



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

OUR PROGRAMMES, OUR
STRATEGIES AND IMPACT STORIES



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Message from Executive director

In 2024, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) recorded significant achievements, reinforcing our commitment to press freedom, democratic governance, and social justice:

Our flagship journalism project, The Fourth Estate, led impactful investigations that exposed corruption in Ghana's scholarship scheme and public education procurement processes, leading to government action and policy reforms.

Ahead of Ghana's 2024 elections, we co-established a national Media Situation Room under the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition. This initiative helped counter mis/disinformation and was commended by ECOWAS and the UN for its role in safeguarding electoral integrity.

We launched Guinea-Bissau's first-ever National Framework on the Safety of Journalists, and established the West Africa Network of Activists and Media Defense Lawyers (WANAMDEL) – 14 lawyers from 11 West African countries providing legal support to journalists and activists across the sub-region.

Our Equal Voices project in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire resulted in award-winning journalism and the creation of gender desks in newsrooms, advancing media gender equality. Through our investigative journalism fellowships, we empowered emerging journalists to lead critical reporting on elections and extractive governance, producing stories that are shaping public discourse.

We advanced peacebuilding in Ghana by working with the media and Fulbe associations to challenge stigmatizing narratives and foster mutual understanding and social cohesion. We secured over USD 2.3 million in funding and reached over 16 million people through our digital platforms – strengthening both our capacity and impact.

As we look ahead, we remain resolute in our mission to promote press freedom, freedom of expression, and democratic resilience across West Africa.



Sulemana Braimah
Executive Director



MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Media development, Gender in media reforms & Illicit Financial Flows

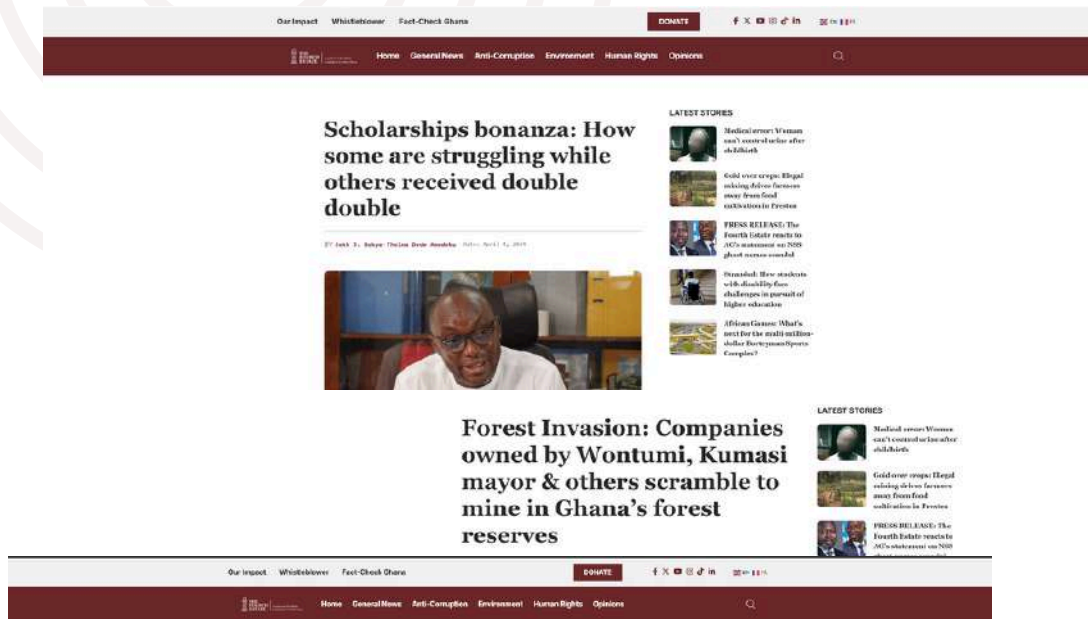
THE INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM PROJECT



A Project of the Media Foundation for West Africa

THE FOURTH ESTATE

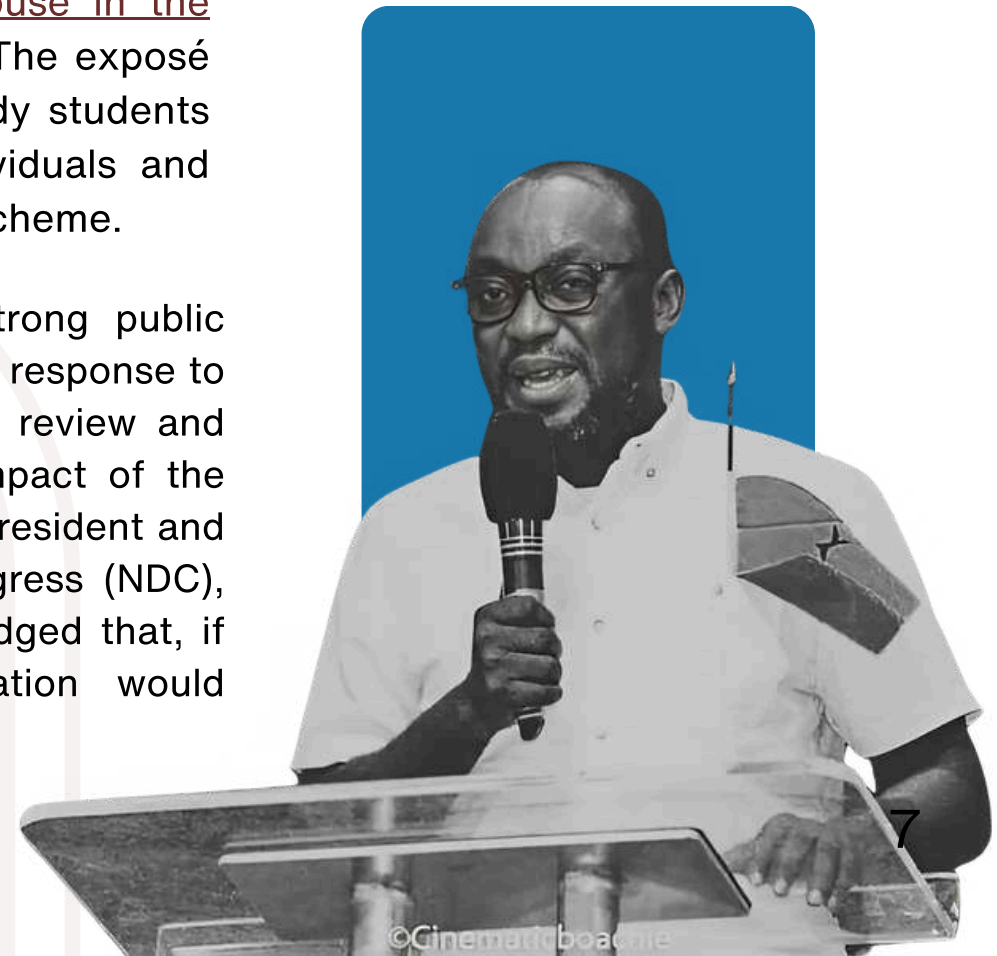
Critical Reporting: The Fourth Estate's most **impactful** stories in 2024



The Fourth Estate Investigative Reporting Triggers Government **Reforms** in Scholarship Administration

Impact of The Fourth Estate's Investigative Journalism on Scholarship Accountability in Ghana. In April 2024, The Fourth Estate, the investigative journalism project of the MFWA, uncovered deep-rooted corruption, cronyism, and abuse in the administration of government scholarships in Ghana. The exposé revealed that scholarships meant for brilliant but needy students were routinely diverted to politically connected individuals and their associates, undermining the core purpose of the scheme.

The report sparked national outrage, catalyzing a strong public demand for accountability and systemic reform. In direct response to the revelations, the government initiated a process to review and sanitize the scholarship administration system. The impact of the investigation extended into the political arena. Former President and flagbearer of the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), John Mahama, publicly referenced the exposé and pledged that, if elected in the upcoming elections, his administration would prosecute individuals found culpable in the scandal.



Education Ministry announces review of wi-fi contract after expose by The Fourth Estate

In June 2024, Ghana's Education Ministry announced that it had decided to vary an Ghc84million contract that the government had signed with an internet service provider, Lifted Logistics Limited, to provide internet connectivity to public Senior High Schools, after it emerged that Lifted Logistics was not providing value for money. The company's shabby performance was exposed by the Fourth Estate.



Defending Truth, **Strengthening Democracy**: The Impact of the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition in Ghana's Elections 2024



In a decisive move to safeguard Ghana's electoral integrity, the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition, comprising Fact-Check Ghana (Media Foundation for West Africa), Dubawa Ghana (Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development), and GhanaFact (FactSpace West Africa) established a Media Situation Room to combat misinformation and disinformation during the 2024 elections.

Global **Recognition** and High-Level Engagements



A high-level delegation from the Office of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) visited the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition's Elections 2024 Media Situation Room, commending the Coalition for its proactive efforts in combating misinformation and disinformation during the elections. The delegation was led by Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS.



The Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition also welcomed a delegation of observers from the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) at the Ghana Elections 2024 Media Situation Room. The observers commended the Coalition's dedication to combating misinformation and disinformation, highlighting its crucial role in ensuring a transparent and credible electoral process. They also emphasized the importance of upholding information integrity to strengthen democratic governance and public trust in elections.

Supporting the Ghanaian Press to Self-Regulate: PRINPAG reviews its Code of Ethics



Ghana's media has been an important fulcrum for the country's democracy. However, it remains a concerning fact that its work continues to be fraught with excesses and unprofessionalism. The incidence of these blots on the media's work, unfortunately, continues to aggravate, courting calls from some stakeholders, including the country's media regulator, the National Media Commission (NMC) for press freedom to be curtailed with laws.

As a leading stakeholder in the media, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) remains resolute in the position that media professionalism is key in disarming those justifying state censorship. Consequently, when the Private Newspaper and Online Publishers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG) requested assistance from the Foundation to update its code of ethics for its members and bring the document in alignment with modern standards, the MFWA was more than happy to help.

**STARTED IN
MARCH 2024,**

the Foundation hired the service of a consultant and oversaw the review of the **PRINPAG code** of ethics which was subsequently launched in October 2024. The document has since been formalized as an official working code for members of PRINPAG.

MFWA IN ACTION



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Like the President (of PRINPAG) said, every profession needs a framework of ethics as guardrail for its core occupational values. thanks to the MFWA and DW Akademie, PRINPAG is having a very fit-for-purpose document in this revised code of ethics

*Rebecca Ekpe,
Public Affairs Officer, GJA*

Promoting **Press Freedom** and Access to Quality Information in **Guinea-Bissau**



The political environment in Guinea Bissau remains hostile, and that means that the country's media is operating under conditions that are far from ideal. Hostilities towards media practitioners have often manifested in the form of arrests and prosecutions over critical stories, and in some cases, downright brutality at the hands of security agents.

Often when suchlike abuses happen, there is no constructive resolution and one of the factors for this lack of proper closure is the absence of a framework to address them. Being aware of this, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), as part of a project funded by the European Union Office in Guinea Bissau, came up with a framework for the safety of journalists in the country.

On May 3, 2024, the National Comprehensive Framework on the Safety of Journalists was launched. As the launch coincided with the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day, there was a refocusing of attention on the safety of journalists and commitment by the government of Guinea Bissau to ensure that journalists are safe. The framework includes a mechanism for addressing violations against journalists and setting up a Complaints Settlement Committee.

MFWA IN ACTION

Promoting Gender Equality in Ghanaian and Ivorian Media

The media is society's most automatic vehicle for social change. However, in the matter of gender equity, the media itself is very guilty of the inequities that its platforms are used to advocate against. Research continues to show that women are not well represented in the managerial and editorial positions in media organizations



The MFWA, in partnership with French media organization, Canal France International, last year started the implementation of a programme dubbed Equal Voices to instigate gender equity in the media in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

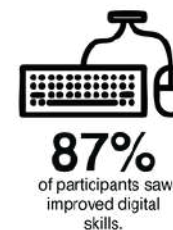
Training sessions under the **Equal voices** project implemented by the MFWA and CFI



Key Feedback & Results



Project Impact



Strategic meetings under the **Equal voices** project implemented by the MFWA and CFI



Session with Gender-Focused Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) – Focused on identifying barriers preventing women from advancing in media leadership roles and gaps in gender advocacy.

Session with Academia (previous reporting period) – Engaged members of the academic community to analyze research findings and trends in gender representation in media.



Session with Policymakers and Media Associations – Discussed challenges women face in the media industry and existing interventions to address gender inequality.

Session with Journalists, Editors, and Media Managers – Explored the lack of standalone gender policies in media houses and the need for structural support for women in media



CFI beneficiaries & Success stories



Award Recognition

A beneficiary of the project, Humul-Khrusum Tahiru,

won two awards—the Best Gender Award and Female Journalist of the Year Award—at the Upper East Regional Ghana Journalists Association Awards. This was a result of her gender-sensitive documentary on the challenges female aspirants face in the District Assembly Elections.



Media Leadership Initiatives

Multimedia Group Sets Up a Gender Desk

Thanks to a trainee from the Equal Voices project, Anita Serwaa Adzoga from Multimedia Group Limited set up a Gender Desk in her newsroom to prioritize gender-focused stories.

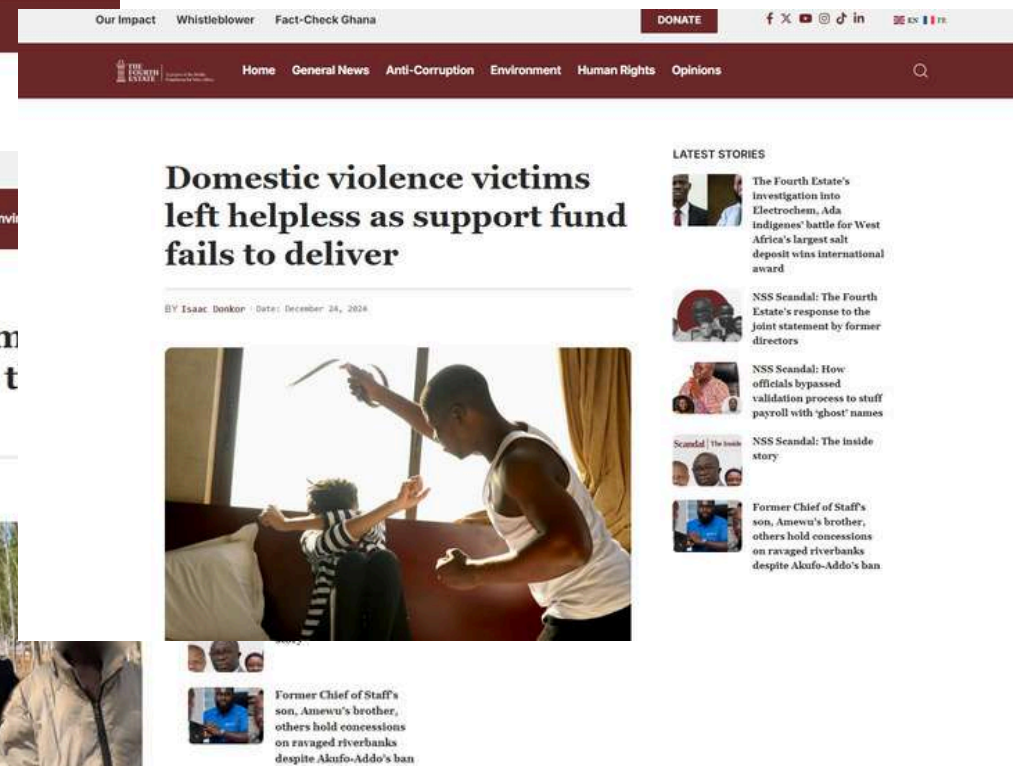
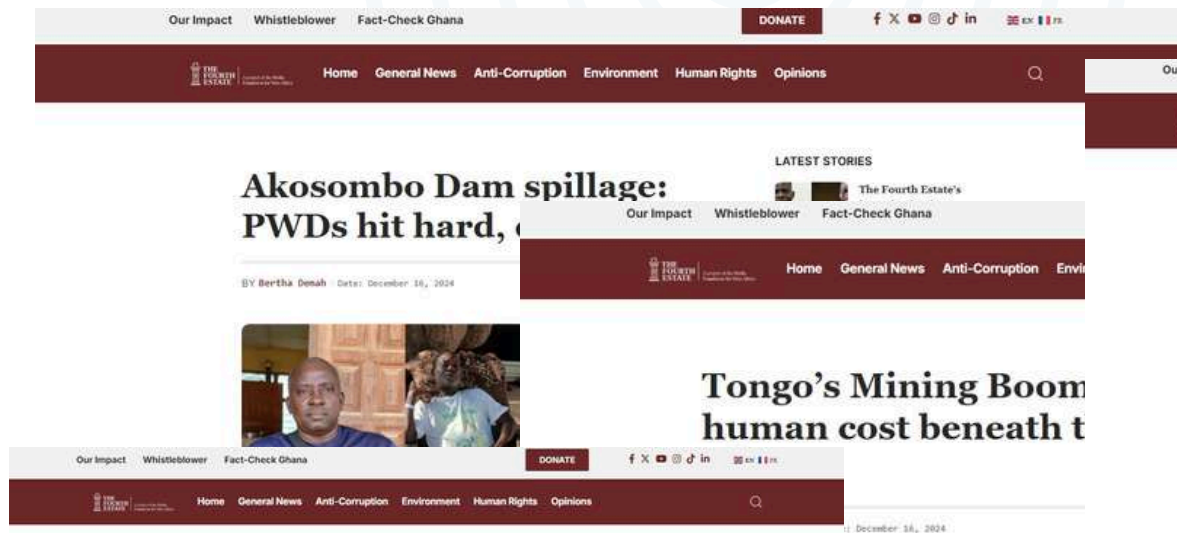
MFWA Fellowships: Pipelines for **New Generations** of Professional Journalists



Investigative journalism continues to be that area of journalism that traditional media educational institutions in West Africa are not producing enough practitioners to feed. Consequently, a felt void continues to exist within the media as far as investigative journalism is concerned. However, that void is slowly shrinking thanks to a tradition of Fellowships that the MFWA has established, and has been using to equip early-career journalists with investigative skills. In 2024, the tradition continued with the MFWA hosting the fourth and fifth edition of the NGIJ 2024 focusing on election reporting and extractive journalism

The fourth and fifth edition of the Next Generation Investigative Journalism (NGIJ) Fellowship ran between September and December.

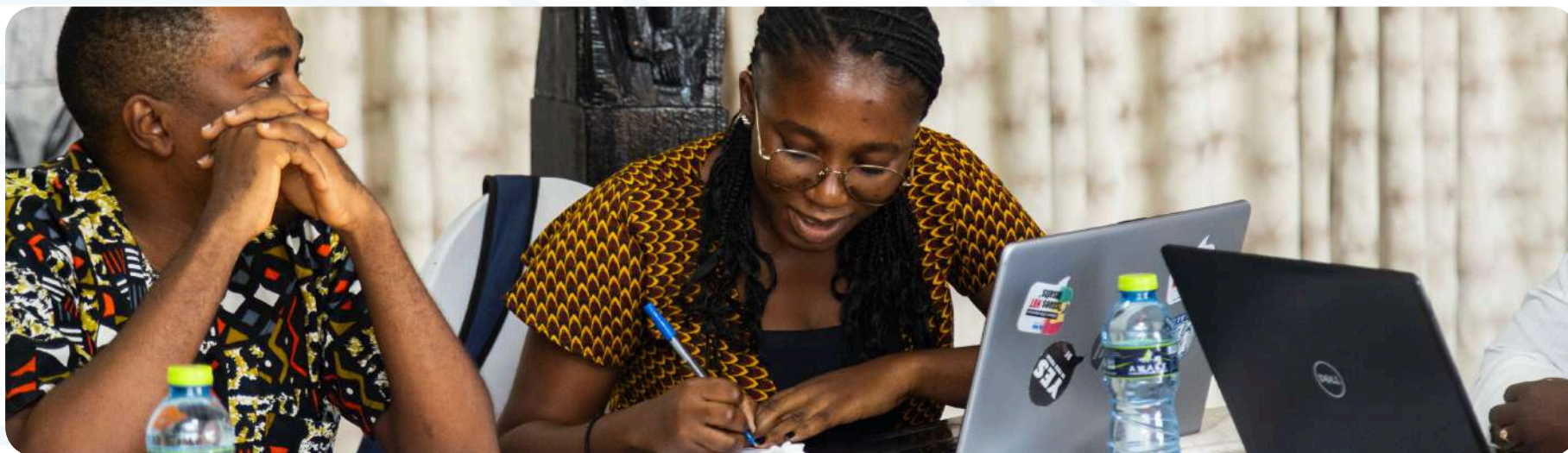
Publications under the Next Generation Investigative Journalism Fellowship 2024



Strengthened **Investigative Journalism Ecosystem** on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania



Through the implementation of the two-year Expose the Flow project, we have enhanced the capacity of journalists and newsrooms in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania to investigate and report on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs). By the end of 2024, sixty (60) journalists and six (6) newsrooms had been empowered with specialized skills, tools, and editorial support to produce impactful stories on IFFs, an issue long considered too technical for effective media coverage. The project builds on MFWA's earlier efforts in fiscal justice, including training for 20 journalists under the Strengthening Civil Society and Media Capacity for Fiscal Justice initiative, and a three-month journalism fellowship for 10 young journalists on progressive taxation and IFFs.

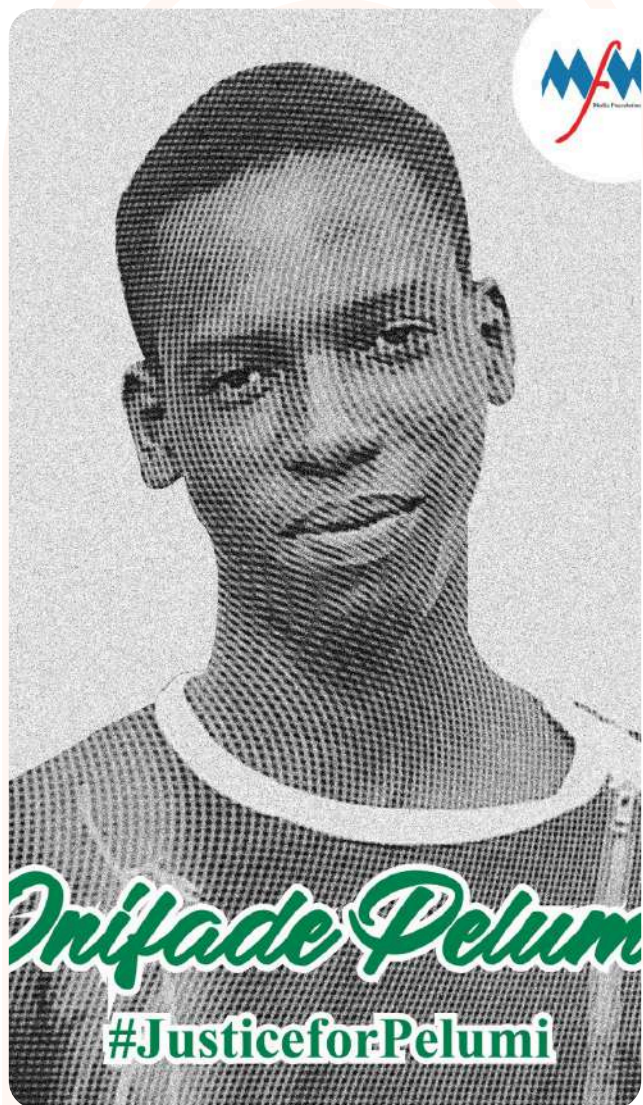


FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION & DIGITAL RIGHTS

Press freedom, legal support
and Digital Public infrastructure



The pursuit of **justice** for the marginalized



A key component of the MFWA's work is ensuring social justice by providing voice for the voiceless and pursuing justice for the downtrodden in society. In 2024, the Foundation carried on with this component of its work, joining forces with sister organizations to demand justice for slain Nigerian journalist, Pelumi Onifade.

In February 2024, the MFWA, alongside CPJ and IPI, co-petitioned the Lagos Governor over the 2020 killing of Mr. Onifade during the #EndSARS protests. The petition demanded justice and the release of the victim's body for burial. Since the petition, the Nigerian government has responded by opening an investigation into the killing.

The petition forms part of the MFWA's ongoing advocacy to get justice for Pelumi Onifade. On July 27, 2023, the MFWA issued this [statement](#) to mark the 1000th-day milestone of Onifade's death.

WANAMDEL set up to defend West African journalists and activists **against legal harassment**

If society's powerful bullies had their way, all journalists and social activists

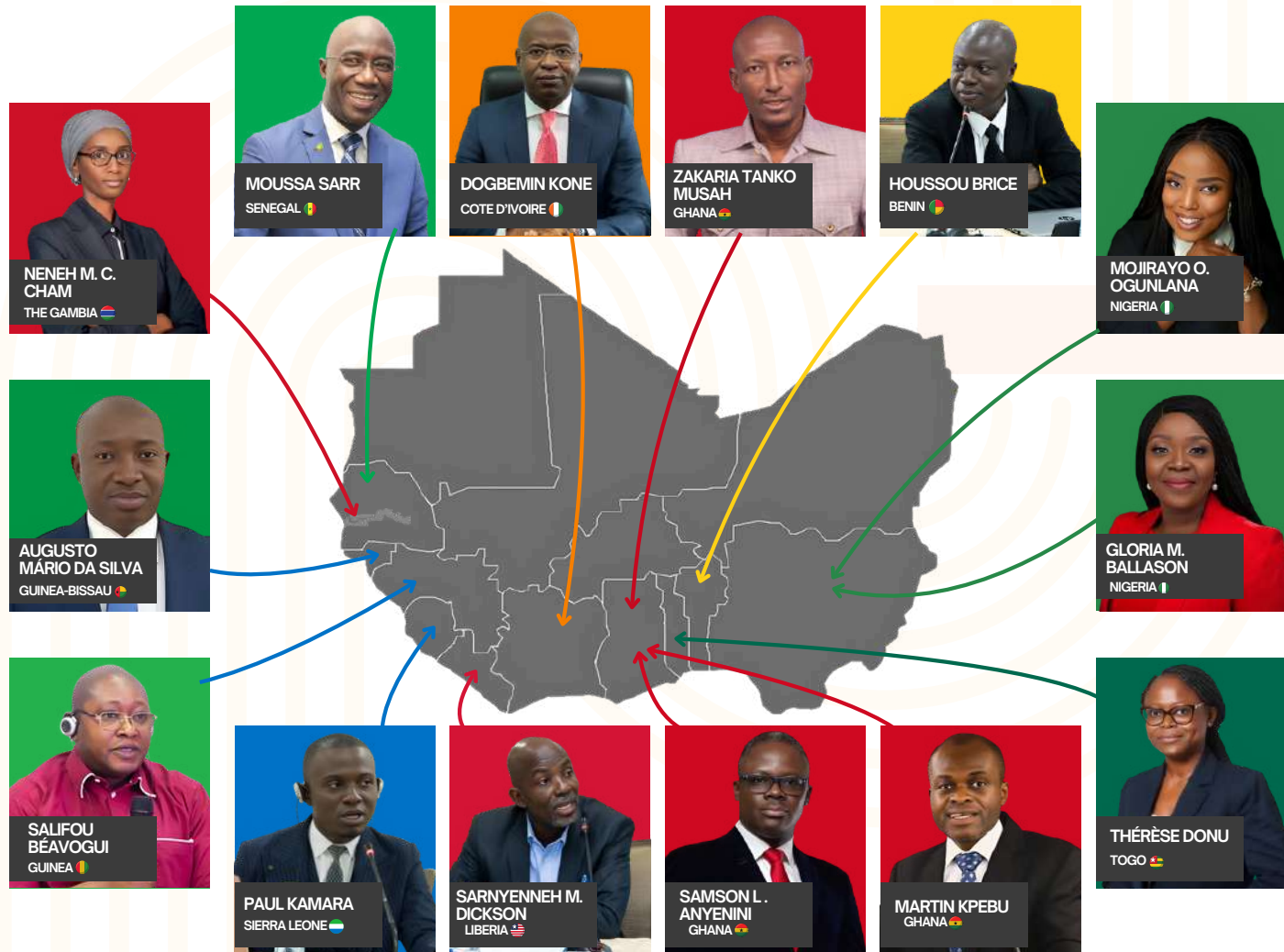
would pander to their parochial interests and tremble at their whims and caprices. This power-lust is very manifest, even in a West Africa, where the generality of States profess the rule of law as the main principle of state policy. Often, those who can afford it, have hired the most powerful lawyers that money can buy, to sponsor lawsuits that harass journalists or activists who work to expose wrong. The harassment has often been in the form of SLAPPs - Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP); a civil suit which is deliberately purposed to silence free expression. Additionally, some of the suits have been used to cripple media organizations, practitioners, and activists with hefty court fines.

In response to the persistent trend of suchlike legal harassment against journalists and civic activists in West Africa, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) put together a network of defense lawyers to provide timely and effective legal assistance to victims. The group of lawyers is known as the **West Africa Network of Activists and Media Defense Lawyers (WANAMDEL)**.



MFWA IN ACTION

Made up of fourteen (14) lawyers from eleven (11) West African countries,



Training Workshop on How journalists can avoid defamation suits

Forty (40) journalists from across Ghana have benefited from a two-day workshop on how to avoid legal traps and defamation suits.

The workshop, which was facilitated by experienced media, communication and legal experts, exposed the participants to the legal provisions that govern media freedoms, freedom of expression and journalism practice in Ghana. It also highlighted specific defamation provisions that are often invoked and weaponized to harass journalists with the aim of silencing them.



Key Training Areas



Understanding defamation and its legal implications

Best practices for fact-checking and responsible journalism

How to avoid legal risks in investigative reporting

Case studies on media-related lawsuits

The distinguished media, communications and legal experts, Professor Kwame Karikari, and two members of the West Africa Network of Activists and Media Defence Lawyers (WANAMDEL), Lawyer Zakaria Tanko Musah and Lawyer Samson Lardy Anyenini, unanimously underscored four simple tactics journalists can employ to avoid defamation



Participants' **perspectives** about the training & **its impact**

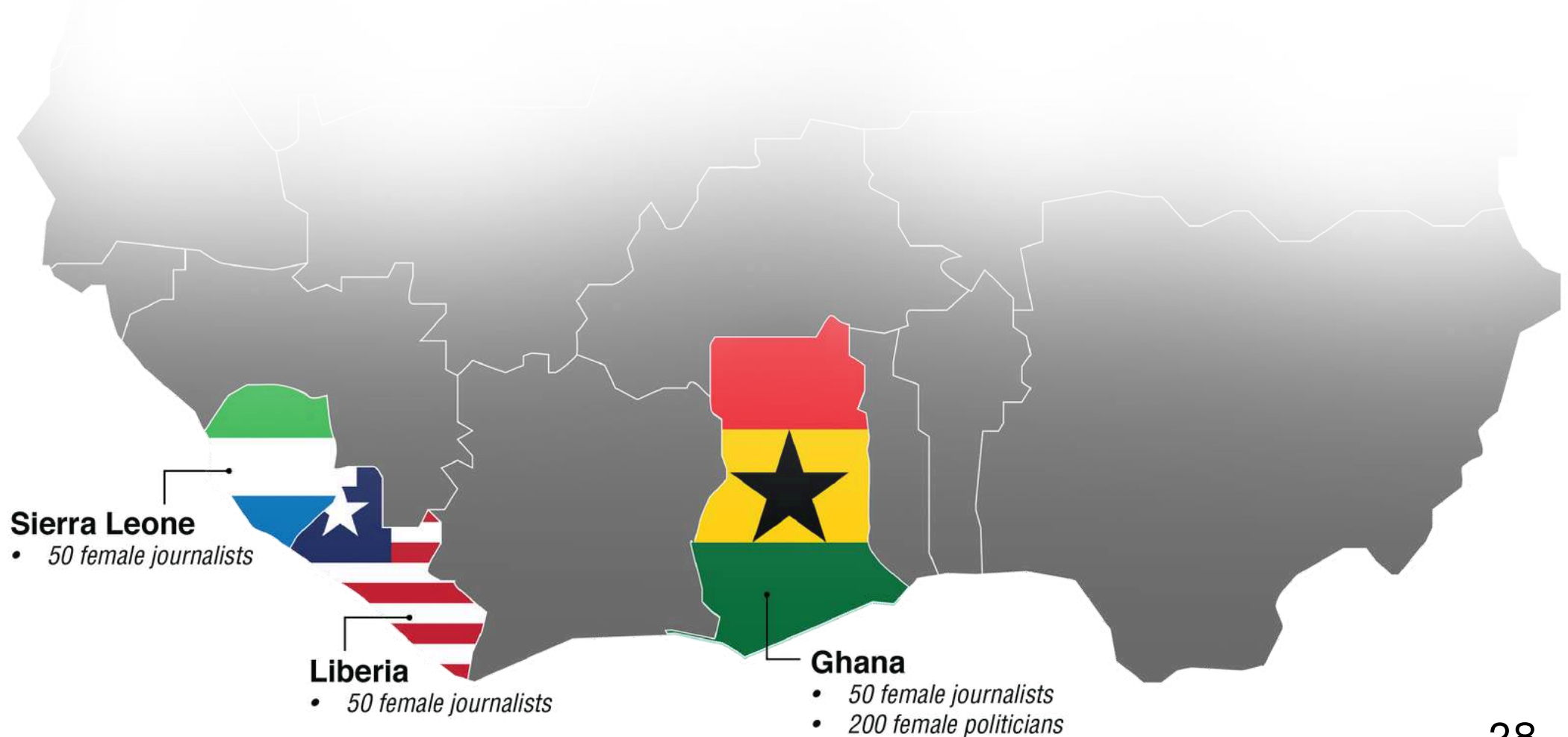


I've learned that even the language used can amount to defamation. So, for instance, then I thought that the mere fact that you've used that alleged would relieve you of defamation of anything regarding defamation.

Abdul Gafarou Salifu
Dreamz fm



Training workshops on digital literacy and skills for **female journalists, activists, politicians** in Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone



MEDIA FOR PEACE & SOCIAL COHESION

**Affective Polarisation, Counter Mis/disinformation
& Election Integrity**



Enhancing **Social Cohesion** and Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism

For a very long time, Fulanis have been stereotyped as callous and violent invaders of communities in Ghana. This has often led to violent clashes between members of the Ghanaian communities and the Fulbe, often leading to death. Unfortunately, the Ghanaian media has been very complicit in the stereotypical representation of the Fulbe which stokes marginalization and hate towards them. Recognizing the media's share in the problem, but also, the power that it has to reverse the systemic stereotype that the Fulbe suffer, the MFWA has been working to reshape the narrative about the Fulbe through a project called Various activities under under the "Promoting A Positive image of the Fulbe in the Ghanaian media" that is funded by the USAID-OTI.





We also feel like we're being threatened. Sometimes, when we receive these reports, which we hear on the media, on television, on the radio, when these stories seem so negative, we're even afraid to work with these communities because we don't know who will fight against you just because of these negative reports.

Sulemana Abdulai

General Secretary, National Council of Fulani Chiefs



We don't say dagomba farmer, we don't say ewe carpenter, even though they do a lot of time in carpentry. So why do we say Fulani Headsman? That's the problem, it's as simple as that. Don't say Fulani Headsman, say Headsman

Umaru Sander,

Broadcast journalist, Channel One Tv

Various activities under the “Promoting A Positive image of the Fulbe in the Ghanaian media”



3 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SESSIONS

Media and Fulbe Associations in Accra and Tamale



6 DAYS OF TRAINING SESSIONS

Media managers, media association, editors, journalists, Fulbe associations in Accra and Tamale



ACCRA DIALOGUE SESSIONS

Media managers, media association, editors, journalists, Fulbe associations in Accra



TAMALE DIALOGUE SESSIONS

Media managers, media association, editors, journalists, Fulbe associations in Accra

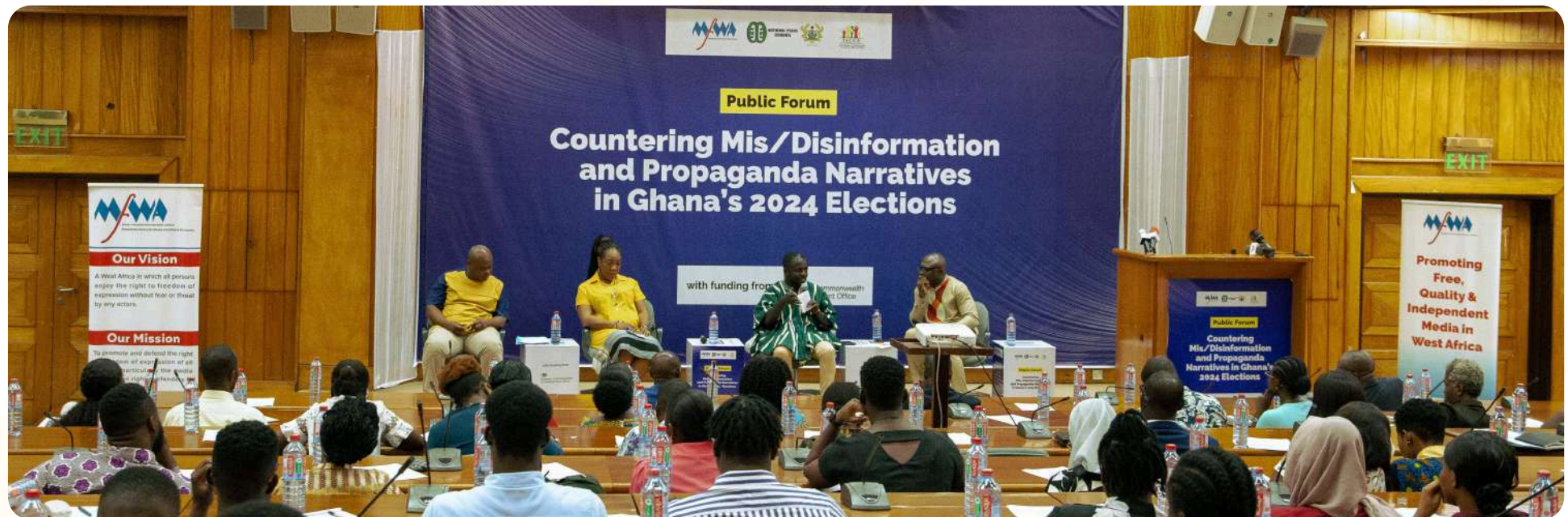




I must admit that initially I was skeptical when we started, because myself, I'm Fulbe, and I happen to be a journalist too, so I was wondering what new thing I'll be learning from this entire workshop. It has been very insightful, because it was more of a facilitator and participant workshop, it was very interactive.

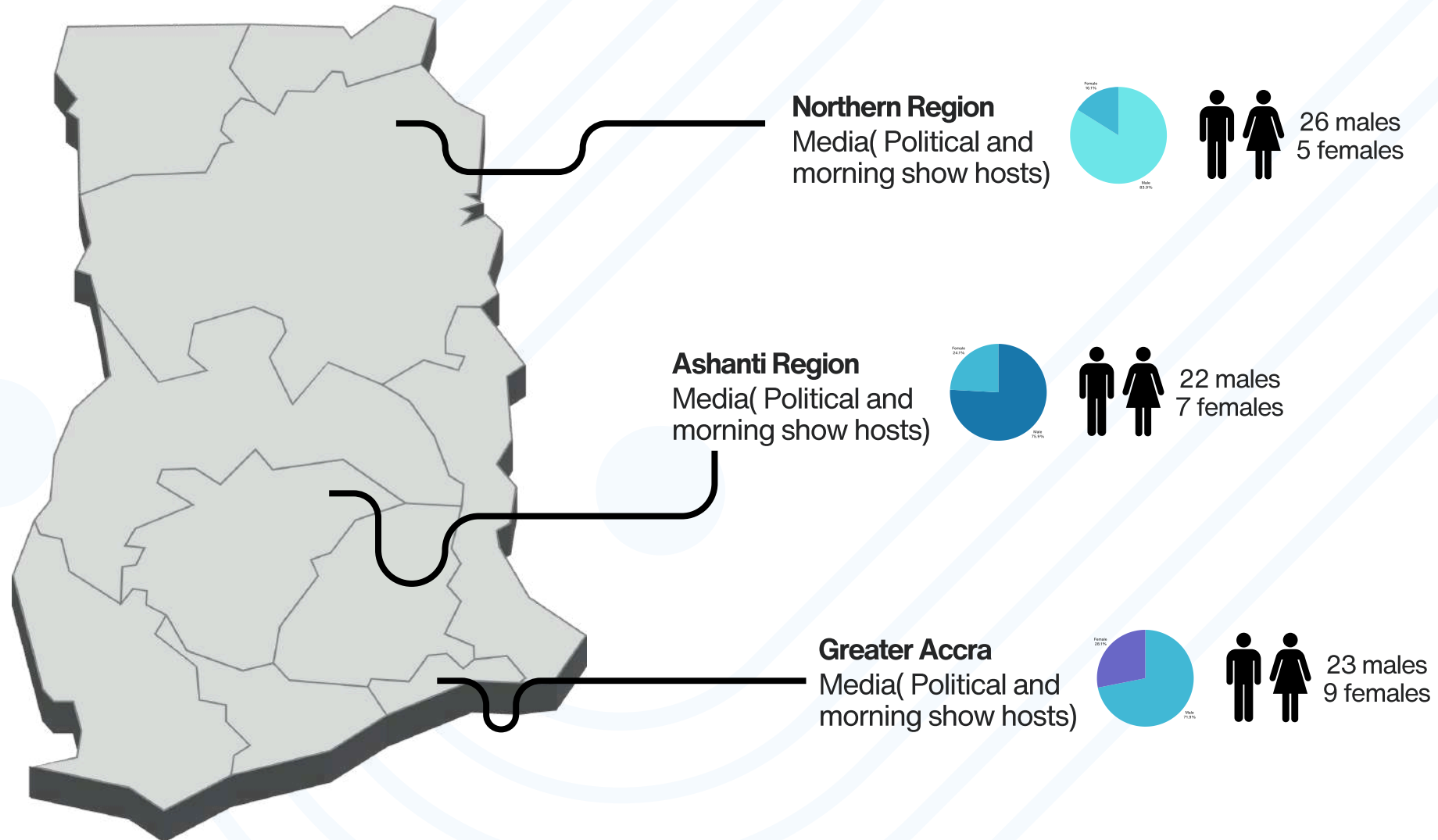
Khadija Sissy Mohammed
Ghana Broadcasting Corporation

Countering Mis/Disinformation and Language Behaviors that can lead to Violence in Ghana's 2024 Elections



In the lead-up to Ghana's 2024 general elections, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) implemented a series of strategic interventions to strengthen information integrity and promote peaceful democratic processes. Recognising the threat posed by mis/disinformation and incendiary language during electoral periods, the MFWA engaged key stakeholders to build capacity, influence narratives, and foster dialogue aimed at mitigating election-related tensions. Through targeted training workshops, policy dialogues, and multi-stakeholder forums, the initiative brought together a broad cross-section of actors, including journalists, editors, media managers, political communicators, and civil society leaders, from across the country. These activities equipped participants with tools to identify and counter false narratives, uphold ethical journalism, and minimise the risk of election-related violence.

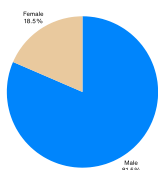
Training workshops journalists, media managers and editors trained on **Information integrity**, election integrity



Policy dialogues with Managers, Editors, Media Associations, Policy Influencers on Information integrity, election integrity

Bono East Region

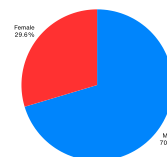
Media(Managers, Editors, Media Associations, Policy Influencers)



22 males
5 females

Eastern Region

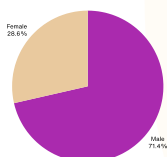
Media(Managers, Editors, Media Associations, Policy Influencers)



19 males
8 females

Western Region

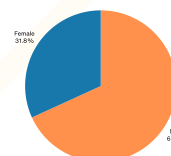
Media(Managers, Editors, Media Associations, Policy Influencers)



15 males
6 females

Greater Accra

Media(Managers, Editors, Media Associations, Policy Influencers)

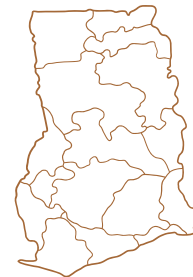


45 males
21 females

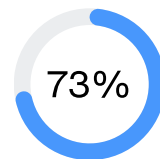
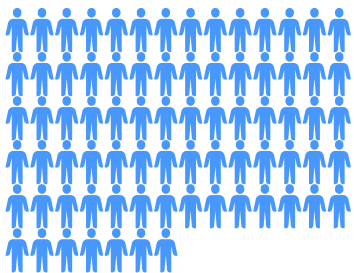
Political Parties trained in Countering **Information Disorder** and **Propaganda Narratives** ahead of Ghana's 2024 elections



Political party communication officers, youth organisers, women organisers, regional chairmen

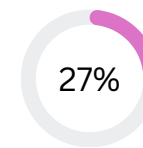
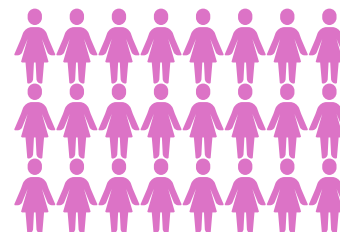


Greater Accra region
Northern region
Ashanti Region



Male Statistic

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Female Statistic

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INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Resources, Communications, Partnerships, & Results



Partnerships and Engagements with Regional and International bodies



In September 2024, the MFWA, leveraged on this partnership by holding a strategic planning session with the regional body on September 3-4, 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria. The discussion focused on enhancing media capacity, countering violent extremism and disinformation, and promoting media freedom in line with ECOWAS Vision 2050. A team of selected management and board members of the MFWA who have embarked on strategic stakeholder engagement in Liberia had a meeting with the President, H.E. Joseph Boakai and Liberia's Speaker of Parliament, Cllr. Jonathan Fonati Koffa

Improving **Institutional capacity** and programme delivery

As part of its continued efforts to strengthen institutional capacity and enhance programme delivery, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) welcomed several talented professionals to its team in 2024.



Daniel Kwame Ampofo Adjei, PhD., PMP®
Programme Manager, Institutional
Development

New staff for the year 2024



William Jalulah
Associate Editor, The
Fourth Estate



Fatimata Mustapha
Program assistant, Media for
Peace and Social Cohesion

New staff for the year 2024



Fifi Anaman
Reporter, The Fourth
Estate



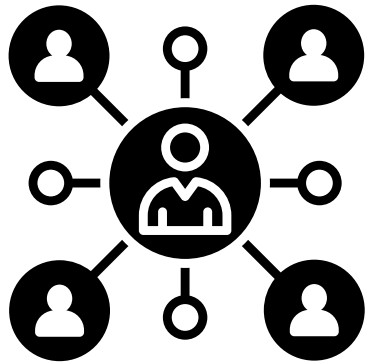
Rhoda Bondzie
Program assistant,
Digital Rights



Nubuke Gadzekpo Amoah
Project Associate

2024 Digital Footprint Overview

Total Reach

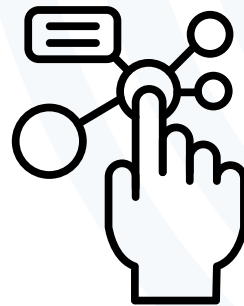


4.1 Million
Unique People

Across websites & social
media platforms



Content Engagement



16 Million
Views & Interactions

Measured across MFWA, The
Fourth Estate, and Fact-Check
Ghana digital platforms

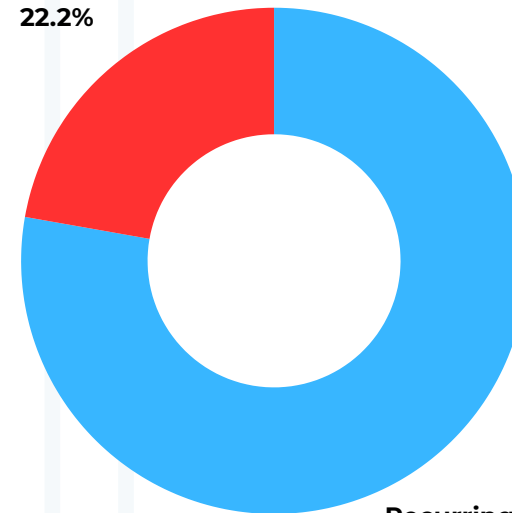
2024 financial year, a year of a strong and diverse funding portfolio



**USD 2.3
Million**
in Grant Support

**Securing USD 2.3 Million in Grants
from a Diverse Group of Partners**

**New Partners
22.2%**



**Recurring Donors
77.8%**

**14 recurring donors & 4 new
partners have enabled us to expand
our initiatives.**

Acknowledgement to our funding partners



30%
Media &
Development
Organizations



**Ford
Foundation**



30%
Government &
Diplomatic Agencies



GERMAN
EMBASSY
ACCRA



Kingdom of the Netherlands



40%
Foundations &
NGOs



ifex