



Strengthening Reporters, Strengthening Reporting

How Internews' Earth Journalism
Network Impacts the Careers of
Environmental Journalists

Prepared by:
Courtney Tolmie (Wonderlight Consulting)
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Any errors in this report are the sole responsibility of the lead researcher.

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Executive Summary

Internews launched the Earth Journalism Network (EJN) in 2004 to improve the quality and quantity of environmental journalism around the world. In order to achieve this mission, EJN endeavors to strengthen the knowledge, skills and career opportunities of journalists and editors who report on the climate and environment, as well as bolster the capacity of media organizations that publish reporting on the same topics.

This research was designed to assess the degree of impact, if any, that EJN's support (fellowships, trainings, story grants and organizational grants) has had on the professional trajectories of individuals and on the quality of coverage of media outlets that have received it. The research was undertaken in two stages: a survey shared with the broader EJN network followed by a set of targeted informant interviews to analyze specific cases.

The research reveals the extent to which journalists attribute positive developments in their careers to EJN's support. Key findings include:

- Survey respondents overwhelmingly report improvements across several categories of benefits, including: knowledge, skills and quality of work; networking and collaboration; impact and viewership; and pitching and financial success. These benefits are shared across all types of support that EJN provides to individual journalists.
- Survey respondents and interviewees overwhelmingly report that EJN has increased their interest in environmental reporting and helped them to include the voices of vulnerable populations more often as sources, including women and members of rural, Indigenous and/or local-language communities.
- EJN's support can also be connected to both general opportunities for engagement among environmental journalists and concrete collaborations within and across countries. These collaborations include cross-border reporting opportunities and platforms for specific topics within environmental journalism.
- Several research participants highlighted that EJN's support provided them with unparalleled opportunities to report stories that not only resulted in improvements to their own careers but also in several cases resulted in changes to public policy and practice.

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- While career impacts are largely shared across all demographic categories, journalists in Latin America less frequently reported that their financial opportunities were improved following EJN's support as compared to participants from other regions. Potentially, this phenomenon is due to the fact that the funding available to support environmental journalism in this region is comparatively limited.
- As EJN enters its third decade of supporting environmental journalists around the globe, the research points to a small set of targeted recommendations that would further strengthen its impact on the careers of journalists, including: expand training and mentorship on specific topics including financial sustainability, provide additional flexibility on grant topics and timelines and increase support for formal collaborations between journalists.

Introduction

Internews launched the Earth Journalism Network (EJN) in 2004 to improve the quality and quantity of environmental journalism around the world. Under this mandate, EJN undertakes a range of activities, such as awarding story grants to individual journalists; organizing fellowships for individual journalists to report on international conferences such as the UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs); providing grants to media organizations to shore up their environmental coverage; and hosting capacity-building opportunities for journalists on emerging environmental topics. According to its own statistics, since its inception EJN has trained 13,800 journalists, supported the production of more than 14,500 stories and, since 2017, awarded more than 700 grants to journalists and media organizations in every region of the world.

For EJN to achieve its ultimate goal of strengthening environmental journalism, it is necessary that EJN helps to improve the knowledge and skills of journalists and editors who cover issues related to the climate and environment. To that end, EJN commissioned this research to assess the degree of impact, if any, that its support (fellowships, trainings, story grants and organizational grants) has had on the professional development of grantees, as well as to identify actionable recommendations for EJN to take on board as it enters its third decade of work.

Specifically, the research was undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify impacts on the career trajectories and professional output of the journalists that EJN has supported, which can include career advancements, awards, better quality of coverage produced and other similar professional milestones;
- Identify a sampling of the impacts that EJN's support has had on the quality of coverage produced by individuals and organizations that received it; and,
- Understand how EJN's support contributed to these changes and identify any other factors that also led to these changes.

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This research provides evidence on [four key questions](#):

1

Have EJN-supported stories led to improved environmental and climate coverage – as self-reported by our journalists and partners – and/or advanced the careers and coverage of journalists and media outlets? If so, how?

2

Have EJN-supported trainings or mentoring led to better environmental and climate coverage, and/or advanced the careers and coverage of journalists and media outlets? If so, how?

3

Has EJN support led to improved coverage of environment and climate issues in regions and media outlets where it was previously lacking? If so, how?

4

What other factors have contributed to these impacts?

The research was undertaken by an independent lead researcher, with support from EJN staff. Data collection, analysis and write-up took place over four months (November 2022 through February 2023).

Following this Introduction, Section 2 of the report describes the methodology used for the research, including limitations. Sections 3 and 4 present findings from the survey and key informant interviews respectively, including 11 case studies featuring a journalist, media initiative or collaboration that benefited from EJN's support. Finally, Section 5 presents a discussion of the results and recommendations for EJN's work moving forward, with a focus on the factors and feedback provided by interviewees as strengthening or limiting EJN's reach.

Methodology

The research was carried out in two phases: (1) a survey of 66 EJN grantees and (2) a set of key informant interviews with a targeted sample of 27 grantees which informed the development of impact case studies.

Phase 1. Survey (November–December 2022)

Protocol design. The lead researcher worked with EJN staff to design a survey instrument that captured the experience of EJN-supported journalists (“participants”). The survey was designed to collect data according to two key dimensions of EJN’s support: (1) the EJN support mechanism that the respondent perceives as most beneficial to their work (organizational grant, story grant, fellowship or training) and (2) the category of impact on their personal or organizational development. While these categories differ somewhat between forms of support received by individuals (story grants, trainings and fellowships) and forms of support received by organizations (organizational grants), survey questions were designed to ensure that a subset of outcome variables were collected for all respondents to allow for analysis across the full sample (Table 1).

The survey instrument (included in Appendix 1) included Likert-style questions and optional open-ended questions for participants to elaborate on their experience. Participants were asked to input basic demographic information and given the option to provide their contact information to be included in the second phase of research.

Sampling and data collection. There were no restrictions placed on the sampling frame for this phase of research. The survey was sent to all individuals in the wider EJN network, including individuals identified by staff and partners as highly likely to respond. The survey was designed and administered using Microsoft Forms. Participants were contacted using direct emails and EJN listservs with information about the survey. The survey remained open for two and a half weeks (from November 21 through December 8).

Data analysis. After closing the survey to additional responses, we reviewed and cleaned the database to remove duplicative and incomplete responses. Ultimately, 66 responses were included in the analysis.

We analyzed the final dataset from three different perspectives (overall results, disaggregated results and thematic analysis). The results of this analysis are presented in Section 3.

Table 1. Outcome variables

Both individual and organizational support
Increased interest in climate and environmental reporting or projects
Improved knowledge of climate and environmental issues
Increased financial opportunities in media
Increased viewership of stories/work
Improved ability to network with other journalists
Increased collaboration with other journalists
Improved profile as journalist
Individual outcomes only
Improved journalism and reporting skills
Increased diversity in sources
Increased pitching of climate and environment stories
Increased success in pitches
Increased impact of stories
Organizational outcomes only
Improved quality of work
Increased international funding or interest in work
Improved sense of capability in applying for and receiving grants
Increased social media following

Outcomes results (overall and by EJM support mechanism). Using simple statistical analysis, we analyzed the degree to which respondents believe that EJM contributed to the professional outcomes outlined in Table 1. In addition to analyzing data for the full sample, we analyzed trends in outcomes according to the main type of support received to provide information on the relative effectiveness of different mechanisms of support in contributing to different outcomes.

Outcomes disaggregated across demographic categories. The survey asked respondents to provide information on several key characteristics, including:

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- Position in media (e.g., freelance journalist, reporter working for media outlet)
- Main type of media (i.e., print, audio, visual, social, other)
- Gender identity
- Identification as a member of populations including Indigenous or minority language communities, LGBTQIA+ and people living with disabilities
- Key populations covered in reporting
- Age
- Tenure in the media sector

These demographics were included in the survey because we wanted to assess the degree to which these characteristics were associated with differences in outcomes. For demographic categories for which we received enough variation, we calculated cross-tabulations to analyze differences in how demographic characteristics correlate with outcomes and the role that these may play in the impact of EJN's activities.

Qualitative theme analysis. While the majority of survey questions were quantitative (binary or scale responses), we sought to conduct thematic analysis for responses to a series of open-ended questions that asked respondents to expand on yes/no answers. However, because of the limited number of open-ended responses and relative lack of detail in these responses, we were unable to conduct thematic analysis on qualitative data collected in the survey. Instead, we utilized key informant interview data with a targeted sample of grantees (phase 2) to analyze themes related to professional impact.

Phase 2. Case studies (December 2022–February 2023)

In the second phase of research, we undertook key informant interviews and developed a set of detailed case studies that delve further into the impact that EJN's support has had on a diverse set of individual journalists and media organizations.

Sampling. Case studies were identified using a purposive sampling frame with a multi-step process to ensure that an optimal quantity and quality of experiences were ultimately selected.

Step 1 – identify cases with positive outcomes to explore. After completion of the survey, we reviewed potential cases using two data sources: the survey results and feedback from EJN staff. From these two data sources, we compiled a list of 20 potential case studies that met two criteria:

- Respondent or EJN staff perceived that there is a positive impact to explore.
- Respondent did not opt out of being contacted for the case study in their survey response (for survey respondents).

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Step 2 – identify dimensions of variation for case study selection. We worked with EJM staff to develop a list of characteristics for which they would like to see variation across the case studies. These characteristics ultimately included:

- EJM support mechanism: selecting cases of support provided in the form of story grants, organizational grants, fellowships and trainings.
- Geographic diversity: selecting cases that represent different countries or regions.
- Demographic diversity: including women, reporters representing marginalized communities or other characteristics.

Step 3 – final selection of case studies (including back-ups). Ultimately, we made the decision with EJM staff to contact all 20 potential case study targets for interviews. The final selection of case studies was made based on (1) responses to our request for interviews and (2) qualitative data collected during the interviews regarding strength of impact story and diversity across the dimensions described in step 2 above.

Data collection. For each case study, we collected three types of data: interviews with key grantees, EJM program materials and interviewee-produced materials.

Interviews with key grantees. Interviews were conducted with each potential case study target (grantee); ultimately, we were able to interview 16 of 20 grantees whom we contacted. During each interview with an EJM grantee, we also asked that they recommend additional secondary sources who could speak about the individual's career and the support received from EJM. Using this snowball method, we ultimately conducted an additional 11 interviews with secondary sources, which ensured that each case study included at least two sources of information for validation and triangulation. Secondary sources included EJM staff, professional colleagues, mentors and mentees of case study targets. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 2.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, using a protocol that was developed and adapted for each interviewee. While instruments were tailored for each interviewee, the sets of questions focused on the same themes for all of them:

- Description of EJM's support.
- Perceptions and supporting evidence of the impact of EJM's support on the interviewee's professional development. Questions assessed anticipated and unanticipated impact and asked interviewees to reflect on both the most significant changes and smaller outcomes.
- Factors that helped or hindered the effectiveness of EJM's support.

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- Other impacts (beyond professional development).
- Recommendations that would strengthen the effectiveness of EJM's support and/or adapt it to changing needs.

EJM program materials. As a second data source, we identified and reviewed EJM program materials and resources related to each case study. These included materials available on the EJM website and websites of media outlets or platforms with which interviewees were associated.

Interviewee-produced materials. Finally, we requested and reviewed content produced by the case study subjects. A list of the content shared and reviewed is included in the bibliography.

Data analysis. Each data source (including interview transcripts and materials provided by EJM and grantees) was coded using a closed coding scheme focused on impact, factors and feedback. After the completion of coding, we undertook qualitative analysis for each code to identify themes emerging within and across cases.

Individual case studies. Upon completion of qualitative analysis, we developed 11 case studies, found in Section 4. The case studies present an overview of the subjects, the support they received from EJM and evidence of the impact they experienced.

Crosscutting analysis. While the main purpose of the key informant interviews was to undertake a deeper dive into individual impact cases, we leveraged the sample of cases to conduct crosscutting analysis to help identify themes or trends across cases. The results of this analysis are shared in Section 4, with recommendations for future work included in Section 5.

Limitations

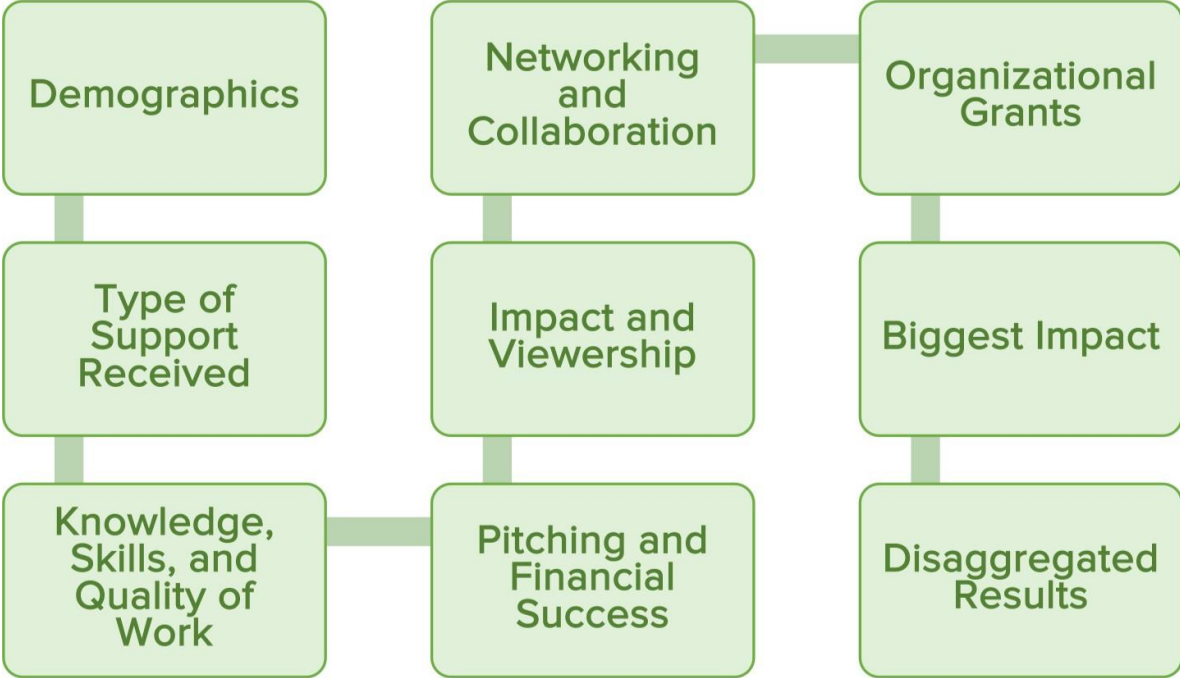
While the research was designed to mitigate risks and provide rigorous evidence in response to the research questions, there are two limitations to this research that are important to consider when interpreting the results.

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- **Potential bias in survey respondents.** Because we did not target specific types of respondents in the survey outreach, it is important to acknowledge that respondents often self-selected in a way that creates biases toward certain types of respondents. For example, it is likely that we received a higher sample of respondents from countries in which English is widely spoken and/or respondents that have had either a very positive or negative experience with EJN. While it is impossible to prevent this bias, our review of demographic data suggests that we adequately sampled respondents from countries in which a non-English language is the primary language. However, it is likely that the sample is biased toward more positive responses (i.e., those individuals who are eager to share very positive experiences with EJN); as such, survey results should not be interpreted as representative of all experiences with EJN.
- **Bias in subjective data.** Survey and interview responses were inherently based on subjective data – asking respondents to assess whether they experienced self-perceived benefits from EJN's support. While such subjective data is biased based on the feelings of the respondent, we utilized interviews with secondary sources as well as a review of reporting undertaken by case study subjects to validate interview responses across multiple sources. The resulting case studies do not include any results that have not been validated by at least two sources.

Survey Results

The 66 survey responses were analyzed across several dimensions:

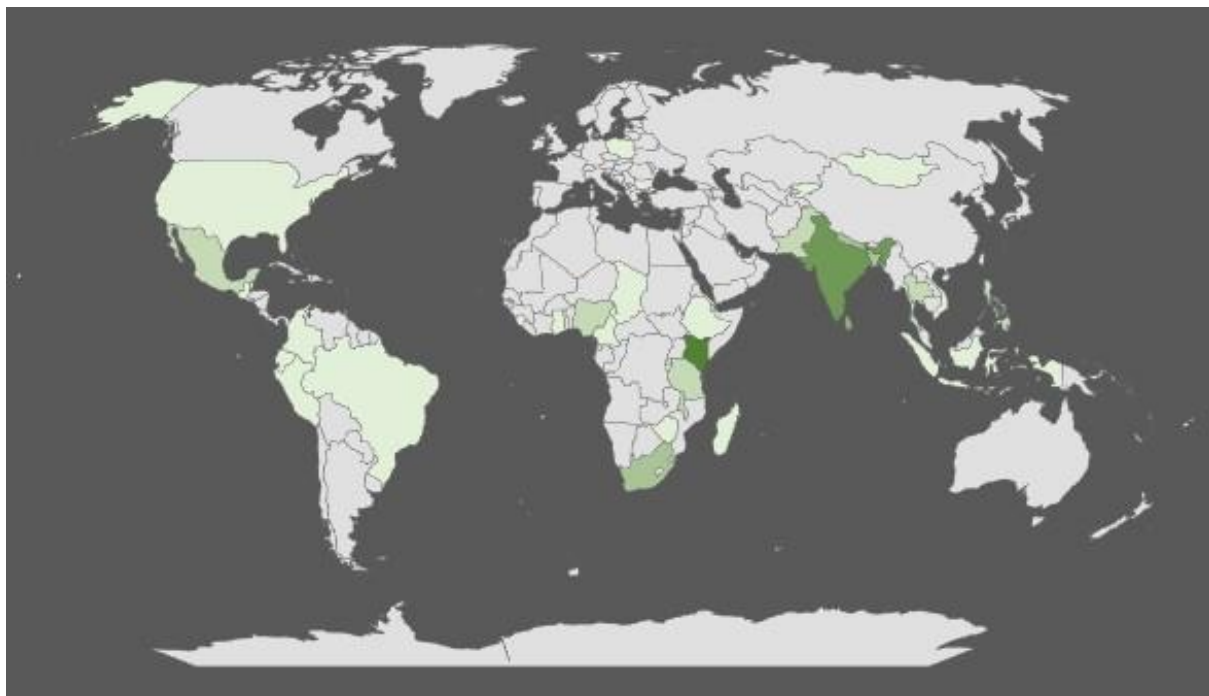


Demographics

We observed significant variations across several key demographic distinctions, including gender identity (with 42% of respondents identifying as female) and Indigenous or ethnic minority (with 30% of respondents identifying as a member of an Indigenous or ethnic minority community). Less diversity was observed in other demographic distinctions, including LGBTQIA+ communities (1 respondent) and people living with disabilities (3 respondents).

Survey respondents also represented a wide variety of countries and regions supported by EJM, as shown in Figure 1. While the largest fractions of respondents are based in Asia Pacific (24 total) or Africa (22 total), we also received responses from Latin America (7), Europe (2) and North America (1).

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of survey respondents

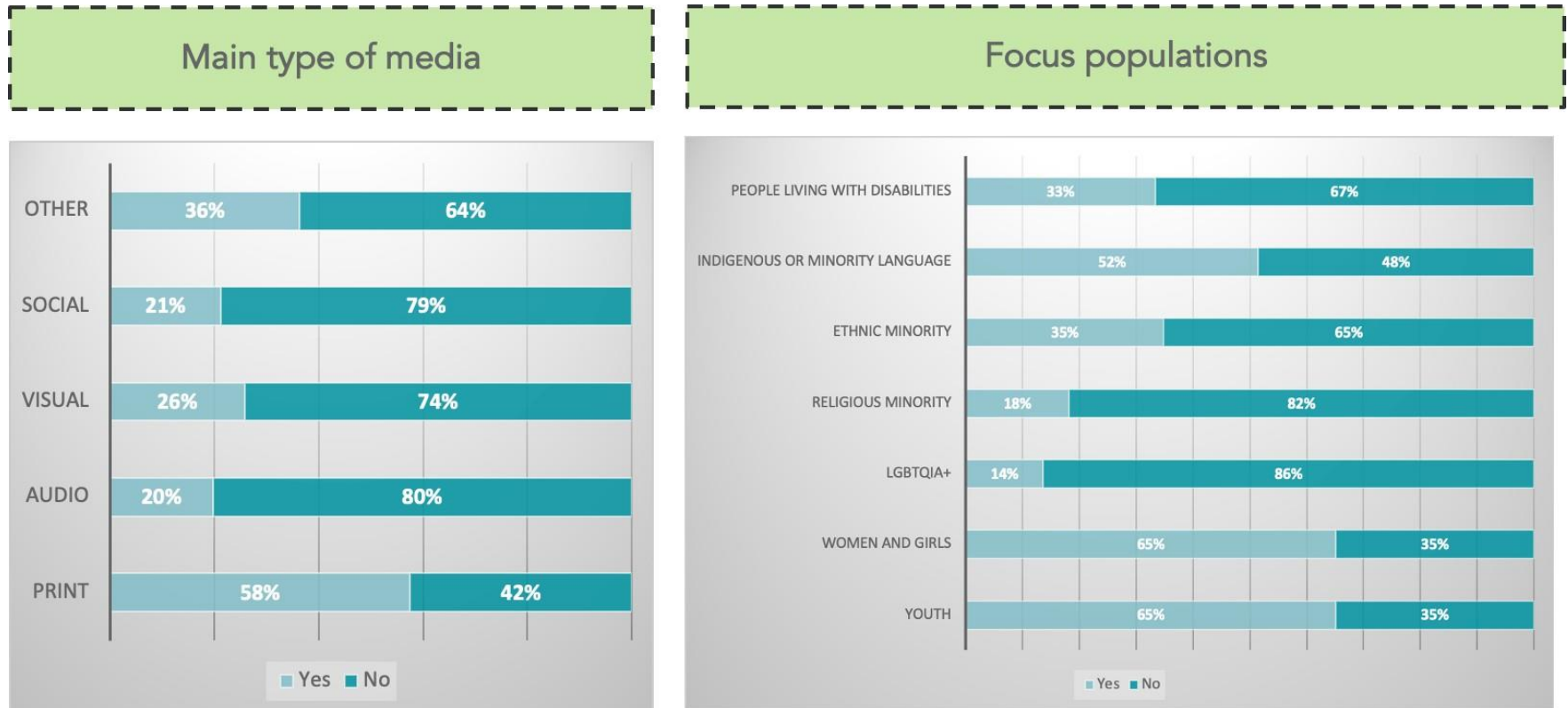


The age of respondents followed a bell curve, with the plurality (41%) between the ages of 35 and 44; slightly fewer identifying as 45-54 (33%) or 25-34 (23%); and one person each identifying as 18-24 years and 65 and older. Tenure in the media sector follows a similar pattern, with 36% responding “11-20 years”; 29% responding “more than 20 years” and “5-10 years” each; and 6% responding “2-5 years.”

Respondents also represented a variety of professional positions and perspectives in the media sector. When describing their current work in the media, the plurality (35%) identified as freelance journalists, while slightly fewer identified as a reporter working for a media outlet (32%) or an editor or manager of a media outlet (24%). A smaller number (1-2 respondents each) identified as employed by a civil society organization, an NGO content producer and tertiary lecturer, a consultant to media outlets, a former journalist or a representative of a non-profit media organization.

Survey respondents further reported working with a range of types of media and focus populations, as highlighted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Main type of media and focus populations covered



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Type of EJN support

Respondents were asked several questions about the type of support they received from EJN, with options including: organizational grant, media training workshop, fellowship and story grant. Recognizing that many respondents likely received multiple types of support, the survey included questions on overall support received and most impactful support as perceived by the respondent.

The majority of respondents reported receiving story grants (58%) and fellowships (52%), while participation in media training workshops (36%) and organizational grants (11%) were less frequently reported. While the majority of survey participants only received one form of support (60%), one-quarter (26%) reported receiving two forms of support and a small number received three or all types of support (11% and 3% respectively).

When asked about the most impactful type of support received from EJN, 42% said it was a fellowship and 35% said it was a story grant; a smaller percentage said it was a training (17%) or organizational grant (6%).

It is interesting to note that among all respondents who received a fellowship from EJN, 82% reported this as the most impactful type of support received; this includes those who received other types of support as well as those for whom a fellowship was the only support received. These numbers decrease for story grants (61%), organizational grants (57%) and trainings (46%).

Knowledge, skills and quality

When asked general questions regarding improvements in their knowledge of climate and environmental issues since their involvement with EJN, all respondents answered affirmatively. Furthermore, all but one respondent answered positively when asked whether they felt more inspired to focus on climate and environment stories since their involvement with EJN.

Responses provided a more nuanced picture of the specific skills and knowledge that participants believe improved as a result of EJN's support. When asked to rate the improvement of specific skills on a scale of 0 (no improvement) to 4 (lots of improvement), the majority of respondents gave a response of 3 or 4 for most skills. However, reporting skills including using data, using video or audio and working with an editor all received several responses of 0, 1 and 2, suggesting that while the majority of respondents did still rate these as areas where they

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experienced improvement, these may be topics in which EJN could continue to strengthen its training and support (or it could be that those who received training in these skills were not among the respondents)¹.

Respondents were also asked whether they have diversified their sources since receiving EJN's support to include information from women, Indigenous community members and LGBTQIA+ individuals in their stories. For respondents who viewed story grants or fellowships as the most impactful support received, a significant majority reported that they have diversified their sources (91% and 86% respectively). For those respondents who received the greatest impact from a media workshop training, the majority also stated that they have increased the diversity of their sources but at a lower rate than other respondents (64%).

Pitching and financial success

While survey respondents did largely express that their financial opportunities have improved since their involvement with EJN, there are important differences in responses across the type of support received.

As with diversification of sources, respondents who cited story grants and fellowships as most impactful presented a more positive picture of financial opportunities; when asked whether they were better able to secure paid consultancies, assignments or opportunities to work with media organizations since receiving EJN's support, 77% and 79% of story grant and fellowship respondents answered yes respectively. For media workshop training respondents, only 33% responded positively.

Recipients of organizational grants were asked a similar set of questions and also provided a mixed picture. Of four organizational grant respondents, only one stated that they believe their organization or outlet is financially sustainable; however, three respondents did express that they believed their EJN grant(s) contributed positively to their organization's financial sustainability.

Respondents in all categories overwhelmingly expressed that the support they received from EJN has helped them to increase the quantity of climate- and environment-related stories that they pitch for publication and improve the success of their story pitches (Figure 3).

¹ It is worth noting that key informant interviews provided a different perspective, with several interviewees pointing to improved data and geojournalism skills as a result of their support from EJN.

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Impact and viewership

Respondents were asked about their perception of the viewership of their stories as well as the impact that their stories have had. We explore these outcomes in more depth in several of the case studies.

Journalists and outlet representatives responding to the survey reported a very positive experience of EJN's support as it relates to readers and impact. In the case of story viewership, only two respondents (both fellowship recipients) stated that their viewership has not changed since their involvement with EJN; all other respondents noted that their audience had either increased by a little (33% of respondents) or a lot (63%).

Networking and collaboration

One of EJN's goals is to support collaboration among environmental journalists around the world, and both the survey responses and key informant interviews suggest that EJN is largely achieving this goal.

The large majority of respondents (86%) affirmed that they believe they or their staff have been able to network with more journalists as a result of their involvement with EJN, with no significant variation across categories of EJN's support.

When asked about the ability to collaborate with journalists following EJN's support, the majority of respondents (65%) answered positively. However, it is worth noting that almost 50% of those respondents who reported story grants as the most impactful support received responded "no" to this question. It could be the case that story grant recipients have fewer opportunities to engage with other EJN grantees than individuals involved in trainings or fellowships (which sometimes involves travel for a cohort of recipients). Further exploration of this result may be worthwhile.

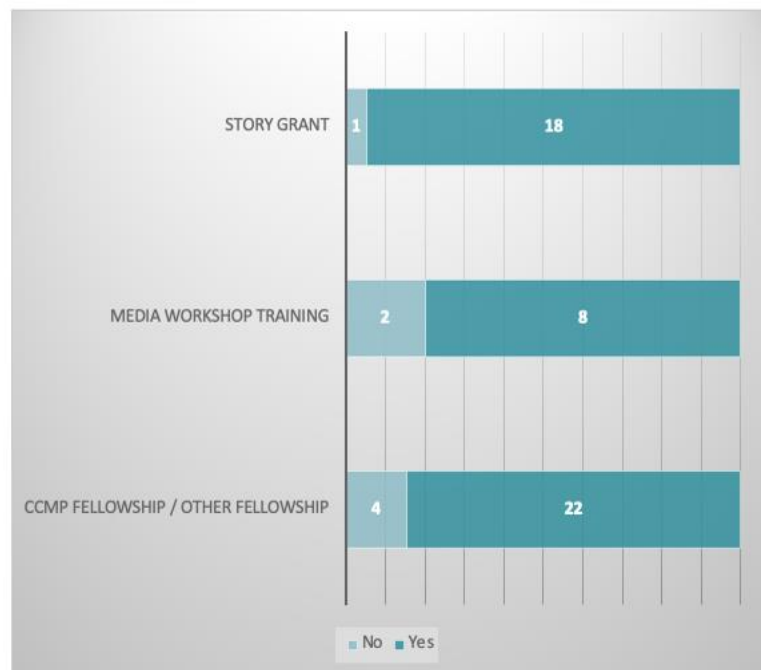
Looking beyond collaboration, almost all respondents agreed that their profile as a journalist has been raised since their involvement with EJN, a trend that cuts across all forms of support that EJN provides to individuals.

Figure 3. Pitching of climate- and environment-related stories

Are you pitching environment- or climate-related stories more regularly since your involvement with EJM?



Do you feel your pitches are more successful following your involvement with EJM?



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Organizational grants

Only a small number of respondents (4 total) reported that they had received an organizational grant from EJN and that this grant was the most impactful form of support they received; as such, it is difficult to interpret trends from the small number of responses received.

With that said, we have included in Figure 4 the summary statistics from key questions asked of organizational grant recipients. While these should be interpreted with caution, they may raise questions and reflections that EJN can use in its future programming.

Figure 4. Organizational grant questions and responses

	YES	NO
QUALITY: Do you feel that the quality of your work has improved since your involvement with EJN?	4	0
FUNDING: Have you received more international funding or interest in your work since your EJN grant(s)?	4	0
FUNDRAISING CAPACITY: Do you feel more capable when applying for and receiving other grants since your EJN grant(s)?	3	1
IMPACT: Do you feel your work has become more impactful since you worked with EJN?	4	0
SOCIAL MEDIA: Have you seen your social media following grow significantly since working with EJN?	2	2

Biggest impact

Respondents were asked to provide a brief description of the biggest impact that EJN's support has had on their work. The responses to this question were diverse and helped us to design the second phase of research, in which we undertook a deeper dive into different categories of impact. Here we share an overview of the findings, with the caveat that many responses were short and thus provided limited details on the perceived impact. It is worth noting that these responses represent the perceptions of survey respondents; we do not have backing evidence to verify these changes beyond the views of respondents.

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General improvement in skills, interests, network and confidence. The majority of themes identified in these open-ended responses related to general statements of improvements in individual skills or networks. Among skills-focused answers, respondents highlighted general improvement (16 responses) in most cases, with one person each citing improvements in investigative journalism skills, story structuring and editing and engagement with other media ecosystem actors. Responses related to networking and collaboration similarly were largely general statements (13), with three individuals noting the opportunity to work with journalists outside of their own country. Finally, eight respondents noted new or increased reporting interests, with four general responses related to climate and environmental reporting, one response each relating to energy and marine issues and two respondents citing their increased interest in working on stories related to women and/or Indigenous populations.

Limited but specific responses related to individual changes. In a small number of cases, one or two respondents each highlighted a more specific impact that they experienced in their work: exposure to new audiences, increased international support and reputation with global audiences, new resources for work, increased mentorship opportunities and greater access to sources for their work.

External impact and recognition. While the responses cited above are primarily focused on internal and individual improvements, respondents did also note a number of external changes related to their career development, professional recognition or the perceived impact of their reporting. These include:

- **New professional and financial opportunities** (6 respondents): Respondents cited new freelance opportunities, promotions within their media outlet and other opportunities outside of the media sector that support better environmental policies and practice.
- **Awards for reporting** (4 respondents): Several individuals noted that they have received awards for their stories, including for those produced with support from EJN.
- **Improvements in media organizations or platforms** (3 respondents): Survey participants noted that EJN's support helped to either create new media platforms or provided financial and non-financial resources to strengthen the capacity of recipient outlets.
- **Increased climate coverage in focus countries** (3 respondents): While this research was not designed to identify the impact of EJN on broader climate coverage, several respondents stated that they have observed an increase in the quantity and placement of climate-focused stories, which they relate this back to EJN's support.

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- **Impact from reporting** (1 respondent): Finally, one individual noted that the reporting he was able to do because of EJN's support has led to concrete legal and policy changes aimed at helping local communities and reducing corruption and poor environmental practices. This story is explored further in a case study.

Disaggregated results

One overarching finding from the survey results is that respondents have had a very positive experience with EJN's support, which they view as having led to improvement across all of the outcomes on which the survey focused. With limited variation in outcome responses, there are also limited opportunities to analyze how outcomes may be different across demographic groups.

In reviewing the data, we identified three outcome variables with sufficient variation in responses to calculate cross-tabulations and identify whether some groups responded in a systematically different way than other groups. The three outcome variables that were reviewed are:

- Financial opportunities
- Viewership of work (analyzing differences between "viewership increased a little" and "viewership increased a lot")
- Ability to collaborate with other journalists

For each of these outcomes, we analyzed how results differed across key demographic variables in which we also observed enough variation among respondents, specifically:

- Gender
- Indigenous/ethnic minority-identified individuals
- Geographic region
- Position in media sector
- Tenure in media sector

The majority of cross-tabulations did not reveal any systematic differences in disaggregated responses. As such, in this section, we focus on those outcome-demographic pairings in which there are observable differences in responses.

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Financial opportunities and geographic region. Among the regions represented in the survey sample, the data show that respondents from Latin America were far more likely to state that they have not been better able to secure paid consultancies, assignments or opportunities to work with media organizations since their engagement with EJN. This trend is especially significant when compared to respondents from the Asia-Pacific region, 85% of whom stated that their financial opportunities have improved (Figure 5).

It is worth noting that the samples of respondents from each region were relatively small. Furthermore, there may be underlying variables that explain these differences, such as systematic differences among the profiles of grantees of EJN's support by region or among those individuals who chose to respond to the survey.

Financial opportunities and tenure. Similarly, increased financial opportunities show some evidence of being more common among those respondents who have worked in the media sector for 11-20 years (Figure 6). It is possible that this tenure is a "sweet spot" for EJN's support. However, all other tenure groups also had a majority that responded positively to this question. It is possible that journalists become more skilled at applying for grants as they progress in their careers; as such, this trend may not be directly related to EJN's support.

Viewership of work for Indigenous/ethnic minority-identified reporters. Finally, disaggregating viewership results provides some evidence that EJN's support leads to larger self-reported increases in story viewership for individuals who identify as a part of an Indigenous or ethnic minority community¹. A larger fraction of this identity group reported that their viewership has increased by a lot (instead of "a little" or "no change") as compared to the general pool of respondents (Figure 7).

¹ Note that survey respondents were not asked to provide performance metrics for viewership; as such, self-reported viewership may be based on respondent perceptions.

Figure 5. Ability to secure financial opportunities, disaggregated by region

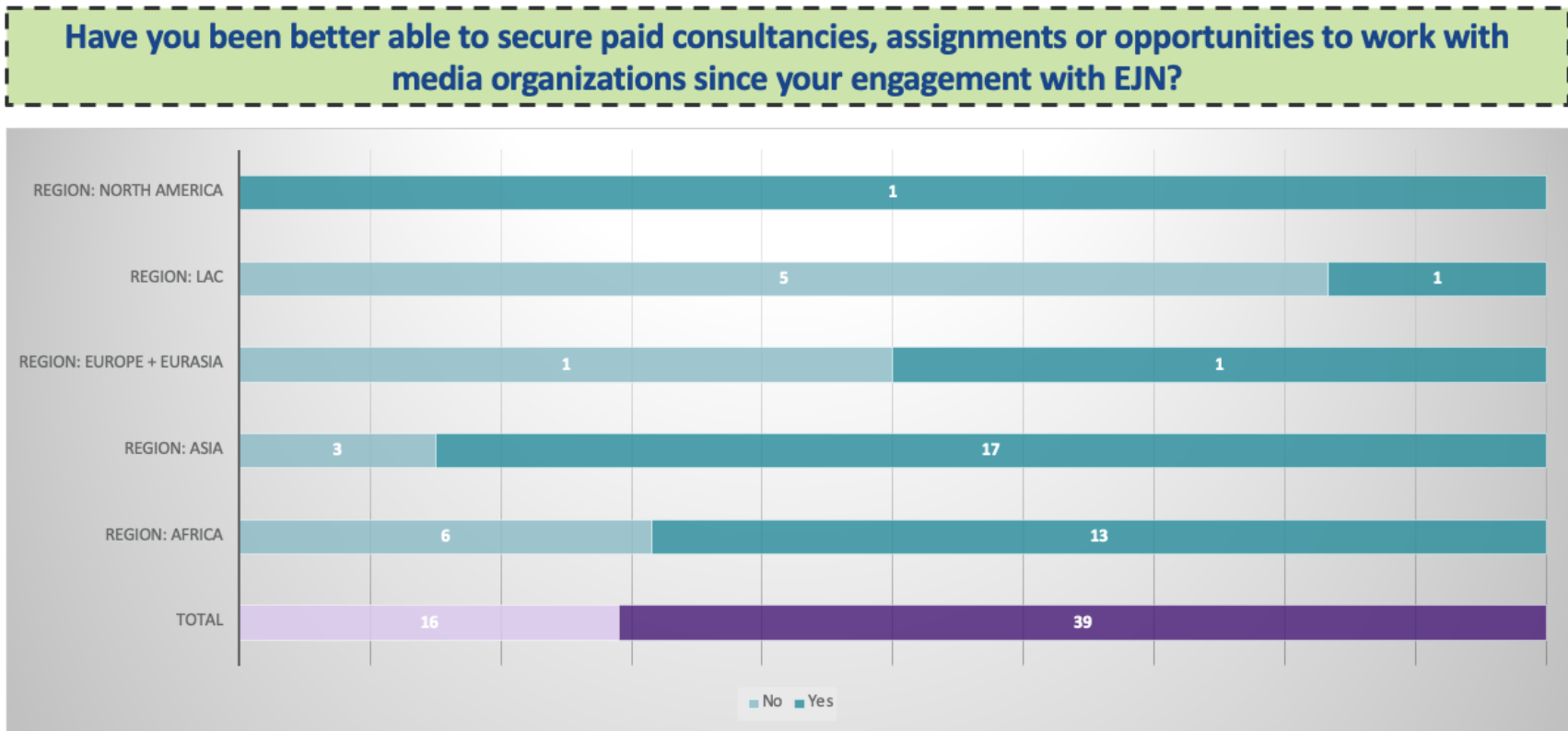


Figure 6. Ability to secure financial opportunities, disaggregated by tenure in the media sector

Have you been better able to secure paid consultancies, assignments or opportunities to work with media organizations since your engagement with EJM?

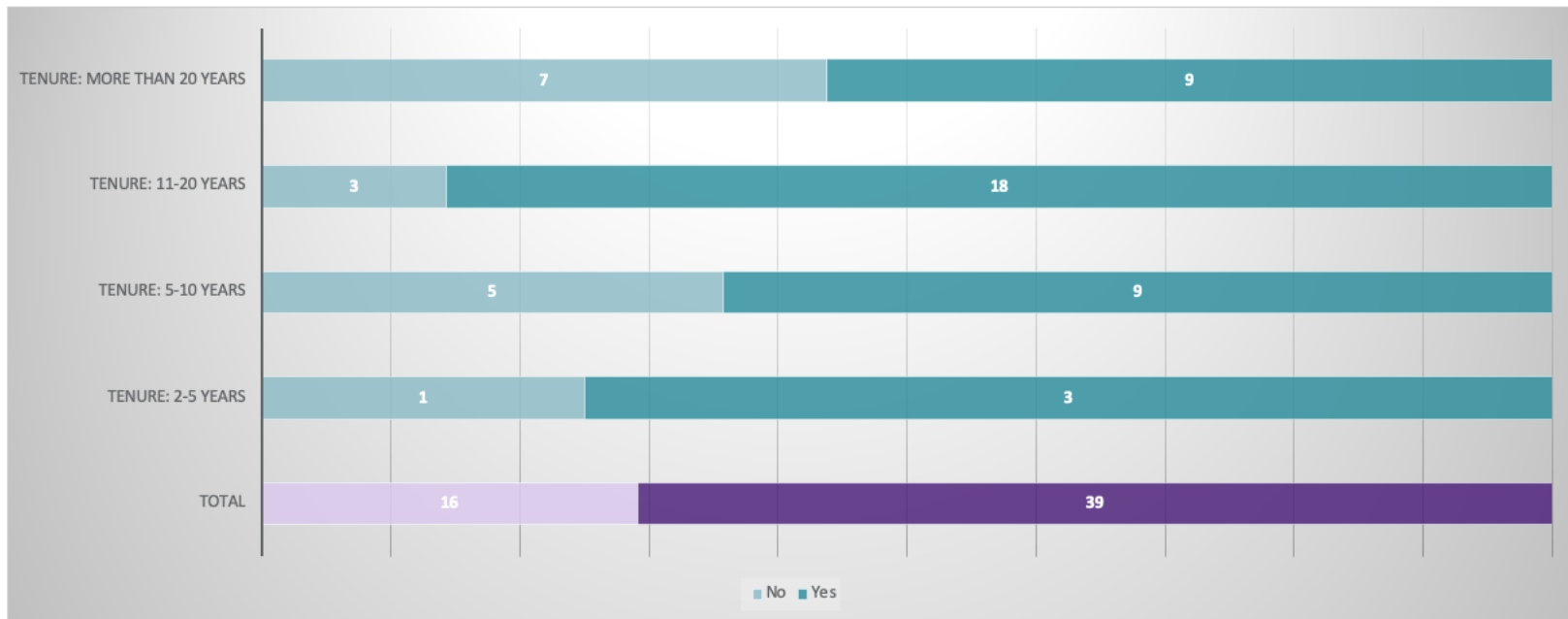
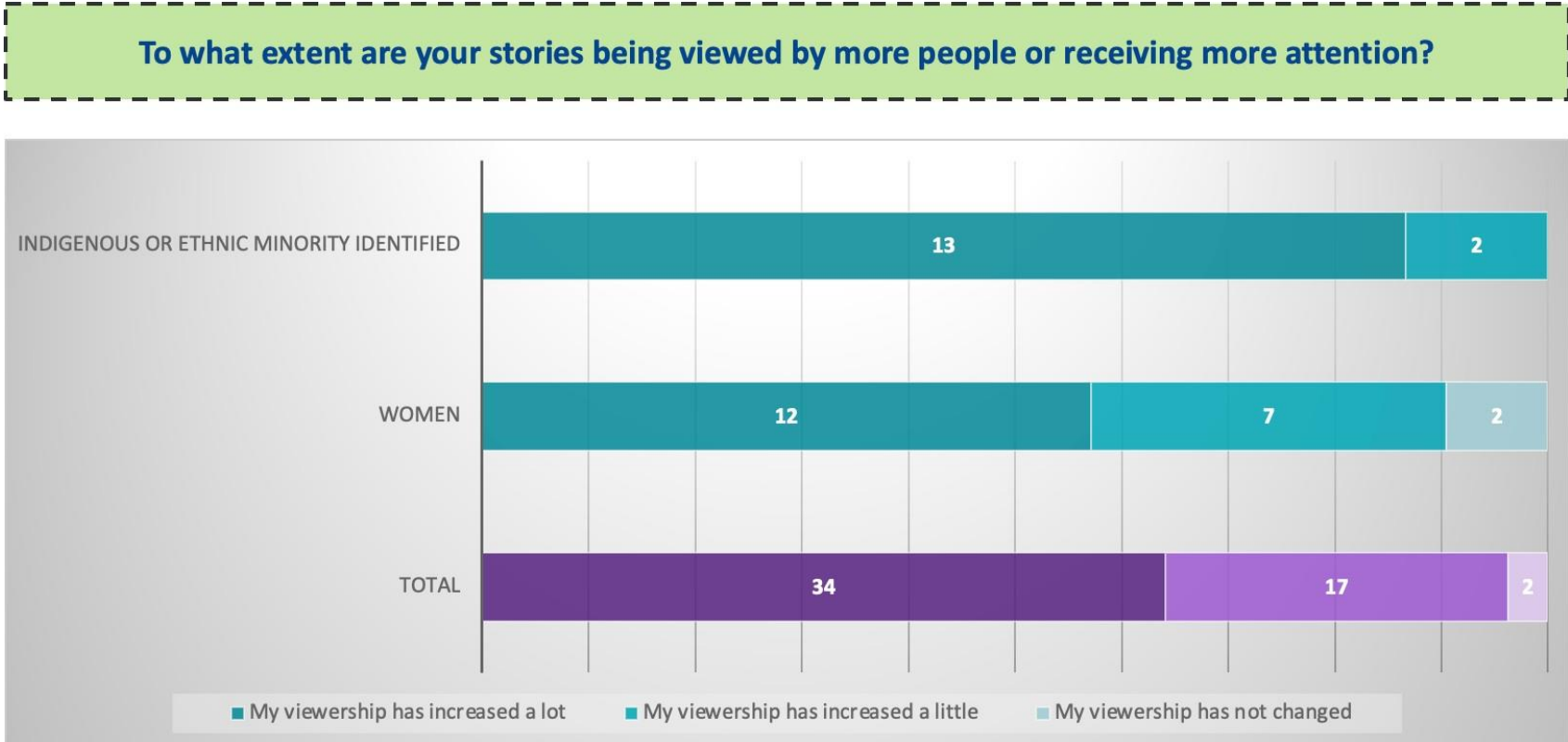


Figure 7. Viewership of stories, disaggregated by demographic identity



Interview Results and Case Studies

After completing the survey data analysis, we conducted 27 semi-structured key informant interviews with EJN grantees, staff at EJN and colleagues of those who have received support from EJN. Interview data were reviewed in parallel with other EJN- and interviewee-provided materials, all of which informed the production of 11 case studies, which are included later in this section.

In addition, the crosscutting analysis of interview data provided additional insight into themes of how EJN's support has had an impact on the careers of individuals and operations of organizations that have received it. These themes respond to key questions 1, 2 and 3 of the research and are highlighted below.

Increased interest in environmental reporting. While some journalists interviewed as part of this research had covered climate or environmental topics before engaging with EJN, several interviewees highlighted that EJN's support had introduced or solidified their commitment to reporting on such topics. Respondents cited trainings, mentorship and opportunities to travel to climate- and environment-related conferences such as the COPs as motivating factors that cemented in their minds the facts that coverage of these topics is critical and that there is a real and growing audience for it.

Even for interviewees who had actively reported on the climate or environment beats before their engagement with EJN, multiple respondents noted that EJN's support furthered their resolve to continue with or even commit more fully to coverage of such topics. There was also some evidence from interviewees that this trend has ripple effects; several interviewees noted that their own increased focus on climate and environment issues seemed to inspire colleagues and peers, resulting in a more widespread impact.

Improved reporting skills. Respondents repeatedly cited specific ways in which EJN's support, especially from trainings and mentorship by EJN staff, provided them with new skills that they have been able to put to use². One skill raised by several interviewees is geojournalism; many respondents noted that they have more frequently used data and mapping in their reporting as a result of EJN-supported opportunities and training. In parallel, multiple interviewees noted that the holistic mentorship they received from EJN helped them to improve their use of data in stories while also ensuring that they did not lose the human element of the story they were telling. Interviewees also noted that

² Note that this finding differs from results from the survey, where many respondents noted that they did not experience a big change in data skills; it is likely that the interviews over-sampled those who experienced a significant improvement in data-related reporting skills.

Strengthening Reporters, Strengthening Reporting: *How Internews' EJN Impacts the Careers of Environmental Journalists*

EJN's mentors helped them to identify compelling story angles, more thoroughly fact-check their stories and utilize different media like photography.

Ability to work on new topics. Almost all interviewees independently highlighted how EJN's support provided them with opportunities to report on topics that they would not have otherwise been able to cover. Interviewees noted many reasons for this impact. First, interviewees cited that many EJN story grants or fellowships support the production of long-form stories, which opens new opportunities to study topics that are not amenable to shorter formats. Second, several interviewees referred to discussions with EJN staff and mentors that helped them to identify topics to investigate that they would not otherwise have uncovered. For many respondents, topics that they began covering with EJN's support have turned into areas of expertise in their careers, which has created positive spillover effects in helping them to publish more stories on these areas in more publications and gain global recognition as experts on important topics related to the climate and environment.

Ability to increase coverage of marginalized populations. Interviewees noted that EJN directly and indirectly helped them to seek out groups of people who are not always featured in environmental coverage, including women and Indigenous and ethnic minority groups. Respondents said EJN has provided or partnered with others to provide some support on these topics, including training on applying a gender lens in their reporting. Beyond direct support, EJN mentors were credited with helping fellows and grantees think about stories from different angles, including those that highlight the voices of historically marginalized populations. Interviewees also stated that EJN's support allows reporters to take unique perspectives in their reporting, which in several cases has included presenting how climate and environmental issues disproportionately affect a diverse set of people.

Concrete professional advancement for EJN-supported journalists. In addition to skills-building and reporting opportunities, multiple interviewees credited EJN with career advancement opportunities that emerged after their engagement with EJN. These advancements include promotion within the respondent's media outlet and new jobs leading climate and environment policy work. In all cases, respondents noted that being selected for support from EJN was seen by colleagues as a signal of their expertise in the field of environmental journalism, opening doors that may not have otherwise been available to them.

Amplification of local voices to global audiences. A common theme that emerged across interviews was how EJN simultaneously expands opportunities for local journalists and ensures that their voices and profiles are increasingly visible at the global level. Several interviewees expressed that EJN's support of journalists who work outside of their country's capital-city newsrooms ensures that local reporters are able to cover topics

Strengthening Reporters, Strengthening Reporting: *How Internews' EJN Impacts the Careers of Environmental Journalists*

that are critical to populations outside of major urban centers. On the other hand, interviewees noted that EJN's support does not stop at the level of helping local coverage be read by domestic audiences; instead, almost all interviewees cited specific opportunities that they have received to publish EJN-supported stories in global media outlets or to receive global awards recognizing their work. One interviewee went so far as to note that EJN has helped to ensure that journalists reporting from the Global South are seen as some of the most cutting-edge and interesting voices in climate coverage today, eclipsing mainstream media outlets from the Global North.

New collaborations between individuals. While previous themes focused heavily on how individual journalists have benefited from EJN's support, one common impact that emerged in the interviews was the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded journalists on climate and environmental topics. Almost all interviewees cited some form of collaboration that EJN helped to foster, from informal tie-ups in which journalists helped each other to identify sources or brainstorm story ideas to concrete engagement in which journalists teamed up to co-report a story. These examples included both within-country collaborations, which interviewees noted may have occurred without EJN's support, and cross-country engagement that could only have been brokered by an international network. Furthermore, respondents noted several engagements that have been sustained for years after EJN's support initially brought journalists together.

New regional networks for journalists. Beyond collaborations between individual reporters, interviewees identified the launching of multiple regional networks or media platforms to which EJN contributed. Platforms and networks such as InfoAmazonia, InfoNile and others were all cited as outlets that have filled a critical gap in their regions and topics of focus, and the co-founders and contributors to these platforms highlighted the role that EJN played in providing direct financial support, facilitating connections with new journalists and donors for the networks and amplifying their reach. These networks have also picked up the mantle to provide their own story grants and trainings to reporters and editors, extending the support for environmental journalism beyond what EJN could do on its own.

Improving relationships between scientists and journalists. Multiple interviewees expressed that they transitioned to environmental journalism from science or public health beats, a move that respondents saw as natural given the scientific and data-driven nature of many climate stories. However, interviewees also noted that professional engagement between journalists and scientists has not always been easy, making it challenging for reporters to secure information from scientists and report that information in a way that is accurate but understandable to readers. Several interviewees said EJN has helped improve these engagements in several ways, including organizational grants that have supported dialogues between journalists and the science community and trainings on topics like zoonotic diseases.

Strengthening Reporters, Strengthening Reporting:
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Impact of coverage. While the primary focus of this research was on EJN's impact on the careers of supported journalists, many interviewees noted that they ultimately want their reporting to make a difference with regard to policy and action related to climate change, biodiversity and the environment. Several interviewees said one of the challenges of being a reporter is that they often do not get to see the reaction or response to their stories. However, multiple interviewees pointed to stories that they produced with support from EJN that led to direct action on the part of government officials related to corrupt practices affecting local communities. In each case, interviewees stated that the support provided by EJN allowed them to travel to the affected sites and conduct in-depth investigative journalism that they would not have otherwise been able to undertake.

Case Studies

The themes highlighted in this section are explored in more depth in a set of case studies that examine the experiences of journalists who have received support from EJM and the impacts that they attribute to it. These case studies, which are presented in the next sub-section of this report, include:

Shining a light on how climate change affects women

[Focus: Jhesset O. Enano, Philippines]

Amplifying local voices on climate to a global audience

[Focus: Shamsuddin Illius, Bangladesh]

Helping to create experts on important niche topics

[Focus: Denise Hruby, Austria]

Equipping journalists to contribute to real change in communities

[Focus: Ofani Eremae and Charley Piringi, Solomon Islands]

Raising the reputation and recognition of environmental journalists

[Focus: Emilio Godoy, Mexico]

Building regional networks for environmental journalism

[Focus: Fredrick Mugira, Uganda]

Creating new opportunities for professional advancement – in and outside the newsroom

[Focus: Pauline Ogada, Kenya]

Fostering regional and global collaboration for better environmental reporting

[Focus: Gustavo Faleiros, Brazil, and Pablo Correa, Colombia]

Helping speak truth to power for Indigenous communities and endangered species

[Focus: Franklin Vega, Ecuador]

Transforming journalism into activism and policy change

[Focus: Rina Saeed Khan, Pakistan]

Sharing critical information with communities during emergencies

[Focus: Center for Investigative Reporting, Sri Lanka]



Shining a light on how climate change affects women

Jhesset O. Enano began her journalism career focused not on climate and environmental issues, but on news related to the local government and metropolitan area. In 2019, during her time as a staff reporter with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Enano had the opportunity to begin covering stories about the climate and environment. It was during this transition that she first encountered the Earth Journalism Network.

EJN support

Shortly after beginning to work on environmental topics, Enano received her first of several EJN story grants – the Health and Climate Change Asia Pacific grant. This grant was followed by two more in 2021: one that focused on stories about wildlife crime and another that supported partnerships between non-governmental organizations and journalists to cover climate change. Enano received further support in the form of trainings, including one that EJN organized in collaboration with the Center for Women’s Resources about reporting on climate change through a gender lens. In an interview for this case study, Enano highlighted how these forms of support have been instrumental in her development as an environmental journalist.

Imelda Abaño, EJN’s senior coordinator for the Pacific and Philippines who has mentored Enano during her grants, said Enano has energetically leveraged the support she received to improve her work in several ways: *“She is really deeply committed to diversifying her skills in reporting.”*

Jhesset O. Enano



Location:
Marikina City,
Philippines



EJN Support:
Asia Pacific
Project (2019)

*“During the past few years that I have been working as an environmental and climate reporter, these opportunities both in the form of the direct grants and the trainings and network I was able to create and build because of EJN... have been a really formative part of my work as a reporter. **I think they were able to really provide part of the building blocks of my career.**”*

– Jhesset O. Enano





Reporting on climate change and mental health

EJN's support helped Enano to begin reporting on a topic that even today is under-reported: the link between climate change and mental health. She returned to the site of Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful storms to ever make landfall in the Philippines, to speak with communities affected six years later. The story grant allowed her to travel to ground zero of the typhoon and report at the scale that she believed this story deserved: *"I believe that, with the support I received from EJN, I was able to do the story that I really visualized. I was the lone reporter, but I was able to do a two-part long-form story with a documentary and several photos because I was also able to hire a documentary photographer to go with me, which was part of the grant."*

Throughout her reporting on this topic, Enano repeatedly returned to the voices of women, from community members who were widowed as a result of the storm to mental health workers helping survivors grapple with the aftermath. She highlighted this gender-sensitive approach as one of the most important components of her work.

"[Women] being able to speak with me as a reporter, as someone interested in hearing about their stories and learning about their experiences, is a way for them to also realize and recognize the challenges they faced six years ago and even up to that time."

– Jhesset O. Enano

While it is difficult to assess if and to what degree her reporting may have contributed to policy change and spurred the government to take action, Enano pointed to signs that stories on this topic being published in top-tier outlets may have ripple effects for those working at the intersections of climate change and mental health every day: *"Reading the feedback of the readers and the public and hearing about it from people who have been working in the climate space, like advocates and activists, this is one of those rare occasions where climate change is seen from the perspective of mental health. And the fact that these stories were published on the front pages of the country's biggest broadsheet allowed them to be part of the day-to-day conversations of the general public and maybe also of officials that have read them."*

Impact

While Enano and her colleagues highlight many ways in which EJN's support has had an effect on her professional development, one impact that stands out is the important role that EJN has played in supporting the work of women journalists and the production of journalism that includes a gender lens. In Enano's case, this provided her with career-changing opportunities.

Connecting with women journalists

Referring to the 2019 training she received on climate reporting with a gender lens, Enano cited myriad benefits to her work, including the opportunity to network and collaborate with women journalists from across the region.



Multiple people who were interviewed as part of this case study noted the unique and extensive challenges women face in the media sector – especially reporting on climate change and biodiversity issues. While networking alone cannot overcome these challenges, interviewees said being able to share experiences and strategies with other women who have encountered the same obstacles can help them feel less alone.

Raising the voices of women

In addition, Enano called out the importance of bringing women's voices to the forefront of climate change stories. Her focus on including women sources and subjects in her journalism appeared in her first EJN-supported story, and it is a philosophy and approach that she continues to bring to her reporting today.

*“When I speak to a climate change expert, it is now second nature to try to find a woman expert. Especially knowing that climate change affects women disproportionately. I **make sure my stories have at least one or more female voices or experts** to make sure I am encapsulating the full story.”*

– Jhesset O. Enano

Abaño emphasized the importance of Enano seeking out the voices of women and others who are not always featured in journalism: *“**In every story she does, she always makes sure that marginalized groups, especially women and Indigenous people, are highlighted in her stories.**”*

“She has done many stories focused on women, and I am really happy about her highlighting women in her reporting. ... It is always a good thing to highlight the role of women in every story, not just environmental stories. The story will be more balanced – and it empowers more women to have their say in the community and be recognized by policymakers deciding the welfare of the community.”

Strengthening her profile as a woman journalist

Enano also supports the inclusion of women's voices in journalism with her own professional advancement. As more women and girls see themselves represented at the highest levels of the media sector in the Philippines, the opportunities available to and taken by women journalists will continue to grow. Enano pointed to the role of EJN in helping her to continue her own growth in her profession: *“**I also had the chance to give back through some speaking opportunities. For example, in 2020 the Asian Center for Journalism had a series of webinars on multiple topics, including one from EJN focusing on zoonotic diseases. And considering the reporting I have been doing both with and without the support of EJN, I was tapped through EJN to speak at that webinar.**”*

The author would like to thank Jhesset O. Enano and Imelda Abaño for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Survivors were forced to live in makeshift tents after Yolanda laid waste to their towns and villages / Credit: File photo from Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Amplifying local voices on climate change to a global audience

Shamsuddin Illius's career took many turns before he became a well-known and respected environmental reporter, transitioning from a job in banking to reporting on politics and crime for daily newspapers and weeklies in his home of Chittagong, Bangladesh. While Illius's move to journalism is one he could trace back to his first newspaper article published when he was in ninth grade, a focus on environmental reporting was less predictable. As recently as 2019, those reporting on these topics in Bangladesh had been concentrated in Dhaka, with few reporters outside of the capital city able to make inroads in pitching and publishing stories on climate change and biodiversity.

EJN support

Sparked by his interest in covering climate change, Illius applied to participate in an EJN-supported workshop on media, climate justice and resilience in the Bay of Bengal. Although he had not previously published stories on the topic, he was accepted as a workshop participant, and his passion for climate reporting took off from there.

Zobaidur Rahman, the Bangladesh editor of EJN's partner website The Third Pole, had the opportunity to work with Illius during this first workshop and immediately observed his potential as a leading voice in climate reporting in Bangladesh: *"I led this workshop where journalists like [Illius] came from different parts of [the] country, and we suggested interesting story ideas and told them '... if you do this story, it will be read by people in other countries because they need to understand the story – not the news, but what happens to people living on the coast due to sea level rise.' And he started becoming more interested, started asking me questions. After three days of the workshop, we went on a field visit. Since he is a seasoned journalist, he started digging out stories and immediately came up with this idea, and it was wonderful. I was amazed."*

Shamsuddin Illius



Location:
Chittagong,
Bangladesh



EJN Support:
Bay of Bengal
Story Grant
(2019)

*"I used to cover business and crime. But EJN has changed that – **it has completely made me a climate and environmental journalist.** It has not only changed the nature of my work, but it gave me a lot of tools, a network and a reputation as an international expert that helps my work."*

– Shamsuddin Illius





Following the workshop, Illius received several fellowships and story grants from EJN, which he credited with helping him make the transition to working as a full-time climate journalist.

Reporting on the impact of environmental degradation on local communities

Illius's [first story](#) for EJN highlighted many of the consequences big and small of climate change faced by coastal communities on the Bay of Bengal, beginning with the loss of the tradition of naming babies after the natural resources that were once such an important part of the local culture. His story highlighted the loss of names like Probal and Shukti (Bengali for “coral” and “oyster” respectively) as these resources that once were common features of life and central to livelihoods have become scarcer as a result of climate change. Illius highlighted why this shift is indicative of a larger issue for communities: *“As a result of climate change, the naming culture of Bangladesh is shrinking. Due to pollution and environmental changes and salinity, these seashells are destroyed. So, people have to leave their professions – and the naming culture also changed.”*

Using this unique perspective, Illius has continued to be a prolific climate journalist in Bangladesh, putting a spotlight on the consequences of climate change from zoonotic diseases to diminished biodiversity that under-represented communities must grapple with. Furthermore, the issues featured in his stories are now receiving attention from officials and the public.

Referring to his story on the loss of seashells along the Bay of Bengal, Illius shared this anecdote: *“I started with [the story on] how climate change is affecting coastal population lifestyle[s]. It was a remarkable story ... the local government has conducted several mobile courts for people who have illegally collected sea resources and are damaging the population of the seashells. At least three people were sent to jail as of 2021. And [the local authorities] have conducted in two years at least 20 mobile courts and seized a lot of seashells.”*

Impact

Beyond the contribution of Illius's journalism to drawing attention to issues and amplifying the voices of local communities, interviewees highlighted the broader impact of his work on the very nature and reach of climate reporting in Bangladesh.

Moving from “news” to “stories”

While news reports focusing on climate change are not new to Bangladesh, much of the country's mainstream journalism until recently focused more on how the environment is discussed in the capital and within government offices – and less on the real impact of climate change and other environmental issues on the day-to-day life of Bangladeshi citizens. Rahman highlighted this important distinction between “news” and “stories”: *“There is a difference between news and stories. For example, if there is an earthquake and 2,600 people died – that is news. But the impact it has on a community or on a family after a child has lost all his family, that is the story we need to tell, and that is what EJN is supporting.”*



Interviewees noted that this focus on “news, not stories” was an inevitable consequence of environmental journalism being concentrated in Dhaka. By supporting Illius and other journalists based outside of the capital, they said EJN has helped not only to foster a greater pool of reporters who are passionate about environmental journalism but also to increase the diversity within that pool of reporters – and thus the diversity of stories and issues that are published.

Expansion of the local network of environmental journalists

EJN’s support has played a significant role in this localization of climate reporting in Bangladesh, both directly through its activities with young reporters like story grants and indirectly as those reporters become mentors to the next generation of climate journalists: *“When I returned from COP26, a colleague who used to work on this paper wanted to write an article on reducing carbon emissions in Bangladesh. He sent me the story to see if everything was okay – this was also a big achievement, that he was sending an article to someone covering COP26 to see if it was okay or not. So EJN also makes me able to mentor people. EJN gets the credit for this because if I had not joined the workshop, I would not have made these connections.”*

Rahman reiterated this belief, noting that EJN’s support has not stopped with one or a small number of journalists.

*“Once, climate reporting was done only by a few journalists, four or five all based in Dhaka. From there, it has gone to the most vulnerable regions and engaged reporters like Illius; seasoned journalists who can write any story, but they have the passion which is created by EJN. So, more human faces are coming in through their stories, there are more stories of the people, of the wildlife **The biggest impact is that we have been able to create at least 20 ‘Illius’-es in Bangladesh who do this type of reporting.”***

– Zobaidur Rahman

Facilitating a global audience for reporters

While EJN has offered support to local journalists reporting on environmental issues, it has also worked to ensure that the resulting stories are shared far beyond the borders of the country in which they are produced, as well as to facilitate cross-country collaborations between journalists. Illius’s work and reach demonstrate the success of this strategy when used to disseminate high-quality and compelling stories about climate change.



“After receiving support from EJN, I was awarded fellowships from other organizations, and recently I have worked with The Sinking Cities Project of Unbias the News. It is a global cross-border investigation that examines how sea-level rise is impacting major cities and how their governments are responding to the consequences of climate crises. Local journalists from six different cities – Dhaka, Karachi, Lagos, Alexandria, Rotterdam, and Dublin – spent six months on this investigation, support by journalismfund.eu. Along with The Business Standard in Bangladesh, I am now also publishing in international media including Agence France-Presse as a stringer and The Third Pole.”

– Shamsuddin Illius

Rahman highlighted how this widening of a journalist’s network can create a virtuous cycle, with more successful and wide-reaching stories encouraging more high-quality production of stories by reporters and vice versa: *“One day I found one of his stories got full-page coverage on the first page of his newspaper. For a new environmental reporter, getting that coverage is rare, and he made it. Thereafter, his interest grew – he started doing stories on climate and water, and he started getting invitations from other countries, for example, to attend COP. He covered COP26 and produced more than 25 stories there.”*

The author would like to thank Shamsuddin Illius and Zobaidur Rahman for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Dead mollusks from different species scattered across St. Martin Island beach on May 16 / Credit: Shamsuddin Illius/TBS.



Helping to create experts on important niche topics

Denise Hruby's work as a journalist took her to many places, even from the start of her career. After studying in her native Austria, Hruby spent almost a decade working for English-language newspapers in Cambodia and China and as a correspondent across Asia.

However, one thing that struck her even during her time in Asia was that the consequences of climate change and the destruction of biodiversity were also happening closer to her home, even if European readers and outlets do not realize that these problems occur in their own backyard. Recognizing this gap in coverage, she returned to Europe in 2018 to begin a new stage of her career as a freelance environmental journalist.

EJN support

Although she previously applied for EJN support while working in Southeast Asia, it was not until Hruby returned to Europe that she received her first EJN grant in 2018 to report on issues of illegal wildlife trafficking on the continent. Hruby said the funding supported her reporting and enabled her to attend the 2019 International Wildlife Trade Conference in London.

Mike Shanahan, project director for the EJN Biodiversity Media Initiative, noted that Hruby did not require significant technical or editorial assistance for her work; instead, EJN provided her with a network and financial support to build on her existing strength as an environmental reporter:

Denise Hruby



Location:
Vienna,
Austria



EJN Support:
Illegal Wildlife
Trafficking Grant
(2018)

“It had a huge impact because it was right at a time when I had moved to a new continent where I didn't have the same support network I had built in Asia. And that takes a long time – and I didn't have the contacts that you need and sources you need for reporting.”

– Denise Hruby





*“I have to say Denise is an exceptional journalist, and she didn’t need a lot of technical support. We helped her to refine her proposal initially, but once we had agreed to fund her, she was off and producing amazing work. So, in terms of support to her, **EJN was able to provide the funding she needed to travel to cities in Europe and meet people and travel to various other locations to report on the stories she was covering.**”*

Reporting on the trafficking of wildlife in Europe and beyond

Hruby leveraged the support that she received from EJN to produce a range of stories covering multiple stages of the wildlife trafficking chain in Europe, from the experience of traffickers themselves to the obstacles that the postal service faces in identifying illegal specimens sent through the mail.

Shanahan highlighted the breadth of the journalism that she produced with EJN’s support: *“In just the space of a few months, she produced five or six different articles for media outlets in Germany, the US, Switzerland, Hong Kong, the UK – and for a whole bunch of different outlets, including some very high-profile ones like National Geographic Magazine, the LA Times and Der Spiegel online in Germany. **So, in that short span of time, she really cemented her work on a variety of topics as an expert by being able to cover a variety of different aspects of the illegal wildlife trade story, everything from illegal poaching of beluga sturgeon for caviar in Bulgaria to going into extreme deep reporting on a bird smuggler who smuggled eggs from Brazil to Germany.**”*

Impact

Above all else, Hruby said EJN’s support allowed her to take reporting risks that she would not have otherwise been able to take but that have led to big rewards for her as a reporter and for the coverage of wildlife trafficking as a whole.

Mitigating the risk of not finding the story

As a freelancer, Hruby noted that she often has to weigh the costs and potential benefits of pursuing a lead that may not turn into a story. The costs, which include travel to interview sources and time lost on other guaranteed stories, can make it difficult for reporters to make the decision to take the risk of an idea not turning into a real story.

This risk is especially high when the topic is one that has not received much attention to date, as was the case with many of the issues that Hruby featured in her stories.

However, EJN provided Hruby with resources, space and encouragement to explore these topics, and the risk paid off: *“**The grant I applied for was to investigate wildlife trafficking in Europe where the attitude is that this is an issue that low- and middle-income countries have. I did one story about how airports and also the postal service in Europe deal with trying to find anything trafficked ... and how dogs can be trained to do this in airports but there is not enough of this across Europe.**”*

For Hruby specifically, EJN’s support made the difference between her reporting on these topics and deciding that the potential costs were too high.



Speaking about one story she wrote that involved covering an inspection of a potential trafficker in the Netherlands, she stated: *“I would have lacked funding to go to the Netherlands, for example, to do this one story. I don’t think it would have been feasible [without EJN’s support].”*

On discovering the scope of her story could be expanded, Hruby said she went on to pitch more well-known outlets than originally envisioned:

“There have been so many stories I reported where I think it might be a nice little story, and then I go out and find so much more. And then I reconsider the publication I thought I might pitch it to, because it has now turned into a bigger story, and I could pitch to a bigger publication, or it could be a longer magazine piece. Or you find a tie to a country elsewhere you didn’t think of before, and you can pitch it to a publication there. I did a story about abalone. There is a lot of abalone being trafficked and a lot of it is going to China. So, once I found that link, I was like ‘I can pitch this to the South China Morning Post because readers in the area should be aware of that.’”

– Denise Hruby

Helping to create experts on important niche topics

By allowing journalists to take these risks, EJN has helped to create a network of experts on climate, environmental and biodiversity topics that deserve more attention and coverage in the international media.

The costs of helping reporters become experts on niche topics are ones that many media outlets simply cannot take on, according to Shanahan:

*“Media outlets don’t have a lot of money to enable journalists to travel and do these kinds of stories. Also, the focus of most media outlets is not on the environment. Even now with climate change becoming much more of an obvious topic for the general public, biodiversity has always been a poor cousin to climate change in media coverage. And when you do have biodiversity coverage, it is not often in-depth, editors don’t understand it or prioritize it. **So, an organization like EJN has to help fill that gap by ensuring that those stories can be told and giving the journalists the time and space to produce those stories.**”*

– Mike Shanahan

Hruby concurred, reflecting on how EJN’s support has guided this new stage of her career as a freelancer: *“A lot of colleagues of mine now joke that I am the bird trafficking person – it has become a weird niche I did not think I would ever report on and did not know existed. But they are super fascinating stories. Four years later I am still working in this direction. **The grant allowed me to start digging into this and set me up for everything I have done since in that world.**”*

The author would like to thank Denise Hruby and Mike Shanahan for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Christmas mail at the International Postal Centre, in Frankfurt, Germany / Credit: Denise Hruby

Equipping journalists to contribute to real change in communities

The Solomon Islands is a remote island country populated by fewer than 1 million people but home to a large, diverse and environmentally critical population of plants and wildlife. When Ofani Eremae began his career as a journalist 25 years ago, the country had only one newspaper. During his time as a journalist, Eremae has had the opportunity to not only contribute to the Solomon Island's media sector, including as an editor at the Solomon Star, he has also mentored a new generation of environmental reporters in the Solomon Islands, including Charley Piringi.

EJN support

Eremae and Piringi highlighted that EJN's support of journalism in the country has benefited both individual journalists and media organizations. Eremae received his first story grant from EJN in 2018, and he subsequently received two additional story grants and benefited from trainings led by EJN. Piringi also has received multiple grants from EJN, with his first one awarded in 2020.

Eremae pointed to funding that EJN provided to a local media association, which ensured that training and skills-building reached a wider set of reporters than only those who receive story grants from the network: ***“Internews provided some funding support to our local media association that enabled us to run a local training for our journalists here, focused on the extractives industry. We look at mining and forestry, especially. I was one of the facilitators of the workshop.”***

Ofani Eremae



Location:
Honiara,
Solomon Islands



EJN Support:
Story Grant
(2018, 2021)

Charley Piringi



Location:
Honiara,
Solomon Islands



EJN Support:
Asia Pacific
Project (2020)





Beyond funding and training, Piringi said the mentorship on fact-checking that EJV provided was critical:

*“This has helped me to broaden my understanding, especially on controversial issues. Learning how to fact-check really helped me to understand how to go about [reporting on] the legal side of things. I have a mentor in the EJV that I send every story to, and they point out whatever they need verification on. They come back to me and say, ‘you should check this fact if it is true; look through this.’ **This helped me to understand how to go about getting these stories done in a professional way.**”*

– Charley Piringi

Reporting on corruption and the local impact of extractive industries

The Solomon Islands’ wealth of natural resources has led to its exploitation at the hands of profit-driven international mining and timber companies and local politicians. While cases of corruption and degradation have immense impacts on the communities in which extractive contracts are awarded, the remote nature of many of these communities has meant that their stories are not always heard at the national level. Piringi’s and Eremae’s reporting is changing that dynamic.

Nickel mining on the Solomon Island atolls.

One of Piringi’s first stories produced with support from EJV examined the negative impacts of nickel mining across several communities and delved into the cases of corruption in which local government officials awarded mining contracts to Chinese and Indonesian firms.

With the grant, Piringi was able to travel to affected communities and develop a documentary film on the corruption and the events that followed the story’s publication.

Illegal harvesting of trees. Eremae covered another case of corruption and illegal activity by international extractive companies in his reporting on logging across the country. Eremae noted how shining a spotlight on these issues can be challenging given the geography of the Solomon Islands:

*“Most of the logging companies here in the Solomons operate in isolated communities. The moment they are issued with a license to operate in a particular area of the community, they take all their machines and their workers down into the community and do as they wish. There is very little monitoring by authorities of what normally happens down there in the communities. Most of the time, they extend their work into areas they are not supposed to enter, and they violated our forestry regulations that banned logging companies from operating near rivers and streams ... So, **I think [this is] the kind of information that has not been widely reported in the public domain, although people in the community complain about it. But because no one in the media goes down to them, their complaints normally stop there.** So, through my coverage, I have exposed a lot of what is going on.”*

– Ofani Eremae



Impact

While it can often be difficult to assess the impact of reporting on policy and government action, the work of Eremae and Piringi provides powerful examples of the role that investigative journalism can play in achieving justice in environmental crimes.

Reporting that forces government response to corruption

The stories produced by Piringi and Eremae as part of their EJM grants led to swift and tangible responses to the crimes that were the topics of their reporting.

Piringi's reporting on the impact of mining on local communities quickly caught the attention of a member of parliament representing some of the areas covered in the story. One month after the initial publication of his article in 2020, Piringi said the country's parliament made the decision to terminate the contract of the mining company, and the land commissioner began working to restore the titles for the land to local citizens. While several instances of alleged corruption among government officials have yet to be investigated, Piringi highlighted how this reporting helped to motivate officials who sought to do the right thing for communities:

*"In interviews with [a representative of the Provincial government], he asked if I could continue pushing for this and he supported me with additional documents. After the story was published, he called me and said, 'Thank you for helping me help the people.' The sad thing is they lost the land title for half of the island – and **following the publication, he pushed for the land commissioner to return the original title.**"*

– Charley Piringi

Eremae's reporting on illegal logging likewise forced officials in the Solomon Islands to respond to the criminal activity of one company, revoking its license to operate in the country. This result in and of itself was a significant win for environmental activists; however, Eremae also pointed out the important ripple effects that his story and the subsequent response from the government has had: *"It has stirred up a lot of discussions on [the topic] on social media. So, in a way, it brought to the forefront an issue that could have otherwise been left unheard, unseen by the public ... So, the impact was quite significant. The opposition took up the story and questioned the government about it in Parliament. Local NGOs and environmental activists came on and highlighted it in the media, shared views and called on the government to terminate the logging license of that company and deport the owner back to their own country in Malaysia, although that has not been done. But that is the impact of that story, it caused a lot of public discussion."*

Reporting that raises the profile of local journalists

While the most visible impact of their reporting may be the government response to corruption in the extractive sectors, both Piringi and Eremae also said that EJM's support of their investigative journalism has brought more visibility to these issues and to their work as journalists from international readers and media outlets.

Piringi elaborated on this impact when discussing his current work as a fellow for the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP):



*“My work with EJN is what put me on a level that got recognition from OCCRP – and I have been doing freelance work and publishing, especially with The Guardian, the AFP, the Associated Press. All these media organizations, but especially ... the bigger ones, when they see the EJN stories they emailed me and asked if I could work on a project with them ... **So EJN really helped me gain recognition outside [of my home country].”***

– Charley Piringi

Imelda Abaño, Eremae’s mentor for many EJN grants, highlighted how his professional dedication has also raised his profile: *“He is really passionate ...and brave to report on unreported stories. We made sure he was supported especially since we know that it is risky. Apart from getting him as a resource speaker now in our media workshops in the Pacific, both of us just finished drafting the brief Guide on Climate Justice Reporting in the Pacific to be launched soon.”*

The author would like to thank Ofani Eremae, Charley Piringi and Imelda Abaño for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: The logging road that runs through the island of San Jorge / Credit: Ofani Eremae.



Raising the reputation and recognition of environmental journalists

Emilio Godoy's work in the media sector took many turns before he became an internationally-known and respected environmental journalist in Mexico. Beginning his journalism career as a teacher in Guatemala, Godoy then moved to the newsroom with a focus on economics reporting. After more than five years reporting in his native Guatemala, Godoy relocated to Mexico and in 2002 made the transition to environmental reporting, saying: *"I felt that there wasn't extensive coverage on environmental issues, and I wanted to do that. And at the same time, it was a labor opportunity for me because very few were doing it."*

EJN support

Shortly after the start of the pandemic, Godoy became aware of a call from EJN to support biodiversity stories in the region. The call aligned with an issue he was interested in pursuing: the overfishing of sharks and corruption in the shark market. However, the issue was one that he had been unable to report on due to the resource-intensive nature of investigating this topic.

He was ultimately selected as a grantee, but it wasn't only financial resources that he received from EJN as a result. Both Godoy and his EJN editors, Lucy Calderón Pineda and Amrita Gupta, emphasized that mentorship and networking opportunities are a critical part of what EJN provides to its fellows.

Emilio Godoy



Location:
Mexico City,
Mexico



EJN Support:
Biodiversity
Media Initiative
(2021)

"This kind of story takes time to produce. You have to report, do interviews, present Freedom of Information requests, and then it takes time. And you have to finance part of it – to report, to go to the place and see what is going on. So, the fellowship allowed me to do all of that without worrying too much about the project itself. I had time and resources, so I only had to focus on reporting and writing."
– Emilio Godoy





As Godoy noted, *“There is something about being a specialist in some issues that you don’t always look at certain angles of the story or certain points that [have] arisen. And the mentorship helps you identify those angles or those questions.”*

Gupta also pointed to Godoy’s willingness to accept feedback as critical to his success as an EJN fellow: *“He began to anticipate our questions and feedback. He knows data is his strength and there are other aspects that would help him reach a wider audience – he was not resistant to that [feedback].”*

Reporting on fishing and cross-national conflicts in the shark market

With EJN’s support, Godoy’s journalism focused on the myriad challenges in regulating shark fishing in Mexico and the implications of these challenges on local communities and biodiversity in the region. His stories included coverage of potential corruption and under-reporting of shark fins being exported to Asian countries. They also examined the role that high demand for shark fins has played in the reduction of shark populations and the effects this has had on the livelihood of fishing communities in Mexico.

Impact

Godoy credited EJN for contributing to the quality of his reporting and his reputation as an environmental journalist, pointing to concrete recognition that he has received and improvements he has made.

International recognition for reporting

For freelance journalists, global reporting prizes can play a critical role in raising their visibility and helping them to secure additional assignments with and publication in top-tier outlets. Shortly after completing his EJN-supported stories, Godoy was awarded one of the top prizes in the field of environmental journalism – the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the UN Correspondents Association (UNCA)

Global Prize for Coverage of Climate Change. One of the stories that helped Godoy secure this award was produced as part of his engagement with EJN: *“I delivered four pieces for the competition – and one of them was produced with support I got from the network. And that is work I like a lot because it is an exclusive issue, I found a lot of information, I went to the place, and interviewed many people. The mentorship was very helpful to deliver a nice piece. So, without this support, it would be very difficult to report on this issue and to win the prize.”*

The importance of global recognition as a motivator

Prizes like the UNCA Global Prize have ripple effects that go beyond the recognition of an individual journalist.

This acknowledgment of a journalist’s career and impact can also serve as motivation for them to continue pursuing these critical stories, even in challenging and dangerous environments. Godoy reaffirmed this commitment following the news that he had won the award:



“The prize is ... a commitment to keep doing the work I have done, with more energy, with more resolution, with more spirit, let’s say. A forest might be on fire right now, pollution [is happening] right now, so environmental journalists have to go on reporting on these issues, explaining what is going on and talking about possible solutions and helping those affected by these things.”

– Emilio Godoy

Supporting the balance of data and storytelling

Godoy credits feedback and mentorship from EJN during and after his grant with improving the quality of his reporting.

The support he received involved identifying angles that need to be investigated and stories that need to be told. According to Godoy:

*“A Colombian colleague wrote a book some years ago, and he said that for freelance journalists like myself, the question is to lift the rocks and find things. But the tricky question is which rock to lift. And the skills help you to do that – to determine which rocks to lift to see what is underneath. **And it has to do with [EJN’s] mentorship as well because it helps you to, as I said, ask questions and find the right pieces.**”*

Gupta highlighted that Godoy, who covered the UN Biodiversity Conference or COP15 in Montreal, Canada, in December 2022 as an EJN fellow, is paying this support and guidance forward to other journalists in EJN’s network: *“He encouraged other fellows to take a more critical eye on these multinational talks and be more measured in what they hoped it would achieve. He was very open with sharing his contacts and insights.”*

The author would like to thank Emilio Godoy, Lucy Calderón Pineda and Amrita Gupta for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Mazatlán, in the state of Sinaloa in northwestern Mexico, is a traditional shark fishing and landing site. In the image, a fisherman casts his net on August 3, 2021, in the waters of Mazatlán / Credit: Christian Lizarraga.



Building regional networks for environmental journalism

Fredrick Mugira had been an environmental journalist reporting on water issues in Uganda for more than a decade when he first began working with EJV, and he was already well established as someone who built bridges among media professionals. Mugira founded the Water Journalists Africa network in 2011 to help bring together reporters working across the continent on the increasingly urgent issue of water conservation. But it was in the context of an EJV fellowship years later that he was inspired to create another platform.

EJV support for InfoNile

Mugira's collaboration with EJV began in 2015 when he received support to report from COP21 in Paris. While reflecting on this experience, Mugira cited an EJV-led training on geojournalism as the spark that prompted him to co-found InfoNile, a platform for journalists to publish data-based stories and data visualization on water issues affecting the Nile Basin.

Beyond direct financial support, EJV has helped connect InfoNile to other funders that have continued to provide the resources needed for it to grow. Referring to a recent training that InfoNile led in Uganda, Mugira noted that EJV supplied an initial grant for the workshop while also introducing him to an organization in Tanzania that awarded InfoNile with additional funding to enhance the training, allowing the network to expand the topics covered and increase the number of participants it could invite.

Fredrick Mugira



Location:
Kampala,
Uganda



EJV Support:
Climate Change
Media Partnership
(2015)

*"The first time I was given an [EJV] fellowship was 2015 to report from Paris during the COP21. So, while there as a fellow, there was a firm that trained us in geojournalism. So, when we completed this, I came back to Uganda, and around that time, there was an intern working with Internews in Washington [and] she relocated and came to Uganda ... **Because she had skills in geojournalism and I was trained in Paris, we got together and started InfoNile.**"*

– Fredrick Mugira





Mugira said it wasn't just InfoNile that has benefited from EJM. He highlighted that EJM's mentorship has provided a lot of value to him personally: *"These fellowships [and] reporting from COP supported me with mentorship as an individual. You find there are trainers for Internews who come and attend, train, and mentor journalists during conferences – they have given me skills on how to handle stories and work with journalists."*

Impact

InfoNile has filled several critical gaps in water reporting across the region:

*"Most of these natural resources we write about are cross-border. For example, the river Nile goes through 11 countries, but in the past, you find journalists worked alone in the countries. They prefer to compete instead of working together. So, we have helped them work in teams, work together, and we realized there is a connection. They are linked – journalists in Burundi work with others in Uganda or Rwanda. **You get stories from a different perspective, not just national.**"*

– Fredrick Mugira

Support for cross-border reporting

The Nile River runs through 11 countries, so the issues that affect the Nile Basin are inherently cross-border. However, the structure of media outlets and existing incentives for journalists make it challenging to cover the regional nature of this topic. One of the primary goals of InfoNile is to support journalism that brings together reporters from different countries.

Training a new generation of geojournalists

InfoNile also provides its own story grants and trainings to young reporters who are starting their careers in environmental journalism. The platform has awarded grants to more than 300 journalists based in the countries of the Nile Basin, and Mugira has paid forward the geojournalism training that he received from EJM by continuing to train InfoNile's members on the use of data and data visualization in stories.

For some journalists like Jean Pierre Afadhali, InfoNile's support has broadened their skillset. As Afadhali noted, *"Before [working with InfoNile], I did not use data so much ... mapping and geo-reporting, I did not use them until I joined InfoNile."*

For other reporters like Diing Magot, InfoNile's support extends to skills and experiences beyond data and geo-journalism:

*"I pitched a story ... about the lack of water in [South Sudan] and COVID affecting this ... [and] it was accepted by InfoNile. It was a photo story – it took me a whole year to do, and Fred was one of my mentors. **At first, it was a bit difficult because my country is difficult – there is no freedom of the press. [He] kept pushing, and eventually, I finished the story.** We were also taught how to consider different angles for pictures – that was mind-opening for me because I am mostly a writer and radio journalist. Because of InfoNile, I was able to take those photos. And last year we had a photo exhibition in Egypt – I got a chance to go and show my pictures. This was a story grant as well, and I was given money to do the story."*

– Diing Magot



Increasing placement and prioritization of data-based environmental stories

Mugira said one of the major obstacles to increasing the publication of data-driven water stories is the editors of media outlets, noting:

*“One challenge we find when we talk to journalists, is they tell us when they have stories on biodiversity, the editors do not typically have the relevant data skills. When we give them data visualizations, they don’t know how to use them or interpret them. **So, editors tend to bury stories in the newspaper, they never make it to the first and second page. Even when they are big stories with maps and visualizations – because some editors don’t know this.**”*

InfoNile has worked to address this issue head-on by providing extensive trainings to editors across the region on the issues of biodiversity and on geojournalism skills.

Mugira presented the recent training led by InfoNile in Uganda as one example of this effort: *“We invited 20 editors from different media houses in Uganda, across all platforms including radio, TV and print, and we trained them on editing stories on biodiversity ... **We invited different scientists to speak to these editors different trainers to come and train them for five days.**”*

Mugira said these efforts are paying off:

*“I have been writing about the story of the environment for the past 20 years. [Before] we were writing about stories of climate change, people do not know about climate change. But now you see these stories, they are everywhere. Even when I went from general environmental [reporting] to writing about water in 2010, there was only maybe one story in a month on water. **But now you see detailed stories, and also we have seen an increased number of journalists going to this beat who want to write about the environment, climate change, biodiversity and all that.**”*

– Fredrick Mugira

The author would like to thank Fredrick Mugira, Jean Pierre Afadhali and Diing Magot for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: The river’s water flow gauging station near Rwebikoona in Mbarara town has been rendered useless / Credit: Fredrick Mugira.



Creating new opportunities for professional advancement, in and outside the newsroom

For Pauline Ogada, environmental journalism began as a natural extension of her work reporting on science, health and agriculture issues for Kenya's leading newspaper, Nation. When she began her career 10 years ago, climate was not a beat for newspapers in the region; however, Ogada repeatedly observed how her reporting on topics such as public health or the challenges affecting farmers intersected with issues of climate change. As media outlets began to recognize that environmental news deserved their own dedicated reporters and experts, Ogada saw an opportunity to start covering stories as part of a beat that would only continue to grow.

Pauline Ongaji Ogada



Location:
Nairobi,
Kenya



EJN Support:
Climate Change
Media
Partnership
(2022)

EJN support

Ogada first received support from EJN in 2022 when she was selected as a Climate Change Media Partnership fellow to cover COP27. Reflecting on her fellowship, she highlighted both the financial and technical elements of support provided by EJN. In addition to funding to attend the conference and produce multiple stories from different perspectives involved in environmental policy and activism, Ogada received training and mentorship from experienced climate journalists, helping her to identify new story ideas.

Reporting on COP27

During the weeks she was at COP27, Ogada was prolific in her story production, reporting in both English and Kiswahili for her home readership in Kenya and for international audiences. Her stories ranged from profiles of leading voices on the COP stage to the perspectives of groups who are not always included in climate change stories.





*“I produced quite a number of stories, more than 15 English stories and some other Kiswahili stories. I am also still producing feature stories – one was published today. **There was one [in which] we interviewed the global advisor to the World Bank on climate change – and the story got positive reviews. I remember [Nation] actually posted it on its LinkedIn page.**”*

– Pauline Ogada

Kiundu Waweru, one of Ogada’s mentors from EJM, noted that Ogada not only produced a large quantity of stories as part of her fellowship, but that her stories met the rigorous standards that EJM sets to republish them on its own website: *“She was quite committed. While in Egypt for the COP, she published about 15 stories – and five stories were posted on our website. The mentors look at the stories, they are published in the newspapers, and we as mentors look at the stories to recommend the ones to be republished on the EJM website. So, she was among the people who had a higher number of stories republished.”*

Impact

Even in the short time since Ogada’s fellowship with EJM began, she has experienced significant and concrete opportunities for advancement as an environmental journalist, all of which she tied back to her recognition as a Climate Change Media Partnership (CCMP) fellow.

Promotion to the climate desk team

One of the biggest impacts that Ogada cited was that she was promoted to her newsroom’s new climate desk shortly after the announcement that she was selected as the only 2022 Climate Change Media Partnership fellow from Kenya. She said it was a demonstration of her experience as an environmental reporter and increased her visibility:

*“[The promotion] happened when I was still in Egypt. The desk had been set up but was not official, so when there were plans to make it official, I remember I was included especially as one of the people who would be covering the COP27 ... Our media organization is big in central Africa, so there were different journalists in the organization who applied for different fellowships and who got to cover COP27. And that was one [piece of] evidence that I was now included ... **That inclusion shows that I am heading the right way. Finally, people are noticing my capability as not just a science writer but also someone who wants to focus on climate change.**”*

– Pauline Ogada

Increased readership and reviews of stories

In addition to being promoted to the climate desk team, Ogada also experienced an increase in readership of the stories that she produced during COP27 as well as positive feedback on them. She noted that the publication of her stories on new platforms, including the EJM website, introduced her work to new audiences.



Furthermore, readers and other media organizations have reached out to her in recognition of her high-quality climate reporting:

“Most of the stories I did were published in our daily newspaper, and I remember receiving quite some reviews – not just from my colleagues, but also from people who knew me but did not know I covered climate. And most of the stories I did, I again posted them online on various social media platforms. I have been receiving messages from different organizations, people who want perhaps to ask me to [be in a] training based on what they were able to read online.”

– Pauline Ogada

Building motivation and confidence as an environmental reporter

Beyond these tangible opportunities for advancement and growth, Ogada and Waweru both cited the critical role of EJN in strengthening the internal drive of journalists as they build their careers covering the climate and environment.

Waweru said he observed how Ogada’s work improved during the weeks when they collaborated as mentor and mentee for COP27: *“The story angles she was getting, and the ideas were something that were kind of rejuvenating for her. She is a very good journalist, but she is humble enough to admit she was able to sharpen her skills. You can have a good story, but it can be difficult to tackle it. **But she came to us and sharpened her skill.** She texted me later and said it was a great opportunity.”*

Ogada herself pointed to the difference in her confidence from the start of COP27 to today: *“It motivated me even more into believing that I was doing a good job as far as environmental and climate change stories. **So, it is not just about my profile in the eyes of other people, but also my self- esteem and profile in my [own] eyes.**”*

The author would like to thank Pauline Ogada and Kiundu Waweru for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Protestors stand outside the venue of COP27 / Credit: Imelda Abaño.



Fostering regional and global collaborations for better environmental reporting

EJN provides a network for environmental journalists to share ideas, questions, sources and opportunities with colleagues from around the world. While the space to exchange is valuable in and of itself, many former fellows said one of EJN's biggest impacts is that the connections it fosters have resulted in the creation of new networks and platforms.

InfoAmazonia – and the collaboration between journalists like Gustavo Faleiros, Pablo Correa and many others – is one of several cases in which EJN's support of individual fellows expanded exponentially to change environmental journalism around the world.

EJN support

Gustavo Faleiros was one of the first cohorts of Climate Change Media Partnership (CCMP) fellows supported by EJN in 2007. By this time, Faleiros had been working as a climate reporter in Brazil for many years; however, his acceptance as one of the inaugural CCMP fellows required some persuasion: *“It is a funny story – they launched the first call only for journalists in Africa and Asia. So, I saw that and decided to send in an application anyway. I said [to EJN], ‘I think you are committing a mistake. You should also work with journalists in Latin America.’ And they actually reached out and invited me to be part of the group – so, it worked.”* This was the start of a long-term relationship with EJN, with Faleiros ultimately working as a trainer and a staff member for EJN.

It was during his time as a trainer for the 2009 fellow cohort in Copenhagen that Faleiros met Pablo Correa, a climate reporter working for the largest newspaper in Colombia, El Espectador.

Gustavo Faleiros



Location:
São Paulo,
Brazil



EJN Support:
Climate Change
Media
Partnership
(2007)

Pablo Correa



Location:
Bogotá,
Colombia



EJN Support:
Climate Change
Media
Partnership
(2009)





In the years since Correa's fellowship, the two journalists have found new ways to collaborate, through both informal engagement and formal partnerships. One such example is InfoAmazonia, a platform co-founded by Faleiros that publishes stories on deforestation in the Amazon region using data, geojournalism and maps.

Beyond supporting the work of individual journalists, Faleiros credited EJV's support of InfoAmazonia as a key reason for its success today:

"It was then [during the 2007 EJV fellowship] I started discussing with some colleagues the idea of creating a website dedicated to the Amazon region – not a website, but at that moment we talked about a special platform where you could track deforestation. And it was the beginning of the movement of open data, transparency – the names were not there yet, but I was already involved with that. And it was great because, when words like data journalists emerged, we were already doing that. In 2012 we launched the website InfoAmazonia with the support of EJV."

– Gustavo Faleiros

Impact

Creating these opportunities for connection, whether between individual journalists or via new networks, is something that EJV has pioneered among organizations supporting media and journalism, and the impact of these collaborations has been widespread.

Facilitating unique opportunities to meet like-minded journalists

For reporters working on climate change in the early 2000s, the network of journalists with similar interests and expertise felt incredibly small. The majority of newsrooms did not have a dedicated climate and environment beat at that time, and support for journalists to attend conferences and events where they would have opportunities to engage with other environmental journalists was very limited. EJV's support for reporters to participate in and report from events like the COPs played a unique role in creating these networks, and the connections made as a result of EJV's support continue to this day, according to Correa:

"I am really convinced that all of EJV's efforts, at least in Latin America ... [have] been essential to create a network of environmental journalists around the continent. I think it would be another story for people like me if we did not receive this training, support and connections. The newspaper would never pay to send me to a conference. [But] when you are a young journalist and you discover people doing the same as you, it opens your mind, makes you see how what you are doing at a local level is important at the international level. It was also really useful because it helped us create a network ... What happened was, if you take one by one the Latin American journalists that attended these trainings, we have collaborated – and those encounters, those training sessions were an opportunity to strengthen this network."

– Pablo Correa



Supporting the creation of new partnerships between old and new outlets

What began as individual engagements for many journalists expanded to partnerships between the outlets that they now lead or created. Collaborations between Faleiros and Correa, for example, evolved over the years from trainer and fellow in Copenhagen to an innovative partnership between *El Espectador*, the Colombian newspaper for which Correa served as editor in 2016, and InfoAmazonia. Faleiros highlighted the impact and the enduring nature of this partnership:

*“When we launched InfoAmazonia [in 2012], we were always working together, and we collaborated on shared content when he was at El Espectador. When he became editor there we established a formal partnership between InfoAmazonia and El Espectador called InfoAmazonia Colombia. **And we have one reporter still today based in the El Espectador newsroom that works for InfoAmazonia.** She produces stories, but every story runs with a byline stating she is a reporter from InfoAmazonia reporting for El Espectador. So InfoAmazonia has a flow of content from Colombia every week.”*

– Gustavo Faleiros

Other media organizations, including many based in the Global North, have taken note of the impact of South-South collaborations like this one, and they have sought to replicate this model that Faleiros sees as originally amplified by EJM:

*“The Pulitzer Center today embraces this, the same methodologies I used with this network – and they recognize it is part of that history that comes with EJM. The International Center for Journalists funded InfoAmazonia for years as well and embraced this idea that there is a good thing happening – a South-South cooperation. And other platforms in other countries. **It is great – and a lot [of this] happened from this partnership with EJM.**”*

Creating intergenerational and interregional connections between journalists

The collaboration between Correa and Faleiros is just one of many examples that EJM has helped to foster, and both journalists noted that these partnerships have extended well beyond a single region – or a single generation of reporters.

Faleiros pointed to how EJM’s creation of a network of international environmental journalists has ultimately helped raise the visibility of reporting from the Global South: *“To me, what EJM has done which is very important during these years was bringing this perspective that you need to collaborate in a network. It is true that things got stronger because they were done in partnership, like the international network. We did this with InfoAmazonia – we had this international network. It gives importance to the international perspective and collaboration, to a point that, **a lot of journalists involved in EJM are now much more visible and relevant and important than the mainstream media of the North.**”*



Correa further highlighted EJN's role in supporting collaboration among a new and growing base of environmental journalists who work in newsrooms now led by EJN's alumni: *"The other things that happened [is] we see this effort is intergenerational. I started in 2008 or 2009, but now in the newspaper, I see new generations of journalists that all had the opportunity at some point to attend a conference and receive some training from EJN. So, the new journalists coming into the newsroom have the same opportunity, even those I don't know directly."*

The author would like to thank Gustavo Faleiros, Pablo Correa and Stefano Wroblewski for their contribution to this case. Banner photo: "Mangroves in the Legal Amazon" Map from InfoAmazonia / Credit: InfoAmazonia.



Helping to speak truth to power for Indigenous communities and endangered species

After studying ecology and tourism in university in the 1990s, Franklin Vega found his lack of communications training to be a surprising advantage as he transitioned to a career in environmental journalism: *“People in the newspaper said, ‘We are looking for people who write about environmental issues and economic issues, but we don’t want journalists.’ And I asked why. They said, ‘Because we teach you how to be a journalist.’”*

Franklin Vega



Location:
Quito,
Ecuador



EJN Support:
Ocean Media Initiative
(2022)

Since that time, Vega has relied on a diverse set of experiences and skills on his path to becoming one of Ecuador’s most well-respected environmental journalists, working with non-governmental organizations and even as an alpinist to understand the perspectives of the people and places that he represents in his reporting.

EJN support

Vega is a recent recipient of EJN support, receiving his first story grant for EJN as part of a project that focused on covering illegal fishing in the Galapagos. In addition to the grant itself, he noted that EJN has provided him with opportunities to expand both the depth of his investigative journalism and his readership. In particular, Vega said the funding gave him with the opportunity to travel to the Galapagos Islands to report on illegal fishing, which in turn allowed him to secure additional sources and details behind the numbers included in his stories.

Vega also cited the support of EJN editors as improving the quality of his work and providing a support system for his reporting: *“When you put [a story] in the EJN network, in the process, I feel the support of the editors; [these are] two women trying to show me another path.”*





Reporting on illegal fishing in the Galapagos Islands

Vega's stories present a unique vantage point on the topic of threats to biodiversity on the Galapagos Islands. Specifically, he has used hard data on fishing licenses and the documented size and weight of wildlife caught by fishermen to identify inconsistencies and uncover potential cases of corruption or wrongdoing.

His investigation of lobster fishing revealed the strategies used by fishermen to circumvent regulations related to the minimum size of lobsters that can be caught and sold. Beyond reporting on the illegality of these activities, Vega further explored the consequences that catching immature lobsters has on the overall population.

Vega's second grant with EJM allowed him to dig even deeper, extending his investigation to examine the role of international actors in corrupt and illegal practices: *"With the second grant, I published two articles because I got there [and collected] a lot of information about illegal fishing. That was more complex because it was about the international trade of fish products in Ecuador, and it shows how tuna comes from open seas. There are 500,000 tons of tuna, [and] in Ecuador, we cannot trace 200,000 tons of tuna. It is about 340 million dollars unaccounted for, without a trace."*

Impact

One common theme across much of Vega's journalism is his focus on shifting the balance of power, putting a spotlight on communities who are not often heard and pressing for those with power to be held accountable for their actions.

EJM's support has allowed him to work on these issues with the assistance of an international network when he faces challenges in this pursuit.

Supporting journalists against powerful figures

Vega said EJM's support helped him not only to identify sources but also ensure that they would be willing to speak with him, all of which allowed him to capture multiple perspectives on topics that he has covered.

For example, Vega experienced a lack of responsiveness from both government officials and union representatives during his reporting on illegal fishing in the Galapagos. However, he said citing his connection to EJM helped him to secure interviews from some of the people who had initially been resistant to share their experiences:

"I talked to a powerful man in Ecuador who is the president of a fisherman charter. And [he said] '... I talked with you a few months ago about sharks,' and I said, 'Yes but I am working on another story about tuna, and it is for me and for EJM.' I talked four or five times with this powerful man because I found a lot of inconsistencies in the data. He gave me more information than the minister and the authorities. And in the last interview, I talked about regulatory capture, when the sector or people who are supposed to be controlled actually control the authorities. I said to him, 'You have the same minister in the last government, and the president of the NGO is another minister of fishing – it is evidence that you control all of the things.' I am kind but straight to the point, and then he said, 'Yes, you are a very good journalist.'"

– Franklin Vega



Supporting reporting on threats to Indigenous Peoples and their rights

In addition to his reporting on wildlife, Vega expressed appreciation that EJV focuses on topics that are important to Indigenous populations, something he has also dedicated many years of his career to covering. Importantly, he sees the impact that this kind of reporting can have:

“In the Amazon region, we have a lot of small farms and people who live there, but they don’t have papers saying, ‘This is my land.’ So, we did work saying that, in this part, there are 3,000 people and 500 farms, and in this process, we had a group of people who went to each home and talked about the Indigenous people in voluntary isolation. It was a big effort. First, it was ‘we don’t see these people’ ... and now it is ‘these people have rights, and I don’t have to go there.’ I mixed the journalist vocation with the vocation of working with Indigenous Peoples.”

– Franklin Vega

One of Vega’s mentors from EJV, Lucy Calderón Pineda, noted that EJV’s story grants and fellowships can help journalists like Vega who want to improve the quality of their environmental journalism and report on topics that are often not covered in the media:

“Franklin is a very experienced journalist; he has launched his own website because environmental journalism is his passion and he wants to improve it a lot.”

The author would like to thank Franklin Vega, Lucy Calderón Pineda and Amrita Gupta for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Boats like these fiberglass boats in Pelican Bay, Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island are used by Galapagos artisanal fishermen / Credit: Franklin Vega.

Transforming journalism into activism and policy change

Rina Saeed Khan has always worked on climate change from multiple angles and perspectives. After receiving her graduate degree in environment and development in 2002, she consulted for development agencies and non-governmental organizations that focused on environmental issues and wildlife protection. However, her love of reporting pushed her to always keep one foot in the media sector: *“I started working as a consultant. I didn’t really want to work full-time anywhere because that would have meant not being able to write. I wanted my freedom.”*

Rina Saeed Khan



Location:
Islamabad,
Pakistan



EJN Support:
Climate Change Media
Partnership (2009)

EJN support

When Khan received a Climate Change Media Partnership fellowship from EJN in 2009, it was not the only opportunity that she had to attend the COP in Copenhagen: Khan had also received an award for her article on the renewal of biodiversity in Pakistan’s Keti Bunder coastal area which would include travel to the Danish capital. However, she said taking on the EJN fellowship would provide her a chance to hone her skills in reporting on climate negotiations and engage with environmental journalists of all experience levels who had also been selected for the program.

Joydeep Gupta, editor-at-large for The Third Pole, an environmental news website co-supported by EJN, highlighted the wide-reaching support that EJN’s fellowships offer to journalists like Khan: *“The financial support is an important part, but it is by no means the only thing... When we give support to journalists for conferences, you go to these large events and can get lost. So, you want people who have covered [COPs] before to guide you through this maze, to say, ‘Here are the stories you are interested in, here is how to do it, and don’t get confused by these 20,000 other things happening around you.’”*





Impact

In her long career as a journalist, Khan has positioned herself, with EJN's support, not only as a mentor to young climate and environmental reporters and an advocate for her colleagues, but also as a thought leader in climate change-related policymaking.

Supporting the growth of climate journalism in Pakistan

At the start of her career as an environmental journalist, Khan observed that Pakistan's media sector was not well represented at major conferences like the COPs, even in comparison to neighboring countries like India and Nepal. In response, Khan worked with EJN and other supporters of environmental journalism to increase representation for Pakistani journalists at these global events:

"I [was] still the only journalist in Pakistan writing on climate negotiations because it is so technical and complicated, and it is difficult to talk about the complexity of the negotiations. Young people involved do not understand why it is so important, and so I said, 'Why don't we have trainings for other journalists? I can bring in experts who go every year, [including] people who go and negotiate on behalf of Pakistan. And they can tell [young journalists] why it is so important.'"

— Rina Saeed Khan

Alex Kirby, a retired EJN mentor, highlighted how Khan's skills supported the overall network of EJN fellows: *"There are relatively few [journalists] who combine both knowledge of the subject matter and journalism.*

"Rina was one of the exceptionally good ones who knew both. And that was why I liked working with her – she did not flaunt her knowledge, but she knew a lot about climate change and other aspects of the environment as well."

Bringing together activism, innovation and journalism

Khan's strength as an environmental journalist stems from her drive to champion the fight against climate change: *"I am an activist and a journalist. You get emotionally involved, and I would never have been so passionate about it if I had not been given this opportunity to understand the process and to feel that I can play a role in it. I can write on it for my country and make people aware."*

In addition to using her passion to report on environmental threats, EJN helped Khan adopt a solutions-oriented approach to her reporting which she still uses in her reporting, including with the EJN-supported platform The Third Pole. Some of the climate and environmental solutions that she has shared in her stories have contributed to real policy change. Gupta pointed to one example from reporting that Khan conducted for The Third Pole in 2020:

"Pakistan and India were hit by locusts from the Horn of Africa, and it was a major problem. Rina did a wonderful story about how to deal with locusts by turning them into chicken feed, and this had a major policy impact in both countries. Policymakers kept saying, 'That is a great idea! We should grab them, put them in sacks and turn them into chicken feed.'"

— Joydeep Gupta



From journalist to policy leader

In 2020, Khan was recognized for her leadership on environmental issues in Pakistan with an opportunity outside of journalism: she was selected as the honorary chairperson of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board. While she had not previously worked in such a position, both Khan and the Ministry of Climate Change saw her potential to leverage her deep expertise and passion for environmental issues to lead policymaking to protect biodiversity in one of Pakistan's national parks. Khan credited EJN with opening the door for her:

"I believe that, without EJN support, I could not have become such a widely read climate journalist in my country. This led to the government of Pakistan offering me a position as honorary chair of an important board in the capital city, Islamabad, called Islamabad Wildlife Management Board."

– Rina Saeed Khan

The author would like to thank Rina Saeed Khan, Joydeep Gupta and Alex Kirby for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Desert locusts attack crops near Okara district, Pakistan / Credit: Pacific Press Agency/Alamy.



Sharing critical information with communities during emergencies

The Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) was started in Sri Lanka in 2019 to champion investigative journalists working on some of the most important and dangerous topics in environmental journalism. Dilrukshi Handunnetti, one of the co-founders of CIR, highlighted the gap that the organization helps to fill: *“We felt that people still treat [environmental issues] almost like a soft issue. People don’t consider it an investigative beat even though, if you look at the reporters that run the highest levels of risk, they are those that cover the environment, especially extractive industries, because you come into conflict with local communities and people engaged in that kind of natural resource extracting operation.”*

Center for Investigative Reporting



Location:
Colombo,
Sri Lanka



EJN Support:
Organizational Grant
(2020)

EJN support and CIR reporting

The journalists who helped to launch CIR, including Handunnetti, had collaborated with EJN before CIR was awarded an organizational grant from EJN. Handunnetti said as an individual reporter, she frequently turned to EJN’s resources, learning tools and mentors, especially on the topic of safety and security. Their engagement with EJN only deepened in 2020 after receiving support from EJN to shore up CIR. This was shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic led to widespread lockdowns. Despite these challenges CIR grew and adapted, leaning into the needs of local communities for accurate information on the pandemic and the unique obstacles faced by science journalists to report on this new disease.

The organizational grant from EJN helped CIR produce a series of investigative stories on critical issues such as the death of elephants and the increased consumption of bush meat across the country. Beyond story production, EJN’s support provided the funding needed for CIR to assess and address gaps within the media sector in Sri Lanka, including translating technical environmental information into understandable messages available in the Sinhala and Tamil languages.





Impact

Handunnetti noted that some of the biggest impacts of EJN's support relate to the organization's ability to survive and support its journalists and readership during COVID-19.

Providing flexible support to young media outlets

EJN was flexible with its grant timeline, which allowed CIR to focus on investigating and publishing important stories. This adjustment not only helped the organization but also the individuals who worked with CIR:

*"[The grant] came through in 2020, just as the world was hit by the pandemic, and it was a difficult time to see how we may take our work forward. To shift from physical to virtual overnight was a challenge. One thing I want to recognize was [that] the EJN team was accommodating when it came to adjusting things. Activities required more time for completion and field reporting was at times impossible due to lockdowns. The pandemic was not something we could wish away, we had to suddenly deal with it. You are working with journalists, on stories and in trainings, and it was also psychologically a very disturbing time. **Environmental reporters are people who do a lot of legwork. So, it came at a time when we were very inspired by the fact that we would be able to get this EJN grant.**"*

– Dilrukshi Handunnetti

Reporting critical environmental information in local languages

With EJN's support, CIR developed a new platform, the Buffer Zone, to provide environmental reporting in the local languages of Tamil and Sinhala. The need for such a platform was only amplified by the rapid and evolving nature of information about the pandemic, which was primarily reported in English. Handunnetti highlighted how the launch of Buffer Zone filled several gaps experienced by marginalized and local-language communities in Sri Lanka:

*"That was such a good thing ... to get a website with local content. There isn't good general content, and I heard this a lot from Tamil readership that they'd like to have insightful content on the environment. This is also because of the violent conflict in Sri Lanka, [the country] has seen 27 years of conflict, so we haven't had much research coming out of the former conflict zones. So, we also don't have lots of stories, and [Tamil readers] don't have much content to read about the rest of the country in their language. It is very insular. It is the same for the Sinhala language – there is good journalism, but there is no consistency. **So, we wanted to create a hub where anyone could come and journalistically tell us a story.** And we also wanted to make sure that experts could find a platform – we had experts offering us content pro bono ... And they wanted to be part of it because there has never been anything like that."*

– Dilrukshi Handunnetti



Jaya Shreedhar, a senior health media advisor for Internews who has worked with CIR, emphasized CIR's and the Buffer Zone's roles in not only producing reporting in local languages, but also building the skills of local reporters:

“Local-language journalists do not get as many opportunities as English-language journalists do, like high-quality training programs or exposure to international experts. And the local-language media can have a powerful impact in the way their local communities think and understand and develop perspectives. So, I love [this about] the Buffer Zone.”

Bridging the gap between scientists, health experts and reporters

The pandemic revealed gaps and tensions between scientists and journalists in many countries, including Sri Lanka. During a time when sharing accessible information on highly technical health topics was so important, CIR recognized that it could play a role in both identifying and addressing these gaps that were obstacles to reporting on COVID-19. Leveraging funds from their EJM grant, CIR hosted a series of discussions with journalists and experts, including one that focused on what Handunnetti sees as one of the most important issues to resolve:

“We brought in 12 Sri Lankan experts ... to say, ‘What do you expect from journalists? How do you think we can improve our reportage? Where are the gaps? Why do scientists find it hard to talk to journalists? And where is the trust?’

“Because we wanted a good group of journalists to come and listen to them and to build bridges, to develop trust as a group. To bring scientists closer to a group of focused journalists, we led a series of dialogues. It was a learning exercise.”

CIR ultimately turned the transcript from those discussions into a document that signaled ways that science reporting could be strengthened, which they shared with journalists, health experts and the government. Handunnetti noted how this discussion, motivated by the pandemic, has the potential for ripple effects beyond COVID-19 reporting:

*“There was a crisis, and crisis brings opportunity. **The biggest opportunity we had through this initiative was to get a better handling of health and environmental [issues] together and to carry out informative reporting and also inspire discussion.**”*

— Dilrukshi Handunnetti

The author would like to thank Dilrukshi Handunnetti and Jaya Shreedhar for their contribution to this case.

Banner photo: Fishers like Kathiramalai Kamalanathan face a bleak water as Indian vessels continue to fish in Sri Lankan waters / Credit: The Sunday Times.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results from the survey and interviews reveal that EJN has had an expansive impact on the professional lives of many journalists whom it has supported. While these research results may not be generalizable to all reporters and outlets that have received support from EJN, they are indicative of the many ways in which training, fellowships, mentorship and grants for individuals and organizations have had ripple effects beyond direct recipients.

Looking holistically at the results, the evidence suggests that EJN has had an impact on journalists and journalism on several levels. First, EJN has contributed to improving the **quality and quantity of climate and environmental reporting produced by individual journalists**. Journalists who participated in this research highlighted that following EJN's support, they have been more successful in getting stories placed and published. They also noted that their reporting skills, including the identification of story angles, have improved, which they directly attribute to the training, mentorship and financial support they received from EJN.

Second, EJN's support has provided opportunities for **new networks to form, existing networks to expand and new collaborations to take place** among journalists who cover the climate and environment and important stakeholders like scientists. While not all collaborations can be directly attributed to EJN, interviewees pointed to multiple specific networks, platforms and cross-country collaborations on stories that they stated would not have occurred without EJN's involvement. It is important to note that, while EJN has provided foundational financial support for many of these networks and platforms, respondents highlighted the equally important (or in some cases more important) role that EJN played of facilitating connections between journalists, donors and other collaborators.

Finally, interviewees cited the **broader impact that EJN has had on coverage of the climate and environment, and by extension actions taken to address climate, environmental and biodiversity issues** since its inception in 2004. While this research was designed to focus on career impacts, it is implicit in EJN's mission that supporting reporters will ultimately support better and more impactful reporting. The research was not designed to assess causation; however, interviewees repeatedly offered specific instances in which EJN-supported reporting could be tied to policy and legal changes in communities.

Recommendations

While this research reveals the positive impact that EJN has had on the careers of the journalists whom it has supported, the evidence does point to recommendations for EJN to improve its approach as it enters its third decade. These recommendations are drawn from two primary sources: (1) survey findings that suggest small opportunities for improvements and (2) inputs from interviewees regarding factors that helped and hindered the effectiveness of EJN's support.

- *Expand training on specific relevant topics, including using data and audio/video in reporting.* While interviewees did cite geojournalism training in particular as a strength of EJN, survey results revealed that a minority of respondents did not believe that EJN's support helped them to improve their use of data or media such as audio and video in their reporting. EJN could review its training curricula and approaches to enhance this component of its support.
- *Enhance training and mentorship related to diversifying sources and financial sustainability.* Related to the previous recommendation, some survey respondents noted that they did not feel EJN's support had helped them diversify the sources that they include in their stories or secure new financial opportunities. This finding is not specific to trainings and may reflect the fact that not all forms of EJN support seek to achieve these changes. However, if EJN aims to help all supported journalists experience these changes in their work, EJN may want to explore enhancing the support provided on these specific topics.
- *Explore new ways to support the financial sustainability of organizations.* While a minority of respondents who received individual support from EJN did not perceive an impact on financial sustainability, the responses from organizational grantees appear more dire. These findings need to be interpreted with caution due to the small sample of organizational grant respondents (4 total); however, organizational respondents noted significant challenges with financial sustainability for their organizations. If EJN is exploring new programs or mechanisms for support, organizational sustainability appears to be a high need that is worth further exploration. One interviewee also noted that this may be an increasingly critical need as other foreign funders with potential ulterior motives such as placing country propaganda in the media are starting to provide funding to media outlets in low- and middle-income countries.

Strengthening Reporters, Strengthening Reporting: *How Internews' EJN Impacts the Careers of Environmental Journalists*

- *Provide more financial sustainability training or mentorship for Latin America – or further explore reasons for lower responses in the region.* Among disaggregated survey results, perhaps the starkest finding was that the significant majority of respondents from Latin America did not feel EJN helped them secure more financial opportunities. This is in contrast to the trends from all other regions. While there may be underlying reasons for this trend that are not related to regional support, this is a result worth exploring further.
- *Provide new and direct support for formal collaborations.* Survey and interview respondents cited numerous examples of collaborations that occurred between and among EJN-supported journalists; however, there may be multiple opportunities to strengthen this outcome. First, it is worth noting that story grant recipients were less likely to report that they collaborated with other journalists after engaging with EJN, suggesting that there may be value in building networking opportunities directly into story grant support if EJN seeks to foster collaborations as part of story grants. Furthermore, survey and interview responses were more likely to cite lighter-touch or general network engagement (such as requesting feedback on EJN's Google Groups) than formal partnerships and engagement. EJN could test new mechanisms to support or incentivize formal collaboration among reporters.
- *Continue to support increased flexibility with grant topics and timelines.* Interviewees and survey respondents largely highlighted how flexible EJN support has been, allowing them to report on stories that they would not otherwise have had opportunities to cover. It is worth noting that several interviewees noted that EJN could expand its flexibility, especially in light of recent global economic changes and the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviewees noted that aspects of EJN grant support, including funding available for grants, timelines and topics (in the case of thematic story grants or fellowships), could be made more flexible to help reporters.
- *Expand geographic coverage for topics that have relevance to low- and middle-income countries.* Interviewees noted that EJN should continue to prioritize supporting reporters from low- and middle-income countries; however, there was also an acknowledgment that climate stories are increasingly cross-border and thus need coverage in high-income countries that may be upstream or downstream from the climate problem. Along these lines, there was a call for EJN to continue providing support to journalists in all countries affected by or playing a role in climate change.

Strengthening Reporters, Strengthening Reporting:
How Internews' EJN Impacts the Careers of Environmental Journalists

- *Test new models to strengthen mentorship.* EJN's mentorship was cited frequently as having a big impact on the careers of journalists, and respondents noted that the one way it could be improved is to expand its reach. One interviewee said mentorship is critical especially for early-career environmental journalists and would be even more impactful if it were made more "hands-on." Recognizing the challenge of expanding mentorship with a limited staff, the interviewee suggested that EJN could explore innovative ideas like expanding peer mentorship among EJN grantees at a regional level to ensure that more reporters have an opportunity to benefit.

Appendix 1. Survey Protocol

Internews' Earth Journalism Network Career Impact Research

Thank you for responding to this survey about your experience with the Earth Journalism Network. Your responses will help Internews to continue improving the support it provides to journalists and media organizations.

We estimate that this survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. We would be grateful to receive your response by December 8.

* Required

Demographic Information

1. What is your full name?

2. In what country are you based? *

3. Which of the following best describes your current work in media? *

- Freelance journalist
- Reporter working for a media outlet
- Editor or manager for a media outlet
- Employed by a civil society organization (not a media outlet)
- Other

4. If you currently work for a media outlet or organization, what is the name of the organization?

5. What is the main type of media that you currently work with or produce? *

- Print media
- Audio media (radio or podcasting)
- Visual media (television or streaming)
- Social media
- Other

6. What is your gender identity?

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

7. Do you identify as part of an indigenous community or ethnic minority group? *

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

8. Do you identify as LGBTQI+? *

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

9. Do you identify as a person living with a disability? *

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

10. Do you currently produce content that focuses specifically on any of the following populations: *

- Youth
- Women and girls
- LGBTQI+ populations
- Religious minority groups
- Ethnic minority groups
- Indigenous and/or minority language groups
- People living with disabilities

11. What is your age? *

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 65 and older

12. For how long have you been working in the media sector? *

- Less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

Grant Information

13. What type of support did you receive from EJM? Please select all options that apply. *

- Story grant
- Organizational grant
- CCMP Fellowship / Other Fellowship or Travel Scholarship
- Media workshop training

14. In your opinion, what type of support that you received from EJM had the most impact on your career? Please only select one; all subsequent questions in the survey will ask you about this type of support. *

- Story grant
- Organizational Grant
- CCMP Fellowship / Other Fellowship
- Media workshop training

15. What is the name of your organization that received the EJM organizational grant?

16. What is the name and year of your organizational grant? *

17. Which Fellowship were you awarded. e.g. COP26 CCMP Fellowship, UNCCD Fellowship, or Biodiversity Travel Scholarship *

18. Which year did you complete the fellowship? *

19. What is the name and year of your story grant? *

20. Please provide the name of the story/headline you wrote under the EJM grant or if possible provide an URL *

21. Which workshop did you attend? e.g. Media Workshop on Prospects and Challenges of Renewable Energy in India *

22. What year did you attend the workshop? *

Knowledge and Reporting Skills

23. Do you feel more inspired to focus on climate and environment stories since involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

24. Do you feel your knowledge of climate and environmental issues has improved since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

25. Which of the following knowledge-related skills has improved as a result of your involvement with EJN?

	0 - No Improvement	1	2	3	4 - Lots of Improvement
Understanding the science behind climate change or environmental issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Representing the positions of experts and other stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connecting a local story to a global issue, and vice versa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simplifying complex issues into relevant journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. Do you feel your journalism and reporting skills have improved since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

27. Which of the following reporting skills has improved as a result of your involvement with EJN?

	0 - No improvement	1	2	3	4 - Lots of Improvement
Refining your story angle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding useful sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensuring your sources are balanced	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using video or audio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structuring your story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focusing on solutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with an editor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Please elaborate on your answers, if desired. Please answer N/A if you do not wish to answer. *

29. Since received support from EJN, have you included a more diverse group of sources in your stories (such as women, indigenous communities, and LGBTQI+ people)? *

Yes

No

Pitching and Publication

30. Are you pitching environment or climate-related stories more regularly since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

31. Please elaborate on your response, if desired. Please write N/A if you do not wish to answer. *

32. Do you feel your pitches are more successful following your since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

33. Please elaborate on your response, if desired. Please write N/A if you do not wish to answer *

34. Have you been better able to secure paid consultancies, assignments, or opportunities to work with media organizations since your engagement with EJN? *

Yes

No

35. Do you have any other comments on your ability to pitch and get published since your involvement with EJN? *

Impact of Reporting

36. Do you feel your stories are being viewed by more people or receiving more attention since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

37. To what extent are your stories being viewed by more people or receiving more attention? *

My viewership has increased a little

My viewership has increased a lot

My viewership has not changed

38. Why do you think this change has occurred? Do you have audience or viewership data that you can share? *

39. Do you feel your stories have been more impactful since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

40. Please describe how you believe your stories have been more impactful, if desired. Please write N/A if you do not wish to answer *

Networking

41. Do you feel you've been able to network with more journalists as a result of your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

42. Have you been able to collaborate with journalists working on similar projects since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

43. Do you feel your profile has been raised as a journalist since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

44. Please describe how this networking or collaboration has improved your career, if applicable. Please write N/A if you do not wish to answer *

Program Quality

45. Have you been inspired or interested in creating more climate and environmental journalism projects since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

46. Do you feel the quality of your work has improved since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

47. Do you feel that the knowledge of your organization's staff of climate and environmental issues has improved since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

48. Describe how the quality of your work has improved, or not. *

49. Do you feel your work has become more impactful since you worked with EJN? *

Yes

No

50. Please describe the impacts, if any. *

51. Do you have any more comments about your organization's improvements or lack thereof? *

Financial Sustainability

52. Do you feel your organization is financially sustainable? *

Yes

No

53. Do you feel your EJM grant(s) contributed positively to your organization's financial sustainability? *

Yes

No

54. Have you received more international funding or interest in your work since your EJM grant(s)? *

Yes

No

55. Do you feel more capable when applying for and receiving other grants since your EJM grant(s)? *

Yes

No

56. Please describe how EJN's support helped your financial sustainability, if applicable. Please right N/A if you do not wish to answer.

Organization Reach

57. Do you feel you are able to reach a greater number of people since you worked with EJN? *

Yes

No

58. If your organization produces stories or content, do you feel your organization's stories are being viewed by more people or receiving more attention since your involvement with EJN?

Yes, our viewership has increased a lot

Yes, our viewership has increased a little

Our viewership has not changed

Our viewership has decreased

I am unsure

59. Do you feel more people in your desired audience (journalists, policymakers, the public, scientists) are aware of your organization since your EJN grant(s)? *

Yes

No

60. Have you seen your social media following grow significantly since working with EJN? *

Yes

No

61. Has the staff of your organization been able to network with more journalists as a result of their involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

Unsure

62. Has your staff been able to collaborate with more journalists working on similar projects since your involvement with EJN? *

Yes

No

Unsure

63. Please tell us more about these changes, including increases in social media following, event attendance or application numbers and more.

*

Conclusion

64. What is the biggest impact that you believe EJN's support has had on your work?

65. Can we share your responses in our newsletter and on social media?

Yes, with my name and information included

Yes, anonymously

No

66. Can we contact you for an interview to find out more about your answers? *

Yes

No

67. If you responded yes, please share your email address so that we can contact you.

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 Microsoft Forms

Appendix 2. Key informant interviews

The following individuals were interviewed as part of this research:

- Imelda Abaño
- Jean Pierre Afadhali
- Annonciata Byukusenge
- Lucy Calderón Pineda
- Rob Chaney
- Pablo Correa
- Jhesset O. Enano
- Ofani Eremae
- Gustavo Faleiros
- Emilio Godoy
- Amrita Gupta
- Joydeep Gupta
- Dilrukshi Handunnetti
- Denise Hruby
- Shamsuddin Illius
- Alex Kirby
- Diing Magot
- Fredrick Mugira
- Pauline Ogada
- Charley Piringi
- Zobaidur Rahman
- Rina Saeed
- Mike Shanahan
- Bongany Siziba
- Franklin Vega
- Kiundu Waweru
- Stefano Wroblewski

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