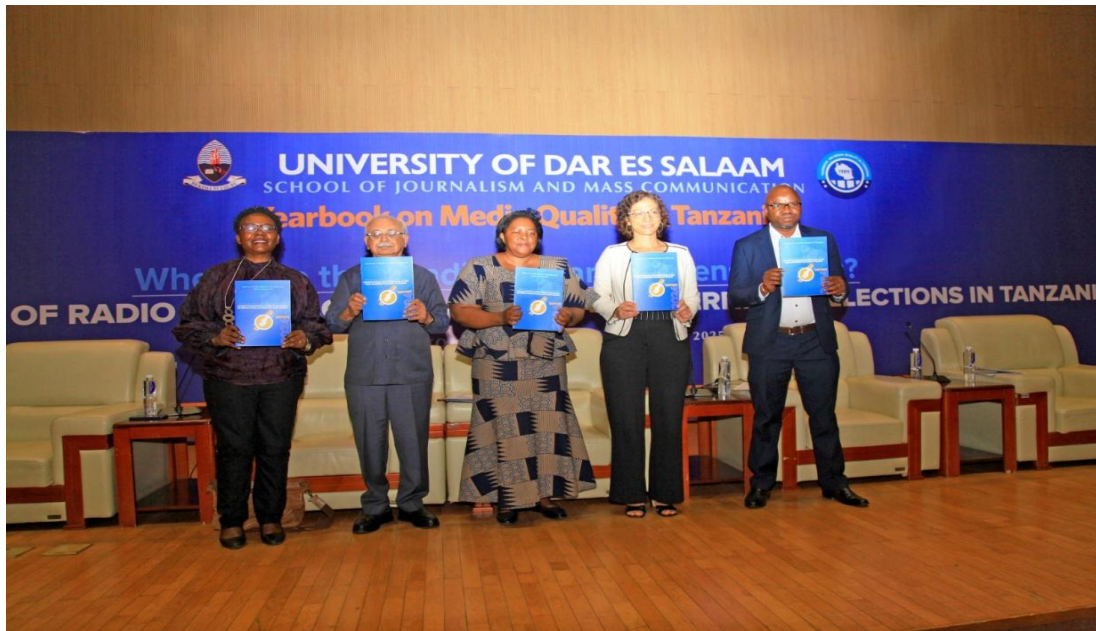


**UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
YEARBOOK ON MEDIA QUALITY IN TANZANIA RESEARCH PROJECT (2021-2024)
CONTRACT NO: 81069023; 301011
OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEARBOOK ON MEDIA QUALITY 2024
COVERING 1ST JANUARY – 31ST DECEMBER 2024/JUNE 2025**



**SUBMISSION TO THE SWITZERLAND EMBASSY AND UK HIGH COMMISSION IN
TANZANIA**

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1.0 Introduction

In May 2021, the University of Dar es Salaam's School of Journalism and Mass Communication (UDSM-SJMC) entered into a collaborative agreement with the Embassy of Switzerland in Tanzania to undertake a four-year media research project titled the '**Yearbook on Media Quality in Tanzania Research Project (2021-2024)**.' The primary aim of this project is to enhance the quality of media reporting in the country through research, training, and stakeholder engagement.

In 2024, the final year of the project's implementation, the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) received a contribution of USD 162,500 from the Switzerland Embassy as of December 2024. Additionally, that same year, UDSM's School of Journalism and Mass Communication (UDSM-SJMC) entered into a contract with the UK High Commission to co-finance the implementation of the Yearbook 2024, totalling USD 114,634.15 (GBP 94,000). As of December, UDSM-SJMC had received USD 102,662.41. These project contracts require UDSM-SJMC, as the implementing party, to submit operational and financial reports. Therefore, this operational report fulfils a contractual obligation by providing an overview of the project activities implemented during the reporting period.

The Yearbook on Media Quality in Tanzania 2024 assessed the coverage of the 2024 Local Government Elections (LGEs) in Tanzania Mainland. It assessed 35 local radio stations drawn from different parts of the Tanzania Mainland, including the national radio, *TBC Taifa*. The selection ensured the inclusion of local radio stations with varied licences, namely district and regional licensees. Initially, the project had planned to study 40 radio stations, but five (5) radio stations had to be dropped during the recording period as they experienced technical faults, mainly transmitter breakdown and could not cope with the pace of recording. The assessment criteria included the following aspects: how well the radio stations informed the citizenry about the elections and the candidates running for office, how they interrogated candidates' promises, and how they engaged the citizens (voters), who, according to the country's constitution, are sovereign. The Yearbook 2024 report is available from the project's webpage: <https://sjmc.udsm.ac.tz/yearbook/downloads/>.

2.0 Major highlights Yearbook 2024

- **Positive reception:** The Yearbook 2024 report was launched on 12th March 2025, and was attended by representatives from the Switzerland Embassy, the UK High Commission, President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), university faculty and journalism students from various universities, journalists and editors, representatives from political parties, CSOs, media support organisation and international organisations. For the four consecutive years, stakeholders' attendance and participation during the launches have been consistently impressive.
- **Participation at the WPF 2025:** The project team was invited to participate in World Press Freedom Day 2025, which took place in Arusha. This marked the first time the findings from the Yearbook studies were shared at the event. The project organised a panel discussion titled '*The 2025 Election: The Media and Journalists We Want.*' This discussion was attended by high-level representatives from media regulatory bodies, including the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) and the Information Service Department (MAELEZO), university representatives, press clubs, media organisations, editors, and journalists.
- **Dissemination:** In addition to those who attended the launch and panel discussion at WPF 2025, the Yearbook team organised a dissemination session with journalists of the two radio stations in Arusha, *Arusha One FM* and *Sunrise FM*. The discussion centred on Tanzania's media and election coverage, drawing on experiences from the Yearbooks 2020 and 2024.

3.2 Yearbook 2024 Launch and Publicity

On March 12, 2025, the University of Dar es Salaam's School of Journalism and Mass Communication (UDSM-SJMC) launched the Yearbook report titled *"Where are the candidates and citizens' voices? Scrutiny of Radio Stations Coverage of 2024 Local Government Elections in Tanzania."* The report launch was attended by various stakeholders, including journalists, editors, representatives from media support organisations, development partners, academics, political parties, and journalism students. The discussions at the launch provided constructive dialogue and reflection on ways to strengthen the quality of radio journalism reporting in Tanzania. The following are the key takeaways from the launch:

- **Coverage of election cycles:** There is an increasing necessity to emphasise the entire electoral process, extending beyond the confines of campaign periods, to ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive representation of citizens' voices. This approach involves engaging voters during elections and fostering ongoing dialogue and participation in civic matters throughout the electoral cycle. By enhancing public awareness and accessibility to information, implementing robust voter education programs, and encouraging community involvement in decision-making, the media can create a more vibrant democratic environment. This holistic strategy ensures that citizens' perspectives and needs are continually acknowledged and integrated into the broader discourse surrounding democracy and development.
- **Strengthening Investigative Journalism (IJ):** Investigative reporting is indispensable in promoting transparency and accountability during elections; however, journalists often encounter significant hurdles. These challenges include a lack of access to critical information, insufficient skill sets, and inadequate resources. Investing in comprehensive training programs, providing robust institutional backing, and establishing sustainable funding models supporting in-depth investigations is essential to strengthening IJ. By doing so, journalists can be empowered to uncover the truth, hold leaders to account, and truly serve the voiceless—the voters.
- **Encouraging media collaboration:** The innovative concept of 'co-opetition'—which merges the principles of cooperation and competition—among media organisations presents a unique opportunity to optimise resource-sharing. By fostering partnerships, media houses

can pool their expertise, share investigative findings, and access broader data sources during elections. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the capabilities of data-driven journalism but also enhances the overall quality of reporting.

- **Advancing gender representation:** The representation of women both as sources of information and as media professionals is an area that still requires significant improvement in journalism reporting. As the world commemorates the progress made since the Beijing+30 agenda, it is essential to emphasise achieving gender balance in media coverage. This includes increasing the number of women in leadership roles within media organisations and ensuring that women's voices and perspectives are prominently featured in news stories and programs during elections. By actively promoting gender equity in reporting and representation throughout the election cycles, the media can foster a more inclusive media landscape that accurately reflects the diversity of society and contributes to a more equitable world.
- **Revitalising journalism education:** The landscape of journalism education must transform significantly to become more solutions-oriented and competency-based. This evolution requires a curriculum to arm graduates with essential practical skills pertinent to today's rapidly changing media environment. Emphasising proficiencies in cutting-edge technology, fostering adaptability to shifting market trends, and honing robust problem-solving capabilities will empower future journalists to effectively navigate and respond to the industry's challenges and demands. Educators can cultivate a new generation of media professionals ready to impact society through this comprehensive approach.
- **Capitalising on media viability:** Financial sustainability is essential for maintaining media independence in today's rapidly evolving landscape. Current educational curricula address various business models and media management strategies; however, it is imperative to integrate a comprehensive focus on 'media entrepreneurship.' This integration will equip aspiring media professionals with the innovative skills and entrepreneurial mindset necessary to navigate challenges and seize opportunities in the industry.
- **Harnessing digital transformation in Journalism:** The rapid evolution of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), social media, and digital platforms, is transforming news production and consumption in Tanzania. Journalists must adapt to these changes to

stay relevant. AI can automate routine tasks and analyse data, allowing journalists to focus on in-depth storytelling. Social media platforms are essential for real-time audience engagement and feedback, enabling immediate interaction with readers. Understanding these digital tools is crucial for reaching younger audiences who prefer online news and spotting fake news, which has become a growing problem during elections.

- **The enduring importance of radio:** In a world increasingly driven by digital technology, radio remains a vital source of information, especially for rural communities. It is a trusted medium that provides essential news and insights, empowering listeners to make informed decisions in their daily lives. Despite technological advancements, radio's ability to connect and inform continues to hold a unique significance.
- **Editorial independence:** It was evident that editorial independence is challenged as journalists and editors feel pressured by owners and politicians. Thus, they restrict their urge to exercise meaningful journalism reporting and end up favouring one party in the election.
- **Election reporting 2025:** The stakeholders urged the University of Dar es Salaam's School of Journalism and Mass Communication (UDSM-SJMC) to include online media in the 2025 media election reporting, as that will help to know how online media, which is steadily growing, is performing vis-à-vis legacy media.



Ms. Consuelo Natale, from the Swiss Embassy, gives remarks during the launch of the Yearbook 2024 report at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) on March 12, 2025.



From left to right: Ms. Consuelo Natale from the Swiss Embassy, Mr. Sylvester Ernest from the UK High Commission, Dean of SJMC, Dr. Mona Mwakalinga, Prof. Issa Shivji from UDSM and Prof. Donatha Tibuhwa (UDSM) peruse the Yearbook 2024 report soon after it was launched on March 12, 2025, at UDSM.



The Executive Director of the Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF), Mr. Dastan Kamanzi, contributes to the findings of the YB 2024 report during the launch held at UDSM.



Secretary General of the Journalists Workers Union of Tanzania (JOWUTA), Mr Suleiman Msuya, shares his views during the launch of the Yearbook 2024 report at UDSM.



Mr Amos Ngosha, Chairperson of the National Independent Broadcasters Association (NIBA), responded to media owners' interference in editorial independence during the launch of the Yearbook 2024 report at UDSM.

3.3 Further dissemination

After the launch of the Yearbook 2024 report, the project team designed a dissemination strategy that was meant to further discuss the findings of the Yearbook 2024 report and previous reports to a wide range of stakeholders, with the main target being local radio stations involved in the Yearbook 2024 report. On 29th May 2025, the Yearbook team (project manager and two co-researchers) organised a panel discussion at the World Press Freedom Day (WPF) held in Arusha to discuss the media's role in the 2025 General Elections. The session was attended by the government officials (Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority, TCRA) and Information Service Department (MAELEZO), members of academia (University of Dodoma, UDOM), Dar es Salaam Tumauni University (DarTU), representatives from media organisations such as Tanzania Media for Community Development (TAMCODE), TAMWA, Chairperson of Arusha Press Club, journalists, editors, and students from Arusha-based journalism colleges. The panel discussion was followed by outreach programs held at *Arusha One FM* and *Sunrise FM* in Arusha on 31st April 2025 and 1st May 2025.



Panel discussion during the WPF 2025: Panellists from left to right: Dr Zacharia Malima (Yearbook 2024 Project manager), Ms. Salome Kitomari (Editor, Nipashe Newspaper), and Mr. Absolom Kibanda (Media Brains). The discussion was moderated by YB co-researcher Abdallah Katunzi (right).



The Director of Arusha One FM, Mr Yahya Abdallah Mnzava (seated second from right), and the Manager of Arusha One FM, Mr Ipyana Musyani (seated second from left), in a group photo with the Yearbook co-researchers and Arusha One FM staff after the discussion of the Yearbook 2024 report and plan for the coverage of the GEs 2025.



The Manager of Sunrise FM, Ms. Hawa Msangi (seated second from right), the Yearbook Programme Manager, Dr Malima Zacharia (first from right), in a group photo with the Yearbook co-researchers and Sunrise FM staff after the discussion of the Yearbook 2024 report and plan for the coverage of the GE's 2025.