. The following statement, for example, is typical of the attitudes of those respondents with a close working relationship with OTI.

“OTI strategy is guided by what their partners tell them. They are receptive to our ideas about local needs. This is OTI’s major distinguishing factor compared to other INGOs and donors, who use local NGO’s as extensions of their own identity and agenda.” (Sri Lanka)

The following statements, by contrast, were provided by respondents with limited knowledge of and direct exposure to OTI and its project partners.

“OTI has no set agenda or clear strategy. They pick their partners; then they design projects with them.” (Liberia)

“The center in Matara has poor public relations. It’s hard to access the place, and it’s not clear how it’s supposed to be used.” (Sri Lanka)

These findings reveal the importance of clear and accessible communications from OTI to its potential partners and beneficiaries regarding its mission and objectives in their countries and communities. Research suggests that many of respondents’ complaints and concerns about OTI assistance could be mitigated—and their receptivity to OTI programs and activities enhanced—by greater clarity about the source, mission, and objectives of OTI assistance (and/or the source, mission, and objectives of its partner institutions).

This observation is in marked contrast, however, with the perceptions expressed by OTI representatives who participated in the study, who described OTI as closely connected to its target constituents and communications about OTI and its mission as unconnected to the quality and effectiveness of its programs and, hence, unnecessary to program success.

“Our strategy is transitional, quick-impact, not humanitarian assistance or long-term development. The aim is to fill gaps in radio and media. Visibility is not important to us, since we are here to support the government. It is important that beneficiaries see the government and not OTI in the work we do.” (Liberia)

Here, the problem is not with the strategy itself, but rather with the apparent disconnect between strategy and perception. In the context of chronic frustration and suspicion that characterizes these post-traumatic environments, non-disseminated program sources and objectives are, for many potential beneficiaries, conspicuous by their absence, simultaneously inflating expectations beyond project capabilities and generating dissatisfaction with even the most well-designed and effective program delivery.

5) Entitlement Mentality
In this setting of chronic need and chronically limited resources, respondents reported that

3Apart from program partners, most beneficiaries were completely unfamiliar with the OTI name and were only able to speak knowledgeably using the names of OTI partners or the names associated with individual projects. Throughout the research, respondents’ complaints about the lack of knowledge about program rationale and objectives applied to these institutions and projects as well.
many people in their countries have developed an “entitlement mentality,” deferring responsibility for addressing their countries’ problems to others. According to this view, current problems can only be solved by outside intervention, through the substantive, ongoing support of external assistance organizations.

“The Liberian mentality is ‘do nothing, get all’, which must change.” (CSO leader, Liberia)

This problem was reported as particularly acute in Sri Lanka, where respondents repeatedly cautioned about the sense of financial entitlement felt by many of their citizens and citizens groups, who have become accustomed to assistance pouring into their communities from foreign governments and international aid and lending organizations. To counter these expectations without creating disappointment and mistrust requires clear, emphatic and ongoing communications from OTI regarding its formal objectives and projected outcomes.

“The problem is that people here expect everything for free. This is an outcome of the assistance received after the tsunami.” (Sri Lanka)

“There is certainly an entitlement mentality among people here.” (Sri Lanka)

B. External Factors
In addition to the attitudinal factors identified above, research also identified the following external factors that limited the effectiveness of OTI projects in post-trauma environments:

1) Government Resistance and Repression
By far the most commonly cited external obstacle to OTI project success is the active resistance of national and local governments to free and open communication, particularly projects designed to increase government transparency and accountability. Respondents from both countries repeatedly cautioned that is unrealistic (in some cases, dangerous and irresponsible) for OTI to base its strategies strictly on professional training projects and public awareness programming and events—without simultaneously pressuring governments to loosen current constraints on media and public debate.

“The government wants to win the war militarily, and until it does, it will not tolerate views that question its actions or its strategies. This is why independent media is non-existent in Sri Lanka today.” (Sri Lanka)

“The government doesn’t understand how effective communication can be in its own interest.” (Liberia)

“The government will drive up prices for broadcasting licenses or suddenly raise the price of newsprint. They have many ways of strangling the media.” (Sri Lanka)

To achieve this, several respondents recommended that World Bank loans include conditionalities requiring Freedom of Information Acts and other relevant legal and judicial reforms. Respondents in Liberia also suggested the need for more aggressive governmental education initiatives, to teach local and national officials the positive implications of increased governmental transparency and public debate.

“Donors need to pressure governments more; they have the power to change the media environment in our country. Their assumption is that media activists can achieve reforms alone. They forget that we are very vulnerable and
“easily silenced by government scare tactics.” (Sri Lanka)

“They [OTI] should be pressuring the government to reform its media policies. They should not be pressuring local media workers to put themselves in danger in this environment.” (Sri Lanka)

“Journalists are disappearing at checkpoints in the East and the North. There is no donor reaction to this.” (Sri Lanka)

“The real need is to create an enabling environment in which journalist can operate the way we train them.” (Liberia)

Respondents also observed how ongoing government resistance to open media coverage has understandably resulted in self-censorship on the part of many journalists and civil society leaders. This condition will only be remedied, they argued, with the introduction of significant changes (e.g., the announcement of official acts and reforms) by governments and public officials.

2) Distance and Isolation

Respondents from both countries described the difficulty of reaching audiences with resources, training, and events in rural regions outside of the communication centers of Colombo and Monrovia. The problem of regional isolation was equally relevant for national television and radio broadcasts, which have limited range and consequently limited program potential.

“Local rural people have very little access to information, such as papers, radio or television. Most people don’t have access to any regional media or community media at all. It doesn’t exist. There’s basically no media infrastructure outside Colombo, Galle and Kandy.” (Sri Lanka)

“The messages were only played on ELBC and STAR, so they didn’t reach far and wide.” (Liberia)

“Media products funded by OTI are good, but production is only a baby step. The real challenge is extended and sustained dissemination. That’s where the real impact is.” (Sri Lanka)

In some cases, even regional training centers were too far away to be useful to isolated rural populations (e.g., in Matara, Sri Lanka, where only 20 percent of project trainees returned to use the facilities).

“Only Matara journalists can use the local media centers, because of the distance. We don’t even have the money to travel there.” (Sri Lanka)

Respondents provided a number of suggestions for addressing the problem of regional isolation, including

- Periodically rotating the location of regional resource and training centers to make OTI services available to traditionally neglected populations;

- Equipping mobile resource and training centers to carry OTI personnel, training and resources to rural areas.

3) Suspicion of Outsiders

Respondents from both countries acknowledged the suspicion and lack of receptivity of many citizens (both media professionals and the general public) to resources and assistance from outsiders. This culture on the part of many potential partners and beneficiaries increases the importance of emotional and symbolic gestures (e.g., participatory needs assessments, integration of local resources and expertise into project designs, etc.) that may
or may not seem practical from a strictly technical or financial point of view.

“As an outsider agency with foreign funding, people may be very suspicious and may resist your efforts.” (Sri Lanka)

4) Resistance to New Technologies
Respondents from both countries described the resistance of many journalists—particularly older, more established professionals—toward the use of new communication and recording technologies. This requires both sensitivity in anticipating and addressing these resistances in training, and, in some cases, flexibility in tailoring communications to the existing realities of the journalistic community.

“Older journalists reject the new technologies that are being taught: the Internet, digital recording for radio. Seventy percent of working journalists in Sri Lanka do not have an e-mail address.” (Sri Lanka)

“Many journalists here don’t know what the Internet is—and don’t want to know!” (Sri Lanka)

C. Program-related Factors Contributing to the Success of OTI Assistance

Research for the study identified a variety of program-related factors that have contributed to the success of OTI projects and activities. The common denominator among almost all of these factors (and the programs which featured them) was an attention to the needs and concerns of local professionals and local audiences. From the content and presentation of information and activities to the actual settings in which they were provided, respondents consistently preferred training, activities, and events that were prepared and presented by groups that included local participants, used familiar language, situations, and delivery mechanisms, and were held in local, accessible settings.

1) Use of Local Media
Respondents from both countries repeatedly stressed the importance of using local, grassroots media in communicating with the general public. The superiority of local media (as opposed to national media) was attributed to several factors:

- Greater credibility and trust on the part of local audiences, who (as previously discussed) are generally suspicious of information and assistance provided by outsiders;
- Greater opportunities for direct, face-to-face interactions;
- More extensive exposure for programs and broadcasts (given the problem of geographical remoteness and limited broadcast capabilities described above).

Local communication strategies also provided project partners with the opportunity to use informal platforms (e.g., towncriers for announcing events, “viewer circles” following film screenings and dramatic presentations, “limerick artists,” who crafted relevant messages into poetic form and recited them, etc.) with greater appeal and resonance for local audiences. Use of dramatic performances and other face-to-face presentations are particularly useful in communities where many people are illiterate and unfamiliar with the language and concepts involved in topical news broadcasts.

“We used media in two ways: mass media, such as television, radio and newspapers; and media at the grassroots level in the field (dramas, films we’d made). With the latter, we found that the impact is much greater, where our face
time with the audience was greater. Showing a film at the local level, or “narrow-casting,” generated so much intense discussion.” (Sri Lanka)

“OTI’s programs are effective because they reach illiterate people through discussion and dramas. Dramas are more effective because they bring the issue alive, with characters that people can relate to. This is much better than just a reporter talking, and the dramas are also done in local languages.” (Liberia)

2) Information and Stories that Explain Why Knowledge Is Important
Absent a tradition of free media and open public discussion, many citizens are initially unenthusiastic about and inattentive to messages regarding governance and reform, and they often do not understand the potential significance of such information for their lives and well-being. Several respondents reported that programs and broadcasts that clearly and carefully explain why and how the information being presented is important are much more likely to engage popular audiences.

“The radio drama created wider awareness that mob justice is wrong—and why. You can be liable for the death of a suspect under criminal law. Most people in our country don’t know this.” (Liberia)

In this context, respondents also emphasized the importance of repetition for audiences who are traditionally unaccustomed to receiving important messages through the media. To be effective, messages and information must be broadcast repeatedly and reinforced by presentation through different media. The importance of repetition is heightened in rural and/or geographically remote areas, where limited access to public media (radio, television, newspapers, the Internet) dramatically reduces the potential impact of single or infrequent broadcasts, publications or postings.

3) Public Debates and Forums
Respondents in both countries praised the use of public debates and forums to discuss governance reform and other areas of public concern. Public debates were described as effective in two key areas:

- Demonstrating the possibility of the non-violent exchange of conflicting ideas, experiences, and opinions;

“The inter-university debates on federalism, governance, and democracy allowed for a non-violent exchange on issues that divide our country.” (Sri Lanka)

- Gaining the attention (and thus increasing the accountability) of local public officials, who frequently attend debates to gauge public opinions and concerns.

“We see a change in politicians, who now come to public forums to hear what is being debated. Local governments seem to recognize that people have power.” (Sri Lanka)

4) Citizen Journalism
A number of respondents stressed the usefulness of recruiting and training non-professionals to create and disseminate their own messages and stories about issues of concern to their communities. In an environment where citizens are generally mistrustful of governments and indifferent to the non-entertainment potential of public media, this type of citizen journalism has tremendous advantages for establishing the credibility, relevance and appeal of stories and messages.

“Projects with an ‘outside-in’ approach are most effective, giving communities a platform
to produce media and messages themselves.” (Sri Lanka)

“Training more journalists is one thing, but actually giving citizens groups, CBOs and others the means to produce, broadcast and create digital archives of their own stories would definitely help tip the balance.” (Sri Lanka)

“They use beneficiaries and ordinary Liberians to drive content by featuring them in transmitting and reporting. This makes the content interesting and relevant to listeners. And the stories themselves are also useful.” (Liberia)

5) Facilitating Ethnic and Cultural Exchange

One of the key benefits of OTI projects (identified by respondents from both countries) is the opportunities that they provide for representatives of different (often traditionally adversarial) ethnicities and cultures to meet together in a neutral environment. Such events are viewed as important and potentially transformative, whether the purpose is to discuss topical issues or to share art, music and other cultural forms.

“Doing the concerts was an excellent experience for the artists, particularly those coming from rural areas who got to see Colombo and met artists from other ethnicities.” (Sri Lanka)

“The segregation of country blocks us from seeing all we have in common. Culturally and musically, our melodies and dance movements are very similar. Through the traveling dance groups, these linkages become clear to Lankans around the country.” (Sri Lanka)

The importance of cultural-exchange events was particularly stressed by respondents in Sri Lanka, where the ongoing conflict has virtually eliminated inter-ethnic and inter-regional dialogue. In this context, providing traditional adversaries with opportunities for cultural exchange in a non-political, non-adversarial setting is viewed as foundational for political discussion, debate, and reconciliation in the future.

6) Culturally Sensitive Training

Respondents noted the importance of training that is sensitive to the social and cultural context in which journalists work, while at the same time providing trainees with skills and techniques that mitigate longstanding social and cultural obstacles to effective journalism.

“We appreciated the lessons on interviewing techniques with powerful people. Normal interactions with such people dictate subservience, but good reporting and interviewing require a more technical approach, which we learned.” (Sri Lanka)

This balancing of professional techniques with local needs is only possible through training that is conducted in the actual settings in which local journalists work and/or includes substantive needs assessment (to allow journalists to describe the challenges and demands of the contexts in which they work) and post-training feedback (to allow journalists to identify the problems they encounter in learning and applying new knowledge and skills).

7) Question and Answer Forums and Broadcasts

The question and answer format of public forums and radio broadcasts was consistently praised by respondents from both countries, both as a source of empowerment for those posing questions (few, if any, of whom have previous experience expressing their viewpoints and concerns in a public setting) and a call to accountability for public officials, many of whom are increasingly attentive to the attitudes and opinions expressed in such events.
“It’s both an educational tool and a means for expression for rural Liberians, who, after so many years of fear and suffering, want to talk!” (Liberia)

"More than anything else, it gives them a chance to speak their minds—and know that they’ll be heard.” (Sri Lanka)

8) On-the-job Training
Respondents from both countries described on-the-job training opportunities as far superior to the isolated, on-site training provided at traditional OTI workshops, which were consistently criticized for their failure to provide hands-on, practical experience and skills. As described above, respondents insisted that local and on-the-job training dramatically increases the ability of trainees to adapt traditional professional standards, knowledge, and skills to local challenges. The preference for on-the-job training was most pronounced in Sri Lanka, where many respondents reported transforming experiences working in media production units with international journalists following the tsunami—and were eager for additional on-the-job training in the future.

“This has never existed in our country. It mobilized local journalists to work in the field alongside expats and national media.” (Sri Lanka)

“On-the-job training in conflict areas is far superior to anything that can be provided by workshops.” (Sri Lanka)

9) Including Community Members in Programming and Public Events
Respondents repeatedly praised the use of local beneficiaries and other community members in OTI programming and events. The inclusion of local citizens was described as increasing the appeal, relevance and credibility of program information and messages, as well as increasing receptivity to future programs and training opportunities.

“Interviews with trainees and participants give RHAP legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the public. This in turn increases participation in our workshops and visits to our rural offices.” (Liberia)

10) Using Traditional Media to Promote Broadcasts and Events
Respondents from both countries stressed the importance of using traditional local media and communication tools (e.g., town crier announcements of special broadcasts, written invitations to community leaders, floating banners, etc.) to promote public events and new media broadcasts. Outside donors and program planners, they explained, too often assume incorrectly that local citizens are attentive to promotion and announcements through mainstream media, which is frequently either unavailable or unused. Again, this reinforced the importance of preliminary needs assessments to identify the optimal media (both formal and informal) for reaching general and specific audiences.

11) Accountability Tools
While research did not reveal widespread knowledge of such resources, a few respondents reported the usefulness of Legislative Reports Cards and other innovative tools in increasing government transparency and accountability.

“The Legislative Report Card is very impressive because it keeps the electorate involved in policies after elections. It also keeps politicians’ attention on the work of following up on their campaign promises.” (Liberia)
D. Program-related Factors that Limit the Effectiveness of OTI Assistance

In addition to the program-related factors that enhance the effectiveness of OTI assistance, respondents also identified the following program-related factors that limit the appeal and effectiveness of OTI training, activities, and support. As the earlier discussion explained, criticism was concentrated on the scope, accessibility, and sustainability of OTI assistance, rather than the deficiencies of specific activities or events.

1) Lack of Sustainability

The most commonly voiced concern among all respondent groups involved OTI’s perceived lack of follow-up and long-term commitment to the projects that it supports. Respondents were critical of both OTI’s short-term support of specific projects (including its perceived preference for “one-off” broadcasts and events) and its failure to support the long-term programmatic and capacity needs of its project partners. When asked to evaluate OTI in relation to specific performance attributes (quality, responsiveness, professionalism, accessibility, etc.), the vast majority of respondents provided good to high ratings for each attribute—with the exception of sustainability, which was consistently rated as poor or inadequate.

“The end result of the OTI approach is that it’s like a fireworks show—only the after-image remains.” (Liberia)

“The type of one-off programming that they do is a waste, without any follow-up.” (Sri Lanka)

“For example, OTI gave $10,000 to Radio Buchanan for coverage of Independence Day celebrations, but there was no interest in the station’s long-term recovery or in improving its connection with Monrovia.” (Liberia)

“People have high expectations for development. When donors do good work but leave so quickly, it is very difficult and discouraging.” (Liberia)

Respondents attributed OTI’s failure to provide follow up and sustainable support to two key factors:

• An unrealistic estimation of the potential impact of individual projects (broadcasts, presentations, training events, etc.) on attitudes and behavior;

• The equally unrealistic belief that funding and resources for additional projects will be available from other sources after OTI’s departure.

“OTI assumes that other long-term development actors will materialize and pick up where it left off. But this isn’t happening.” (Liberia)

“You can’t expect changed attitudes from a single broadcast or changed behavior from a single workshop.” (Sri Lanka)

“It’s unreasonable to expect trainees to start visiting the media house and using its resources after a single training session.” (Sri Lanka)

2) The Importance of User-informed Needs Assessment

A substantial number of respondents from both countries complained about the absence of local consultations and user-informed needs assessments in the initial planning and development of OTI projects.

“The media houses in Matara and Ampara were not the products of participatory needs assessments. They were strictly donor-driven.” (Sri Lanka)
“There was no attempt to contact target audiences to assess their needs or expectations.” (Liberia)

According to respondents, this has diminished the effectiveness of OTI projects in three ways:

- Implementation of poorly designed and ineffective programming and events, relying on messages, media, and formats that fail to reach and/or convince target audiences;

- Over-estimation of the physical, financial, and professional capabilities of OTI media partners, who are often unable to make effective use of the resources and/or opportunities with which they are provided;

- Diminished credibility of and receptivity to OTI projects on the part of many potential beneficiaries, whose suspicion and mistrust of foreign assistance is heightened by the lack of opportunities for input into project planning and design.

“There was no advance message testing for our television campaign,” explained an OTI partner in Sri Lanka regarding the importance of advance testing for the content and presentation of campaign messages and program content. “We just assumed the audience would grasp our message.” In this case, the respondent explained, the campaign was unsuccessful because planners failed to anticipate that the majority of Sri Lankans would interpret its pro-peace message, in the form that it was presented, as unpatriotic.

In addition to the absence of message and content testing, respondents also described how inadequate needs assessments sometimes results in the use of inappropriate or less-than-optimal media. A common complaint in both countries concerned the excessive reliance on radio (particularly radio call-in programs) in regions where access to and use of radio is restricted—and the availability of telephones is even rarer.

“Most people in rural radios don’t have radios.” (Liberia)

“Only 20 percent of Liberians have cell phones. This severely limits the usefulness of call-in radio programs.” (Liberia)

Respondents provided various suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of OTI’s call-in radio projects: distributing wind-up radios; facilitating “radio-listening groups” for listeners with limited access; using town criers and other local media to announce forthcoming programming (since non-radio listeners often learn about programming after it’s been aired). In some cases, these types of adjustments were apparently made over time, during the course of a series of broadcasts. Respondents viewed it as unnecessarily wasteful, however, that these issues were not identified prior to initial program implementation.

Respondents also described how, through a lack of preliminary needs assessment, OTI has sometimes overlooked or ignored that fact that its partners lack the financial or technical capabilities to fully benefit from funded projects.

“Star Radio has no business plan. OTI relocated them to an expensive space they can never afford.” (Sri Lanka)

“OTI gave us an expensive phone system for our office. It was never used, however, because no one knew how to do it.” (Liberia)
3) **Over-emphasis on Training**
One of the most serious and far-reaching consequences of inadequate needs assessment is its over-reliance on training. According to respondents in both countries, OTI acts as if it regards professional training for journalists as a panacea for effective communication and governance reform, under-estimating the limitations imposed by various factors (e.g., government restraint and intimidation, financial limitations, lack of quality trainees, etc.) on the potential impact of even the most well-planned and sophisticated training initiatives.

"It is completely unrealistic to believe that training alone will bring about a healthy independent media." (Sri Lanka)

"This cannot be corrected through training. Well-educated people need first to be recruited, which requires more money for salaries.” (Liberia)

4) **Association with US Government Interests/Agenda**
Not surprisingly, several respondents in both countries reported that they tend to associate OTI and its programs with US government interests.

"OTI equals the US embassy, which equals USAID. It’s all the same to us.” (Liberia)

"Their was a top-down approach. They would always re-edit and change the product to make campaign messages acceptable to US government policies.” (Sri Lanka)

This concern was consistently outweighed by the perceived importance of and need for the type of services and support provided by OTI. In addition, criticisms of OTI’s connections with US government interests were, with very few exceptions, limited respondents with little previous knowledge or experience of OTI and its projects.

5) **Association of OTI Projects with the Interests of Local and National Governments**
A few respondents in both countries were troubled by what they perceived as OTI’s close alliances with local and national governments in developing and disseminating programs and messages. This association was a concern both for project partners and potential audiences, both of whom describe it as undermining the integrity and credibility of program content.

"It should not be supporting LBS. Its stories are censored for anti-government material before airing. The station should not be supported until it liberalizes its policies.” (Liberia)

"OTI’s media projects are implemented through civil society groups and public radio stations, which in reality become ‘mouthpiece’ of the government by presenting communications tailored to meet government objectives, even though the government is not directly involved.” (Liberia)

"We are seen by other locals as traitors.” (Sri Lanka)

As with concerns about US government associations, concern about associations of OTI with the interests of local and national governments was largely restricted to those respondents with limited experience and knowledge of OTI assistance.

6) **Importance of Evaluation/Impact Measurements**
As described above, respondents were skeptical regarding the potential long-term impact of OTI projects. Many respondents also suggested that OTI lacks (or has at least failed to demonstrate)
effective, public-informed measurements for assessing its short- and medium-term impact on media effectiveness and government accountability.

“Beneficiaries are the sole determinant of a project’s effectiveness, and it’s not clear that OTI tries to learn how its projects benefit the people it serves.” (Sri Lanka)

In the only substantial difference among respondent groups, research identified a marked disagreement among media representatives and CSO representatives regarding the primary criteria for assessing program impact. A substantial number of CSO representatives were quick to credit the impact of OTI-supported campaigns and events on public attitudes and behavior. For these respondents, anecdotal accounts of successful activities and events represented valid evidence of program impact that were readily linked to the possibility of substantive, if incremental change over time. Conversely, the majority of media representatives defined impact strictly in terms of long-term, sustainable improvements in both the skills and capacity of public media and the openness and accountability of public officials. These respondents were more likely to assert that it is either “too early” to assess the impact of OTI assistance or to predict that OTI programming will have little, if any substantive impact in the future.

7) Lack of Regional Balance
A substantial majority of Sri Lankan respondents expressed concern about the lack of regional balance in OTI’s presence in their country. The general neglect of programs and coverage in the North (with a few notable and highly regarded exceptions) were repeatedly described as compromising the objectivity and credibility of what were otherwise viewed as vital, important projects.

“Lack of coverage and presence in the North called out credibility into question in the South. Thus our coverage and investment was one-sided, which violates the basic journalistic commitment to objectivity.” (Sri Lanka)

“Sinhalese will not listen to OTI peace messages once they learn that OTI is not working in LTTE areas.” (Sri Lanka)

“Without balance in coverage, we lose our credibility as journalists.” (Sri Lanka)

Conversely, projects that were able to provide regional balance were described by partners and participants as enormously effective.

“For the Peace Stories in 2006, we had human interest stories from Tamil, Sinhala, and Muslim communities. The process was very transformative for us and for participants and listeners.” (Sri Lanka)
# APPENDIX C: CHART OF OTI EVALUATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Macedonia</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI Macedonia/ Confidence Building Initiative (CBI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>September 2001 - September 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Of 512 grants, 92 are media related, comprising $1.65M of $11.65M total. Dedicated media office in Skopje, but regional offices can issue media grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Reduce tension and mitigate conflict through confidence building efforts during the implementation of the Framework Agreement. Report notes that these terms were never defined, and there was no strategy plan. Targets areas where conflict occurred, not on a national level. Project divided into five regions, and one media office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation comments that media was “intended to serve as crosscutting grants for providing balanced information to a wide audience therein reducing misinformation and reducing tension among different groups.” Specifically tries to mitigate “conflict triggers.” Other components are communications-related: increasing citizen access to balanced information and diverse points of view/ fostering transparency, responsiveness, and accountability between citizens/ promoting citizen participation in community decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>None described in depth, but strategic communications support for the national census is hailed as a success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Supported a wide range of media activities including print and electronic news media, film, music, cultural performances, and other artistic means of communication and expression. Published educational brochures on the Framework Agreement. Cultural activities include support for local festivals, concerts, and dances where members of different groups could interact. Developed comedic skits that used humor to discuss perceptions about ethnic differences to reduce tension. Other activities (not described in detail) include Grants for Radio Life (VOA-modeled station that plays Albanian and Macedonian rock), documentary on life in rural Macedonia, and distribution of papers in remote areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good Governance (support for the census, elections) 3.3 Support for Independent media (funding for individual newspapers, radio stations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>No numbers provided in the report, but many cultural events, awareness raising materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Media: “Aside from anecdotal data, the evaluation team was not able to measure, in any reliable way, the outcomes of CBI media interventions.” Overall project impact: no data to support whether intervention prevented conflict, but intervention was able to “buy time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Mandate is unclear and too broad. Expectations to operate at the local level (support for individual journalists) and at the national level (PSAs for the Census, parliamentary elections, etc.) These expectations are often in conflict. Also, project uses local CB units and “community process” that is not well-suited for media interventions. Difficult to create a local constituency around a radio station with regional reach. Staff says “the Media office functioned more like a marketing research firm selling a product” [referring to national election campaigns.] Project has difficulty partnering with local institutions, such as the Macedonian Institute of Media, since intervention is focused around Confidence Building Units. Overall, project is poorly organized, and places a strong emphasis on the burn rate rather than quality work and solid impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congo</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI Democratic Republic of Congo/ Community Focused Reintegration (CFR) and Synergie d’Education Communitaire et d’Appui a la Transition (SE*CA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>2003- 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td>Social Impact, Inc. The USAID/OTI Community-Focused Reintegration Programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. Washington, D.C.: USAID.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media component comprises 74 grants of 237 total at a cost of $1.51M, or 17% of total budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Support the reintegration process of community members following long periods of violence and anarchy. Program is not traditional DDR - does not focus on &quot;peace spoilers&quot; alone, but works toward reconciliation of all community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation comments that media was &quot;intended to serve as crosscutting grants for providing balanced information to a wide audience therein reducing misinformation and reducing tension among different groups.&quot; Specifically tries to mitigate &quot;conflict triggers.&quot; Other components are communications-related: increasing citizen access to balanced information and diverse points of view/ fostering transparency, responsiveness, and accountability between citizens/ promoting citizen participation in community decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>The cornerstone of TAP: works through Radio Okapi and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to establish Radio Listening Clubs - provides for significant community involvement and quick response activities (for example, radio announcements about voter registration). Praised as a &quot;democratic&quot; form of information dissemination (non-paying and accessible to illiterates), and encourages further discussion and community involvement as the basis for mobilization. Transitions Radio Okapi from local broadcasts to national coverage on shortwave. Some community resource centers receive two-way radios to encourage networking. OTI also helps the IEC design a communication strategy for the national elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Develops internet centers as a source of information dissemination, but this is ineffective (resource draining and technically difficult) and requires literacy. Project is scrapped in favor of Radio Listening Clubs. Attempts training of journalists, in conjunction with USAID/DG, yet this is considered unsuccessful and discontinued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good Governance (establishment of listening clubs promoting awareness about the election) 3.2. Supporting State Responsiveness through Strategic Communication (development of an IEC communication strategy) 3.3 Support for independent media (to a lesser degree, as support develops the capacity of radio stations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>140 listening clubs established, consisting of 10 members each, reaching every targeted community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Project is hailed as a success. The Radio Listening Clubs appear sustainable and are leveraged for other development initiatives, such as anti-corruption. Media component has the greatest national level impact, though it is &quot;difficult to quantify.&quot; Project successfully achieves greater voter turnout, but evaluation attributes this more to other activities such as youth training. Program does not adjust after the elections are postponed. Evaluation notes positive, yet unanticipated gender impact, attributed more to work-programs. Evaluation suggests that meaningful impact will not be visible until one year after the project ends, though no evaluation is planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Radio Listening Clubs could include a wider range of participants, an income generation component, or offer two-way communication. Program does not use government officials or institutions and beneficiaries believe that OTI was responsible for the progress, not the central government. This may discourage long-term accountability and trust between citizens and the government. Program does not have an effective handover strategy after it ends, and should be longer than 2-3 years. Project components (capacity building, grants, media) could be better integrated. Due to security concerns, OTI cannot operate in the unstable Eastern provinces, though Radio Okapi does reach these areas.</td>
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**Burundi**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>OTI Burundi/ Community Based Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (CFRI)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources Dedicated to Media</td>
<td>Media component comprises 41 grants of 211 total at a cost of $802,262 or 17.8% of total budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Objectives/Strategy</td>
<td>Uses a “holistic” approach to achieve post-war reintegration through five different components, which operate separately. With the exception of media activities, gradually shifts from focus from national to local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Specific Objective</td>
<td>Media loosely fits under the project’s third objective, “increase knowledge and participation in public dialogue on current issues.” Radio intervention is designed to fill the communication gap between the capital and the rural areas, which comprise 95% of the population. Another objective is to dispel rumors, which were a major factor in the earlier conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable Media Projects</td>
<td>Determines that radio is the predominant mass medium in the country. Primarily assists the two main radio stations, state-run Radio Television Nationale Burundaise (RTNB) and privately-held Radio RSF Bonesha to broadcast nationwide. Media program closely follows the transition process, focusing on the referendum and the various elections. Program makes substantial grants to each radio partner for specific programming activities each quarter. To develop new programming, journalists’ trips to remote regions are supported through per diem and transportation costs, and residents are encouraged to share their views. The two stations occasionally collaborate to monitor the elections and expose cheating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Media Activities</td>
<td>Also provides relay structures for Radio Isanganiro, an existing broadcaster. Grant support for media monitoring provided to the Organisation des Media de l’Afrique Centrale (OMAC). Involves reviewing and analyzing newspaper coverage and e-mail sites, as well as radio broadcasts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of Media Intervention</td>
<td>3.1.2 Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding (radio stations air DDR related program) 3.1.3 Good Governance (develops new programming relevant to political developments, such as elections, constitutional referendum) 3.3 Support for Independent Media (equipment for two main radio stations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Output Examples</td>
<td>In addition to capital for radio stations, produces one or two weekly reports by journalists on communities served by OTI and more remote regions, as well as programming specific to major political events, such as the election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome/Impact</td>
<td>Overall, program achieves progress in all but one sector (combatant reintegration). Program is more expensive, given costs associated with including senior officials, though media component is cost-effective. Media component is effective at suppressing rumors in rural communities, bridging the communication gap between Bujumbura and the rest of the country, creating awareness about important national issues, and fighting electoral fraud. Project is very responsive to changing political environment and events and leaves most stakeholders with a belief in the role of continued media intervention, and radio directors claim “freedom of the press is now confirmed as a power amongst others” and makes criticism of officials acceptable. Directors also see themselves as guardians of free and fair elections. Because of the wide reach, effectively links transition in the capital with community reintegration. However, the “key impacts on communities remain anecdotal” and despite five M&amp;E approaches, the project never establishes a functional baseline. The baseline survey serves only to confirm existing programs, not as a tool to evaluate impact. However, the project is “highly effective in having both national and community focus, remained highly targeted, programatically flexible, with regular evaluations of radio stations and media monitoring.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles/Shortcomings</td>
<td>Evaluation suggests that OTI could have funded the startup and distribution of a newspaper to rival the government and party-dominated newspapers that rarely circulate beyond Bujumbura. This would have reached a literate elite important to democratic stability. Project components (capacity building, community grants initiative, vocational skills training and media) could be better integrated. OTI will not allow expatriates to reside in rural areas, leading to a concentration of activity in the area around the capital.</td>
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### Liberia

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<tr>
<th><strong>Project Title</strong></th>
<th>OTI Liberia/ Liberian Transition Initiative (LTI)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media component comprises a modest portion of 26.4M project (no exact numbers provided).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Considered a &quot;classic OTI program&quot; in the first phase, &quot;producing confidence in and momentum towards a stable and democratic peace in Liberia&quot;. Program focuses on &quot;young people&quot; aged 18-35. Project centers around Youth Empowerment Life Skills (YES) and later gives grants to communities that have received YES training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation does not describe how media fits in the program, though it likely supports the objective &quot;increase public understanding of key political transition issues,&quot; which receives less funding than other program objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>None described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Development of responsible journalism, partnership with the Talking Drum Studio, a Search For Common Ground-supported organization that was effective in Sierra Leone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.3 Support for Independent Media (sponsoring development of journalism).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>No media output is described - project gives grants to 326 of 376 communities that receive YES training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation suggests that part of OTI's impact was in piloting programs which could be used in other USAID projects. Impact was &quot;substantial, both materially and psychologically,&quot; though offers little evidence and says that there is no baseline data to gauge progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>First phase of project does not extend beyond Monrovia, though this is viewed as important as infrastructure is needed most in the capital. Grantmaking was delayed by four months as contractor, Creative Associates, set up operations. The youth training program does not fit its &quot;fast and flexible&quot; mandate.</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI Sri Lanka/ Sri Lanka Transition Initiative (SLTI)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media component comprises 22% of $22M total project funding, excluding $1.3M subcontract to Internews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Project attempts to build support among the Sri Lankan population for the peace process, though this is articulated in different ways. Report effectively explains why there was no coherent strategy - implementers had different conceptions of change. First was &quot;bottom up,&quot; which promoted positive public acceptance of peace at the grassroots level. Second was &quot;passive calming&quot; which hypothesized that OTI-targeted areas were less likely to participate in violence. Third was &quot;active containment,&quot; a belief that OTI-catalyzed networks will inhibit conflict. Fourth was &quot;empowerment,&quot; or encouraging partner individuals and groups to actively advocate for peace as a conflict deterrence mechanism The fifth theory was based on the principle that knowledge and understanding, supported by greater information, would prevent rumour and fear-mongering.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Media is the only national program, but it changes focus. Ranges from &quot;informing citizens about the peace process and building attitudinal support for it&quot; to &quot;increase the exchange of accurate, balanced information on peace issues&quot; and later shifts to dispersing information about tsunami reconstruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>All media efforts work to propagate the &quot;peace message&quot; at the national, regional, and local level. Internews trains journalists to &quot;develop a new kind of reporting of the conflict,&quot; and establishes centers in Colombo where journalists are trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Local radio program production, information centers for the tsunami, support for peace-related media of all types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.1 Humanitarian Relief (post-tsunami awareness, specific messages support peace accords) 3.3 Support for independent media (training for journalists on objectivity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Local peace education resources, including “Take this Road,” a film shown in hundreds of villages and used by the Sri Lankan peace community. Books, surveys, and training handbooks, many directed at youth. Internews Centers established to support journalism training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Activities involving festivals and cultural performances were most effective at bringing diverse groups together, and there is considerable evidence that this fostered a more tolerant attitude, though not necessarily any impact on the peace process. Internews’ training for journalists produced mixed results. Although the journalists learned more objective reporting, there are few outlets for their work, given the lack of depoliticized media space. Exit survey does show evidence of attitudinal changes: in one instance, an Internews-trained journalist writes an article that diffuses tensions after interethnic killing. Overall, the most visible impact is in communities where OTI manages to integrate grant activities into multi-faceted partnership, but this becomes more difficult in the post-tsunami rush to spend. Evaluation laments short time in the field and inability to meet with many partners, and concludes that it is “difficult to find evidence of significant impact beyond the consequences of a particular grant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Overall, the report suggests that peacemaking in Sri Lanka may not be susceptible to grassroots-level interventions. Few interventions, including media, reach decision-makers. Also, Tamil Tigers (LTTE) are considered a terrorist organization, which limits SLTI from working nationwide. Media is overwhelmingly politicized and lopsided, which prevents support for unbiased messages. There is a perception that disseminating facts has increased the impact on peace and is &quot;an important step in the direction&quot; of a less one-sided view of the conflict.</td>
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<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI Afghanistan Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>Planning initiated October 2001, project concluded June 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media component comprises $11M of $46.5M total project funding, or 23.7%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Program strategy and objectives change consistently, often drastically over the course of the project, which is well-captured in the evaluation. Project planners have difficulty developing a timeline for their commitment and cannot vary between small- or large-scale interventions, or between immediate or longer-term impact. Media has a consistent role despite the reformulations and is the only component “with a substrategy of its own.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Role of media programs is articulated differently as the project changes, including “developing the objectivity and outreach of Afghan media.” Significant support to the objective of “promoting participatory democratic process.” There is some evidence that OTI planners were able to adjust with the incoming concepts and not one that requires an adjustment in the media component, but rather more capacity building for ministries on communication issues. Sub-objectives include: (1) drafting and adoption of a Western-style media law; (2) production of radio programs and materials to “highlight progress and educate”; (3) support first independent radio stations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Support for the Ministry of Communications, which establishes a new communication network throughout the country, decreasing the time required to communicate with the rest of the country from 10 days to 2 hours. Support for the Office of the President’s Spokesperson to the President includes training in media production skills for the Media Monitoring Unit and equipment, such as translation headsets. Funding independent media includes support for radio stations Arman FM and Tolo TV. These projects are managed by local, enterprising partners with a vision for their country. Evaluation considers this a “risky” beneficiary but one of the most successful. Major support is provided to Radio Afghanistan, previously the government broadcaster, though this initiative has mixed results, and is not necessarily sustainable in the long run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Funds local, community-level radio stations, though these may not be as sustainable as Arman FM and Tolo TV. The project centralizes many activities in one compound, which gives more opportunities for training and media monitoring. Funds support the Emergency Loya Jirga, trains journalists to cover other parts of the political process, and publishes election-related material. The project supports the publication of the country’s only children’s magazine, which reaches remote regions and promotes literacy skill. Many of the media outputs help other projects, including peace communities and local women’s discussion groups, which all use material produced by the media component. Some programs give a voice to key issues, such as human rights. Another project disseminates agricultural skills through radio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.2 Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding (provision of peacemaking materials) 3.1.3 (election support), 3.2 Strategic Communications (improving the capacity of government ministries to communicate) 3.3 Support for Independent Media (training for journalists, support for radio stations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Outputs include support and improvements for 31 radio stations, development of a national network, training and support for two ministries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Overall, the project improves communication between citizens and their government. Support for independent media is most sustainable, with many unexpected, positive consequences. Media serves to open dialogue on gender: for instance, when the government tries to forbid the airing of a female singer, this affirms women’s place in the public sphere and the role of the constitution on these issues. Support for specific political events is meaningful and consequential. Media advances awareness of rights on range of issues, from human rights to agricultural development. It is not mentioned whether OTI has an impact on the Media Registration Law, one of its objectives. Afghans have a positive image of their news media and view it as a “vehicle of progress and social development.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Salient obstacle is sustainability. Many stations will not continue without donor funding. Radio Afghanistan is “far below international standards,” despite OTI intervention, though this may be due to factors beyond OTI’s control, such as patronage and intra-government tensions. Although communication with the government is easier, the network that OTI establishes often only works one way, with no channel of communication from the local to the national. By supporting major broad- casters, such as Radio Arman, OTI may encourage a media monopoly and exclude smaller entities that are competing for the same revenue. There is not enough focus on the media law, leaving the entire sector open to government interfer- ence. The evaluation criticizes OTI for not focusing on this issue more (though the evaluation overlooks the role that the media played in challenging decency laws enforced in the courts through its progressive broadcasts). Radio Arman does not include enough political programs, instead focusing on “pleasing” music broadcasts. The substance of the programming is questioned, as some smaller, community-based stations only air entertainment. Another major shortcoming is that the project does not establish clear baselines, develops a logical framework though it is never followed, and does not track a PPR. But there are many more positive characterizations of the project. Media is hailed as “clearly the most successful avenue for OTI transitional funding.” The project successfully balances needs for independence with political concerns and is led by talented, returning Afghans.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Iraq</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI Iraq: Iraq Transition Initiative (ITI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>April 2003-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media is a cross-cutting theme and the USAID evaluation does not attempt to disaggregate. The project focuses the majority of resources on short-term employment, with media often supporting this goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Varies after different team building meetings and changes with the security situation, but is loosely 1) supporting critical activities that build and sustain Iraqi confidence in the development of a participatory, stable and democratic Iraq 2) identifying and filling crucial gaps in US government assistance and 3) increasing public support for the interim government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>None articulated. Media seems to play a secondary role, consolidating gains in public opinion after infrastructure projects were completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Project expands the reach of Radio Sawa’s broadcast to more cities. It publicises the Transition administrative law, raising awareness through training journalists, station managers, and placing advisors on radio stations. Project tries to convert Iraq Media Network (IMN) into an independent broadcaster, yet uses it as a CPA mouthpiece and requires IMN to uncritically air CPA messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Other activities include support for internet cafes in southern Iraq. Media activities are included as part of a package of activities following short term employment programs. NGOs are encouraged to use their own networks and contacts to disseminate their accomplishments to the media and public. In war-torn areas, such as Fallujah and Najaf, OTI funded public information campaigns about the importance of neighborhood cleanliness. Tries to develop a media law, but is too concerned about developing coverage that is fair to the CPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good Governance (awareness about the Transition Administrative Law) 3.2 Strategic Communications (the development of IMN) 3.3 Support for independent media (training for journalists).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>A &quot;core media strategy,&quot; among other training and project development activities, though the strategy is not explained in depth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Uncertain at best. The evaluation notes that &quot;in the final analysis, the actual human impact of these grants can only be assumed.&quot;Evaluation does find that activities support the three main program-wide objectives, though these are less in the OTI program. There is little support for private media, though it is unclear what form an intervention would take. The project decrees a media law, rather than helping the Iraqi government develop its own policies or creating a media law in cooperation with Iraqi media. Attacks on Al-Jazeera and journalists who take an angle that is perceived as anti-American further exacerbates problems of credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>The CPA has no media strategy, which is an obstacle to OTI/ITI in setting priorities, and initially the CPA discourages OTI work in this area. Overall, the program has virtually no impact assessment, M&amp;E system, or output tracking system in place besides a grant database. Evaluation repeatedly criticizes the inability to adequately assess outcome. There is major difficulty establishing media law.</td>
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<td><strong>Angola</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>Support to Angola’s Democratic Transition Program (SADT)/ OTI in Angola</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>February 2003 - September 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media component discontinued before project completion. Total project amounts to 1.9 million.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>According to OTI Strategy, the project is “helping to build a foundation to begin a real transition to an open and participatory democracy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Supporting efforts toward improved media quality, professionalism, a stable and favorable legal environment for journalists, and increasing the number of media outlets. This program was discontinued after a February 2004 program review, due to limited opportunities and resources available through OTI for effective media grantmaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Several media-related activities, such as distributing cassettes about land rights to villagers, were included in other program components. CSOs encourage citizens to voice their demands on the radio, and journalists often pursue reports of poor government services. Media-related projects proposed but not implemented include training, community debates and support to journalists for legal fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good governance (support for CSO advocacy) 3.3 Independent media (support for journalists).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Some CSOs launch radio campaigns, training for journalists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Almost entirely anecdotal. Project does improve the ability of CSOs to advocate on key issues and supports the use of media to advance their agenda.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Only a handful of independent media outlets were established in Angola and the government controls most of the media.</td>
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<td><strong>Peru</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI in Peru</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>February 2001 to January 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Project not disaggregated by media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Overall mission is to support the democratic opening created by the fall of President Fujimori's government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Primarily related to defense and security, or improving the quality and quantity of media coverage of defense and security matters. Media also supports truth and reconciliation, including increased citizen awareness and knowledge of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>No single, dominant media initiative, but many smaller, effective projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Conducting media training and information campaigns, workshops, and meetings between civilians and the military which focused on access to information and the role of the media in civil military relations. The truth and reconciliation commission support included national and regional media dissemination through radio, television broadcasts in four languages, public fairs, and cultural activities. Civil society advocacy included training journalists, increasing media coverage of anti-corruption issues, information campaigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.2 DDR (support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) 3.1.3 Good governance (support for civilian led-military and improving the ability of CSOs to use media advocacy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Published several books and studies and conducted information campaigns on defense and security issues - estimated 3M Peruvians reached through OTI-funded awareness-raising materials. There were an estimated 350,000 dissemination materials, 41 OTI funded studies, 4000+ trained, 80+ workshops related to the TRC. Civil society advocacy included 4 radio campaigns reaching an average of 600,000 people, anti-corruption fairs attended by 50,000 people, and four information pamphlets published and distributed to 10,000 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>There was a greater interest in military issues among the media. One grantee, a think tank, organized public debates in preparation of a national security strategy. Many grantees had input in other defense/military related issues. On media specific issues, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) failed to develop a consistent and coherent public communication strategy. Public confidence in the TRC’s ability to dig out the truth dropped. However, OTI said that the general understanding of the TRC increased and participation broadened. The long-term impact of the TRC was not evaluated, as the OTI evaluation preceded the release of the TRC final report. Overall impact assessment is difficult because results have to be inferred from results of sub-grants. One monitoring tool is a year-long media tracking service. This did record intensity of media coverage, but was not able to attribute coverage to OTI work. Overall, difficult to measure because effects cannot be attributed, many changes are attitudinal, adequate M&amp;E mechanisms were not designed, and the time frame is limited and inappropriate for the nature of the change.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>In defense and security, sustainability is a major issue. Program is not institutionalized, with no continuing donor support.</td>
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<td><strong>Indonesia</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI in Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>1998-2000 (initially scheduled to conclude 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Media component comprises $6.6M of $16.4M total project funding, or approximately 40%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Assist USAID/Indonesia with political transition support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Increase journalism professionalism and objectivity. Decrease military involvement in civil and political affairs. Enable OTI-supported NGO and media to articulate their messages in policy settings. In the long-run, the program supports increased access to accurate, objective information, reducing rumors and tensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Helps to establish and assist new NGO Visi Anaka Bangsa, which develops PSAs for television and radio, holds public dialogues or town meetings, and conducts public opinion polling. Overall, voter education campaigns increase confidence in the electoral process. Activities serve as a foundation for future election work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Media law development, promoted by Internews, assists parliament with new NGO law. NGOs develop weekly interactive programs on media issues, integrating media development and civil society. Other programs deal with important issues in post-Suharto Indonesia, such as human rights and gender issues. NGOs also conduct media monitoring. Activities encourage journalists to write about media activities. Specific training for journalists also improve their ability to write about civil-military relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good governance (support for the election-related materials). 3.3 Support for independent media (CSOs develop important programming on gender, human rights, for publication).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>New OTI-encouraged press law spawns more than 200 new publications. Voter education campaigns increase confidence in the electoral process, reaching 160-180M viewers. Print media OTI-supported print media reaches 23M, although this may not be directly attributable to OTI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Greatly improves the ability of NGOs to use media. Project tries to tackle many important issues, such as civil-military issues, and makes progress through training, but this is subject to factors beyond the project’s control. Awareness-raising efforts reach millions, primarily through television. Media strengthening initiative is timely and effective, contributing to the short-term objective of informing the public on political issues and to longer-term development goals of institution building, including a legal framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Overlapping M&amp;E systems. Roles were not clearly defined and there was confusion about whether OTI or USAID/ANE was responsible for certain aspects of USAID’s role. There was no exit strategy or transition from USAID/OTI to longer term intervention. Program continued to lengthen, from 1-3 years, with no clear policy on duration. Some positive overlap between USAID and OTI, but separate planning and results monitoring worked against full integration. Significant uncertainty about OTI’s role, specifically about whether it was to provide support to the mission or run separate projects. This was due in part to an enlarged role for OTI. Other contributing factors were uncertainty about leadership, difficulties with congressional earmarking, and lines of authority.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>East Timor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI in East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>December 1999 (beginning of UN mandate) - 2002 (full independence for E. Timor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Total Project Value: 3M. Level of media funding is not described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Support the transition to a stable and independent East Timor and build on the progress started by the UN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Rebuild and foster an independent media sector in East Timor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Capacity building for the only national media entity, Radio UNTAET, though the long-term sustainability of this enterprise is in doubt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Support from OTI in the form of equipment, training, and direct financial contributions. Substantial training for journalists both on the job and outside the country. OTI supports the development of a media law, though there is less progress on this issue. Project attempts media training center, though this project is abandoned. OTI-funded district reporting program encourages coverage of local issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.2 Support for the peace process (UNTAET develops media supporting transition to independence), 3.2 Strategic communications (advice to media and government on press law, independent boards) 3.3 Support for independent media (media infrastructure, such as printing presses).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>At project completion, Radio UNTAET reaches all 13 districts with reliable news and information, two daily newspapers, handful of small district publications, and many journalists trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Project achieves significant accomplishments in journalism training. Activities result in the establishment of a print consortium, though the largest daily newspaper only publishes 2000 copies a day. Support for several other papers, though there is no large publishing house in Dili. The future of the print consortium at the time of writing was uncertain; it subsequently folded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Overall, there is a lack of information about the general state of the media (although the detail of the report belies this finding). Major uncertainty about how to shift UNTAET to an independent broadcaster after it leaves UN control, which speaks to the larger challenge of trying to limit government influence over the media sector. Media remains completely dependent on foreign donors, especially since there is not enough of an economic base to generate advertising revenue. Journalists are passive recipients of aid, and have not formed a truly independent association. Training may not be cost-effective because it requires journalists to leave the country and pay for their costs. Government is only willing to fund its own media, and it is not clear how media will sustain itself without foreign aid. Newspaper distribution is a major issue for the future viability of the sector and one that is unresolved. Need for a community radio station, which is only sustainable through an association, is unaddressed. Many activities seem to rely on volunteerism, though this is not realistic in the long run.</td>
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### Bosnia Hëregovina

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Title</strong></th>
<th>OTI in Bosnia Herzegovina</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>February 1996-May 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Support the transition to democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>The stated goal varies, but tends to emphasize the establishment of editorially independent media that offer &quot;consistent, objective and balanced information to Bosnian citizens.&quot; OTI activities focus more on the political climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Funds creation of the Open Broadcast Network (OBN), which stimulates democratic debate on key issues, and organizes live current affairs programming. Though ultimately unsuccessful, it serves as the basis of a new network, Mzera Plus. Through collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, supports the establishment of a regulator, the Communications Regulation Agency (CRA), which removes political manipulation from the licensing process. OTI deals mostly with the creation of new media outlets and promotes the link between NGOs and media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Assistance focuses on private print and broadcast media, saving many outlets that would have otherwise gone out of business. Project also creates broadcaster’s association and funds the creation of new, independent stations and newspapers. Significant provisions for the training of journalists. Project also funds market research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good governance (support for the elections), 3.3 Support for independent media (development of an independent broadcaster, liberalization of state-controlled media).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Strong network of independent broadcasters. Effective regulatory agency (the CRA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Raises the bar for Bosnian broadcasters and spurs the development of independent media, keeping many organizations afloat that would have gone out of business. Improves credibility of and trust in independent media, and distrust of government controlled media. Independent regulatory authority (CRA) is looked at as the most lasting of the interventions, curbing extremist media and preventing the media from affecting developments in Kosovo. OBN is eventually unsustainable, though the resources devoted to this project are absorbed by other initiatives. Print media that had a sectarian focus earlier seek a broader, national audience. Encourages national journalist association which further bridges ethnic divides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Overall strategy does not emerge until 1998 and not centrally managed until 2000. There many different USAID programs which are not coordinated. Political parties are hostile to OBN and delay its launch. No written strategy in the crucial, earlier phases. OTI strategy includes dispensing media support broadly and using a more political criteria, which contrasts with and is often at odds with the USAID approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI in Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>1997-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Overall US government funding is $3M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Support democracy assistance program and continued economic sanctions. After 2000, objective changes to supporting resistance to the Milosevic regime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>OTI funds programs and media outlets that disseminate messages pushing for immediate political change. Self-characterized as &quot;pushing the reform agenda.&quot; Contrasts with USAID E&amp;E programs, which emphasize longer-term, sustainable media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Broadcast media, especially radio, is the priority area of USG support, primarily through infrastructure bolstering the Associate of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) network. &quot;Ring Around Serbia&quot; initiative unites local and international broadcasters to push for Milosevic's ouster, covering most of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Extensive media training in broadcast and print journalism. Many ideas are generated by Serbians, not USAID, which produces some unique projects, including some which are critical of US involvement. Program funds development of PSAs during elections, encouraging fair vote count and ensuring that media continues during the elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.1 Humanitarian (specific media for sanctions, during the bombing campaign) 3.1.3 Good Governance (reform and election media), 3.3 Support for independent media (infrastructure support for broadcasters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>250,000 listen to Ring Around Serbia broadcasts, significant support for more than 1 dozen stations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Media is viewed as a major tool in supporting transition from authoritarianism and solidifying the opposition. Media also affects public opinion on other key issues, such as the miner’s strike. Achieves mutually reinforcing relationship with civil society. Significant infrastructure remains in place more than two years after Milosevic's ouster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Significant challenge posed by NATO bombing in March 1999-May 2000. Support for media continues, yet more tacitly and from outside the country. Consortium finds ways of sending information into the country even when Serbian government requires all domestic media to report only the government line. Difficulty with licensing and fairly allocating airwaves. There is uncertainty about the future of independent media as more stations are privatized, and a risk of &quot;crony capitalism.&quot; Donor coordination diminishes after Kostunica is elected, and media support diminishes. After Milosevic's ouster, many media outlets need to redefine themselves and achieve a different &quot;independent&quot; orientation. The media law still needs more attention and strengthening, especially if it aspires to match European standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guatemala</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>Guatemala Demobilization and Assistance Program – OTI Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>November 1996- November 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td>Heard, John. 1999. Guatemala Demobilization and Incorporation Program. Washington, D.C: USAID.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Total USAID contribution never specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Support the peace accords ending the civil war and facilitate a true transition from ongoing conflict to a condition of stability and peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>“Educate the Guatemalan public on the incorporation process and the content of the peace accords. Create an atmosphere of harmony and dialogue to facilitate the peaceful integration of ex-combatants into their communities.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Media component is relatively small compared to the rest of the project. Primarily consists of a series of workshops aimed at areas of greatest potential for renewed conflict along with a reinforcing radio campaign. Directed at community leaders and representatives of the demobilized population, most of the workshops were held municipal halls and had a duration of one day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Radio campaign complements workshops, though the radio activity is not described in depth. Campaign is structured around single message, broadcast in the principal languages of the zone of coverage, loosely translated as “Don’t look at me as a stranger, I am of your own blood, and if I went to the mountain to struggle against hunger, now that I return to my land I am ready to embrace you, to cultivate at your side the history of our fathers and to seed it to our sons without hatred or animosity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.2 Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding (promoting awareness about the peace process).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Workshops carried out in 16 municipalities, reaching 1,375 community leaders and ex-combatants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Measured quantitatively, with the strongest indicator the positive reviews the workshop received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation criticises the project for its late start and says that social communication initiative would have been more effective if it had started earlier.</td>
</tr>
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### Sierra Leone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Title</strong></th>
<th>OTI in Sierra Leone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>1997-2002 (program enters second phase in 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Not specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Promote the peace following the Lome Accords, specifically by minimizing the dangers of conflict diamonds and addressing the needs of ex-combatant child soldiers and out-of-school youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Support the awareness-raising activities of other projects, chiefly the reintegration and diamond-management programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>“Search for Common Ground’s Talking Drum Studio to produce and distribute to local radio stations news and messages promoting reconciliation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Media Sensitization Campaign supports the development of the Diamond Area Community Development Fund through the Talking Drum Studio, a SFCG media development initiative that creates radio spots. Media also serves as a means to gather information on other awareness initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.2 Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding (awareness about conflict diamonds and reintegration programs) 3.2 Strategic Communication (radios for the government to communicate with mine officials).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Radio broadcasts and other media to limit conflict diamonds and promote reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Media plays an important role supporting other initiatives, specifically the diamond project. Information received from community meetings during the media campaign indicated that mine wardens were collecting fees that were probably for their personal use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation criticises project sustainability and long-term planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Philippines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Title</strong></th>
<th>SWIFT Mindanao (OTI Philippines)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>August 1997 - December 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>No media component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Provide emergency livelihood assistance to former MNLF combatants and their families and to promote political stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>No media component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>No media component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>No media component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>Provides for livelihood assistance, improves literacy rate, and develops community managed fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Project finds that income generation programs are relatively successful, though community funds are not established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kosovo</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI Kosovo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>June 1999-September 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>OTI awarded 45 grants to media with a value exceeding $1 million.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Establishment of an economic policy and constitutional framework, accountable and transparent governance, restored normalcy in living standards and opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Enhance organizational capacity to provide the public with a variety of public affairs information in a professionally competent manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>OTI targeted activities that would help broaden coverage, improve reporting skills, provide legal assistance, and establish centers of excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>Project also supported media association development including 19 independent radio stations which formed the Association of Independent Electronic Media of Kosovo in August 2000 to strengthen their role in Kosovo and to lobby. Worked with local media outlets to develop talk shows on community accomplishments. Supported elections by working with CICs (Community Improvement Councils) and helping develop public service announcements for print and broadcast media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1 Good Governance (encourage balanced coverage of key transitional issues) 3.3 Support for Independent Media (training of journalists, development of standards).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>45 media-specific projects, in addition to support for CICs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation identifies greater awareness of election issues, improvement of overall quality of journalism, restoration of media institutions destroyed during the war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>Some media recipients of OTI’s short-term grants expected almost automatic, longer-term support from USAID’s democracy program. OTI dealt with this confusion by ensuring that media grantees understood the distinction between the OTI and mission democracy grants.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nigeria</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>OTI/SWIFT Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>1999-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Dedicated to Media</strong></td>
<td>Not disaggregated by media, though many of the 75 civil society grants involve media in some form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objectives/Strategy</strong></td>
<td>In the wake of the military government, ensure that government institutions demonstrate increased transparency and responsiveness, mitigate destabilizing forces, establish the foundation for a free and fair election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Specific Objective</strong></td>
<td>Elevate the consciousness of the media towards greater awareness of their role in positively addressing national issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Media Projects</strong></td>
<td>Anti-corruption television series is the foundation of the awareness campaign. Internet Press Centers help journalists get online and develop news websites. The Centers’ operations included disseminating information from around Nigeria and from Nigerian journalists abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Media Activities</strong></td>
<td>OTI assisted private print media and trained journalists in reporting techniques to improve overall quality. Supported Voice of America programs on conflict topics in Nigeria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of Media Intervention</strong></td>
<td>3.1.3 Good governance (funding for anti-corruption media) 3.3 Support for Independent Media (support for press centers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Output Examples</strong></td>
<td>7 internet press centers, 13 anti-corruption episodes, which attracted commercial sponsors after 10 episodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome/Impact</strong></td>
<td>According to the evaluation, the salient outcome is that OTI’s work with civil society groups to use media in airing public issues was visible and clearly stimulated public interest. According to the report, “it was too early to identify the impact on conflict reporting, noting that it was important to assess this effort over time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles/Shortcomings</strong></td>
<td>A key obstacle was program sustainability. Most of the successful media initiatives will stop without continued support, which seems unlikely to be found.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


Official Evaluations of OTI projects


Endnotes


25 Panos “Case for Communication” p. 13

26 Many argue that the term “independent media” can never be fully implemented, since all media are clearly dependent on some economic or political institutional base. We use the term here, however, to specify an ideal of objectivity, neutrality and editorial professionalism that conforms to internationally accepted norms of practice.


39 Downloaded from the Fondation Hirondelle website on January 18, 2008. <http://www.hirondelle.org/hirondelle.nsf/525125ad0c4e00a0c12564e500424876/8603a2d41fc59612c1256b3c004bb371?OpenDocument
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About CommGAP

The Agora was the heart of the ancient Greek city—its main political, civic, religious and commercial center. Today, the Agora is the space where free and equal citizens discuss, debate, and share information about public affairs in order to influence the policies that affect the quality of their lives. The democratic public sphere that the ancient Agora represents is an essential element of good governance and accountability.

The Communication for Governance & Accountability Program (CommGAP) seeks to promote good and accountable governance through the use of innovative communication approaches and techniques that strengthen the constitutive elements of the public sphere: engaged citizenries, vibrant civil societies, plural and independent media systems, and open government institutions. Communication links these elements, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped about key issues of public concern. CommGAP posits that sound analysis and understanding of the structural and process aspects of communication and their interrelationships make critical contributions to governance reform. CommGAP is funded through a multi-donor trust fund. The founding donor of this trust fund is the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID).
The media and communication sector plays a complex role in post-conflict and fragile states. In states experiencing conflict, violent political upheaval or complete collapse, the media can provide important, reliable, and timely humanitarian and political information in the midst of chaos, helping people to navigate their tumultuous surroundings. Moving toward the longer term, media and communication processes can enable citizens to engage in dialogue, serve as platforms for debate and oversight, anchor governance reforms, and facilitate peacebuilding and poverty reduction. Yet, despite its importance, the media and communication sector is frequently an afterthought in post-conflict reconstruction. This paper calls for a new model in post-conflict and fragile states, one that prioritizes communication’s role in governance and peacebuilding.