

NEWS
NETWORK

working for
social change and
empowering people

www.newsnetwork-bd.org

Annual Report 2024



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social change and
empowering people*

News Network

Road 2, House 8, Dhanmondi

Dhaka 1205, Bangladesh

Phone: +88 02 55166239

E-mail: info@newsnetwork-bd.org

facebook.com/newsnetworkbangladesh

<https://twitter.com/nnbangladesh/>

<http://bd.linkedin.com/in/newsnetworkbd>


Report Published

March 2025

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Design & Graphics

Md. Nazmul Alam



**News Network stands for
freedom of
expression, human rights
and democracy,
good governance and
independent media**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, News Network continued its efforts to establish itself as a reliable and significant organization. Accordingly, it received considerable praise for its steadfast support of young people, civil society activists, journalists, and human rights advocates. The dedication and achievements of the organization have been well-received by funding partners resulting in two new funding agreements with Internews and UNESCO-IPDC.

Under a partnership with Internews, News Network launched a 15-month project titled “Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression” effective from October 2024. The initiative aims to enhance the professional abilities of journalists and civil society activists to promote freedom of expression through media reporting and raising awareness about legal safety.

Additionally, a new collaboration with UNESCO-IPDC began in November 2024 to implement the initiative “Program for Promoting Safety of Journalists”. The goal of this year-long project is to increase journalists’ physical and digital safety capabilities, with a specific emphasis on protecting female journalists both online and offline.

Concurrently, in March 2024, News Network successfully completed the project “Strengthening Capacity of Media to Promote Democracy”. This 15-month program, which started in January 2023 and was supported by USAID and Internews, covered 15 districts in eight divisions of Bangladesh. It aimed to enhance the skills of 400 journalists and 40 trainers on election reporting with a view to increasing media coverage of democratic processes

Through these initiatives, News Network continues to champion freedom of expression, media safety, and professional capacity-building, cementing its role as a leader in advancing democracy and human rights in Bangladesh.

Shahiduzzaman
Editor and Chief Executive Officer
News Network

Partners of the Year



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Internews
Local voices. Global change.



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the Development
of Communication



Projects during the year 2024

Sl.	Project titles	Supported by	Project status
1	Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression	Internews	Ongoing since October 2024
2	Program for Promoting Safety of Journalists	UNESCO-IPDC	Ongoing since November 2024
3	Strengthening Capacity of Media to Promote Democracy	Internews and USAID	Completed in March 2024



Progress



Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression (CAFE)

In November 2024, News Network and Internews signed a 15-month project agreement to implement Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression (CAFE) initiative in all divisional headquarters and major districts in Bangladesh. The project, a new initiative of its kind, aims to strengthen freedom of expression by improving the professional

abilities of journalists and civil society activists, and empowering them to actively contribute to the cause.

The initiative will directly benefit approximately 500 individuals, including 250 journalists and 250 civil society activists.

Key activities of the project include:

1. **Training for Journalists:** Providing comprehensive training to enable journalists to report effectively on issues related to freedom of expression.
2. **Small Grants for In-Depth Reporting:** Offering small grants to selected trained journalists to support in-depth reporting on critical topics relevant to freedom of expression.
3. **Raising Awareness on Digital and Legal Safety:** Sensitizing both journalists and civil society activists on legal and digital safety precautions to make them able to carry out their work in a secure manner.

This project represents a significant step towards fostering collaboration between media professionals and civil society organizations in safeguarding and promoting freedom of expression in Bangladesh.



unesco

The International
Programme for
the Development
of Communication

Program for Promoting Safety of Journalists



As per agreement signed in November 2024, a year-long project supported by UNESCO-IPDC came into operation in four major divisional headquarters. It's a unique initiative to promote the safety of journalists, including news reporters and media

gatekeepers (e.g. editors, executive editors, news editors and senior newsroom editors). One of the major activities of the project is to train up 80 reporters, working for regional and national print, electronic and online news media, on digital and physical safety issues with special attention to female journalists. Some other activities include organising interaction meetings with 60 media gatekeepers to make them aware about their own safety, providing safety measures to reporters while covering news in crisis zones and publishing quality reports and articles highlighting human rights and democratic values. Most of the activities will be implemented in 2025.





Strengthening Media Capacity to Promote Democracy



In order to strengthen media freedom in Bangladesh, News Network initiated a significant project in November 2022 that went into effect in mid-2024. This project, support by Internews and USAID, played a vital role in strengthening democracy in Bangladesh by providing journalists with fundamental training in digital hygiene, security, and physical safety and thereby enabling them to work freely and fearlessly.

By strengthening the skills of journalists, employed in print and electronic media, the initiative upheld the

highest standards of objectivity, accuracy and ethical journalism. Through encouraging knowledgeable, unbiased reporting, the project contributed to the integrity of the electoral process and helped promoting free and fair elections, good governance, and accountability.

The project, which spans 16 districts, focused on the need for responsible, trustworthy journalism, reaffirming the media's position as a cornerstone of democracy.

Key Achievements and Immediate Impact:

- Empowering 400 journalists from national and regional media with specialized training on ethical election reporting, improving their ability to provide accurate, balanced, and fact-based coverage.
- Developing a national pool of trainers through two Training of Trainers (ToT) programs for 20 senior journalists, ensuring the sustainability and continuation of high-quality journalism training across the country.
- Enhancing public awareness and civic engagement by providing 100 small grants to trained journalists for publishing in-depth reports on voting rights, voters' participation, democratic values, human rights, and good governance. These reports have played a vital role in apprising and empowering citizens to actively participate in the democratic process.

- Building long-term media resilience through a refresher ToT program held in February 2024 in Dhaka, further refining the expertise of 20 senior journalists to conduct training nationwide.



A group photo featuring participants of the Training of Trainers (ToT) program from across the country, along with trainers and distinguished guests. - News Network

Project impact

Short-Term Impact:

- Improved media professionalism: Journalists are now better equipped with knowledge and skills to report accurately,

- ethically, and independently.
- **Enhanced election coverage:** The training has directly contributed to more credible and balanced reporting on electoral processes.
- **Increased voter awareness:** In-depth reports published under this project have educated citizens about voting rights and democratic participation, fostering greater civic engagement.
- **Safer working environment for journalists:** Training on digital and physical safety has strengthened journalists' ability to protect themselves from threats, online harassment, and surveillance.
- **Immediate knowledge dissemination:** The 20 trained trainers have already started transferring their expertise to junior journalists in their respective news organizations.

Long-Term Impact:

- **Strengthened democratic institutions:** The project has helped build a more informed and engaged public, reinforcing democratic values in Bangladesh.
- **Sustainable capacity building:** The trained journalists and ToT participants will continue to mentor and train future generations, ensuring long-lasting benefits for the media sector.

- **Greater press freedom and accountability:** By empowering journalists to report fearlessly and ethically, the initiative supports a more independent media landscape, holding power to account.
- **Institutionalized ethical journalism practices:** The emphasis on accuracy and fact-based reporting will contribute to higher journalistic standards across the industry, promoting transparency and public trust in media.
- **Resilience against misinformation and threats:** The knowledge gained from this project will help journalists combat disinformation and propaganda, ensuring that citizens receive reliable, fact-based news.

Potential for Replication and Scalability:

This project can be used as a model to support independent journalism in other parts of Bangladesh and abroad. Because of its success, similar initiatives could be expanded and replicated in other districts, nations, or regions where press freedom is threatened.

- **Adaptability:** The methods and training materials can be modified to fit various media and political contexts.

- **Sustainable impact:** The ToT approach ensures that trained journalists can continue to teach and train others, making the initiative self-sustaining.
- **Policy Integration:** The program's principles of ethical reporting and journalist safety can be incorporated into media policies and journalism curricula in universities.
- **Cross-sector collaboration:** By engaging civil society, media organizations, and policymakers, the initiative can be expanded and institutionalized at national and regional levels.

Conclusion:

This project has significantly improved media independence, democratic governance, and accountability in Bangladesh by empowering journalists, encouraging ethical election reporting, and raising public awareness. Its long-term sustainability and short-term successes guarantee its influence, and its scalability and replication potential offer a blueprint for media development initiatives worldwide.

Financial Statement 2024



Audited Financial Statement Auditor's Certificate


NEWS NETWORK
Consolidated Statements of Receipts & Payments Account
for the year ended 31 December 2024

PARTICULARS	Note	Amount in BDT	
		01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024	01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023
RECEIPTS:		7,652,699	26,226,830
Opening Balance		2,019,673	60,720
Cash in Hand	183		
Cash at Bank	2,019,490		
Grant Received From The Donors:	6	5,629,147	25,984,696
Bank Interest	7	1,779	1,114
Subscription from the Executive Members		2,100	2,100
Miscellaneous Income		-	178,200
PAYMENTS:		5,909,219	24,207,159
Salary & Allowance		2,577,788	6,877,998
Communication Expense		144,364	211,936
Utilities		71,739	129,671
Printing and Stationery		26,732	38,427
Election Reporting Training of Trainers		954,694	783,230
Mainstreaming Journalists Safety Manual		15,000	-
Election Reporting Training Dhaka Based		-	3,588,682
Election Reporting Training District Level		-	5,713,715
Training Supplies		-	476,644
Contractual Services		-	1,315,900
Manual and Curriculum		-	72,450
Story Report Writing Honorarium		941,000	1,332,000
Mentor Honorarium		-	135,000
Office Rent		363,000	648,120
Folder and Note Book Design & Printing		108,385	280,725
Indirect Cost		476,350	834,648
Venue Food Accommodation etc.		-	522,836
Honorarium for Consultant		172,000	175,000
Advocacy Campaign on Sensorship & Content		-	120,617



NEWS NETWORK
Consolidated Statements of Receipts & Payments Account
for the year ended 31 December 2024

PARTICULARS	Note	Amount in BDT	
		01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024	01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023
Awareness Raising Training On Online Account Equipments		-	122,045
End user Training on Digital Safety Topics with Focus on Harm Deduction		-	275,392
Advocacy Campaign for Promoting the Research Result		-	214,886
Renting Laptops		-	131,286
Bank Charge	8	26,068	153,900
Audit Fees		30,000	12,951
Entertainment		2,100	37,000
			2,100
Closing Balance		1,743,480	2,019,672
Cash in Hand	3,347		
Cash at Bank	1,740,133		
TOTAL PAYMENTS		7,652,699	26,226,831


Secretary General
News Network


Finance & Admin Manager
News Network



CERTIFICATE GIVEN BY THE AUDITORS

We have audited the accounts of **NEWS NETWORK**, Registration no. FDR-922, dated 20.03.1995 for the Year ended 31 December 2024 and examined all relevant books and vouchers and certifies that according to audited accounts.

1. The brought forward foreign donation at the beginning of year 1st January 2024 was Tk. 2,019,673.
2. The foreign donation amounting to Tk. 5,629,147 was received by the organization during the period.
3. The balance of unutilized foreign donations by the organization at 31st December 2024 Tk. 1,743,480.
4. Foreign donation amounting to Tk. 5,909,218.87 has been utilized for the following purposes (shown project wise).

NAME OF THE PROJECT	1. Strengthening Capacity of Media to Promote Democracy. 2. Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression (CAFÉ) 3. Programme for Promoting of Journalists
FUNDING AGENCY	1. Internews, Thailand 2. Internews, USA 3. UNESCO

Name of the project (s)	Budget for this year	Amount spent this year	Difference
Strengthening Capacity of Media to Promote Democracy.	4,342,580.37	4,342,580.37	-
Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression (CAFÉ)	2,007,200.37	1,543,951	463,249.37
Programme for Promoting of Journalists	1,249,500.00	3,747.59	1,245,752.50
News Network Own Fund	18,940.00	18,940.00	0.00
Total Taka	7,618,220.74	5,909,218.87	1,709,001.87

Total Expenditure in BDT 5,909,218.87 (Equivalent to USD 49,657.30/ EURO 47,774.43)

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


Pinaki Das FCA

Senior Partner

ICAB Enrollment Number: 151

FRC Enlistment No.: CA-001-133

Pinaki & Company

Chartered Accountants

FRC Firm Enlistment No: CAF-001-113

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: 09 February 2025



NEWS NETWORK BUDGET 2025

Heads	Collaborative Action for Freedom of Expression (CAFÉ) funded by Internews-USA	Programme for Promoting of Journalists funded by UNESCO	Piloting women-led independent news media funded by ASIA foundation	Total in BDT. & USD
Personnel cost	4,569,180	642,600	2,045,745	7,257,525
Program Cost	14,081,000	3,414,980	4,013,000	21,508,980
Operation Support cost	2,412,819	107,420	892,440	3,412,679
Capital expenditure	0	0	355000	355,000
Grand Total BDT.	21,062,999	4,165,000	7,306,185	32,534,184
Grand Total USD	177,000	35,000	61,397	273,397

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF NEWS NETWORK

President

Shahriar Hossain, Ph. D

Vice-President

Kaiser Ali Talukder, Ph.D

Secretary General

Shahiduzzaman

Finance Secretary

Jalal Ahmed

Members

Rasada Akther

Sanchita Sharma

Taslima Tamanna

The Agendas

1. Promoting human rights, democracy, good governance, accountability and transparency and environmental rights
2. Strengthening independent media and promote freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of press, internet freedom and digital rights
3. Promoting access to justice and right to information
4. Undertaking programmes to enhance professional capacity of journalists and HRDs
5. Providing support and encourage young women to choose journalism as their profession
6. Promoting investigative journalism and works to reduce impunity for crime against journalists and HRDs
7. Working for promoting digital security and physical safety of journalists, HRDs and CSOs
8. Supporting media and civil society to face the challenges of climate change and poverty alleviation
9. Promoting women empowerment and gender equality, combatting violence against woman (VAW), gender based violence (GBV), forced marriage and child marriage
10. Supporting religious freedom, social diversity, inclusiveness of marginal people, religious minority and ethnic community people.
11. Conducting research, study, survey and investigation on public interested issues
12. Organising dialogue, seminar, workshops and discussion meeting on issues of national importance.

