



FREE PRESS UNLIMITED  
**NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS PROGRAMME**

Internal mid-term evaluation  
Pakistan  
November 2017- January 2018



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# 1. Introduction

*This is the public version of a larger report. The original report has been redacted in order to anonymise or remove mentions of specific persons and organisations. Unfortunately, this includes the substantiation done to verify specific outcomes and parts of the findings and analysis that could not be anonymised. The final chapter, with conclusions and recommendations for the media organisations involved has also been removed.*

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## 1.1 No News is Bad News and Outcome Harvesting

The No News Is Bad News (NNIBN) programme started in January 2016. The aim of the NNIBN Programme is to work towards the following vision:

*Media and journalists, as independent players in civil society, constitute a diverse and professional media landscape and function as change catalysts.*

This is done by working towards three interlinked Intermediate Outcomes:

- IO1: An **enabling environment** for the media is established, conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism, and diversity.
- IO2: Media serve the interest of the public and act as a **watchdog** on their behalf
- IO3: Journalists and media-actors work **professionally** and are effective and sustainable

At the start of the programme, a baseline workshop was organised in each of the countries included in the programme. In Pakistan this was done between 16- 18 August 2016. These resulted in a set of baseline *capacity scores* for each of the partner organisations involved, as well as a description and set of priorities organised by program indicator. A set of (initial) intended outcome and progress markers were formulated for each indicator based on the baseline report and have since then been used to monitor progress. This progress is measured and published according to the IATI-standard every three months.

To complement these monitoring activities, Free Press Unlimited started to look into Outcome Harvesting as a possible method to use as part of the Mid Term Review (MTR). Outcome Harvesting can be used to do a broader search for results in terms of intended and unintended outcomes and to detect programme-wide patterns in the effect of our partnership. Due to the complex contexts of the program, Free Press Unlimited wants to monitor (and evaluate) beyond planned or intended outcomes. Furthermore, by giving proper attention to engaging with partner organisations in the interpretation of results, the method facilitates all participants in the results chain to make sense of the found outcomes and use the process to learn and improve their coordinated work at national, regional and international level.

Before applying OH on the NNIBN programme as a whole, Free Press Unlimited decided to realize a pilot in two countries: Somalia and Pakistan. With regards to Pakistan, the (pilot) evaluation took place from October 2017 to January 2018, and focussed on the period from the start of the programme in 2016 up to that point. Partners were involved in two phases: they were extensively interviewed through teleconferencing and e-mail during November- December to collect the outcomes; and a sensemaking workshop was organised to jointly interpret, validate and facilitate the use of the findings in January.

The outcome harvesting activities Free Press Unlimited has done with our partners in Pakistan have had four outputs or applications:

- An evaluation of the Pakistan country programme, which has resulted in this document;
- Lessons learned for future outcome harvesting workshops, which have been used to draft a *pilot evaluation report* and a two-pager on *outcome harvesting at Free Press Unlimited*;
- Input for the Mid-Term-Review of the No News is Bad News programme as a whole.
- Recommendations on the priorities and strategies for the programme going forward, discussed together with Free Press Unlimited's programme staff and our partners in Pakistan.

## 1.2 Country context

Freedom of the Press 2016	Freedom of the Press 2017	Civic Space
64 (not free)	65 (not free)	Repressed

*Freedom of the Press (Freedom House) and Civic Space (Civicus) rating*

Pakistan has a vibrant society of many ethnic and cultural groups, but political instability, social inequality, widespread illiteracy, religious extremism and ethnic and linguistic divisions all combine to prevent it from achieving its economic potential and the growth needed to provide for its young, rapidly expanding population of around 200 million.

As can be seen from the ratings given by Freedom House and Civicus, the enabling environment for free expression is weak and deteriorating. While there are many skilled and committed journalists in Pakistan, many lack proper training, are poorly paid, and there are no widely accepted standards of ethical journalism, leaving the media sector open to abuse by political and business interests.

Civil society contacts are limited so journalists often do not work effectively in the interest of their audiences. Underserved and neglected parts of the country (media dark areas) need greater attention, with improved links between provincial and national journalists. In addition, social and religious minorities are ignored or misrepresented in the media.

Journalists cannot work safely because of militancy and violent politics. Reporting on certain issues like the security service, certain militant groups, Kashmir or China's growing economic interests (CPEC) is a highly dangerous undertaking. Data collected by the Committee to Protect Journalists shows that Pakistan is in

the top 10 of most dangerous countries to work, with 60 journalists killed because of doing their work, since 1992.<sup>1</sup>

At the start of the No News is Bad News programme in 2016, Free Press unlimited formulated the following strategy in Pakistan:

*Free Press Unlimited will work through local media producers and support organisations to promote, together with civil society organisations, a stronger enabling environment for media and better links with civil society, enabling both to respond to the information needs of specific audiences.*

*Free Press Unlimited will promote collective action through professional bodies and press clubs in support of a safer working environment, to allow free expression through improved legislation and the end of impunity; ethical, fact-based and investigative reporting to promote transparency, enabling media and civil society to act as a check on corruption; and supporting media projects in media dark areas of the country and among women and marginalised social and ethical groups.*

National lobby & advocacy efforts are centered around ending impunity and journalist safety (mainly combating the blasphemy laws and cyber-crime laws) and are accompanied and enhanced by an international lobby & advocacy trajectory towards UNESCO. Free Press Unlimited further supports media organisations and citizen journalists based in media dark areas in strengthening professional reporting (fact-based independent journalism serving the interests of the public) and works to improve the organisational and financial sustainability of the organisations through training/ mentoring and exchange with similar initiatives elsewhere.

## 1.3 Partnership

Free Press Unlimited has worked in Pakistan since 2004. During the period under evaluation (2016- 2017), Free Press Unlimited cooperated with four partner organisations in Pakistan:

- Partner 1, a local-language news service, active in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on the border with Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>
- Partner 2, a citizen journalism website, provides news and a discussion forum for the remote mountain regions of the Gilgit-Baltistan territory and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).
- Partner 3, a Pakistani organisation focussed on digital freedom and (online) citizen journalism.
- Partner 4, an independent media documentation and training centre, non-governmental organisation committed to promoting and defending freedom of expression.

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1 <https://cpj.org/asia/pakistan/> – accessed June 2018

2 FATA has been merged with the neighbouring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as of 31 May 2018.

Partner 1 and Partner 2 are (local) media outlets, while Partner 3 and Partner 4 are civil society organisations operating nationally. Both of the media outlets have a small core of professional staff but rely heavily on volunteers and citizen reporters and are strongly embedded within their local communities.





## 2. Evaluation process

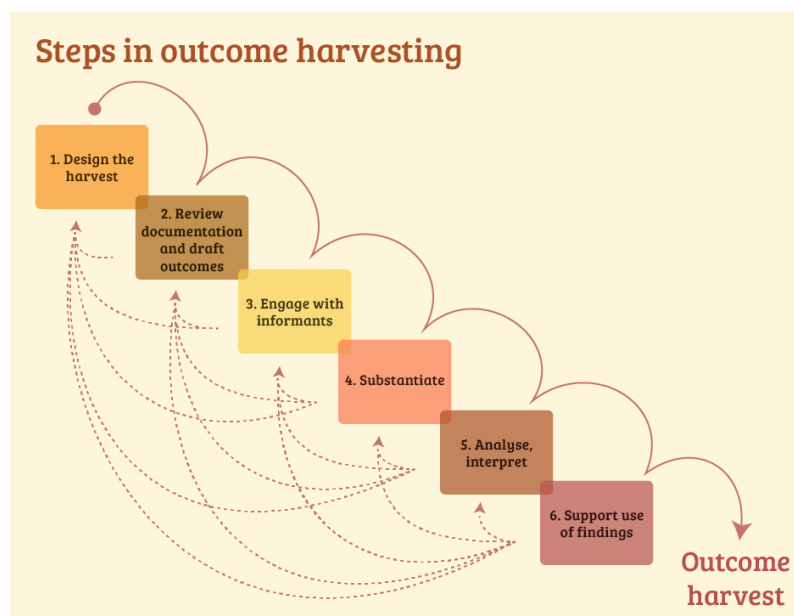
Outcome Harvesting defines ‘outcomes’ as the changes in behaviour, practices, and relationships of a concrete person or organisation. Each outcome focusses on two actors: the person or organisation whose actions have led to the change (the change agent), and the person or organisation that has changed (the social actor).

Defining an outcome always starts with identifying the social actor, which ensures that (a) the outcome is concrete and distinct (each change is captured separately) and (b) that any relevant change is included, regardless of what was planned or expected to change. Outcome Harvesting is not designed to check whether a plan has been executed or certain targets have been met, but rather first to determine what has changed and then work backwards to see which activities contributed to the change.

Of course, this comes with certain limitations: only those outcomes that the partners are aware of are captured. Starting with the outcomes and working backward depends on the ability to remember and to recall what happened some time ago. Furthermore, not everything that would normally be considered a ‘result’ is also an outcome under the definition used in Outcome Harvesting: only changes in behaviour by a social actor can be included in the evaluation. Although Outcome Harvesting is rather open in its scope of changes (also including elements that were not foreseen, for instance), it is more rigorous here, which means that any action taken that was directly in the sphere of control of the change agent can not be counted as a ‘real change’.

Outcome Harvesting consists of 6 steps:

1. Design
2. Document review
3. Engage with stakeholders
4. Substantiate
5. Analysis and interpretation  
Use of findings



## 1. Design

We decided that the Outcome Harvest would be used both to reflect on the Theory of Change that is being used as a framework for No News is Bad News as a whole, as well as to look at elements specific to the project in Pakistan.

Specifically, the following users and usages were identified:

Programme Staff (Free Press Unlimited)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring for (internal and external) accountability</li><li>• Improving programme strategy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Learn more about how and at what level results are achieved</li><li>◦ Adjust goals and expectations for the second half of the programme</li><li>◦ Map differences in contributions of partners</li></ul></li></ul>
Knowledge & Quality (Free Press Unlimited)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide input to improve Theory of Change</li><li>• Provide input for the Mid Term Review of the No News Is Bad News (NNIBN) programme.</li><li>• Gain experience with the Outcome Harvesting method and test different approaches, to improve future evaluations.</li></ul>
Partner Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen awareness of the results of interventions</li><li>• Facilitate reflection on the coherence between the different programme partners and their contributions to common goals – leading to possibilities for improved cooperation.</li><li>• Build capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation.</li></ul>

## 2. Document review & 3. Engage with stakeholders

As part of the pilot set-up of the Outcome Harvest, engaging with stakeholders (the partners) was done remotely, via teleconferencing and e-mail. We wanted to study the feasibility of this approach, as compared with a face-to-face workshop.

First a document review was done, to collect some preliminary outcomes and leads from existing reports. These were entered into a table that was shared with the partner before the first teleconference session. The 'harvesting' started with a two-hour teleconference session with each partner organisation (separately), in which the method and process was explained, the outcomes from the document review were discussed and the participants were interviewed to identify additional outcomes. After that the collection and improvement of outcomes was continued over e-mail.



This structure seemed to work well, as it gave both the participants and the evaluator time to reflect on the quality and completeness of the outcomes. One lesson learned was to reserve more time for this step, however: in the design one- two weeks of e-mailing back and forth were foreseen, but in practice this took up to four months due to differences in responsiveness and availability during the period.

#### 4. Substantiation

Participants indicated for each outcome a means of substantiation: an additional source or person where the outcome can be verified. A sample of these outcomes have been verified; due to the sensitive nature of the (political) context, it was decided to verify through documented evidence rather than by contacting external persons. This was possible for nearly all outcomes.

#### 5. Analysis and interpretation

All outcomes were put into a categorisation table, where they were categorised on several elements (e.g. NNIBN indicator; local / national level; etc.).

The following categories were used for the classification:

Classification field	Category
Change agent	<i>Participating organisations</i>
Social actor	CSOs, own organisation, national government, local government, media, citizen reporters, embassy, international organisation,
NNIBN indicator	1- 9 (nominal)
Intermediate outcome	1- 3 (nominal)
Progress marker	Indicator+ a/ b/ c/ etc.
Program focus	Inductive
Activity type	Inductive
Level	Local/ national

This has resulted in the findings presented in the next chapter and in feedback discussed directly with the programme coordinator and partner organisations. These were also presented and discussed during a workshop with the partners at the end of the process, which provided additional insights.

Two of these categories were not envisioned in the design but added later: programme focus and activity type. These were generated inductively from the set of outcomes. The resulting typology was shared and discussed with all stakeholders, who indicated that they recognized it as a good representation of the programme and that they found it a useful structure to look at both their results and future plans. This can be taken as a confirmation that we can use outcome harvesting to generate categories and typologies in the future as well – for instance for an evaluation of the Theory of Change.

## *6. Use of findings*

While the collection of outcomes happened remotely, a workshop was organised later. This sensemaking workshop was the primary way to facilitate the use of findings with regards to the partner organisations. It combined feedback on the analysis and interpretation of the results with sessions where the findings were used as input for developing priorities, strategies and exploring cooperation between partners for the second half of the NNIBN programme.

The sensemaking workshop consisted of several elements:

- Clarifying remaining questions on the method and on how to use it independently
- Communicating patterns in the results
- Discussing their validity and interpretation
- Using patterns and focus areas to identify complementarity between partner activities and objectives
- Discussing strategies and priorities for the second half of the NNIBN-programme
- Gaining feedback on the process and the method

Among other things, this resulted in several suggestions to adjust the format for future Outcome Harvesting exercises; two groups (with participants from three organisations in each, based on the focus of their organisation) defining joint priorities and plans for cooperation on content production in media-dark areas and lobby and advocacy, respectively; and clarity on how to use Outcome Harvesting for future reporting by the partners to Free Press Unlimited.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Focus areas

A primary finding of this outcome harvest is the identification of focus areas in the Pakistan programme: five specific aims the program tries to achieve. They were identified inductively from the list of outcomes, and each of the outcomes collected contributes to or is an example of one of these focus areas. In relation to the overall programme strategy, they can be seen as specific strategies for the Pakistani context towards achieving the higher-level objectives of the Theory of Change.

#### Focus areas:

1. Contact between media and local communities, groups underrepresented in the media, and the organisations representing them.
2. Bringing local issues to the attention of the public and authorities, so that they will be addressed.
3. Civil society organisation cooperation with each other and with other organisations for more effective coordination, lobby and campaigning.
4. Bringing local news from media dark areas to national attention.
5. Lobbying for better rules and policies for media and press freedom.

With the following amount of outcomes per focus area:

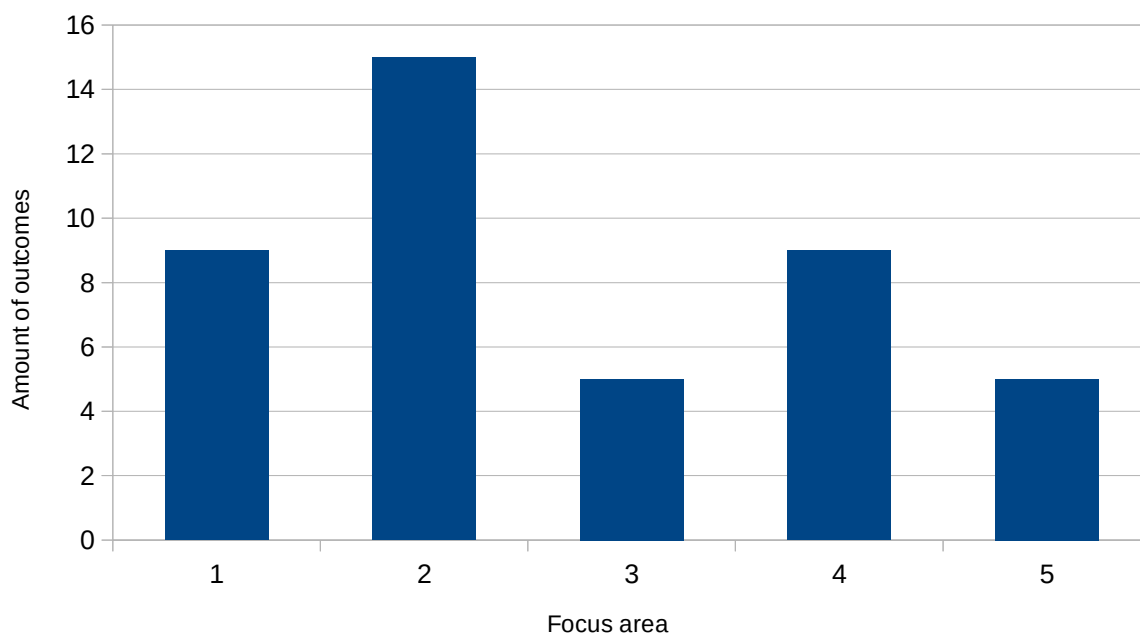


Figure 1: Number of outcomes per focus area

## 1. Contact between media and local communities, groups underrepresented in the media, and the organisations representing them

One of the strong points of the work of Free Press Unlimited in Pakistan is the cooperation with media organisations that are highly embedded in the local community. However, the local community consists of many different groups as well, some of which are traditionally underrepresented in the media.

Strengthening the connection of media organisations with these groups and the civil society organisations representing them has been one of the main focus areas of the programme. Outcomes related to this focus area are for instance that local civil society organisations now share stories with Partner 1, and that women in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan are now contacting Partner 2 to send in stories from their perspective. Several describe the relations and cooperation that Partner 1 established with local civil society organisations after organising a workshop for them.

This focus area contributes to intermediate outcome 2<sup>3</sup>, and enables media to better serve the interests of the public. It does so mainly by increasing downward accountability.

Example:

Outcome description	Significance description	Contribution description
19 local CSOs from FATA and KP have started sharing their stories with Partner 1 and have joined a WhatsApp group where issues to be reported are shared. (March 2017)	These stories were not shared with Partner 1 before.  It further enhances CSOs engagement with Partner 1 and other local media organizations, which helps both Partner 1 and the CSOs.	Partner 1 invited the CSOs to a training involving trust-building exercises, and trained the CSOs on media awareness.

## 2. Bringing local issues to the attention of the public and authorities, so that they will be addressed

The second focus area of the programme so far has been bringing problems facing the community to wider attention. This also follows from the embeddedness of local media in their communities. The outcomes we have found demonstrate that this often leads to action by the relevant authorities to address these issues, illustrating the importance of (independent) media to improve service delivery to local communities and to hold power holders to account. Examples include such things as a local council reopening a market that had been closed since 2009, but also the provincial health minister of KPK province investigating an ongoing practice whereby a local hospital in Chitral was dumping waste into a river.

This is a form of accountability that is not about controversial or highly politicised issues, but nevertheless very important to ensure that (local) government works in the interests of the public. It contributes to intermediate outcome 2, mainly through increasing upwards accountability.

Focus area 2 is supported by focus area 1. Several outcomes describe how leads for stories with impact came from engaged members of the public. The media organisations involved also made it clear during the sensemaking workshop on the interpretation of these results that they can only do so effectively when they are well connected with the public: this allows them to be aware of the most relevant and pressing issues.

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<sup>3</sup> Intermediate Outcome 2: *Media serve the interests of the public and act as a watchdog on their behalf*

In one example, Partner 1 wrote several articles together with and gave space to an organisation working on trans rights. This eventually increased pressure on the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), which introduced a new policy for registration of trans gender persons - under the previous policy, they were not able to obtain identity papers without cooperation from their parents, which left many without legal papers.

### 3. Civil society organisation cooperation with each other and with other organisations for more effective coordination, lobby and campaigning

The third focus area has been facilitating and stimulating cooperation between organisations that lobby and advocate for press freedom and journalist safety. This includes cooperation between organisations that are actively engaged in lobby and advocacy, but also establishing links with embassies that are sympathetic to this cause and with relevant international organisations such as UNESCO.

Free Press Unlimited plays a larger direct role in the outcomes related to this focus area: it is the main change agent in two of them, both of which concern establishing and engaging in cooperation involving both local organisations, and embassies and UNESCO. This focus area contributes to intermediate outcome 1<sup>4</sup>, by increasing the capacity and effectiveness of civil society organisations to lobby for a better legal and regulatory environment for media organisations and journalists.

Example:

Outcome description	Significance description	Contribution description
Partner 4 and several other organisations meet and coordinate in an informal coalition of human rights organisations.	This increases the ability to lobby Pakistan government together.	Partner 4 requested the chairman of NCHR to convene a meeting in Karachi, while they were both in Geneva for the UPR.  At the meeting convened by PILER and hosted by NCHR, a number of proposals were discussed and it was decided to initiate an informal network to liaise with of human rights CSOs in Karachi and other cities.

### 4. Bringing local news from media dark areas to national attention

Media dark elements were an important element of the problem analysis made by Free Press Unlimited at the start of the programme. It is therefore not a surprise to find that a significant number of outcomes deal with this problem. Media dark areas in Pakistan are not or very sparsely covered by media for several reasons, ranging from political sensitivity to a lack of economic development.

In two of the four regions targetted, Free Press Unlimited supports existing local media organisation. These are very small in terms of paid staff, but have a large network of engaged citizens and volunteer reporters. A

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<sup>4</sup> Intermediate Outcome 1: An enabling environment for the media is established, conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity

success for the programme was that national media have now started to pick up these stories. In the other regions, the programme has set up networks of citizen journalists. These are connected to a central network, and published on a national platform.

Example:

Outcome description	Significance description	Contribution description
National media outlets Dawn News (TV) and 92 News (TV) followed up on issues first brought up by the platform. <b>Examples redacted.</b>	National media seldom highlights issues of public interest in remote regions.  It is important to make local news mainstream, to increase accountability. In these cases, they did follow up on local issues from the platform, which is new. These media outlets have a large reach.	The platform's multimedia reporting on the issues in the media dark regions including southern Punjab put the issues on the spotlight.  By highlighting the problem, the platform prompted the mainstream media to realize the importance of public interest issues and follow them up.

## 5. Lobbying for better rules and policies for media and press freedom

This focus area describes the direct lobby and advocacy initiatives undertaken by the programme. These are aimed at improving the enabling environment for the media and for freedom of expression, which is intermediate outcome 1 of the programme.

Examples:

Outcome description	Significance description	Contribution description
Experts at the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) review by the UN Human Rights Committee quoted the figures and examples from Partner 4's report and made recommendations based on Partner 4's recommendations.	This gives the recommendations and view points of Partner 4 more leverage and increases their influence.	Partner 4 sent alternative reports for both the UPR and CCPR reports, as a result of encouragement and contacts established with the Netherlands embassy.
Parliament rejected a draft bill on the safety of journalists proposed by the government, which did not incorporate enough of the UN recommendations and did not ensure safety of journalists enough. Instead, a three member subcommittee will draft another bill together with stakeholders from the field.	This bill would have had a large negative impact if it would have been accepted. Now there is the possibility to fight for a better law that really protects journalist safety.	Partner 4 was one of the first to speak out against the draft bill.  Partner 3 submitted a report to the General Assembly that was critical of the bill.  Later, others such as the unions also started to criticize the draft.

## 3.2 Activity types

The focus areas described above are based on the changes<sup>5</sup> described by the outcomes and the reason why this result is significant for No News is Bad News. These are the first two elements of each outcome description. In addition, a third main element describes the *contribution* of the programme to this result. These can also be categorised into five types of activity done by the change agents to achieve a particular outcome.

### ACTIVITY TYPES:

1. Training
2. Writing and publishing articles
3. Organise meetings
4. Making and following a policy on publications
5. Writing and sending reports, recommendations or criticisms.

With the following amount of outcomes per activity type:

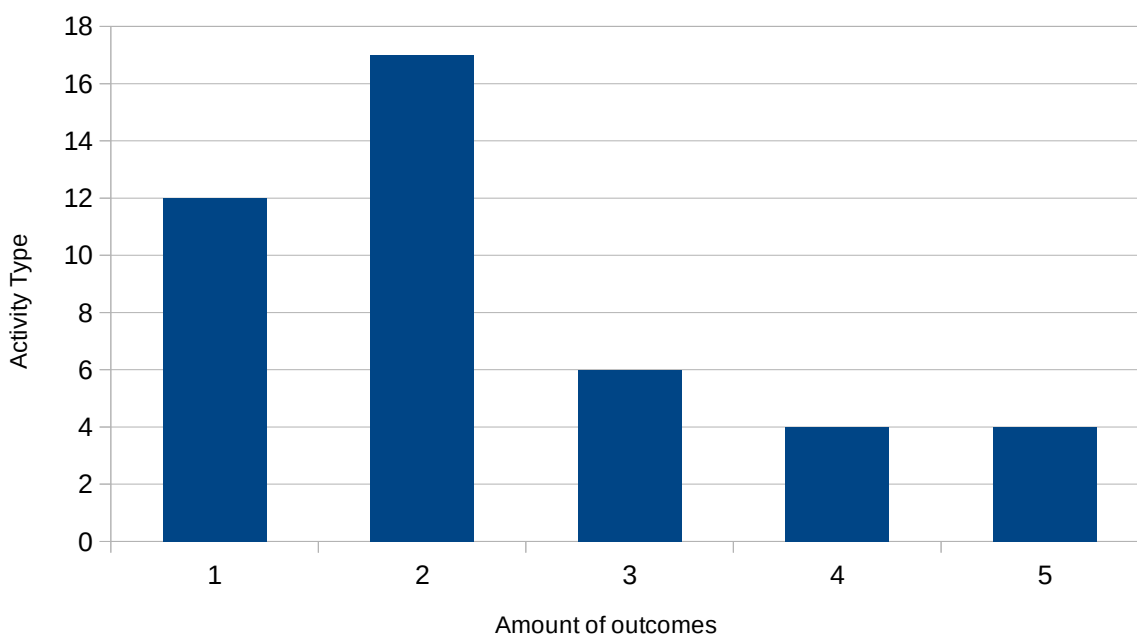


Figure 2: amount of outcomes per activity type

Training, and especially writing and publishing articles lead to more distinct outcomes than organising meetings, making and following a policy on publications, and writing and sending reports, recommendations or criticisms.

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<sup>5</sup> A description of the change that has been achieved.



For each outcome, a contribution rating (in percentages) was also specified – see the table to the right. A high contribution rating indicates that the change happened almost completely because of the contribution of the programme, while a low rating indicates that many other factors or organisations also played in important role.

Activity Type	
1. Training	61
3. Organising meetings	59
4. Making and following a p..	58
2. Writing an publishing arti..	46
5. Writing and sending repo..	37

Table 2: average contribution rating per activity type

### 3.3 Social actors

Each outcome is formulated in such way that it describes a change (in behaviour, relationships, etc.) of one particular actor. We can therefore easily see which actors were influenced by the programme. The following table shows a list of types of actors and the amount of outcomes for which they were the (main) social actor:

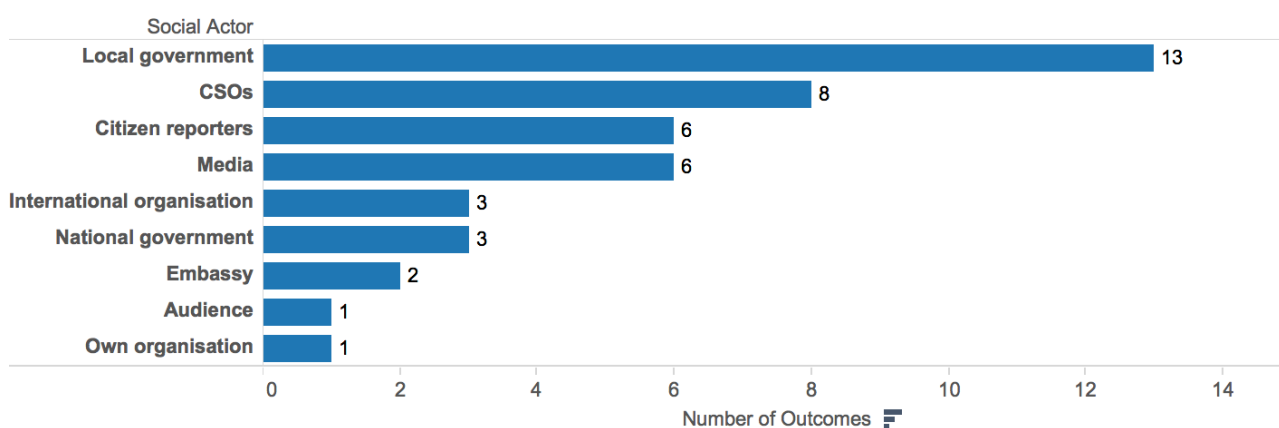


Figure 3: amount of outcomes per social actor

A plurality of outcomes affected a local government (including provincial governments). These are mostly outcomes in which the government addresses a societal issue brought to public attention through articles published by one of the media organisations, as described under focus area 2.

The number of outcomes is not a direct measure of the size of the impact of course: some changes can be more or less important than others. There is some difference in the significance rating given to each outcome, for instance: see the table to the right, which displays the average significance rating given to the outcomes of each social actor:

The two groups with the largest amount of outcomes, local governments and civil society organisations, both receive the lowest average significance score for these outcomes.

Social Actor	
Citizen reporters	8
National government	8
Audience	7
International organisatio..	7
CSOs	6
Embassy	6
Local government	6
Media	6
Own organisation	6

Table 3: average significance rating per social actor

Although local governments are by far the largest category in the overall set of outcomes, with civil society organisations a distant second, this is certainly not the case for all organisations. Partner 4 for instance did not influence local governments at all, and the large number of outcomes focussed on CSOs is mostly due to the work Partner 1 has done with CSOs in this period.

These patterns become even clearer if we also look at the type of activity that led to a change for each social actor.

Every time a local government was influenced to take or change some action, it was due to writing and publishing articles. This explains the lack of outcomes related to this social actor for Partner 4, which did not publish content. Citizen reporters were affected by training and by policies on publications; embassies by organising meetings; and national governments by lobby activities and publishing articles. Most outcomes that affected CSOs were due to training, which Partner 1 had indeed focussed on in the preceding period.

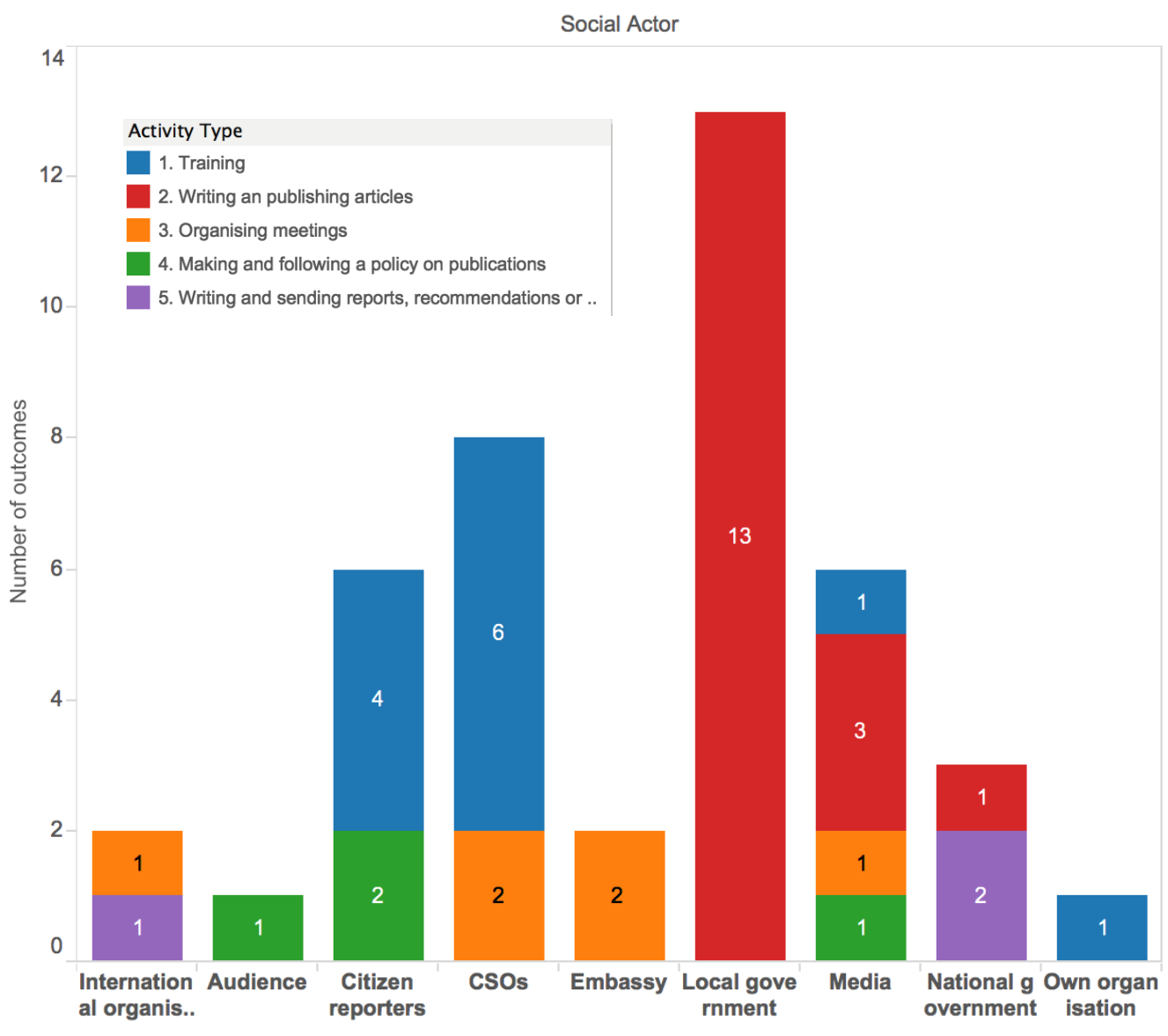


Figure 4: amount of outcomes per social actor, per activity type

### 3.4 Local/ national level

More than two-thirds of all outcomes in Pakistan took place at the local (including provincial) level.

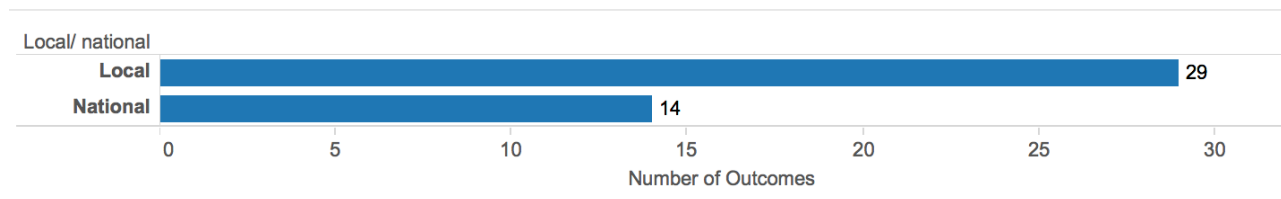


Figure 5: amount of outcomes per level (local/ national)

By themselves these numbers don't tell us terribly much though: some outcomes can refer to (much) larger changes than others.

Looking at it by activity, we can see that the lobby-related activities (organising meetings and sending recommendations) take place almost exclusively at the national level. For content production this is mixed, while training took place almost and making and following policies on publication completely at the local level. This is as expected, since the programme works mostly with local media outlets and citizen reporters.

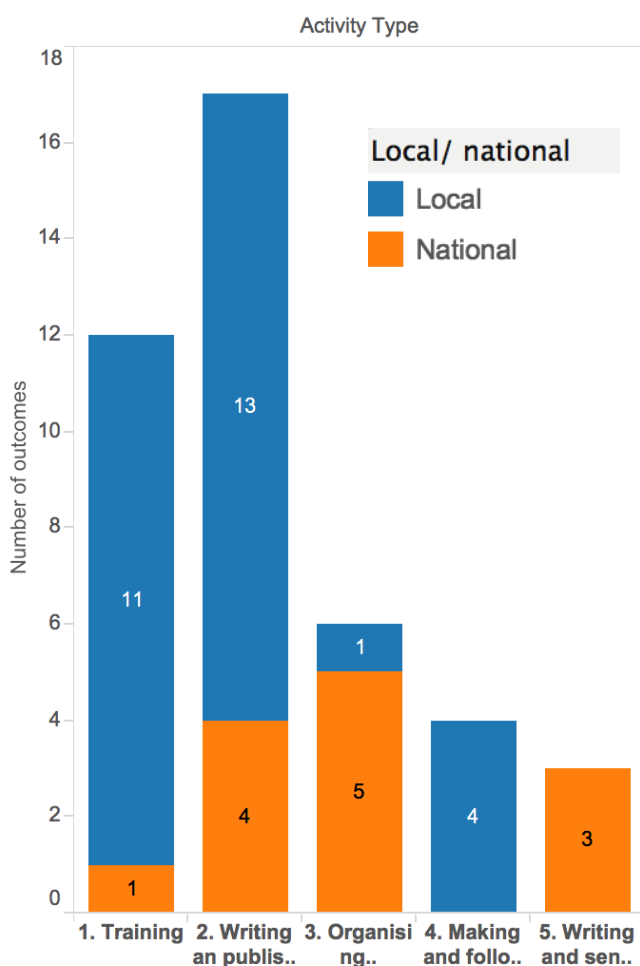


Figure 6: amount of outcomes per activity type, per level