

# Strategy 2018–2024



# Foreword

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In some ways, the world of 2022 looks very different from that of 2018. The global coronavirus pandemic, a greater urgency around climate action, increasing pressure on local independent media, conflict and increased polarisation in many countries have shifted the landscape in which we work. And NGOs are increasingly conscious of the need for diversity and localisation. At the same time, cuts to overseas development aid have meant that we have not grown as fast as we had anticipated.

What hasn't changed is that, through crisis and in their everyday lives, people need trusted information to help them make critical decisions, to adapt, to survive and to ensure a better life for themselves and their families. We continue to support local media to deliver that information, dispelling myths and rumours, helping people make sense of events and bridging divides. And we continue to ensure that our programmes are engaging and reach people where they are, whether that is through solar-powered radios to previously media-dark communities, or through viral content for

young people on Instagram and TikTok. We continue to measure the impact of our projects and to publish evidence of what works.

Since 2018, we have supplemented our organisational strategy with a new strategy and approach on equity, diversity and inclusion and updated approach papers on key areas of work. But our strategic focus – on governance, health, and humanitarian and resilience projects and programming – has not wavered, as we continue to serve communities in more than 20 countries around the world.

What we offer – media and communication for the good of people – has never been more needed. Our Board of Trustees has therefore approved the extension of this strategy until 2024, to allow us to focus on meeting these needs, while we work toward a full strategy refresh in a post-pandemic world.

**Caroline Nursey OBE**  
Chief Executive Officer  
October 2022

# 1. Why media and communication matter

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Over the last 20 years, more than a billion people have progressed out of extreme poverty. But 1.3 billion people are still very poor, struggling to meet basic needs on a daily basis. Many of these people live in fragile states where conflict and ineffectual governments make survival, let alone development, difficult. In middle income countries, some people remain very poor because their gender, ethnicity, age, legal status, social class, disability, language, religion or sexuality prevents them from accessing the services and opportunities that would allow them to benefit from the growing prosperity of their country. Climate change, conflict, inequality, and large movements of populations mean that – in both poor and middle income countries – progress is uneven and may not be sustainable.

A strong and independent media is important in building transparent and accountable societies. In many countries, the media is becoming less free – controlled by government or oligarchs, threatened by factions or simply financially squeezed. The ‘post truth’ phenomenon, exacerbated by the way that material is shared on social media, threatens both democracy and social cohesion in many societies.

We all need information. Every day, people make decisions that affect their lives and those of their families: how best to use their savings; whether to send their daughter to school; is it a good idea to vaccinate their child; should

they vote and, if so, how? At times of crisis, the choices are stark: are floods coming; is it safe to return home after an earthquake; where are water, food and shelter?

In an increasingly complex communication environment, it is more important than ever that people can access information that is accurate, timely and relevant. Media channels have the potential to inform and educate people, building social cohesion and empowering individuals. Yet they can also be used by their owners or by political, religious or ethnic groups to subvert the truth and spread hate.

Digital technologies have changed the ecology of communication itself. As well as providing unparalleled access to information, they have created new spaces where people interact with each other and have turned audiences into active users and generators of information.

Despite the benefits of new digital communication channels, people face challenges in deciphering what information to trust and increasingly interact in echo chambers where their own beliefs are reinforced and amplified. Much information is now provided through platforms not traditionally considered as ‘media’, and debates over their owners’ accountability and responsibility remain unresolved. The interaction between online and offline communication is complex and often poorly understood.



Information on its own – even when accurate and timely – is not enough. For people to understand other perspectives, resolve differences and make choices that improve their lives they need to understand other people, perhaps through stories or drama. And they need to be given the chance to talk about what they have heard, through debate programmes, phone-ins or social media conversations, or through being inspired to talk to their friends and family. This can then lead to shifts in how society functions.

Without communication, few areas of development can succeed. Water points will

only protect people from disease if people know how to keep the water clean once collected. New clinics will not reduce the numbers of mothers and babies dying unless women and their families understand that giving birth in a health centre is safer, realise that they need to save money to get there and plan their journeys. People can easily be coerced to vote a certain way, unless they know how the electoral system works and understand the options open to them.

One of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Goal 16 – includes improving access to information. And good communication contributes to many of the other SDGs too.

# 2. Strategy

## 2.1 WHO WE ARE

BBC Media Action (BBC World Service Trust until December 2011), is a UK-registered charity that works on international development. Our premise is that responsible media is essential to democracy. We work in the knowledge that change happens when people have access to reliable, timely and useful information and the opportunity to talk about it.

Founded by the BBC in 1998, we operate as an independent organisation embracing the BBC's values and editorial standards. Our work is not funded by the Licence Fee. However, we benefit from strong partnerships with the World Service and other parts of the BBC and several of our trustees come from the organisation.

We work in some of the most fragile and divided societies in the world. Our work addresses poverty. This does not just mean supporting women and men with low incomes but also those with limited access to health, education and other basic services. We also work to support women and men living in divided and unsafe environments, and people who have little opportunity to hold to account those with power. To support these people, we work in three focus areas where media and communication can make a positive difference:

- Governance and rights
- Health
- Resilience and humanitarian response.

## 2.2 OUR VISION AND MISSION

### Our vision

A world where informed and empowered

## OUR VALUES

### We are:

#### People-centred

The communities we serve are at the heart of all we do.

#### Trustworthy

We are honest and open, share information and acknowledge mistakes.

#### Creative

We are innovative, adaptable and creative, making lasting improvements to people's lives.

#### Respectful

We respect everyone we work with: our audiences, partners and colleagues. We seek to understand context, and to encourage diversity.

#### Collaborative

We support, challenge and value our colleagues and partners, learning from each other. We involve communities in designing and delivering our work.

#### Effective

We have impact by combining research, expertise and innovation to find appropriate and lasting solutions.

people live in healthy, resilient and inclusive communities.

### Our mission

With our partners we reach millions through creative communication and trusted media,



helping people have their say, understand their rights, responsibilities and each other, and take action to transform their lives.

### **2.3 WHAT WE WILL WORK ON**

Building access to trusted information is at the heart of this strategy. Between 2018 and 2024, we will build on past successes and implement some new initiatives. We will increase our support to the development of media organisations and other partners that share our commitment to fairness, trust and accuracy. We will assist them in their efforts to contribute to accountable, resilient, cohesive societies where women and men can lead healthy lives.

We will work with local and national media to help them understand their audiences. We will help them make content which is relevant to, and addresses, local needs. We will support partners to build links with others to improve information and dialogue within and across communities. We will still make content ourselves but will concentrate on integrating content production and capacity strengthening, passing on our skills to others. We believe this shift in emphasis will lead to a more sustained impact even though it may reduce the number of people that we reach directly in this period.

#### **2.3.1 GOVERNANCE AND RIGHTS**

Under this theme, we work on accountability, rights and responsibilities, negotiating difference and improving social cohesion.

Independent, editorially robust and trusted media are at the core of effective democracies and inclusive, peaceful societies. We make, or support others to produce radio, television

or digital content. In doing so, we enable people from all parts of society to better hold those in power to account for the decisions they make, support free and fair elections, and ensure people understand their rights and responsibilities. We help women and men appreciate different viewpoints and live together peacefully. We work closely with local media organisations to help them develop editorially and commercially so that they produce content that is impartial, protects freedoms, builds social cohesion and holds leaders to account. Where the context allows, we seek to influence media laws so that they encourage independent and responsible media.

Through this area of our work, we contribute to SDG Goal 16 (which includes living in peace, ensuring access to information and protecting freedoms) and Goal 10 (which includes empowering and promoting the social, political and economic inclusion of all). Our approach is set out more fully in our Governance and Rights Strategy<sup>1</sup>.

**Between 2018 and 2024, an increase in work on other issues will see this area reduce as a proportion of our overall effort while remaining our biggest focus overall. Work to champion understanding of different viewpoints and build social cohesion will be a growing priority for our work in this area. We will do more to engage with providers and users of social media to tackle issues of misinformation and responsibility.**

#### **2.3.2 HEALTH**

Nine out of the thirteen targets set for SDG Goal 3 – Ensuring Healthy Lives and Promoting Wellbeing for All – can only be reached if

people's voices are heard, people change their behaviour, and social norms shift. Our work enables this to happen. We focus on the health of mothers and children, nutrition, stopping the spread of infectious diseases, and health linked to water and sanitation (which feeds in to SDG Goal 6). Our approach is set out more fully in our Health Strategy<sup>2</sup>.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will place an increasing focus on work to improve nutrition. Significant progress has been made in many other areas of health, yet nutrition remains problematic. This is both because many people do not have enough food to eat and because increasing numbers are facing lifestyle diseases, such as diabetes, as a result of bad diets. Communication can help address these issues.**

### **2.3.3 RESILIENCE AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

Our work on resilience and responding to humanitarian emergencies seeks to help people to prepare for and withstand shocks and stresses – including a changing environment or economic challenges. Not only do we provide people with the information they need, we also inspire ordinary people to believe that they can take action to improve their lives. Through our work in this area, we contribute to SDG Goal 2 (doubling agricultural productivity of small-scale food producers'), SDG Goal 15 (halting deforestation), Goal 13 (improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning) and SDG Goal 11 (reducing the number of deaths caused by disasters).

Our approach is set out more fully in our Resilience and Humanitarian Response Strategy<sup>3</sup>.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we expect this area to grow as a proportion of our overall work, building on evidence we have generated of what works in this area. The proportion will fluctuate due to the unpredictability of humanitarian crises.**

### **2.3.4 EMERGING WORK**

Communication is critical to tackling obstacles to girls' education. We have found that it can be effective in giving girls confidence to attend school and tackling some of the attitudes in families and wider society that prevent them from doing so. This contributes to SDG Goal 4 (getting children – especially girls – to go to school).

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will increase our work supporting access to learning, particularly for girls. We will also explore what our contribution might be to supporting non-formal learning. We will not work on classroom or tertiary education.**

**Occasionally, it may be appropriate to experiment in a new area of work. This will be done rarely and based on an assessment of both the demand for our work and our added value, as we will achieve more if we concentrate our efforts.**

### **2.4 KEY GROUPS**

In all our work, we seek to understand the people whose lives we are trying to improve. We take into account the needs of those who may be marginalised on grounds of gender, ethnicity,



age, legal status, class, disability, language, religion or sexuality.

**In this period, we will focus in particular on gender equality and women's rights, as well as the growing youth population and people with disabilities.**

#### **2.4.1 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

In all our work, we try to challenge stereotypes and help people understand others. We take into account the various needs of women and men, girls and boys in both the design and delivery of our work. And we use our research and creativity to design some projects that transform the position of women and girls in society and contribute to SDG Goal 5 (which includes ending discrimination against girls and women). Our approach is described more fully in our Gender Equality Strategy<sup>4</sup>.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will learn, adapt and develop our work in this area. We will strive to take gender into account in all our projects and will increase the proportion of our work that seeks to transform gender relations through addressing the root causes of inequalities between women and men.**

#### **2.4.2 YOUTH**

There are more young people in the world today than there have ever been. Half the world is under 30 and nine in ten of these young people live in developing countries. Most young people have less opportunity than their elders to influence the national, local and household-level decisions that affect their lives. Young people face significant challenges in finding employment and in getting appropriate health care.

Much of our work is tailored specifically to the needs of young people – encouraging them to take part in peaceful elections, to take actions to adapt to effects of climate change or to carefully consider what actions to take when their first child is born. This work contributes to a number of the SDGs, most of which have a target relating to youth.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will continue to increase the proportion of our work that is specifically designed to meet the needs of young people. We will deliver more work using digital platforms, recognising that young people are increasingly engaging in this way.**

#### **2.4.3 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

One in seven people in the world have a disability. People with a disability are often unable to access their basic rights: to vote and to have a political voice, to achieve equal access to education, information, employment, and health care. They can face particular challenges in surviving economic or environmental shocks.

Media can help challenge stigma, discrimination and negative social norms related to disability, amplify the voices of people with disabilities, and provide spaces for governments to be held accountable for implementing appropriate legislation and policies.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will consider the needs of people with different disabilities when developing project strategies. We will work with disability-focussed partners to reduce stigma and meet the needs of people with disabilities when it comes to health, governance, resilience and humanitarian response.**

# Theory of Change

Our organisational theory of change illustrates our understanding of how our work with media and communication can empower people, connect them and influence those in power to improve people's lives. It is rooted in a fundamental belief that strong, responsible media are a cornerstone of democracy and development.

In any project, we pursue the most promising pathways to our end goal, focussing on the factors that are most likely to drive or inhibit change. Depending on the issue at hand, we can help build knowledge and foster confidence, discussion and motivation. We can successfully challenge restrictive and discriminatory norms. We can enable people to come together, support each other, discuss their views and solve problems. We can help make sure that people from all parts of society ask questions and can influence those in power about the issues that matter to them.

These shifts can then prompt the kind of actions needed to improve health, strengthen resilience and response to crises. They can result in an improved position in society for women and girls, ensure that different sections of society understand each other and that people participate more in the decisions that affect their lives. Governments and those delivering public services can also become more responsive.

Taken together, these shifts in behaviour, how society functions and how governance systems work contribute to a world where people live in healthier, more resilient and inclusive communities.

## WHY CHANGE IS VITAL

### Media and information

- Increase in digital and mobile media
- More fractured and co-opted media
- Rising misinformation

### Rights and fragility

- Closing civic space
- Fragility, violence and extremism
- Pervasive gender inequality and discrimination

### Health threats

- Maternal and child conditions
- Communicable diseases
- Poor water and sanitation
- Growing burden of non-communicable disease

### Demographic changes

- Younger populations
- Large scale urbanisation and migration

### Resources and resilience

- Climate change and environmental degradation
- Food insecurity
- Economic instability within households
- Rising risk from natural hazards
- Increased humanitarian emergencies

## HOW WE ENABLE CHANGE



Conducting research



Strengthening media and non-media partners



Producing content



Supporting outreach

## MORE TRUSTED, INCLUSIVE, INDEPENDENT, AND ENGAGING MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

EMPOWERS INDIVIDUALS

Discussion  
Knowledge and understanding  
Self-efficacy and motivation

CONNECTS PEOPLE

Supportive norms, attitudes and beliefs

INFLUENCES POWER

## INTERMEDIATE CHANGES

Healthier behaviours and stronger health systems

Improved position of women and girls in society

## LONGER TERM CHANGES

Action to increase food security and economic opportunity, reduce disaster risk and decrease the impact of humanitarian crises

All sections of society better connected with others, participating in the decisions that affect their lives

More responsive and inclusive governance systems

## IMPACT



More accountable, equal, inclusive and peaceful states and societies



Improved health and wellbeing



Strengthened resilience and humanitarian response

# 3. Our approach

## **3.1 AREAS OF INFLUENCE – PEOPLE, PRACTITIONERS, ORGANISATIONS AND SYSTEMS**

Each of our projects is designed to bring about change in at least one of four interdependent “areas of influence”: people, practitioners, organisations and the wider media system or government.

Embracing the name and values of the BBC, the most trusted broadcaster in the world, supports our engagement with mass audiences – the people who are the direct beneficiaries of much of our work.

We also work with communication practitioners – journalists, actors, producers and more – so that they can make better programmes and content, and with health and other development workers and community leaders.

We work with organisations like radio stations and local government departments. And sometimes, we engage at a systems level. We work on the legal frameworks that regulate what media can do in a particular country or influence internationally as we did to convince the humanitarian system to incorporate communication more thoroughly and consistently into its work.

**We engage in one or more of these areas of influence according to the context in which we are operating and the problem that we seek to address. We will continue to do so in this period.**

## **3.2 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

We know that working in partnership can exponentially increase the impact of our work. Usually, we work in partnership with civil society organisations, including international NGOs, and with media organisations. We also work with national and local government to deliver complementary elements of wider projects.

Where specialist organisations can provide services inside a refugee camp, we can ensure that refugees know about these services and provide them with information that helps them to help themselves. Where shelter experts can provide materials to people rebuilding their homes after a disaster, we can provide those people with information about how to do it and inspiration by broadcasting the stories of others who have succeeded. Where educationalists provide schools and teachers, we can surface and address underlying norms that influence decisions not to send girls to school.

Partnerships with organisations working in communities help us ensure that our content reaches those who may not have radio, television or digital access and provides our partners with material that they can use at community meetings.

**In the period 2018–2024, we will strengthen our partnerships with a wider range of development actors so that, together, we can have greater impact on the lives of vulnerable people in the countries where we work.**



Of course, we also work in partnerships across the BBC. We broadcast to World Service audiences in Nigeria, East Africa, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and the Arabic-speaking world. We also partner with BBC colleagues, from divisions as diverse as the Natural History Unit to CBBC.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will work with the most appropriate digital service providers wherever we are and extend our responsible use of social media. This will ensure that the content that we and our partners provide is accessible to people on the platform that most makes sense for them.**

### **3.3 IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS, UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE, ADAPTING AND EVALUATING WHAT WE DO**

All our work is designed with people at the centre – looking at it from their point of view and involving them.

We invest in innovative and robust research to understand the lives of the people we are reaching. We explore their challenges, values, aspirations, preferences, usage of media and information and their views of institutions and the environments they live in.

Our capacity to gather and analyse audience insight is unique in the sector and enables rigorous adaptive project design and accountability. During project implementation, we use audience feedback to help us refine and adapt our approaches.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will continue to invest in rigorous research to ensure**

**that we understand the women and men we are trying to reach – particularly the most marginalised and vulnerable. We will invest in understanding how communication habits are evolving in an increasingly interconnected and digital world and to ensure that we understand political context and complexity. Rooting our work in robust theories of change, we will learn from what we do to ensure that we achieve the greatest possible impact. We will invest in understanding in greater depth how – and to what extent – work with social media can bring about the changes that our projects seek.**

We invest heavily in evaluating our work. The quality of our evaluation helps us learn internally and develop a body of evidence that we share externally to determine what works best and inform the work of others. Our Data Portal<sup>5</sup> makes questionnaires and raw data available to all who want it.

**We will set research questions for the 2018–2024 period to contribute to evidence, research and policy debates in each of BBC Media Action's focus areas. We will also build and communicate evidence on cross-cutting areas such as gender, digital, capacity strengthening and shifting social norms.**

While funding restrictions may not allow for robust evaluations of every grant, between 2018 and 2024 we will identify where it is most important to measure impact, including within our most innovative projects.

**We will develop research partnerships with academic institutions and interested funders to deliver flagship pieces of research to**

**provide robust evidence. We will continue to build the capacity of our country staff so that more high-quality research can be managed locally.**

### **3.4 INFLUENCING DEVELOPMENT THINKING: OUR POLICY WORK**

Our research feeds into our policy engagement, sharing with the development sector what works in media development and communication for development. We share our findings as widely as possible working with academics and practitioners. We host discussions and engage with decision-makers to help them explore the ways that media and communication can enhance development work.

Through a large and successful grant from DFID between 2011–2017, we have built up and disseminated a significant body of learning and we will continue to share this within the sector. We are committed to finding funding to continue focussed policy work, and build on our position as thought-leaders on media development and communication for development.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will continue to engage with donors and development actors to build on our learning to date and help shape policy and practice across the development sector.**

### **3.5 STRENGTHENING CAPACITY**

In all we do, we seek to build the skills of those around us. These can be our staff in the

countries where we work (nearly all of whom are recruited locally), our project delivery partners, or the organisations and individuals that we set out to develop through training, mentoring and provision of advice and equipment.

We deliver many projects that are explicitly designed to strengthen media organisations or to develop journalism. We work with online platforms, state or public sector broadcasters, community, privately owned or commercial media, or journalists. We also work with government agencies to help them understand the information needs of ordinary women and men. And we offer training to them – as well as local and international development agencies – to help them communicate better with communities about disaster management and health.

Across our capacity strengthening work, we have found that engagement across an entire organisation works best so that technical, editorial and managerial staff can all support change. We aim to bring the very best of BBC talent – broadcasters, producers and technical experts – to support our partners.

We know that one-off training courses have limited impact and that longer-term professional relationships with organisations are needed to bring about change.

**Between 2018 and 2024, capacity strengthening for partners will be an even higher priority than it has been previously.**

# The difference we make

Evidence shows that women and men who listen to or watch our programmes have higher levels of knowledge, discuss pertinent issues more, change their attitudes and adopt healthier behaviours at scale.

Over the last five years our work to support effective democracies across 11 countries, reached 192 million people. More than two thirds of our debate programmes have had cabinet level politicians (or their local equivalent) on the panel. We ensure women get a fair chance to take part in debates, both as part of the audience and as panellists. In addition, 10 out of 14 presenters of recent flagship topical discussion programmes were women. Advanced analysis has shown that our work is consistently associated with people knowing more about politics and governance issues, discussing these issues more and participating in politics more.



[Briefing: Inspiring Political Participation<sup>6</sup>](#)

Women who tuned into our TV and radio programmes on health in Ethiopia and Bangladesh were twice as likely to seek antenatal care and to plan for giving birth at a health facility. Overall, evaluations show that listeners or viewers of our health programmes have increased knowledge, attitudes more likely to lead to healthy behaviour and increased adoption of healthier behaviours. A Randomised Control Trial used to evaluate a project on antenatal care and breastfeeding showed that watching media programmes has a direct, causal effect on short term knowledge and intention to change behaviour.



[Case study: Can a Health Drama and Discussion Show Affect the Drivers of Behaviour Change?<sup>7</sup>](#)

We are at the forefront of broadcasting in emergencies. When Ebola took hold in Sierra Leone, the local radio stations that we were already supporting played an active role in the relief efforts. And when a disastrous earthquake struck Nepal, both BBC Nepali and local stations that we had trained were on air providing life-saving information within hours of the earthquake.

In Bangladesh, our reality TV show designed to prepare people for floods, cyclones and other extreme weather proved very successful. The programme reached 22 million people and 47% of viewers reported taking actions such as flood-proofing their homes or setting up a saving scheme as a result of watching the show. Research across all our resilience programmes has shown that people who have watched or listened to BBC Media Action programmes have increased knowledge of how to adapt to their environment, more confidence that they can do something and, importantly, are more likely to take actions such as growing different crops or making changes to their houses to support their resilience.



[Report: Building Resilience<sup>8</sup>](#)

More than 180 partners have received support from BBC Media Action trainers and mentors. Practitioners have reported improved skills. Organisations have shown that they have greater understanding and can adopt improved editorial standards.

A recent DFID assessment of a five-year project across 14 countries stated we represent 'excellent cost effectiveness', reaching 283 million people with life-changing information at a cost of 32p per person. Our programmes form an important part of BBC World Service schedules with our audiences contributing to the BBC's ambition to reach half a billion people worldwide by 2022.

# 4. How we will operate

## 4.1 WHERE WE WORK

We work where we know that media and communication can make the most difference. This includes some of the most fragile and divided societies in the world. Most of these countries are categorised as 'low' or 'medium' on UNDP's Human Development Index. We also take account the 'Freedom in the World' and 'Fragile States' indexes and recognise that marginalised groups in some middle-income countries are very poor. It is also the case that a lack of transparency combined with authoritarianism, corruption and limited opportunity for freedom of expression have a devastating effect on people's lives. This means that, occasionally, we work in a country categorised as 'high' on the Human Development Index though not in any counted as 'very high'.

We make a long term commitment to working in those countries where we establish an office. We know that we can achieve more impact and work more sustainably where we have strong relationships with other organisations and understand the context from past project experience and research. Our capacity strengthening work in particular benefits from long-term engagement.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we intend to continue to work in the following countries where we have country offices: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia. In addition we work in Kenya and Somalia from our office in Nairobi and Algeria, Libya and Tunisia from our base in Tunis. We expect that this will continue to be the most effective way to operate during**

**the coming period. From a base in Lebanon, we work with Syrian refugees and people inside Syria and will explore the possibility of establishing a base in Jordan too. In Iraq, security concerns make it impossible to set up an office. Instead our London-based Iraq country team have developed long-lasting local partnerships through which we deliver effective and sustainable work, and this is expected to continue.**

During 2018, we will explore supporting the creation of an independent entity in India and ceasing to operate there as BBC Media Action, apart from in partnership with the new entity. We expect to secure registration in Indonesia during 2018 and start delivering work there. We are seeking registration in Pakistan. We hold registration in Uganda as a base to continue to work with South Sudanese communities should it no longer be possible to operate within South Sudan itself. We do not anticipate establishing offices anywhere else between 2018 and 2024, although we will continue to explore possibilities of helping people inside Yemen and will watch the emerging situation in Zimbabwe.

Alongside our long-term work in these countries, we work in some places on a shorter-term basis without having an office in the country or employing staff there. Most of this work is media development. However, we sometimes deliver training in communication with disaster-affected communities in various parts of the world or carry out research that feeds into our wider policy work on the role of media and communication in development. Occasionally, in response to a humanitarian emergency, we find that we are best positioned



to respond – often in partnership with the World Service – in a country where we have not been working long term.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will continue to work to this alternative model where appropriate.**

#### **4.2 RESOURCING**

BBC Media Action's annual turnover for 2017/8 including gifts in kind was £35.4 million. Delivering effective work that has a real impact on the lives of people is far more important than organisational growth. But we do want to do more and change more lives.

**We anticipate an average annual rate of growth between 2018 and 2024 of around 10%.**

Most of our funding comes from institutional donors – both governmental and foundations – and we are grateful to them all. The UK Government has been our single biggest funder. Over the last few years, we have successfully diversified our range of funders outside the UK and we expect this to continue during the period 2018–2024, though our relationship with DFID, the FCO and other parts of the UK Government will remain very important.

Between November 2011 and July 2017, a multi-year, multi-country grant from DFID comprising a third of our income enabled us to work particularly flexibly and cost effectively.

**Given that DFID is no longer making grants of this type and that we have not identified any other funder that might provide similar**

**resources. We will plan on the basis that the bulk of our funding will come from single-country, single-theme grants during the period 2018–2024. However, we will in parallel continue to explore the opportunities for multi-country, multi-theme grants, given the greater scope this kind of funding provides to deliver at scale, discover what works best and operate cost effectively.**

An increasing proportion of our work is delivered in partnership with other development organisations and, in particular, INGOs. This is most effective where we provide media and communication expertise within a wider project. Usually, the generalist INGO is the lead organisation accountable to the donor and we deliver complementary work within the overall agreed objectives.

**We expect this way of working to increase as a proportion of what we do during the period 2018–2024.**

Many donors are changing the way that they fund international development work, moving to contracts rather than grants and experimenting with payment by results, adaptive programming and other models. Each of these places differing, and often increased, compliance and reporting requirements on Media Action and we must invest in understanding these and adapting our processes where we think it appropriate to receive such funding.

**We will continue to apply high ethical and editorial standards in identifying what funding we should accept from which source for what work and, because of that, will not apply for funding for health work from the**

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### **USA Government for the time being because of conditions currently imposed.**

Our resourcing strategy will be set out more fully in a separate document during 2018.

We have a small but critically important stream of income from corporate partners, individual donors and fundraising events that provide not only valuable flexible income, but also gifts-in-kind that reduce our costs of operating, leverage additional support and help us to deliver our work more cost effectively. We are grateful to them for their support in so many ways.

**We are investing in increasing our fundraising activity in this area over the period 2018–2024.**

### **4.3 BUILDING OUR STAFF TEAMS AND WORKING WITH INTEGRITY**

BBC Media Action is trying to build a better world. That means that how we behave is as important as what we do. We have reviewed and rearticulated our values and try to work to them.

We have had policies in place for many years about safeguarding those we work with and treating our colleagues with respect. In light of the recent incidents of sexual harassment in the development sector and in wider society, we are continually reviewing these policies and during 2018 will deliver refreshing training to safeguarding champions in all our offices and to colleagues across the world. We will continue to remind ourselves frequently of the behaviour expected of us in terms not only of safeguarding and respect at work, but the Bribery Act, good use of finance and other

resources, and keeping our colleagues safe and secure. Those we work with are being told of our whistle blowing policy and encouraged to use it whenever appropriate.

Where we hear of abuse of power, we will investigate and take action as appropriate.

We have around 75 staff working in headquarters and a further 500 staff around the world, some of whom are London-based staff delivering projects.

**Between 2018 and 2024, we will seek to keep our cost-base to the minimum necessary to deliver effective and high-quality programming. We do not plan to significantly increase central office staffing and we expect staff numbers in our country offices to fluctuate depending on the work that we are delivering during particular periods.**

We draw our staff from media organisations (including the rest of the BBC), the international development sector, the media development sector and from academia and the commercial sector. We recognise that the diverse mix of skills and voices within our teams leads to better discussion, decisions and outcomes. Finding expertise in communication for development and media development is not easy so it is important that we continue to develop our own staff.

**During the period 2018–2024, we will continue to promote more diverse staff teams as set out in our diversity strategy – across gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and social class – addressing the particular challenges in each location where we work.**



**We will draw up a staff development strategy that includes and extends our practice of enabling staff exchanges or placements in other countries in support of staff development and sharing learning and expertise. And we will provide space for staff to spend time on work that will strengthen the organisation, promote learning and shape our future thinking.**

**We will support staff to deliver effectively and take action when they are not doing so.**

#### **4.4 IMPROVING OUR OPERATIONS**

We will continue to find ways to reduce our running costs and deliver more effectively to be as cost-effective as possible. Early in the period 2018–2024, we will see further benefits of the investments we have made in moving to a single global cloud-based technology platform.

Integration with our global finance system will allow us to be more efficient and use financial management information more easily to make timely, informed decisions at all levels of the organisation.

Digital systems can transform the way we work, making information-sharing and collaborative working much easier across our global locations and allowing us to do more with fewer people.

**We expect that our operating model will evolve throughout the period 2018–2024 as we develop our digital platform.**

#### **4.5 IMPROVING HOW WE LEARN**

We work on challenging issues in a complex world where understanding context is vital for impact. Our in-depth research, understanding the different populations we communicate with and the power dynamics that influence behaviour, gives us a great basis to do effective work. However, as design thinking, adaptive programming, and iterative project design and evaluation become the norm in global development, we know we have further work to do.

**We will review and improve how we collectively learn, ensuring our project management, information-sharing and learning processes support and encourage evolution and refinement as we implement our work. Central to this is ensuring robust theories of change are at the heart of our project design, management, monitoring and evaluation processes.**

#### **4.6 ENSURING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

Our trustees are responsible for BBC Media Action's strategy, responsible use of resources and ensuring that we operate in line with our governing documents. They fulfil their responsibilities through board meetings, an annual away day, a Finance and Audit subcommittee, a Governance subcommittee and engagement by individual trustees in understanding particular areas of work.

**Early in the period 2018–2024, trustees will carry out a governance review to ensure that they are discharging their responsibilities as effectively as possible.**

# 5. Links and references

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1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/policy/approach-papers/governance>
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/policy/approach-papers/health>
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/policy/approach-papers/resilience-and-humanitarian-response>
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/policy/approach-papers/gender-equality>
5. <http://dataportal.bbcmediaaction.org/site>
6. <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/practicebriefings/inspiring-participation.pdf>
7. <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research/health-drama-behaviour-change.pdf>
8. <http://dataportal.bbcmediaaction.org/site/assets/uploads/2016/07/Building-Resilience-research-report.pdf>



Cover image: A community discussion in Northern Nigeria, part of BBC Media Action's programme to help families make informed choices about immunising their children.

Find out more:

**[bbcmediaaction.org](http://bbcmediaaction.org)**



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