STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO INFORMATION LAW AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Training Guide & Reporting Framework for Monitoring the SDGs in Sierra Leone

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
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Preface

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global set of 17 development agendas and 169 targets that were adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Summit in September 2015, to be achieved by 2030. In adopting a strategic approach to implementing the SDGs, Sierra has remained steadfast in upholding two of the 17 Goals as the accelerators for cardinal transformation of its economy and building long -term resilience for sustainable development. Sierra Leone's 2021 Voluntary National Review (VNR)[1] captures that the country focuses on two sustainable development accelerators, i.e. SDG 4 (Inclusive Education) and SDG 16 (Justice, Peace and Inclusive Society). Because these two SDGs are significant in advancing the achievement of other SDGs, Sierra Leone equally focuses on nine other priority goals, namely: Goals 1 (Ending Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Health), 5 (Gender), 8 (Decent Work), 10 (Inequality), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Change) and 17 (Means of Implementation).

The 2030 deadline is six years away, and the 2023 Sustainable Development Report (SDR) for Sierra Leone, a global assessment of countries' progress towards achieving the SDGs[2] shows that Sierra Leone ranks 133 out of 166 countries in the overall attainment of the SDGs, with a performance Index Score of 55.7% in a country with over 8.5 million people and a gross domestic product (GDP) of $14.9 billion. Details of the SDR show that Sierra Leone is experiencing more positive and fewer negative spillover effects in three SDG dimensions, viz: environmental and social impacts embodied in trade, economy and finance, and security. This is an indication of significant measurable progress for the country in achieving the SDGs while also highlighting areas where the country needs to do more.

Freedom of information is now a global phenomenon as a prerequisite for ensuring the voice and participation necessary for a democratic society. Right to access information held by public authorities is a fundamental right of the citizens and this is consistent with Target 16.10 of the SDGs which seeks to ensure public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 2013, Sierra Leone enacted the Right to Access Information Act (RAI ACT), and established the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) as a very important step towards democratic governance, transparency, accountability and the rule of law. [3]

Sierra Leone's media can discharge its public accountability role as a veritable tool for monitoring the country's progress and the actualization of core SDGs that are central to the country's development through the instrumentality of Sierra Leone's Right to Access Information Act (2013). Similarly, to ensure that future journalists are able to understand these priority areas of the country and support the government and people of Sierra Leone towards actualizing these core development issues, journalism and media training and education must mainstream Sierra Leone's priority SDGs into its curriculum. As at 2023, Sierra Leone's SDG percentage achievements show that the country has recorded and is on track with 19.4% indicators, has made limited progress on 49.3%, while 31.3% of its SDG indicators show that progress is worsening.[4] It is expected that media organizations, practicing journalists and journalism training institutions will leverage on these statistics and utilize Sierra Leone's RAI ACT to initiate a paradigm shift towards the attainment of the country's development goals.

A million thanks to UNESCO, under the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) for providing us the financial support on the activity "Increased Media Capacity to monitor and report on the provisions of the Right to Access Information Law in Sierra Leone."

Yeama Sarah Thompson-Oguamah
Executive Director
Initiatives for Media Development
March 2024

[1] Government of Sierra Leone. (2021, June). 2021 Voluntary National Report on SDGs in Sierra Leone. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Freetown: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.
[2] Sachs, J. D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). Implementing the SDG stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023. Dublin: Dublin University Press. DOI: 10.25546/102924
[3] Refer to Kamara, A. B. (2021). The Right to Access Information Commission's Training Manual on the Right to Access Information Act No. 2 of 2013. Freetown: Right to Access Information Commission.
[4] 2023 Sustainable Development Report. https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/sierra-leone

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Background To This Guide

The pursuit of sustainable national development is intricately linked with the availability of information and the role of the media in disseminating critical knowledge. Access to Information laws play a pivotal role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance processes. This training guide and reporting framework aims to empower media practitioners, civil society organizations, and stakeholders to effectively monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the lens of access to information and media engagement.

The guide presents a comprehensive framework for journalism education and reporting practices in Sierra Leone to promote SDGs, gender equality, access to information, and safety of journalists. It offers valuable insights, practical recommendations, and case studies to guide stakeholders in fostering a vibrant and responsible media ecosystem in alignment with national development priorities and international standards.

Globally, there are growing calls for the media to play a more frontal and central role, as a non-state actor, in the realization of the SDGs. Moreover, the accountability mechanism for monitoring the development, implementation, reporting and review of Sierra Leone's Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) is not complete and effective without the media playing its crucial role as a critical stakeholder in national development. The media arguably, continues to be one main pathway to ensuring effective management and maximum delivery of SDG's.

Media will continue to be a cornerstone for nurturing and equipping generation of journalists with the skills, knowledge, and ethical principles for navigating the complexities of modern media environments. The Fundamental Principles of State Policy (Chapter II, Subsection 8) of Sierra Leone's Constitution (1991) stipulates that it is the obligation of the mass media, to at all times, freely uphold the Constitution and highlight the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people. Thus, the media can play the vital role of shaping public opinion, fostering transparency, and holding institutions accountable while journalism education becomes the catalyst for promoting sustainable development and advancing Sierra Leonean societal goals.

Access to information on the other hand, lies at the heart of a vibrant democracy and transparent governance. Media can play a pivotal role in equipping journalists with the skills to navigate information ecosystems, access reliable sources of information, and uphold public rights to know. By fostering a culture of information transparency and accountability, proper journalism empowers journalists to serve as watchdogs, bridge information gaps, and foster informed civic engagements in Sierra Leone. This can shape the future of media professionals and drive societal progress to align with gender equality, safety of journalists and the SDGs. Understanding the intersections between the media, the SDGs and journalism is crucial for fostering a thriving media landscape and facilitating positive social change.

Meanwhile, the safety of journalists remains a pressing concern in Sierra Leone and across the globe. Journalism education must, therefore, prioritize the safety and well-being of journalists by providing comprehensive training on risk assessment, conflict reporting, digital security, and psychological resilience. By equipping journalists with the tools to mitigate risks and navigate hostile environments, journalism education can reinforce the fundamental principles of press freedom, independence, and professional integrity, which are essential for upholding democracy and protecting human rights for the successful actualization of the SDGs.

Therefore, given the call to action on the decade of delivery of the SDGs, access to information is critical to hold government accountable and to evaluate the SDGs. This guideline will advance key pathways to enhance the role of the media in strengthening awareness, providing evidence based impact stories and evaluating Sierra Leone's Right to Access Information Law 2013 in line with SDG 16.10.2 which is intended to monitor progress towards the adoption and implementation of constitutional, statutory or policy guarantees to uphold access to information as a public right, and more importantly, raise its voice to advance inclusion, equity and justice which are critical drivers of the SDGs and MTDP in Sierra Leone.

This guideline provides the following five cardinal strengths:

1	Holistic Approach	This approach addresses diverse facets of journalism education and reporting frameworks, including UNESCO curricula, media development indicators, gender-sensitive reporting, access to information, journalists' safety, international standards, implementation strategies, and evaluation mechanisms.
2	Contextual Relevance	The guideline is tailored to the specific needs and challenges of Sierra Leone, providing contextually relevant insights and recommendations for enhancing media development, promoting gender equality, and strengthening democratic governance.
3	Practical Guidance	Through clear and actionable recommendations, the guideline equips journalism educators, practitioners, and policymakers with the tools and strategies needed to navigate evolving media landscapes, uphold ethical standards, and address emerging issues in the field of journalism.
4	Collaboration and Advocacy	The guideline emphasizes the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including media organizations, civil society groups, government agencies, and educational institutions, to promote media freedom, transparency, and accountability. It also underscores the role of advocacy in advancing policy reforms and institutional support for journalism education and press freedom initiatives.
5	Continuous Improvement	By highlighting the importance of monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation, the guideline encourages a culture of continuous improvement and learning within the media industry. It underscores the need for stakeholders to remain agile, responsive, and proactive in addressing evolving challenges and opportunities in the field of journalism.

SOURCE: Chukwuma Chinye. (17 June, 2023). Sierra Leone's 2023 elections: Consolidating democracy amidst challenges and opportunities. Centre for Democracy and Development, Abuja, Nigeria, culled from https://www.cddwestafrica.org/blog/sierra-leone-s-2023-elections-consolidating-democracy-amidst-challenges-and-opportunities/

Chapter One

Introduction

- Contextualizing the importance of Media and journalism education in promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and media development in Sierra Leone

- Emphasizing the significance of gender sensitivity, access to information, and journalist safety in journalism practice

SOURCE: https://www.expert.ai/blog/introduction-to-semantics/

1.0 Contextualizing the Role of Media and Journalism Education:

- o The media serves as a powerful catalyst for sustainable national development in Sierra Leone by informing, engaging, and mobilizing citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders across sectors to work towards a more prosperous, equitable, and environmentally sustainable future
- o Journalism educators should provide aspiring journalists with necessary skills, knowledge, and ethical principles to navigate the complexities of modern journalism.

1.1 Role of the Media in Sustainable National Development

- o Information dissemination: Media channels such as newspapers, television, radio, and digital platforms disseminate information about sustainable practices, policies, and initiatives.
- o Fostering dialogue and collaboration: Media platforms provide spaces for dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders involved in sustainable development. Awareness Creation: Media platforms raise awareness about environmental issues, climate change, and social injustices that impact sustainable development.
- o Advocacy and accountability: Acts as a watchdog by holding governments, businesses, and other institutions accountable for their actions and policies related to sustainable development.
- o Promotion of sustainable practices: It showcases success stories, best practices, and innovative solutions for sustainable development.
- o Policy influence: Media influences public opinion and shapes policy debates on issues related to sustainable development.

1.2 Significance of the Sustainable Development Goals and Media Development

- o Significance of the SDGs in providing a framework for addressing Sierra Leone's challenges and advancing sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.
- o Role of the media in national development: Informing, educating, and mobilizing citizens.
- o Contributions of Sierra Leone's media to the SDGs: Advocacy, awareness-raising, and agenda-setting.
- o Challenges facing media in Sierra Leone: Press freedom, capacity-building, and sustainability.
- o Discuss Sierra Leone's Sustainable Development Report 2023[5]:
  - The country has achieved SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action)
  - There are major challenges and moderate insufficient improvements to attain SDG 1 (No poverty).

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[5] 2023 Sustainable Development Report. https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/sierra-leone

- The country is experiencing similar major challenges, with stagnating increase, i.e. less than 50% of required rate in attaining SDGs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, 15 and 16 (i.e.: Zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; industry, innovation and infrastructure; life below water; life on land; and peace, justice and strong institutions) respectively.
- There are major challenges towards attaining SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), but the indices continue to improve, albeit moderately, and this is insufficient to attain the Goal.
- There are significant challenges towards attaining SDGs 10 (reduced inequalities) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities)
- There is decreasing scores for SDG 11 and there are significant challenges towards achieving SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals), but the country is on track towards achieving this goal.

Figure 1: Sierra Leone's 2023 Sustainable Development Report

o Highlight how media can intersect with the SDGs by equipping journalists with the tools to raise awareness and defend the rights to freedom of expression and information as provided in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while advocating for social change and promoting inclusive development in Sierra Leone in relation to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 17, which have been signposted in the country's SDGs Dashboard above and SDGs 16 Targets below in Figure 2:

Figure 2: SDG 16 Targets

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1.3 Emphasizing Gender Sensitivity, Access to Information, and Journalists' Safety

o   Access to information is a fundamental human right for empowering citizens, fostering transparency, and strengthening democratic governance.
o   Gender sensitivity in journalism education is essential for challenging stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups.
o   To ensure press freedom, protect journalists' rights, and uphold the profession's integrity in Sierra Leone, the safety of journalists has to be guaranteed.

1.4 Objectives of the Training Guide and Reporting Framework

o   The training guide and reporting framework aims to enhance media development, gender sensitivity, access to information, and journalists' safety in Sierra Leone.
o   By providing a roadmap for journalism education and reporting, the guide seeks to promote adherence to international standards, foster ethical journalism practices, and contribute to positive societal change.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

o   The following chapters will delve into key aspects of journalism education and reporting frameworks, including UNESCO curricula, media development indicators, gender-sensitive reporting, access to information, journalists' safety, international standards, and implementation and evaluation strategies.
o   Across chapters, best practices, case studies, and recommendations for enhancing journalism education and reporting practices in Sierra Leone will be explored.

1.6 Conclusion

•   Media plays a multifaceted role in sustainable national development by informing, educating, advocating, and mobilizing citizens, policymakers, and other stakeholders to work towards a more sustainable and equitable future.
•   Media holds the power to shape narratives, influence public opinion, and drive social change in Sierra Leone
•   By embracing the principles of sustainable development, gender equality, access to information, and journalists' safety, stakeholders can collaborate to build a media ecosystem that reflects the aspirations and values of the Sierra Leonean society.
•   Through the direction provided in this training guide and reporting framework, journalism educators and practitioners can contribute to the advancement of media development and democratic governance in Sierra Leone.

Chapter Two

Understanding UNESCO Curricular for Journalism Education

- Overview of UNESCO's guidelines and curricular for journalism education

- Aligning curriculum with SDGs and national development plans

SOURCE: https://www.dreamstime.com

2.0 Overview of UNESCO's Role in Journalism Education

- o UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations committed to promoting freedom of expression, media development, and access to information worldwide.
- o UNESCO recognizes the pivotal role of journalism education in nurturing informed citizens, fostering media pluralism, and advancing democratic values.

2.1 Key Components of UNESCO Curricular Frameworks

- o UNESCO's curricular for journalism education emphasizes the integration of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and ethical principles.
- o Core components include media literacy, investigative journalism, digital storytelling, media ethics, and media law.

2.2 Alignment with the SDGs

- o UNESCO encourages the integration of SDGs into journalism education to empower prospective journalists/students to address pressing societal challenges through media engagements.
- o Journalism institutions should align journalism program curricular in Sierra Leone with the country's SDGs of focus as indicated in its SDR (2023)[6] and provided by SDGs 16.3 and 16.10.2:
    - SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action)
    - SDG 1 (No poverty).
    - SDGs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, 15 and 16 (i.e.: Zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; industry, innovation and infrastructure; life below water; life on land; and peace, justice and strong institutions) respectively.
    - SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).
  - SDG 16.3, to promote the rule of law, ensure equal access to justice for all; and
  - SDG 16.10.2, to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in national legislation and international agreements by strengthening relevant national institutions, as well as promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

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[6] 2023 Sustainable Development Report. https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/sierra-leone

2.3 Adapting UNESCO Curricula to Local Contexts

o While UNESCO provides overarching guidelines, journalism educators are encouraged to adapt the curricula to reflect local contexts, cultural sensitivities, and emerging media trends.
o In Sierra Leone, journalism education programme may emphasize topics relevant to national development priorities, such as health, education, infrastructure, and governance, as well as the above SDGs.

2.4 Integrating Experiential Learning and Practical Applications

o UNESCO curricula emphasize hands-on learning experiences, internships, and practical projects to enhance students' professional skills and prepare them for real-world journalism environments.
o Collaborations with media outlets, civil society organizations, and government agencies provide students with opportunities to engage in community-based reporting and investigative journalism.

2.5 Incorporating Interdisciplinary Perspectives

o Recognizing the multidimensional nature of journalism, UNESCO curricula encourage interdisciplinary approaches that integrate perspectives from fields such as sociology, political science, economics, and environmental studies.
o Interdisciplinary collaboration fosters a holistic understanding of complex issues and encourages critical thinking and analysis among journalism students.

2.6 Ethical Considerations and Professional Standards

o UNESCO emphasizes the importance of ethical journalism practices, including accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and accountability.
o Curricular frameworks guide students in navigating ethical dilemmas, promoting transparency, and upholding public interest in reporting.

2.7 Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

o UNESCO advocates for diversity and inclusion in media representation, in terms of content and workforce.
o Curricular frameworks encourage journalists to embrace diverse perspectives, challenge stereotypes, and amplify marginalized voices in their reporting.

2.8 Continuous Learning and Adaptation

o Journalism educators are encouraged to engage in continuous learning and professional development to stay abreast of evolving media landscapes, technological advancements, and ethical challenges.
o UNESCO supports capacity-building initiatives, training workshops, and peer-learning networks to foster excellence in journalism education globally.

2.9 Conclusion

o Understanding and implementing UNESCO curricular frameworks for journalism education is essential for nurturing ethical, skilled, and socially responsible journalists in Sierra Leone and beyond.
o By embracing UNESCO's guiding principles, journalism educators can empower students to become agents of positive change, uphold democratic values, and contribute to sustainable development efforts in their communities.

Chapter Three

Media Development Indicators

- Exploring the role of media in fostering democracy, accountability, and transparency

- Assessing media pluralism, independence, and professionalism

- Training journalists to uphold ethical standards and promote media diversity

SOURCE: www.freepik.com

3.0 Role of the Media in Societal Development

- o Media serves as a cornerstone of democracy, fostering transparency, accountability, and civic engagement.
- o In Sierra Leone, a robust media landscape is essential for promoting good governance, social cohesion, and economic development.

3.1 Understanding Media Development Indicators

- o Media development indicators assess the health, independence, and effectiveness of media systems in a country.
- o Key indicators include media pluralism, freedom of expression, professional standards, access to information, and financial sustainability.

3.2 Upholding Professional Standards and Ethics

- o Professionalism in journalism encompasses adherence to ethical guidelines, accuracy, fairness, and impartiality in reporting.
- o Journalism educators play a vital role in instilling professional values and standards among aspiring journalists.

3.3 Promoting Access to Information

- o Access to information is a fundamental right that enables citizens to make informed decisions, participate in public affairs, and hold authorities accountable.
- o Journalism education can empower journalists to advocate for transparent governance practices and promote citizens' right to access information.

3.4 Enhancing Financial Sustainability

- o Financial sustainability is crucial for the long-term viability of media organizations.
- o Journalism educators can equip students with skills in media entrepreneurship, audience engagement, and revenue diversification to ensure the sustainability of media outlets.

3.5 Nurturing Media Literacy and Audience Engagement

o Media literacy empowers citizens to critically evaluate media content, discern misinformation, and engage responsibly with digital media platforms.
o Journalism education should integrate media literacy components to equip students with the skills to navigate the complexities of modern media environments.

3.6 Leveraging Technology for Media Development

o Digital technologies offer opportunities for innovation, audience engagement, and content distribution in the media industry.
o Journalism education should incorporate training in digital storytelling, multimedia production, and data journalism to prepare students for evolving media landscapes.

3.7 Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks and Press Freedom

o A conducive regulatory environment is essential for safeguarding press freedom, editorial independence, and freedom of expression.
o Journalism educators can advocate for transparent and impartial regulatory mechanisms that protect journalists' rights and uphold media freedoms.

3.8 Assessing Media Pluralism and Independence

o Media pluralism refers to the diversity of media outlets, ownership structures, and editorial viewpoints within a media ecosystem.
o Independent media outlets play a critical role in providing diverse perspectives, holding people in power accountable, and fostering public discourse.

SIERRA LEONE

A HOLISTIC APPROACH IN SUPPORT OF FREE AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA

OVERVIEW

A free and pluralistic press is an indispensable element of a vibrant democracy. When upholding professional standards and when protected by legal guarantees, media outlets can expose citizens to a variety of views, enabling them to formulate and act on informed opinions and hold governments accountable on issues that hinge on their socio-economic situation and livelihoods. Since 2013, UNDP has been supporting the development of a free, pluralistic and professional media sector to strengthen democratic governance in Sierra Leone.

KEY ACTIONS

• Strengthening an enabling legislative and regulatory environment

• Developing stronger professional journalism standards

• Promoting democratic dialogue and alternative media systems

IMPACT

The need for media reform has gained greater visibility as an item on the national agenda

A stronger media sector played a key role in disseminating prevention messages during the 2014 Ebola crisis

Sierra Leone has seen a rise in professional standards for journalists, with accreditation increasingly becoming a standard requirement in the field

3.9 Conclusion

o   Media development is integral to promoting democratic governance, fostering public discourse, and advancing societal progress in Sierra Leone.

o   By addressing key media development indicators and equipping journalists with the necessary skills and values, journalism education can contribute towards building a vibrant and resilient media ecosystem that serves the needs of society.

CASE STUDY 1: FOSTERING MEDIA LITERACY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP[7]

Background: In the digital age, media literacy plays a crucial role in empowering citizens to critically evaluate information, discern misinformation, and engage responsibly with digital media platforms. Recognizing the need to promote media literacy and digital citizenship, a coalition of educators, media practitioners, and civil society organizations launched a nationwide media literacy campaign in Sierra Leone.

SOURCE: www.salonefactchecker.com

Approach: The media literacy campaign aimed to equip citizens, particularly youth and marginalized communities, with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the digital landscape safely and effectively. The campaign adopted a multifaceted approach, leveraging traditional media, social media, community outreach, and educational initiatives to reach diverse audiences.

The campaign organized workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions in schools, community centers, and public spaces to raise awareness about media literacy and digital citizenship. Participants learned how to critically analyze media content, identify sources of bias and misinformation, and verify the accuracy of information before sharing it online.

In addition to educational activities, the campaign utilized social media platforms, mobile apps, and online resources to disseminate media literacy materials, engage with audiences, and promote digital literacy skills. It collaborated with local influencers, youth groups, and community leaders to amplify messages about media literacy and foster a culture of responsible digital citizenship.

Impact: The media literacy campaign had a transformative impact on public attitudes, behaviors, and awareness surrounding media consumption and digital engagement. Citizens, particularly youth, became more discerning and skeptical consumers of media, questioning sources, motives, and narratives presented in digital spaces.

By promoting media literacy and digital citizenship, the campaign helped combat the spread of misinformation, fake news, and online manipulation, contributing to a more informed, resilient, and civically engaged society. Participants developed critical thinking skills, digital literacy competencies, and ethical values that empowered them to navigate complex media environments with confidence and discernment.

Furthermore, the media literacy campaign fostered collaboration, dialogue, and community engagement around media literacy issues, creating opportunities for citizens to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and work together to promote responsible media practices.

Overall, the media literacy campaign demonstrated the transformative potential of media education in promoting digital literacy, fostering civic engagement, and safeguarding democratic values in Sierra Leone's digital age.

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[7] For access to some factchecking resources in Sierra Leone, visit: www.salonefactchecker.com

Chapter Four

Gender-Sensitive Reporting

+ Understanding gender biases in media representation

+ Promoting gender-sensitive language and storytelling

+ Encouraging diversity and inclusion in reporting

SOURCE: https://cdn01.allafrica.com

4.0 Recognizing the Importance of Gender Sensitivity

o Gender-sensitive reporting challenges stereotypes, promote gender equality, and amplify the voices of marginalized genders.
o In Sierra Leone, addressing gender biases in media representation is essential for fostering inclusive and equitable societies.

4.1 Understanding Gender Bias in the Media

o Media often perpetuates gender stereotypes and reinforces traditional gender roles through biased portrayal and limited representation.
o Journalism educators play a crucial role in raising awareness about gender bias and promoting inclusive media practices among aspiring journalists.

4.2 Integrating Gender Perspectives in Journalism Education

o Curriculum design should include modules on gender studies, feminist theory, and gender-sensitive reporting techniques.
o Practical exercises and case studies can help students identify and critique gender bias in media content.

4.3 Promoting Inclusive Storytelling

o Gender-sensitive reporting entails portraying individuals and communities in a way that reflects their diverse experiences and identities.
o Journalism educators should encourage students to seek out diverse sources, challenge gender stereotypes, and avoid reinforcing harmful narratives.

4.4 Language and Representation

- o Language plays a powerful role in shaping perceptions and reinforcing gender norms.
- o Journalism education should emphasize the use of inclusive language and gender-neutral terminology in media reporting.

4.5 Amplifying Marginalized Voices

- o Gender-sensitive reporting requires journalists to prioritize the voices and perspectives of marginalized genders, including women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and gender non-conforming people.
- o Journalism educators can facilitate discussions on intersectionality and encourage students to seek out diverse sources and viewpoints in their reporting.

4.6 Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination

- o Media has a responsibility to report sensitively on issues related to gender-based violence, discrimination, and women's rights.
- o Journalism education should equip students with the skills to cover these topics ethically and responsibly, while prioritizing survivors' privacy and dignity.

4.7 Collaborating with Gender Equality Advocates

- o Partnerships with gender equality organizations and advocacy groups can provide students with insights into gender-related issues and access to diverse perspectives.
- o Guest lectures, workshops, and field visits can enrich students' understanding of gender dynamics in society and media representation.

4.8 Fostering Ethical and Responsible Reporting

- o Ethical considerations are paramount in gender-sensitive reporting, including obtaining informed consent, avoiding sensationalism, and challenging harmful stereotypes.
- o Journalism educators should provide guidance on navigating ethical dilemmas and promoting respectful and inclusive media practices.

4.9 Conclusion

- o Gender-sensitive reporting is essential for promoting gender equality, challenging stereotypes, and fostering inclusive societies in Sierra Leone and beyond.
- o By integrating gender perspectives into journalism education, educators can empower students to become agents of change, promoters of social justice, and amplifiers of marginalized voices in the media landscape.

CASE STUDY 2: PROMOTING GENDER-SENSITIVE REPORTING

Background: In Sierra Leone, traditional gender norms often shape media narratives, resulting in limited representation of women and reinforcing stereotypes. Recognizing the importance of gender-sensitive reporting, a local media organization, "Voice for Change," initiated a training programme for journalists to promote gender equality and amplify women's voices in media content.
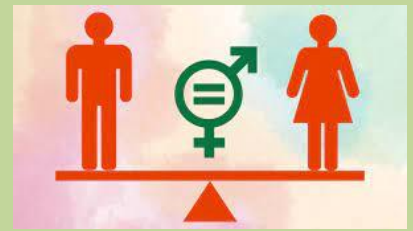
Approach: "Voice for Change" collaborated with gender experts, media professionals, and civil society organizations to develop a comprehensive training curriculum on gender-sensitive reporting. The curriculum covered topics such as gender analysis, inclusive storytelling, interviewing techniques, and ethical considerations in reporting on gender-related issues.

The training consisted of interactive workshops, practical exercises, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Participants engaged in group discussions, role-playing scenarios, and case studies to deepen their understanding of gender dynamics and explore strategies for integrating gender perspectives into their reporting.

Impact: As a result of the training, journalists gained a deeper appreciation of the importance of gender-sensitive reporting and its role in challenging stereotypes and promoting social change. They developed new skills in identifying and addressing gender bias in media content, resulting in more nuanced and inclusive storytelling.

Journalists applied their newfound knowledge and skills to a range of topics, including: women's rights, gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and political participation. They produced feature articles, investigative reports, and multimedia projects that highlighted the experiences and contributions of women in Sierra Leone.

The impact of the training extended beyond individual journalists to influence newsroom culture and editorial practices. News organizations began incorporating gender-sensitive reporting guidelines into their editorial policies, promoting gender balance in news coverage, and providing platforms for diverse voices to be heard.

Overall, the training served as a catalyst for positive change within Sierra Leone's media landscape, contributing to greater gender equality, social inclusion, and media representations.

Chapter Five

Access to Information

- Overview of Sierra Leone's Right to Access Information Act (2013)[8]

- Structure and Contents of the RAI Act[9]

- Exploring international standards and best practices on access to information

- Training journalists on utilizing information disclosure mechanisms to promote transparency[10]

SOURCE: https://www.dreamstime.com

5.0 Understanding the Importance of Access to Information

o   Access to information is a fundamental human right that enables citizens to participate in democratic processes, hold authorities accountable, and make informed decisions.

o   In Sierra Leone, ensuring and defending access to information should be used to uphold the ideals of democratic good governance, promote transparency, combat corruption, and foster inclusive governance.

o   Access to information allows people to seek and receive public-held information which is critical for fighting corruption, making governments more efficient and helping people exercise their basic human rights.

5.1 The Right to Access Information Act (2013)

o   The RAI ACT (2013) guarantees citizens' the right to access government-held information in Sierra Leone.

o   Journalism educators should familiarize students with the provisions of the RAI ACT and its implications for media freedom and transparency

o   Specific attention should be given to the following provisions:

- Part I: The Right to Information (i. e. Freedom of expression and of the press]
- Part III: Exempt Information
- Part IV: Measures to Promote Openness
- Part V: Administrative Provisions
- Part VI: Financial Provisions [i.e. Accountability and transparency in the use of funds by RAI]
- Part VII: Appeals [against denial of request for information]
- Offences and Penalties

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8 For Sierra Leone's Right to Access Information Act (2013), visit: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2013-02.pdf

9 Refer to Kamara, A. B. (2021). The Right to Access Information Commission's Training Manual on the Right to Access Information Act No. 2 of 2013. Freetown: Right to Access Information Commission.

10 On fundamental aspects of the RAI ACT, refer to: Media Foundation for West Africa (n.d.). Essentials of the Right to Access Information Act – Sierra Leone: A Manual for Journalists. Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands. https://www.mfwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/RTI-Toolkit-book-Sierra-Leone.pdf

5.2 International Standards and Best Practices

o Journalism education in Sierra Leone should provide students with an understanding of international standards and best practices that guarantee access to information as provided by the UN SDG 16.10.2.
o Students should learn about global initiatives for promoting transparency, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and their relevance to Sierra Leone's context.

5.3 Role of Media in Promoting Access to Information

o Why should the media report on the SDGs?
o Why do an independent media matter for the SDGs?
o The New Media and its important in raising awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
o Media play a critical role in advocating for transparency, filing information requests, and disseminating information to citizens.

5.4 Access to Information and Civic Engagement

o Access to information empowers citizens to engage meaningfully in public affairs, participate in decision-making processes, and demand accountability from government institutions.
o Journalism education should emphasize the role of media in facilitating dialogue between government and citizens and promoting participatory governance.

5.5 Overcoming Barriers to Information Access in Sierra Leone

o In Sierra Leone, challenges such as limited infrastructure, bureaucratic hurdles, and cultural barriers can impede citizens' access to information.
o Negative perception of the RAI ACT and need for sensitization.
o (Non) Compliance with RAI ACT, e.g.: PART VI, Section 41 on Annual submission of Report.
o Funding (resource) constraints.
o Journalism educators should equip students with strategies for overcoming these barriers, including advocacy efforts, community outreach, and leveraging digital technologies.

5.6 Leveraging Digital Technologies

o Digital platforms and technologies through new media offer new opportunities for disseminating information, engaging with audiences, and promoting transparency.
o Journalism education should incorporate training in digital literacy, social media engagement, and online information verification to equip students for the digital age.

5.7 Ensuring Government Accountability

o Access to information laws empowers citizens to demand transparency and accountability from government institutions.
o Aspiring or practicing journalists need to understand the principles of Freedom, Democracy and Justice as enshrined in Chapter II (sub section 1: Fundamental Principles of State Policy) of Sierra Leone's Constitution.
o Journalism educators should encourage students to investigate government activities, scrutinize public spending, and expose instances of corruption or malfeasance.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

o Journalists must exercise discretion and responsibility when accessing and disseminating information, especially when dealing with sensitive or confidential material.
o Journalism education should emphasize the importance of ethical journalism practices, including verification of sources, protection of whistleblowers, and respect for privacy rights.

5.9 Conclusion

o Access to information is a cornerstone for democratic governance and accountability in Sierra Leone.
o Through comprehensive journalism education, students can become advocates for transparency, champions of citizen empowerment, and stewards of democratic values in their communities.

CASE STUDY 3: ENHANCING ACCESS TO INFORMATION VIA DIGITAL INNOVATION

Background: In Sierra Leone, access to information remains a challenge, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Recognizing the potential of digital innovation to expand access to information, a local nonprofit organization, "InfoTech for All," launched an initiative to develop a mobile application that provides citizens with easy access to government information and services.

Approach: "InfoTech for All" collaborated with government agencies, technology partners, and community stakeholders to design and develop the mobile application,

"InfoConnect." The application provides users with access to a wide range of government resources, including public documents, service directories, health information, and educational materials.

The mobile application features a user-friendly interface, multilingual support, and offline functionality to accommodate users with limited internet access. It also includes interactive features such as citizen feedback mechanisms, public forums, and real-time updates on government initiatives and policies.

To ensure the sustainability and scalability of the initiative, "InfoTech for All" conducted extensive community outreach and user engagement activities. They organized training workshops, focus group discussions, and awareness campaigns to promote the use of the mobile application and gather feedback from users.

Impact: The launch of the "InfoConnect" mobile application had a transformative impact on access to information and citizen engagement in Sierra Leone. Citizens gained unprecedented access to government services, resources, and information, empowering them to make informed decisions, participation in civic life, and holding authorities accountable.

The mobile application also facilitated greater transparency and accountability in government operations by providing citizens with timely access to public documents, budget information, and service delivery updates. It also served as a platform for citizens to report grievances, share feedback, and engage in dialogue with government officials.

The success of the "InfoConnect" initiative inspired similar efforts across Sierra Leone, leading to the development of additional digital platforms and initiatives to expand access to information and promote citizen participation. Through digital innovation, citizens of Sierra Leone became more empowered, informed, and engaged in shaping the future of their communities.

Overall, the "InfoConnect" mobile application demonstrated the potential of technology to bridge information gaps, foster civic engagement, and advance democratic governance in Sierra Leone.

Chapter Six

Safety Indicators for Journalists

- Understanding the risks and challenges faced by journalists in Sierra Leone

- Providing safety protocols and resources for journalists working in hostile environments

- Advocating for press freedom and protection of journalists' rights

SOURCE: https://easydrawingguides.com
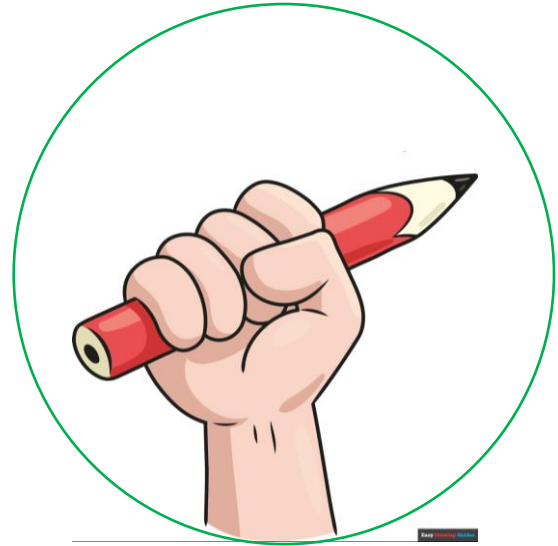
6.0 Understanding Journalists Safety

- o Journalist safety encompasses their physical, digital, legal, financial, occupational, psychological well-being as they discharge their professional duties.[11]
- o In Sierra Leone and around the world, journalists face risks including violence, harassment, censorship, and online attacks.

6.1 Assessing Safety Indicators for Journalists

- o Journalists' safety indicators evaluate the extent to which journalists can work safely and freely without fear of reprisal or harm.
- o Key indicators are numbers of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates, impunity for crimes against journalists, legal protections, and safety protocols in newsrooms.

6.2 Recognizing Risks Faced by Journalists

- o Journalists in Sierra Leone confront various threats, including physical violence, intimidation, legal harassment, and digital surveillance.
- o Journalism educators must educate students about potential risks and equip them with strategies for mitigating dangers while pursuing their profession.

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[11] For more on safety threats to journalists, read: Carlsson, U., & Pöyhtäri, R. (*Eds.*) (2017). *The assault on journalism: Building knowledge to protect freedom of expression*. Goteborg: NORDICOM.

6.3 Legal Protections and Press Freedom

o Legal frameworks play a crucial role in safeguarding press freedom and protecting journalists from harassment and censorship.
o Journalism education should equip students with understanding of media laws, defamation statutes, and international conventions that protect journalists' rights.

6.4 Digital Security and Cyber Threats

o In the digital age, journalists are vulnerable to online harassment, cyber-attacks, and surveillance by state and non-state actors.
o Journalism educators should train students in digital security practices, encryption tools, and methods for protecting sensitive sources and information

6.5 Psychological Well-being

o Reporting on traumatic events, human rights abuses, and conflict zones can take a toll on journalists' mental health and well-being.
o Journalism education should prioritize mental health awareness, resilience-building, and peer support mechanisms to help students cope with the emotional demands of the profession.

6.6 Safety Protocols and Risk Assessment

o News organizations should implement comprehensive safety protocols and risk assessment procedures to protect journalists in the field.
o Journalism educators can simulate real-world scenarios and train students in risk assessment, conflict reporting, and emergency response protocols.

6.7 Advocating for Journalists' Safety

o Civil society organizations, media advocacy groups, and journalism associations play a crucial role in advocating for journalists' safety and press freedom.
o Journalism education should foster a culture of solidarity and activism among students, encouraging them to support colleagues and speak out against threats to media freedom.

6.8 International Support and Solidarity

o The international community plays a vital role in supporting journalists at risk, providing legal assistance, advocacy campaigns, and emergency assistance funds.
o Journalism educators should educate students about global networks and resources available to journalists who face threats or persecution.

6.9 Conclusion

o Ensuring journalist safety is essential for preserving press freedom, fostering democratic governance, and upholding human rights in Sierra Leone.
o Through rigorous training, advocacy, and solidarity, journalism educators can empower students to work safely, ethically, and fearlessly in pursuit of truth and accountability.

CASE STUDY 4: ENSURING SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS IN CONFLICT ZONES

Background: Sierra Leone has experienced periods of political unrest and conflict, posing significant risks to journalists reporting in volatile environments. In response to heightened security concerns, a consortium of media organizations, human rights advocates, and international partners launched a journalist safety initiative to enhance the protection of journalists operating in conflict zones.

Approach: The journalist safety initiative focused on three key pillars: risk assessment, capacity-building, and advocacy. First, the consortium conducted comprehensive risk assessments to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities faced by journalists working in conflict-affected areas.

Based on the findings of the risk assessments, the initiative developed tailored trainings and safety protocols to equip journalists with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to mitigate risks and respond effectively to security threats. Training sessions covered topics such as personal safety, conflict reporting, digital security, first aid, and emergency evacuation procedures.

In addition to capacity-building activities, the initiative engaged in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of journalists' safety and press freedom. It collaborated with government agencies, security forces, and civil society organizations to promote legal protections for journalists, investigate attacks on media professionals, and hold perpetrators accountable for acts of violence and intimidation.

Impact: The journalists' safety initiative had a tangible impact on the safety and well-being of journalists reporting in conflict zones. Journalists reported feeling more confident and better prepared to navigate hazardous environments, assess security risks, and protect themselves while covering sensitive issues.

By equipping journalists with essential safety skills and knowledge, the initiative helped prevent incidents of violence and harassment, enabling journalists to fulfill their professional duties without fear of reprisal. Moreover, the advocacy efforts of the initiative contributed to increased awareness of journalists' safety issues among policymakers, leading to improved legal protections and security measures for media professionals.

As a result of the journalist safety initiative, Sierra Leonean journalists gained greater resilience, solidarity, and support networks within the media community. They continued to report on critical issues, including human rights abuses, political unrest, and conflict dynamics. This contributed to greater transparency, accountability, and public awareness in Sierra Leone.

Overall, the journalists' safety initiative demonstrated the importance of collective action, collaboration, and advocacy in promoting journalists' safety and defending press freedom in conflict-affected environments.

Chapter Seven

Increased Knowledge of International Standards and Best Practices

- Familiarizing journalists with international legal frameworks and standards on media freedom and access to information

- Encouraging continuous learning and professional development

SOURCE: www.freepik.com

7.0 Importance of International Standards

o International standards provide a framework to ensure media freedom, access to information, and the safety of journalists.
o In Sierra Leone, adherence to international standards enhances transparency, accountability, and the rule of law in the media sector.

7.1 Understanding Media Freedom and Press Rights

o International conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantee freedom of expression and press freedom
o Journalism educators should familiarize students with these foundational documents and their significance for media practitioners worldwide

7.2 UNESCO's Role in Promoting Media Development

o UNESCO advocates for media development and freedom of expression through initiatives such as the World Press Freedom Day and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)
o Journalism education should incorporate UNESCO's principles and recommendations for fostering media pluralism, independence, and professionalism.

7.3 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

o SDG 16.10.2 ensures public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the press.
o Journalism educators should educate students on the importance of SDG 16.10.2 and its relevance to promoting transparent and accountable governance.

7.4 Best Practices in Access to Information

o International best practices in access to information include establishing robust legal frameworks, promoting transparency in government institutions, and facilitating public participation in decision-making processes.
o Journalism education should equip students with knowledge on successes regarding initiatives on access to information worldwide and strategies for advocating for similar reforms in Sierra Leone.

7.5 Protecting Journalists' Safety

o International organizations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) monitor threats to press freedom and provide support to journalists at risk.
o Journalism educators should raise awareness about the work of these organizations and the importance of international solidarity in protecting journalists' rights.

7.6 Ethical Journalism Standards

o International codes of ethics, such as the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics and the Ethical Journalism Network's Principles of Conduct provide guidance on ethical journalism practices.
o Journalism education should emphasize the importance of upholding ethical standards, including accuracy, fairness, and independence in reporting

7.7 Promoting Media Literacy and Critical Thinking

o Media literacy education empowers citizens to critically evaluate media content, discern misinformation, and engage responsibly with news and information.
o Journalism educators should integrate media literacy components into their curriculum to promote informed citizenship and combat disinformation.

7.8 Engaging with Global Media Trends

o Globally, media trends are evolving rapidly and journalism students need to stay abreast with these trends, technological innovations, and emerging platforms shaping the media landscape.
o Journalism education should encourage students to analyze and adapt to changing media environments while upholding journalistic principles and values.

## 7.9 Conclusion

o Increased knowledge of international standards and best practices is essential for promoting media development, transparency, and accountability in Sierra Leone.
o Through exposure to global perspectives, ethical principles, and media literacy education, journalism students can contribute to a more informed, democratic, and resilient media ecosystem in Sierra Leone and beyond.

Chapter Eight

Reporting Framework

- Developing reporting guidelines that align with SDG 16.10.2 and Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan[12]

- Integrating indicators for measuring progress in media development, gender sensitivity, access to information, and journalists' safety

- Emphasizing the importance of data-driven journalism and evidence-based reporting
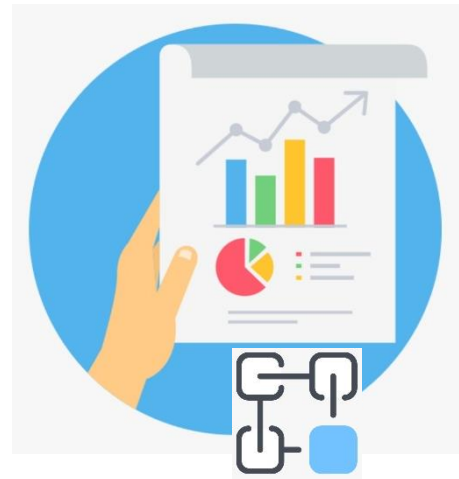
SOURCE: www.freepik.com

8.0 The Importance of a Reporting Framework

- o A reporting framework provides journalists with guidelines and standards for producing ethical, accurate, and impactful journalism.
- o In Sierra Leone, a well-defined reporting framework will support the media's role in promoting transparency, accountability, and public discourse.

8.1 Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals

- o The reporting framework should align with the SDGs that are relevant to Sierra Leone's development priorities, such as ending poverty and hunger, promoting healthy lives and well-being, ensuring education, promoting gender equality, and environmental sustainability.
- o Journalists can use the framework for stories that contribute to SDG awareness and implementation.

8.2 Defining Key Reporting Indicators

- o The reporting framework should include indicators for measuring progress in media development, gender sensitivity, access to information, and journalists' safety.
- o Indicators may include media diversity and inclusion, representation of marginalized voices, adherence to ethical standards, rates of attacks on journalists.

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[12] For Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan, see:
https://www.slurc.org/uploads/1/0/9/7/109761391/sierra_leone_national_development_plan.pdf

8.3 Setting Ethical Standards and Guidelines

o Ethical guidelines ensure that journalists uphold principles of accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and accountability in their reporting.
o The reporting framework should provide clear guidance on ethical dilemmas, conflicts of interest, and responsible use of sources.

8.4 Emphasizing Data-Driven Journalism

o Data-driven journalism is a form of reporting and news writing that uses quantitative and qualitative data to highlight relevant data to provide deeper insights.
o Journalists require training in data-driven journalism: Data collection, data analysis, data visualization, and data interpretation to enhance the quality and depth of their reporting.

8.5 Promoting Inclusive Storytelling

o Inclusive storytelling ensures that diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences are represented in media narratives.
o The reporting framework should encourage journalists to seek out sources from different backgrounds and communities as well as challenge stereotypes and biases.

8.6 Advocating for Access to Information

o Journalists play a crucial role in advocating for transparency, accountability, and citizens' right to access information.
o The reporting framework should empower journalists to file information requests, investigate government activities, and expose instances of corruption or malfeasance.

8.7 Ensuring Journalists' Safety and Well-being

o The reporting framework should prioritize journalists' safety by providing protocols for risk assessment, conflict reporting, and emergency response.
o News organizations should have mechanisms in place to support journalists' physical, digital, and psychological well-being in high-risk environments.

8.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

o The reporting framework should include mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of journalism on societal change and development outcomes.
o Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) may include: audience engagement, social media reach, policy changes, informed citizenry and public awareness of critical issues, and public accountability.

8.9 Continuous Improvement and Adaptation

o The reporting framework should be dynamic and adaptable to changing media landscapes, technological advancements, and societal needs.
o Journalists and news organizations should regularly review and update the framework based on feedback, emerging trends, and lessons learnt from reporting experiences.

8.10 Conclusion

o A robust reporting framework provides journalists with the tools and guide for producing high-quality, impactful journalism that contributes to societal progress and development in Sierra Leone.
o By adhering to ethical standards, embracing diversity, and advocating for transparency and accountability, journalists can fulfill their role as agents of change and catalysts for positive social transformation.

Conclusion

- Reinforcing the role of the media in promoting SDGs and advancing media development in Sierra Leone

- Emphasizing the importance of collaboration between the academia, media practitioners, and government institutions in achieving the SDGs
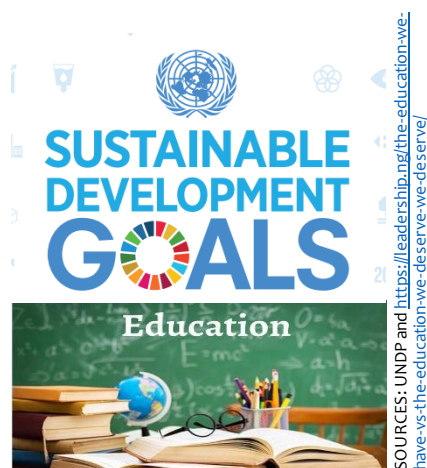
The effective implementation of access to information laws and active engagement of the media are indispensable for achieving sustainable national development and realizing the SDGs in Sierra Leone. By equipping stakeholders with the necessary tools, knowledge, and resources, this training guide and reporting framework seek to foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans.

By integrating these components into the training guide and reporting framework, the media in Sierra Leone can contribute effectively towards the realization of SDGs and in particular the 16.10.2 and the country's Medium Term National Development Plan, while promoting media development, gender sensitivity, access to information, and journalists' safety.

In Sierra Leone, media plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse, fostering transparency, and driving positive societal change. Through the implementation of comprehensive trainings, adherence to ethical standards, and alignment with national development priorities, the media, journalism educators and practitioners contribute to the advancement of media landscape, gender sensitivity, access to information, and journalist safety.

As maintained, this guide underscores the interconnectedness of the media with the SDGs, UNESCO curricular frameworks, and Sierra Leone's national development plans. By contextualizing the importance of the media within broader frameworks of sustainable development, gender equality, and human rights, stakeholders can collaborate to build a resilient media ecosystem that serves the needs of society.

From understanding international standards, to promoting inclusive storytelling, the guide emphasizes the multifaceted nature of the media and reporting frameworks. It underscores the importance of media pluralism, independence, and professionalism in fostering democratic governance, promoting civic engagement, and advancing human rights.

Furthermore, for media to take its role in the development of the country, the guide highlights the need for continuous evaluation, adaptation, and advocacy to address emerging trends, technological advancements, and societal challenges. By soliciting feedback, monitoring progress, and advocating for policy reforms, journalism educators and practitioners can navigate evolving media landscapes and contribute to the democratization of information and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

In summary, media in Sierra Leone have an important role play towards advancing the SDGs, fostering media development, and promoting inclusive and ethical journalism practices. By contextualizing the importance of journalism education within the broader framework of sustainable development, gender equality, access to information, and journalist safety, stakeholders can collaborate to build a resilient media ecosystem that serves the needs of society and contributes to positive social change.