

Analysis of the Uptake of Solutions Journalism by the Media and Academe in East Africa



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2FA	Two-Factor Authentication
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AJEA	Annual Journalism Excellence Awards
CHV	Community Health Volunteer(s)
DW Akademie	Deutsche Welle Akademie
EACC	Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
Fojo	Fojo Media Institute
GPS	Global Positioning System
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MCK	Media Council of Kenya
MCL	Mwananchi Communications Limited
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMG	Nation Media Group
NTV Uganda	Nation Television Uganda
ODK	Open Data Kit
RBA	Rwanda Broadcasting Agency
REJN	Rwanda Environmental Journalists Network
RMS	Royal Media Services
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization
SJN	Solutions Journalism Network
SoJo	Solutions Journalism
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TBC	Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation
TEF	Tanzania Editors Forum
TMF	Tanzania Media Foundation
ToTs	Trainers of Trainers
UBC	Uganda Broadcasting Corporation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the uptake and impact of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) across four East African countries—Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania—with a focus on its adoption, practice, and influence within the media ecosystem. Solutions Journalism, defined as rigorous, evidence-based reporting that critically examines responses to societal challenges, is gaining traction in the region as a viable alternative to problem-saturated narratives that dominate conventional media. By documenting not only awareness and training levels but also outcomes and barriers, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how SoJo is reshaping journalism practice, audience engagement, and public discourse.

The study employed a mixed-methods design that combined quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and desk reviews to capture diverse perspectives and ensure the credibility of its findings. A total of 385 respondents participated in the quantitative survey across the four countries: 95 from Kenya, 96 from Rwanda, 96 from Tanzania, and 98 from Uganda. The survey targeted multiple categories within the media ecosystem, with reporters (38 percent) forming the largest group, followed by correspondents (24 percent), editors (20 percent), faculty members in journalism institutions (8 percent), capacity-building and regulatory body representatives (4 percent), and others (6 percent). In addition, qualitative data were collected through 68 key informant interviews, conducted in Kenya (19), Rwanda (16), Tanzania (15), and Uganda (18). These interviews captured the experiences of editors, reporters, faculty members, senior managers, and representatives from capacity-building institutions, providing deeper insights into the uptake and practice of SoJo.

The findings reveal relatively high awareness of Solutions Journalism, particularly in Kenya and Rwanda, where training programs and practice are more advanced compared to Tanzania. Among the 385 respondents surveyed, 70 percent in Kenya and 65 percent in Rwanda demonstrated a strong understanding of SoJo principles, compared to 58 percent in Uganda and 54 percent in Tanzania. Formal training has played a critical role in this uptake, with nonprofit organizations, universities, and international and regional partners, such as the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), Deutsche Welle Akademie, and Science Africa, serving as the primary trainers. In Kenya, 74 percent of respondents reported having received structured training, while in Rwanda, 61 percent indicated the same. Training is often complemented by mentorship programs and workshops, which have allowed practitioners to integrate SoJo principles into newsroom practice and academic curricula. However, institutionalization of SoJo remains weak, with only 18 percent of respondents across the four countries reporting that their media houses have dedicated SoJo desks.

The platforms most commonly used for disseminating SoJo stories remain broadcast media, particularly television and radio, with Uganda leading in TV usage at 37% and Rwanda in radio at 26%. However, digital platforms are gaining momentum, especially among younger reporters and freelancers. In Kenya, 29 percent of journalists reported using online platforms, while in Rwanda, 15 percent were producing SoJo content for digital outlets. Genres most often used include news and feature stories. However, opinion pieces and editorials are more common in Rwanda and Tanzania, where they accounted for over 20 percent of published SoJo stories.

In Kenya, 83 percent of respondents stated that audiences found SoJo stories more engaging than traditional reporting. Similar patterns were recorded in Uganda (78 percent), Rwanda (75

percent), and Tanzania (73 percent). Journalists consistently reported higher feedback rates, increased community participation, and stronger trust among readers or listeners when publishing solution-oriented stories. Examples include Kenyan stories on youth employment initiatives that inspire replication in other countries, Tanzanian stories on climate resilience that prompt government-backed conservation programs, Ugandan maternal health stories that spark district-level policy discussions, and Rwandan coverage of education reforms that influence local government deliberations.

Beyond engagement, the study found that SoJo reporting has a tangible influence on policy and practice. Approximately 71 percent of respondents in Kenya and 68 percent in Uganda reported observing direct policy changes or institutional responses resulting from SoJo stories. These included reforms in maternal health policies, improved sanitation infrastructure, and youth skills development programs. Rwanda respondents cited government-backed education reforms linked to sustained coverage on school dropouts, while Tanzania reported localized outcomes such as expanded climate resilience initiatives following SoJo coverage.

In terms of credibility, the approach is widely perceived as strengthening trust in the media. Across all four countries, more than 85 percent of respondents agreed that SoJo enhances the credibility of the press. In Kenya, 90 percent of surveyed journalists and editors indicated that SoJo increased public trust in the media, while in Uganda, 87 percent expressed the same sentiment. Respondents emphasized that by focusing on evidence-backed responses rather than sensational failures, SoJo restores confidence in journalism and positions the media as a constructive partner in development.

Despite these successes, barriers to sustained adoption persist. Key challenges include limited funding for in-depth reporting, insufficient access to reliable data, and weak editorial support. In Kenya, 40 percent of respondents identified a lack of resources as the biggest obstacle, while in Tanzania, 35 percent pointed to limited access to official data. Journalists also expressed concern about the sustainability of donor-driven training programs, noting that without stronger institutional buy-in, SoJo risks being treated as a niche practice rather than a newsroom standard. Another emerging issue is the role of artificial intelligence (AI). While AI tools are valued for data analysis and fact-checking, journalists worry about overreliance, which may undermine authenticity and the human-centered storytelling approach.

Overall, the study finds that Solutions Journalism in East Africa is at a promising but fragile stage of growth. Awareness and training are increasing, journalists are producing impactful stories, and audiences are responding with higher levels of trust and engagement. Evidence shows that SoJo can influence policy and catalyze community-driven initiatives, thereby strengthening civic participation and accountability. However, its sustainability will depend on deeper integration within media institutions, stronger partnerships with academia and civil society, and ongoing support from donors and policymakers. By embedding SoJo as a mainstream journalistic standard rather than a niche innovation, the region's media landscape can evolve toward more impactful, credible, and community-rooted reporting.

Key Recommendations

- For Kenya: Strengthen institutional adoption by encouraging media houses to establish dedicated SoJo desks, expand curriculum integration in universities, and provide sustainable funding mechanisms for investigative SoJo reporting.
- For Rwanda: Build on strong awareness and training foundations by enhancing editorial independence, scaling up mentorship programs, and promoting digital-first SoJo platforms.
- For Tanzania: Address restrictive regulatory frameworks, improve access to data, and expand training opportunities through partnerships with local universities and regional and international organizations.
- For Uganda: Support grassroots journalists with targeted SoJo training, strengthen protections for media practitioners, and create incentives for cross-sector collaboration on accountability reporting.

Cross-cutting:

- Institutionalize SoJo in journalism curricula across the region.
- Promote cross-border collaborations and investigative networks for SoJo.
- Increase donor and government investment in funding SoJo initiatives.
- Provide targeted support for women and youth journalists to reduce participation gaps.
- Encourage responsible use of AI while safeguarding human-centered storytelling.



1. INTRODUCTION

This report examines the uptake and impact of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) across four East African countries: Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania. It presents evidence gathered from a combination of surveys, interviews, stakeholder mapping, and desk review. The study was undertaken in response to growing interest in how journalism can contribute more constructively to public discourse by going beyond identifying problems to investigating how those problems are being addressed.

Solutions Journalism is gaining traction among media practitioners who want to report with greater depth and relevance. Unlike traditional reporting, which often stops at highlighting failure or crisis, SoJo encourages journalists to explore credible responses to social problems. It does not ignore complexity or challenges but instead takes a critical look at efforts that show promise, offering the public more than just a diagnosis; it offers potential pathways forward.

The relevance of this approach has become increasingly apparent in the context of widespread misinformation, public distrust in media, and audience fatigue with negative news cycles. There is a growing recognition that the media plays a role not only in holding power to account but also in helping societies understand how change occurs and what can be learned from it. SoJo is positioned as a means to enhance accountability, rebuild trust, and stimulate civic engagement.

This report is grounded in both quantitative and qualitative research. It examines how journalists and media institutions apply SoJo principles or pillars (response, evidence, insight, and limitations) in their work, how audiences respond to such content, and whether this form of reporting affects public dialogue or policy. The study also investigates the role of training, editorial support, and institutional frameworks in either enabling or hindering the practice.

Notably, the report extends beyond assessing awareness and practice to examine outcomes as well. Has SoJo changed how journalists tell stories? Has it improved public understanding or engagement? Are media houses making editorial shifts in response to SoJo principles? These are among the central questions addressed in the findings.

In addition to providing insights into current trends, the report identifies gaps in capacity, funding, and institutional support. It highlights the potential of cross-border collaboration, newsroom mentorship, curriculum reform, and donor engagement to strengthen the SoJo ecosystem in East Africa.

The report is structured to reflect these different areas of inquiry. It begins with a background of how Solutions Journalism evolved globally and its introduction in the region. It then discusses the research methodology, presents key findings, and concludes with lessons learned and recommendations.

At its core, this study aims to support journalists, editors, educators, funders, and policymakers who are interested in advancing more responsible, impactful journalism. It argues that SoJo is not just an innovation, but a shift in how journalism defines its role in society.

Origins and development:

Solutions Journalism did not emerge overnight. Its roots lie in earlier media movements that questioned the limits of traditional reporting. Public journalism in the 1990s, for example, emphasized civic engagement and dialogue, while peace journalism sought to reduce conflict-driven coverage. These traditions laid the groundwork for a more deliberate focus on how societies respond to their challenges.

The practice took a more defined shape in 2010 with the introduction of the Fixes column by David Bornstein and Tina Rosenberg in The New York Times. The column highlighted how people and institutions were addressing entrenched social issues—from education to healthcare—in ways that provided evidence, lessons, and models for replication. This work sparked a broader conversation about how journalism could be more solutions-focused without becoming advocacy.

In 2013, the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) was formed to support this approach with structure and clarity. The network introduced a four-part framework for SoJo: focus on a response to a problem, present credible evidence of impact, explain the “how and why,” and acknowledge limitations. This framework distinguishes SoJo from feel-good stories or promotional content. It positioned SoJo as rigorous, evidence-based, and fully compatible with the core values of journalism.

SJN played a key role in expanding the practice through training, editorial partnerships, and content tools. Its global reach has enabled thousands of journalists to explore how SoJo can be applied across beats from environment to public safety to governance. At the same time, academic interest in SoJo has grown, with researchers examining its impact on audience engagement, trust, and newsroom practice.

In East Africa, the uptake of SoJo began around 2017 through partnerships between local and international media development organizations. Early momentum was driven by institutions such as Science Africa, Internews, and Deutsche Welle Akademie, which facilitated workshops, mentorships, story development, and curriculum development. Journalists who were exposed to the model began integrating it into field reporting and editorial planning, often without formal newsroom mandates.

The approach resonated particularly well in a region where media often cover development, governance, and public service issues. SoJo offered a practical lens for reporters already working in spaces like health, education, or environment to shift from episodic crisis coverage to more analytical, follow-up reporting that examines solutions.

Several journalism schools in the region have since begun incorporating SoJo into their teaching, either as standalone modules or as integrated units within existing courses on health reporting, environmental reporting, investigative reporting, or feature writing. Media houses, while varied in their adoption, have produced notable SoJo stories on topics ranging from climate adaptation to maternal health. However, dedicated SoJo desks remain rare, and institutional support is still emerging.

As this report will demonstrate, the foundations laid over the past decade are now yielding a small but growing community of practice. Journalists are not only producing solution-oriented stories but also mentoring others, contributing to academic discourse, and calling for more

investment in tools, training, and editorial support. The next phase of SoJo's development in East Africa will likely depend on how well these efforts are coordinated, funded, and scaled.

This research paper examines the factors that influence the adoption of Solutions journalism in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. The specific case study objectives were to:

- Understand and explain barriers to the implementation of Solutions journalism,
- Understand and explain what has made Solutions journalism successful to date;
- Assess the uptake of Solutions journalism across several media houses and independent journalists in the countries of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania.



2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

The primary objective of this review is to map the existing literature on Solutions Journalism, focusing on its definitions, theoretical frameworks, implementation strategies, and impact assessments. Specific aims include:

- Identifying the core principles and definitions of Solutions Journalism.
- Exploring the methodologies employed in studying Solutions Journalism.
- Assessing the geographical and thematic distribution of research in this field.
- Highlighting gaps in the current literature to inform future research directions.

Solutions Journalism is characterized by its focus on responses to social problems, emphasizing rigorous reporting on the effectiveness of these responses. It differs from traditional journalism by not only highlighting issues but also exploring viable solutions, thereby providing a more balanced narrative.

2.2. Geographical and Thematic Distribution

Research on Solutions Journalism has been conducted globally, with notable studies emerging from the United States, Europe, and Africa. Thematically, studies have explored its application in areas such as education, health, and environmental reporting.

The Solutions Journalism Network has supported various initiatives worldwide, including the Seattle Times' Education Lab, which focuses on education-related solutions. These initiatives demonstrate the adaptability of Solutions Journalism across different cultural and thematic contexts.

2.3. Impact Assessments

Several studies have assessed the impact of Solutions Journalism on audience engagement and perception. Findings suggest that this approach can enhance reader engagement, foster a sense of efficacy, and promote constructive public discourse.

For example, a study on the Montgomery Advertiser's transition to Solutions Journalism revealed mixed results. While website analytics showed an increase in page views and longer engagement times, audience surveys indicated a decline in engagement over time. This highlights the complexity of measuring the impact of Solutions Journalism in real-world settings.

Solutions Journalism has been defined and conceptualized by various scholars, practitioners, and journalism organizations, each emphasizing different aspects of the practice. The Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) describes it as "rigorous, evidence-based reporting on responses to social problems," highlighting that it must include credible evidence of effectiveness and focus not just on inspirational stories, but on what works, why it works, and how it might be improved.

This definition positions Solutions Journalism as a corrective to the media's typical problem-centric narrative, offering audiences a fuller picture of social issues and potential responses (Solutions Journalism Network, n.d.).

The reviewed studies employed a variety of methodologies, including qualitative interviews, content analyses, and case studies. These approaches facilitated an in-depth understanding of how Solutions Journalism is practiced and perceived across different contexts.

For instance, Mellor and Nguyen (2023) conducted in-depth interviews with local news users to assess audience engagement with Solutions Journalism. Their findings indicated that while audiences appreciated the upbeat tone, there was skepticism regarding the perceived promotional nature of some stories.

According to McIntyre and Gyldensted (2017), Solutions Journalism is a subset of constructive journalism that centers on reporting that is not only accurate and critical but also forward-looking. Their work emphasizes how the practice draws from positive psychology, focusing on resilience, progress, and solutions without veering into advocacy or public relations. This approach aims to enhance audience engagement and empower communities by presenting viable options and models for addressing complex challenges.

Betschka and Schulz (2018) describe Solutions Journalism as journalism that “intentionally seeks out and investigates how people attempt to solve shared problems, and reports on these efforts with a critical and analytical eye.” They stress that the reporting must not shy away from obstacles or failures and should apply the same journalistic standards of scrutiny and verification used in traditional investigative reporting. Their definition pushes back against the perception that Solutions Journalism is about feel-good stories or hero worship.

In academic circles, Curry and Hammonds (2014) argue that Solutions Journalism operates within the exact ethical and professional boundaries as investigative journalism but shifts its focus toward “what is being done about the problem.” They note that this approach can shift public discourse from cynicism to action by focusing on possibility rather than paralysis.

The BBC Media Action (2015) program takes a slightly different approach, describing Solutions Journalism as part of a broader trend toward “media for development,” where journalism can play a constructive role in addressing development challenges. Their interpretation acknowledges the role of local context and the importance of empowering audiences, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, by highlighting how communities address issues such as health, education, and governance.

Finally, Wikipedia offers a composite view, defining Solutions Journalism as “a response-based approach to news reporting that focuses on solutions to social problems as a way of complementing traditional problem-focused journalism.” This definition recognizes that Solutions Journalism does not replace traditional journalism, but rather complements it by extending the scope of reporting to include how issues are being addressed and what lessons can be learned from them.

Taken together, these definitions underscore that Solutions Journalism is not a singular technique but a journalistic mindset that combines rigorous standards with a focus on problem-solving. It requires nuance, evidence, and balance, avoiding simplistic success stories in favor of complex, well-researched narratives that illuminate the work being done to create change.

The theoretical underpinnings of Solutions Journalism are rooted in agenda-setting theory, which posits that media influence public perception by highlighting specific issues. By focusing on solutions, journalists can shape public discourse towards constructive engagement. Additionally, framing theory is relevant, as it examines how media frames influence audience interpretation and understanding. Solutions Journalism reframes narratives to emphasize problem-solving and resilience.



3.0. METHODOLOGY: APPROACHES AND TOOLS

This study employed a mixed-methods design to examine the uptake and impact of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania. The methodological framework combined quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and desk review to capture both breadth and depth of evidence. The multi-method approach ensured that the findings were grounded in diverse data sources and perspectives, thereby enhancing their credibility and transferability across various contexts.

3.1. Research Design and Approach

The study was guided by evidence-based and participatory principles, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. A combination of structured surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), and literature review provided complementary insights, allowing for triangulation and validation of findings. The approach ensured that the study developed a sound uptake and impact report, which will be used for media and policy outreach, as well as educational purposes aimed at improving support for Solutions Journalism in the region and understanding how key participants perceive the influences on the uptake of Solutions Journalism in reporting and news coverage. A value-based approach meant that the data collection and reporting process adhered to the principles of transparency, equity, and equality. Given the heightened sensitivity to identity politics and the need for inclusion, a deliberate effort was made to ensure that all data collectors used were drawn from media stakeholders.

3.2. Comprehensive Desk Review

The desk review used the *Population, Context, and Concept* framework proposed by the Joanna Briggs Institute to frame the scoping review question. The desk review was conducted to map existing literature on Solutions Journalism, focusing on definitions, theoretical frameworks, implementation strategies, and prior assessments of impact.

3.3. Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholder mapping identified key actors within the media ecosystem, including newsrooms, independent journalists, training institutions, and regulatory bodies. This process guided the selection of respondents, ensuring representation across mainstream, community, and digital media, as well as academic and civil society organizations.

3.4. Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected from target groups using a multi-stakeholder quantitative and qualitative method that involved semi-structured, in-depth interviews of relevant social actors in the media field, including media house owners, editors, reporters, correspondents, faculty members in journalism institutions, administrators, and other capacity-building and regulatory bodies such as the Media Council of Kenya. Data collection was guided by tools developed to collect facts, and three primary methods and one corollary method were used.

3.4.1. The Survey Questionnaire

A content-validated, structured survey questionnaire was administered face-to-face using Kobo Collect to 385 media stakeholders in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. The questionnaire captured respondent information, awareness, and uptake of Solutions Journalism, as well as the impact of Solutions Journalism, Technology, AI, and Solutions Journalism, including challenges and opportunities, and the future of Solutions Journalism.

3.4.2. Sampling Techniques

Purposive and random sampling techniques were applied. Reporters and correspondents were selected through simple random sampling, while key informants were purposively identified based on their expertise and institutional roles. The sample size was determined using a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, yielding 385 valid responses across the four countries: 95 from Kenya, 96 from Rwanda, 96 from Tanzania, and 98 from Uganda.

3.4.3. Target Population

The study population comprises editors, reporters, and correspondents working in the field of professional media.

3.4.4. Sample Size Determination

The study deployed simple random sampling for the reporters and correspondents. The study ensured that the individuals selected for interviews were effectively inclusive of the population of interest to study. The sample size was calculated using the RAO soft sample size calculator, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error based on the following formula;

$$n' = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{e^2 N}}$$

where

Z is the z-score

e is the margin of error

N is the population size

p is the population proportion

3.4.5. Data quality assurance

Each enumerator was supervised directly by the study lead. The research lead conducted spot checks to ensure that data collectors were performing their duties. This was to ensure that data collection is completed as stipulated in the assignment guideline and timeline.

3.5. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Purposive sampling was used to select key informants, including media house owners, editors, reporters, correspondents, faculty members from journalism institutions, administrators, and other relevant stakeholders such as the Media Council of Kenya. This ensured the inclusion of individuals with the most appropriate expertise and influence. A semi-structured key informant interview guide was applied to facilitate the discussions.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure that all participants were treated with dignity, respect, and confidentiality at all times. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection, with clear explanations provided regarding the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures.

Anonymity and data security were prioritized to protect sensitive information, with all personal data securely stored and accessible only to the study team. Special attention was given to cultural sensitivity, respecting local customs, traditions, and community dynamics throughout the evaluation process.

Additionally, the study was conducted in accordance with the *Do No Harm* principle, ensuring that participation in the study did not expose respondents to psychological, social, or emotional distress.

3.7. Data analysis methods

Data obtained from the interviews were coded by identifying and labeling items according to the study's objectives and scope, focusing on awareness and uptake of Solutions Journalism, the impact of Solutions Journalism, the role of technology and AI in journalism, challenges and opportunities, and the future of Solutions Journalism. Coding and thematic analysis were carried out using *Atlas.ti* software. Responses were analyzed for themes and compared across countries and respondent groups.

Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using statistical techniques, primarily SPSS, with a focus on descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and averages.

Qualitative data, meanwhile, were analyzed through thematic coding and triangulation. Focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed in Word documents. In contrast, in-depth interviews were documented in detailed notes, which were subsequently transferred into an Excel matrix for thematic filtering and triangulation (by source and question). In both cases, qualitative and quantitative data, as well as field findings, were transmitted to a central server for cleaning and analysis.

To enhance reliability, triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from different sources, ensuring that the conclusions drawn reflected a comprehensive and accurate representation of the realities on the ground.

3.8. Data management and Quality Assurance

Data safety for both digital and hard-copy versions was ensured in line with standard information management guidelines. Soft-copy data were password-protected and stored on secure computers, while hard-copy files were kept in locked cabinets at secure offices. The confidentiality of the collected data and information was explicitly maintained. Wherever verbatim quotations were included in the study report, identifying features of respondents were omitted to preserve anonymity. All respondents were acknowledged for their valuable contributions to the study, and all documents consulted were duly listed in the references section.

3.9. Limitations

This study faced some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research relied heavily on self-reported data, which may not fully capture actual newsroom practices or long-term impacts. Although efforts were made to ensure diverse participation across countries and media sectors, variations in response rates and the depth of engagement were observed. Resource and time constraints also limited the ability to conduct follow-up interviews or directly observe newsroom practices. Despite these limitations, the study provided a valuable snapshot of how Solutions Journalism was being understood, adopted, and applied across diverse media contexts in East Africa.

4.0. GENERAL FINDINGS

4.1. Gender Representation in Solutions Journalism

Across all four countries, male representation in solutions journalism consistently exceeds that of females. Kenya and Tanzania each reported 16% male participation, while Uganda had the highest at 18%. Female participation was notably lower, ranging from 8% in Kenya and Uganda to 10% in Rwanda and Tanzania. This suggests a persistent gender gap in the uptake of solutions journalism.

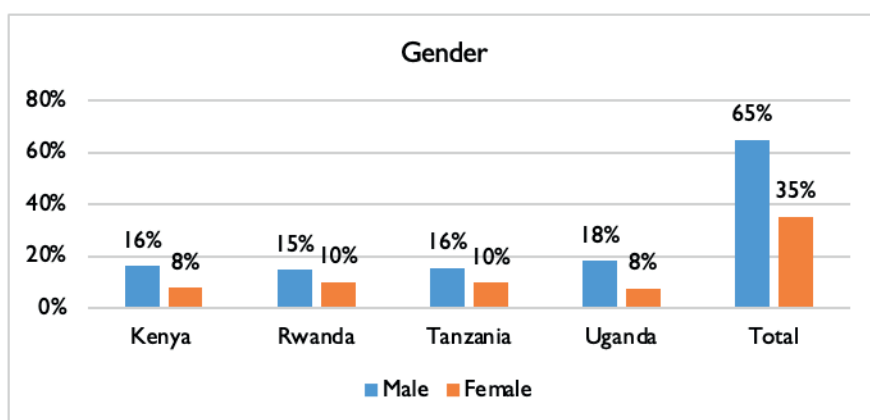


Figure 1: Gender representation in Solutions Journalism

4.2. Respondent Roles in the Media Sector

Reporters formed the largest share of respondents across all countries, especially in Rwanda (13%) and Tanzania (11%). Correspondents followed, with Uganda reporting the highest proportion at 9%. Faculty members and those in regulatory bodies formed a minority.

Table 1: Roles of respondents in the media sector

Role of the respondent	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda	Total
Capacity building and the Regulatory Body	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Correspondent	7%	3%	5%	9%	24%
Editor	4%	5%	7%	4%	20%
Faculty member in a journalism institution	3%	1%	1%	3%	8%
Others	2%	2%	1%	1%	6%
Reporter	7%	13%	11%	7%	38%

4.3. Other Professional Roles Represented

The dataset reveals that the majority of respondents across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda hold roles directly related to journalism practice and media production. These include positions such as news reporter (Kenya), editor and lead reporter (Tanzania), managing

editor (Tanzania), radio presenter (Kenya and Uganda), presenter/anchor (Kenya), and radio host (Rwanda). Rwanda also had the highest number of freelance journalists (2), while some participants reported holding multiple responsibilities, such as editor and capacity builder. These journalism-related roles suggest that a substantial portion of those engaged in the study are active media professionals involved in content creation, reporting, or editorial functions, which positions them well to influence and implement solutions journalism practices in their respective contexts.

4.4. Institutional Affiliation of Respondents

The institutional affiliations of respondents reflect a vibrant and diverse media landscape across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, with representation spanning mainstream media houses, universities, government agencies, and community platforms.

In Kenya, the majority of respondents were affiliated with well-established media institutions, such as KBC, Royal Media Services, Nation Media Group (NMG), and the Standard Media Group. A notable portion were contributors to community outlets, including the Lake Region Bulletin, published online. There was also academic representation from Maseno University, the University of Nairobi, and the Technical University of Kenya, among others.

In Rwanda, the affiliations were primarily from community and private radio stations, including Radio Salus, Royal FM, and Victory TV, as well as prominent media groups such as the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA), Kigali Today, The Rwanda Dispatch, Rwanda News Agency, and The New Times. Several independent digital media outlets and freelance journalists also featured prominently, highlighting the country's growing online media ecosystem.

Tanzania was well-represented by Mwananchi Communications Limited, which appeared most frequently, alongside other notable outlets, including ITV, Azam Media, Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), and The Guardian. Freelancers and journalists affiliated with new media platforms, such as Maipac Online and Flow Media, also indicated the growing influence of digital journalism.

In Uganda, respondents were widely affiliated with national broadcasters, including the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), The Vision Group, Nation Media Group (NTV Uganda and Daily Monitor), and Next Media (NBS TV). A significant number were connected to academic institutions, including Makerere University, Bishop Stuart University, and the YMCA Institute, as well as initiatives such as the Media Challenge Initiative and Switch Africa, indicating a strong presence of training and mentorship organizations within the country's media ecosystem.

Overall, the affiliations demonstrate an expansive engagement with solutions journalism across both legacy and emerging media, suggesting substantial institutional diversity and reach in the region.

4.5. Media Platforms Used by Correspondents

Broadcast media dominated in all countries, with Uganda leading at 27% followed by Kenya at 18%. Online platforms were more commonly used in Rwanda (7%), while print media was most widely used in Tanzania (11%) and Uganda (10%). The distribution implies a preference for traditional platforms, particularly broadcast, with varying degrees of digital uptake.

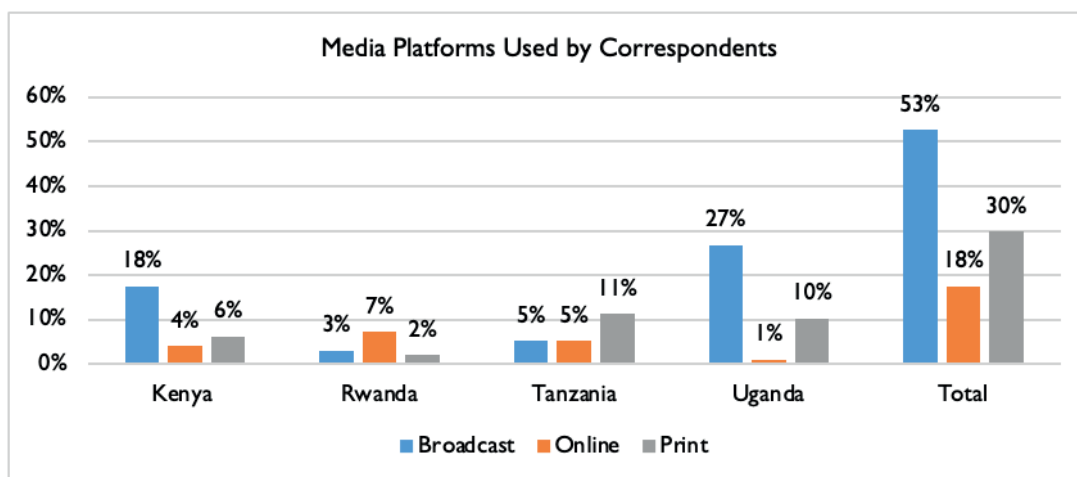


Figure 2: Media Platforms Used by Correspondents

4.6. Type of Broadcast Media for Correspondents

Television was the most common medium in Uganda (37%) and Kenya (12%), while radio was prominent in both Kenya and Uganda (14%). Rwanda had minimal use of TV or podcasts. Kenya was the only country where podcasting (8%) featured, showing early digital innovation. Uganda stands out for its significant utilization of both TV and radio.

4.7. Genres Most Used by Correspondents

News stories were the most commonly used genre in all countries, with the highest occurrence in Uganda (28%) and Tanzania (14%). Features followed, particularly in Kenya (12%). Editorials and documentaries were rarely used, with only Kenya showing a modest 6% use of opinions/editorials. This suggests that solutions journalism is still primarily practiced within conventional news formats.

4.8. Media Platforms Used by Reporters

The data shows that broadcast media is the most common platform for reporters across the four countries, with 49% of respondents working in television or radio.

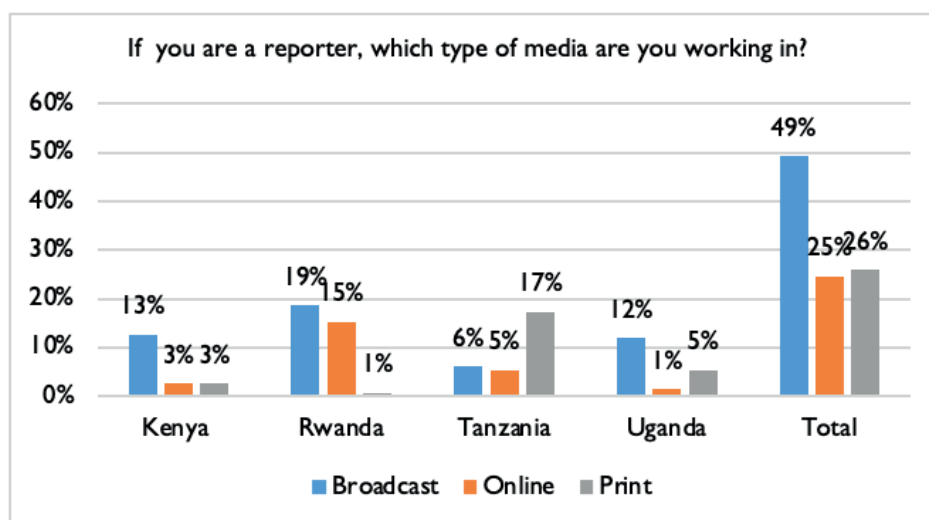


Figure 3: Media platforms used by reporters

Rwanda stands out with the highest proportion of reporters in broadcast (19%), followed by Kenya (13%) and Uganda (12%). In contrast, Tanzania has fewer reporters in this category (6%). Print media also accounted for a significant share at 26% overall, particularly in Tanzania (17%) and Rwanda (15%), highlighting the continued importance of traditional newspapers. Online media, although smaller in share at 25% overall, has seen notable uptake in Rwanda (15%) and Kenya (3%), indicating a gradual but visible shift toward digital-first journalism in certain contexts. Uganda, however, shows limited engagement in online platforms (1%), suggesting slower adoption of digital reporting.

4.9. Broadcast Media Types for Reporters

The findings indicate that respondents working in broadcast media were evenly divided between radio and television, with each sector accounting for 50% of the total. Radio was most prominent in Rwanda, where 26% of respondents reported working in this medium, followed by Kenya at 14% and Uganda at 8%, while Tanzania recorded the lowest share at 3%. Television, on the other hand, had strong representation in Uganda (16%), with Kenya and Rwanda each at 12% and Tanzania at 9%. This distribution suggests that while both radio and television remain equally significant for respondents overall, radio continues to play a central role in Rwanda and Kenya, reflecting the broad reach of community and national stations. In contrast, television appears stronger in Uganda and Tanzania, signaling its growing influence as a preferred platform.

4.10. Genre Use by Reporters

The findings reveal that opinion and editorial pieces dominate as the most frequently used genre across the four countries, accounting for 67% of total reporting, with Rwanda (23%) and Tanzania (21%) showing particularly high reliance on this format. News articles followed at 25%, with relatively balanced contributions from Kenya (7%), Tanzania (7%), Rwanda (8%), and Uganda (4%), reflecting their continued role as a staple of daily reporting. Features were less commonly used at just 5%, appearing sporadically across Rwanda (3%), Tanzania (1%), and Uganda (1%), while documentaries were the least utilized genre at 3%, recorded mainly in Kenya (3%) and marginally in Rwanda (1%). This pattern suggests that while traditional news reporting remains important, opinion and editorial writing have become the dominant mode of storytelling for many journalists, possibly due to its flexibility in interpretation and commentary. In contrast, more resource-intensive formats, such as documentaries, remain underutilized.

4.11. Years of Experience in Journalism

The findings indicate that most respondents had substantial professional experience in journalism or media-related work, with 34% reporting more than 10 years in the field. Tanzania (40%) and Rwanda (39%) recorded the highest shares of highly experienced practitioners, followed by Kenya (29%) and Uganda (28%), suggesting strong institutional memory and professional grounding in these countries. Journalists with 4–7 years of experience formed the second-largest group, at 30%, with Kenya showing the highest proportion (38%), indicating a vibrant mid-career cohort actively shaping newsroom practices. Those with 8–10 years of experience accounted for 22% of the overall total, with a fairly even distribution across the four countries. Early-career journalists with 1–3 years of experience made up 13% of the respondents, with Uganda standing out at 20%, indicating an emerging new generation entering the profession. Only 1% had less than a year's experience. Overall, the data suggests a balanced mix of seasoned professionals and younger entrants, with the presence of a large pool of highly experienced journalists providing stability, while a steady inflow of newer reporters signals renewal and adaptability within the East African media landscape.

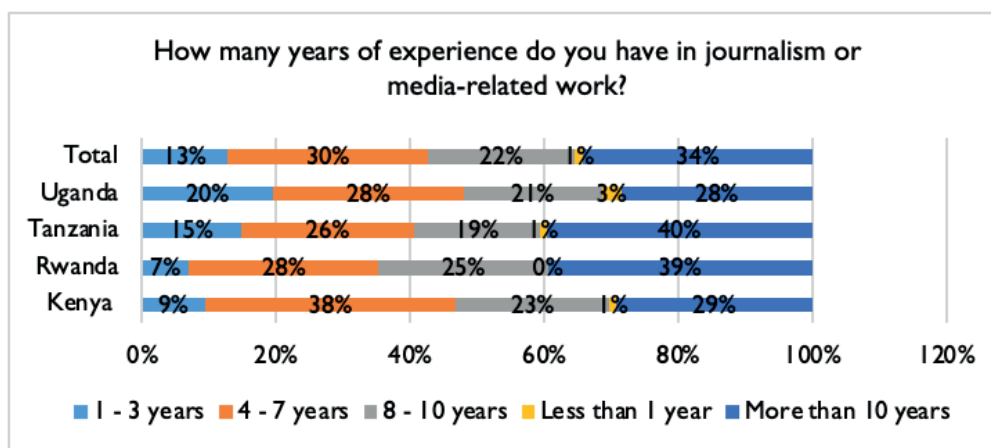


Figure 4: Years of experience in journalism or media-related work?

4.12. Roles of other respondents involved in the study

The analysis of the other respondents' roles shows that a significant proportion (44%) were faculty members in journalism institutions, making them the most represented group. This indicates that academia is heavily engaged in shaping the discourse around journalism and may play a central role in integrating Solutions Journalism into curricula and training future practitioners. The second largest cluster (22%) comprised individuals working in capacity-building and regulatory bodies, highlighting the involvement of institutions that influence professional standards and provide oversight in the media sector. A diverse group classified as "others" (34%) also emerged, including trainers, presenters, editors, CEOs, administrators, freelancers, and program officers, reflecting the wide range of actors contributing to journalism practice and governance beyond traditional newsroom roles. The spread of respondents across academic, regulatory, and diverse professional functions suggests that Solutions Journalism is attracting attention not only from practicing reporters and editors but also from those involved in training, regulation, and leadership. This diversity underscores the potential for multi-sectoral collaboration in advancing SoJo but also highlights the need to harmonize efforts between academia, regulators, and practitioners for greater institutionalization and sustainability.

4.13. Years of experience for other respondents

The analysis reveals that most respondents across all categories have extensive experience, with 38 out of 72 (53%) reporting more than 10 years of experience in journalism or media-related work. Faculty members were the largest group overall, with 31 respondents, and nearly half of them (16) had over 10 years of experience, highlighting the presence of highly seasoned academics shaping journalism training. Capacity-building and regulatory actors also leaned heavily toward the most experienced cohort, with 10 of their 16 respondents in the "more than 10 years" category. Among the "others" group—comprising diverse roles such as editors, presenters, and freelancers—12 of the 25 respondents had more than a decade of experience, but they also represented a wider spread across mid-career levels, with 6 in the 4–7 year range and 6 in the 8–10-year range. Early-career professionals were few, with only three respondents in the 1–3 year range and just one with less than a year of experience, suggesting that the discourse around Solutions Journalism in East Africa is currently dominated by mid-career and highly experienced practitioners rather than newcomers to the field.



5.0. COUNTRY FINDINGS

5.1. Kenya

5.1.1. Introduction

The study drew on both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the uptake and impact of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) in Kenya. A total of 95 respondents participated in the quantitative survey, representing various categories within the journalism ecosystem. These included 27 reporters, 26 correspondents, 16 editors, 13 faculty members from journalism institutions, five representatives from capacity-building and regulatory bodies, and eight respondents in other related roles. This distribution ensured that the findings reflect perspectives from both newsroom practice and journalism education, as well as from institutions that support and regulate the sector.

In addition to the survey, 19 key informant interviews were conducted to provide a qualitative dimension to the study. This included 10 Editors, four faculty members, two reporters and correspondents, one respondent from the capacity-building and regulatory body, one senior manager, and one columnist. These interviews captured personal experiences, professional insights, and concrete examples of how Solutions Journalism is practiced, as well as the kinds of influence it has generated.

5.1.2. Awareness, Perceptions and Understanding of Solutions Journalism

70% of media professionals interviewed for the study demonstrated a strong and consistent awareness and understanding of solutions journalism as a rigorous, evidence-based approach to reporting that goes beyond identifying societal problems to investigate credible responses to those issues, as illustrated below:

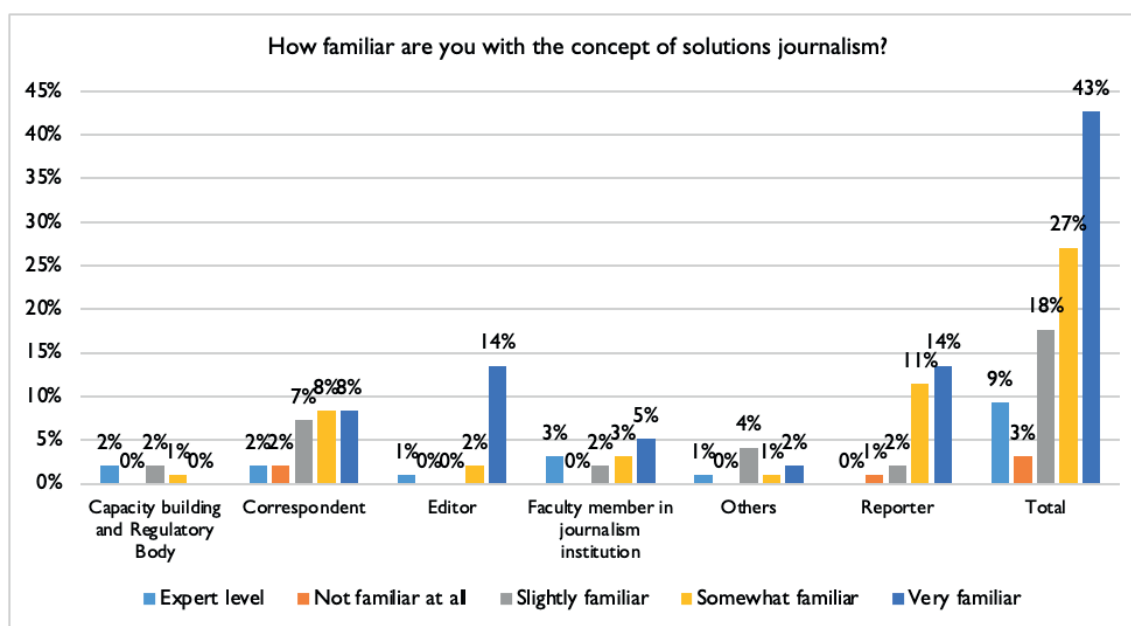


Figure 5: Awareness Levels of Solutions Journalism in Kenya

These results suggest that while knowledge of Solutions Journalism is relatively strong across the journalism ecosystem, more profound expertise remains limited, pointing to a need for continued training and capacity building, particularly for those who are only slightly familiar or unfamiliar with the approach.

For some, initial curiosity was sparked through contact with Science Africa, independent research on the SJN website, or exposure to impactful news stories on platforms such as BBC Africa. Others came across the concept while searching for better ways to report on community initiatives, particularly while working on development-oriented newspaper segments. Many respondents described their first encounters as eye-opening and transformative, fundamentally shifting how they viewed journalism, from a focus on merely exposing problems to a more constructive lens that highlighted evidence-based responses. These early interactions not only deepened participants' understanding of journalistic purpose but also inspired them to begin integrating the approach into their reporting, teaching, and newsroom strategies. Several expressed that the experience had a lasting emotional and professional impact, offering new ways to inspire audiences, engage communities, and promote civic agency.

5.1.3. Education and Sources of Training for SoJo

Most respondents confirmed that they had received formal training in solutions journalism from various sources, including Science Africa, Africa Health Solutions Journalism Initiative, and Universities. These engagements often took place physically in Nairobi, Kisumu, or online, introducing participants to the concept through real-world case studies on topics such as climate change mitigation, maternal health, road safety, and education.

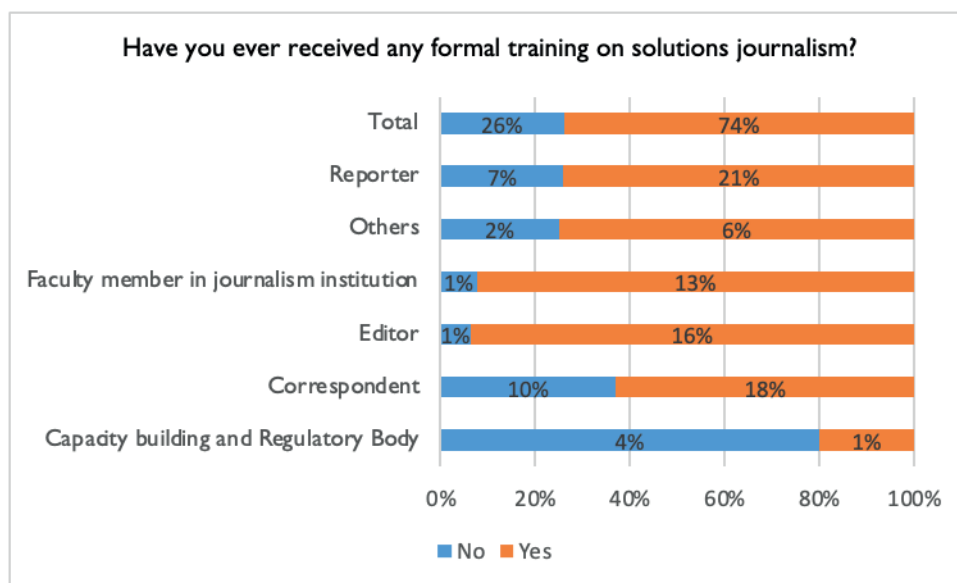


Figure 6: Have you received any formal training on solutions journalism?

Most training was provided by nonprofit organizations (40%), journalism schools (26%), and media organizations (22%), with the remainder citing online courses as their source. This highlights the crucial role of civil society and academia in shaping journalistic practice, particularly in areas of innovation such as SoJo.

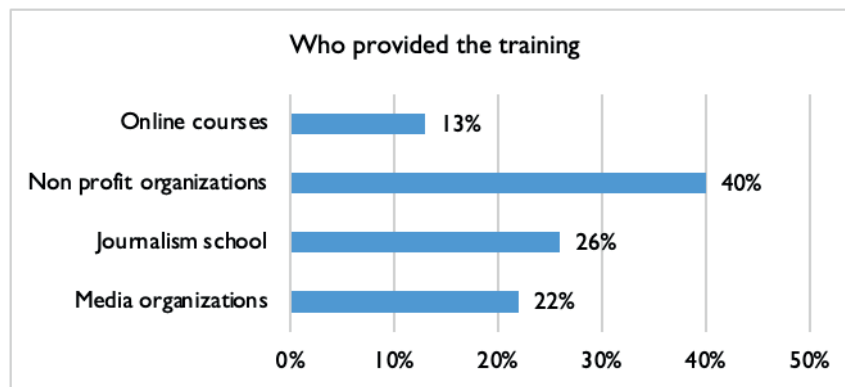


Figure 7: Institution providing SoJo training in Kenya

The primary trainers were Science Africa and the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), which conducted workshops, editor sessions, and collaborative programs with local institutions. Others received training from Universities, such as Maseno, Rongo, and Aga Khan, as well as Internews, Deutsche Welle Akademie, and the Media Council of Kenya. These training sessions covered key elements of the practice, such as the principles and pillars of SoJo, story structure, evidence evaluation, ethical considerations, impact tracking, and strategies for integrating SoJo into editorial workflows or academic curricula. A few individuals reported not receiving formal training but gained an understanding through independent research, particularly by using the SJN website and other platforms that promote constructive journalism. Mentorship by experienced SoJo practitioners (colleagues) also played a role in shaping the skills of some journalists. Overall, training was viewed as instrumental in shifting both individual and institutional approaches to journalism.

Among those trained, correspondents (17.71%), editors (15.63%), and reporters (20.83%) form the largest groups, indicating that frontline media professionals are the primary beneficiaries of such training. Faculty members in journalism institutions (12.50%) and those categorized as “others” (6.25%) also report notable participation. On the other hand, the groups with the least training exposure include capacity building and regulatory body representatives (1.04%) and editors (1.04%), categorized under the “No” option.

There is a varied approach to integrating Solutions Journalism (SoJo) into academic curricula across institutions. Some schools have formally embedded SoJo within existing courses such as Development Journalism, Investigative Reporting, and Feature Writing, making it part of mainstream instruction. Rongo University, for example, has formally integrated solutions journalism into its academic programs, embedding it within courses such as BSc Communication and Media Studies, BA Linguistics, Media, and Communication, and BSc Graphic Communication and Advertising. The decision was driven by the goal of producing graduates who create impactful and meaningful content. At the University of Nairobi, at least four lecturers have incorporated Solutions Journalism (SoJo) into their courses, drawing from materials from the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) and local case studies.

Beyond universities, news organizations also play a role. At KBC, approximately five reporters reported that they consistently apply SoJo principles in their work. At the same time, the Lake Region Bulletin and Lake Basin Bulletin each have editors who not only practice but also mentor others in SoJo. This indicates that both academic institutions and newsrooms play a crucial role in expanding the pool of professionals trained in solutions journalism.

A few other media houses are also currently using or adapting curricula provided by Science Africa and the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), while others are in the process of developing standalone SoJo electives. Media regulatory authorities, such as the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), have developed tailored SoJo curricula. However, many institutions, especially media houses like KBC, do not have formal curricula but instead encourage practice through newsroom training, editorial guidelines, and internal coaching.

The number of staff members actively teaching Solutions Journalism (SoJo) varies significantly across institutions. At Rongo University, six staff members are actively teaching solutions journalism across different programs. These lecturers, who were trained through support from Science Africa and AHSJI, play a central role in ensuring that the concept is not only integrated into the curriculum but also delivered in a way that equips students with practical skills. Their involvement has helped sustain the program, strengthen its uptake within courses such as Communication and Media Studies, and provide students with mentorship that connects classroom learning to real-world reporting opportunities.

Other universities have between three and four lecturers who consistently integrate SoJo into their teaching, using SJN resources and localized examples. Maseno University has three faculty members integrating SoJo into teaching and mentorship, while Kibabii University has about eight lecturers doing the same. In others, only one staff member currently handles SoJo instruction or mentorship. In some media houses and organizations, mentoring and informal training are led by a small group of dedicated reporters. However, many institutions still report having no staff officially assigned to teach SoJo.

Across various organizations and individuals, the number of journalists trained in Solutions Journalism (SoJo) varies significantly. Higher education institutions have played a significant role, with Rongo University reporting that in the 2024/2025 academic year, they trained a total of 1,000 students in solutions journalism. Of these, 350 second-year students took it as a standalone course, while 650 others were introduced to the approach through units such as News Writing and Environmental Communication. This broad reach demonstrates the university's commitment to integrating solutions journalism into its teaching, ensuring that a large pool of learners gains both theoretical grounding and practical exposure to the practice.

Maseno University has submitted the SoJo module/unit for approval by the Council of University Education. Even so, they started mainstreaming SoJo in two units, including trends in Health Reporting and Science, Technology, and Innovation Reporting in the 2023/24 Academic year for fourth-year students. In 2024, 122 journalism students took the two units and were duly examined. The courses were offered again to fourth-year students in the 2024/2025 academic year, with a total of 148 students taking the units and sitting for the exams. Thus, a total of 270 students have been trained in solutions journalism.

Kababii University's standalone SoJo programme is set to be submitted to the Council of University Education (CUE) for approval for the 2026/27 academic year. However, the journalism department reviewed its existing curriculum and included some courses that accommodate SOJO both at the Degree and Diploma levels. 180 second-year students, 130 third-year students, and 80 fourth-year students have taken various units with SoJo, such as News Reporting, Health Reporting, Environmental Reporting, and Investigative Reporting, and sat for exams during the 2024/2025 academic calendar. Thus, a total of 390 students have been trained and examined in solutions journalism by the university.

Media practitioners trained by Science Africa as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) reported that they had personally trained 30 journalists each, with another respondent having trained approximately 70 journalists.

A striking 98% of respondents expressed interest in further SoJo training, and 97% were eager to join a regional network of practitioners.

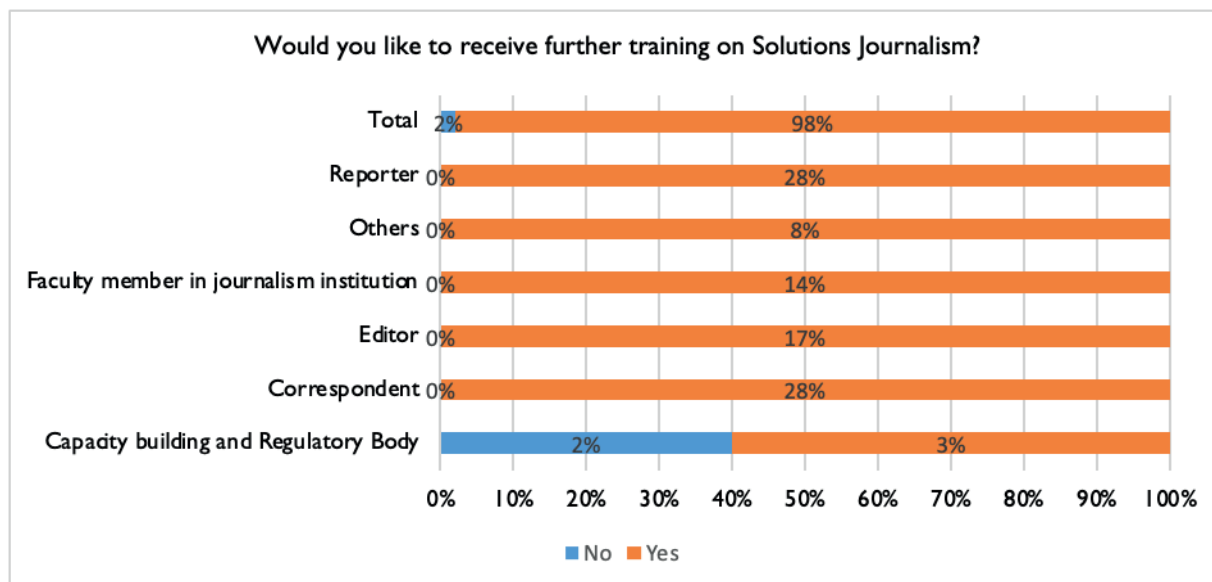


Figure 8: Interest in further training on Solutions Journalism

This overwhelming demand suggests an active community keen to deepen its practice and collaborate across borders. It also provides a strong case for continued investment in structured solutions journalism capacity-building programs. Reporters and correspondents stand out as the largest interested groups, each accounting for 28%, followed by editors at 17% and faculty members in journalism institutions at 13%. Other professionals, including those in capacity building and regulatory bodies, make up a smaller proportion (4%), but still show notable interest.

5.1.4. Uptake of Solution Journalism

As discussed above, SoJo is being actively integrated across various Kenyan media houses and academic spaces, both as a philosophy and as a structured approach to journalism. This has been shaped by the combined efforts of internal champions within institutions and external partners offering resources and training. At the University of Nairobi, faculty members have led curriculum reviews and integrated SoJo into courses, often drawing on external training and support from alumni. Maseno University and Rongo University have also embedded SoJo into teaching. Kibabii University has strengthened its uptake by having faculty members actively teach the approach.

In the media sector, KBC has embraced SoJo in special projects and long-form features, with senior editors mentoring reporters to produce impactful stories. Similarly, smaller outlets, such as the Lake Region Bulletin, have acted as trailblazers, with editors embedding SoJo principles in their editorial practices and mentoring younger reporters and interns. Externally, organizations such as the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), Science Africa, Deutsche Welle

Akademie, Internews, the Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications, and the Media Council of Kenya have provided technical training, mentorship, and curriculum development support. Together, this ecosystem of university leadership, newsroom adoption, and external support has enabled SoJo to gain credibility, expand its practice, and demonstrate tangible audience impact across Kenya.

Most respondents (78%) indicated that they had written or produced at least one SoJo story, indicating a strong translation from awareness to practice.

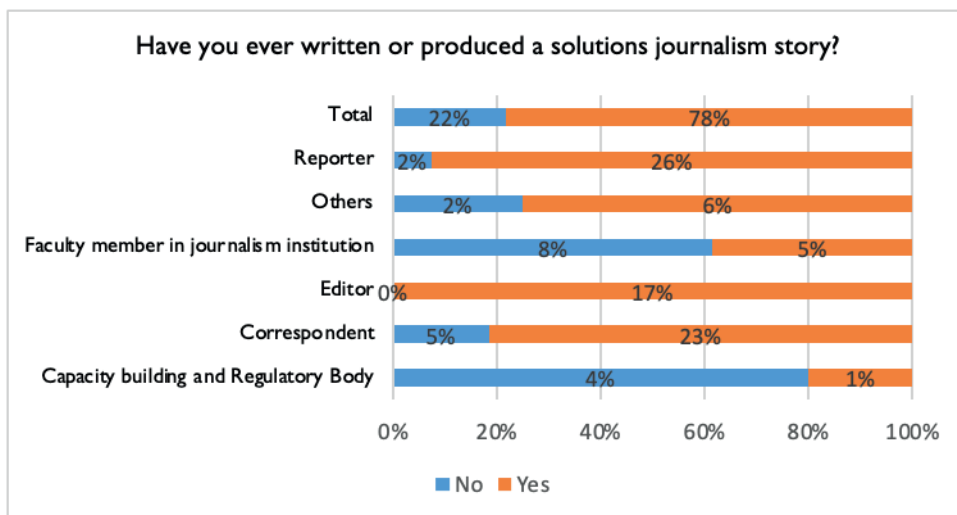


Figure 9: Have you ever written or produced a solutions journalism story?

Among those who practice SoJo, 56% do so occasionally, 28% frequently, and 7% always. Only 9% said they rarely use it. This suggests that while there is engagement, SoJo is often used as an add-on or special feature rather than a standard reporting approach.

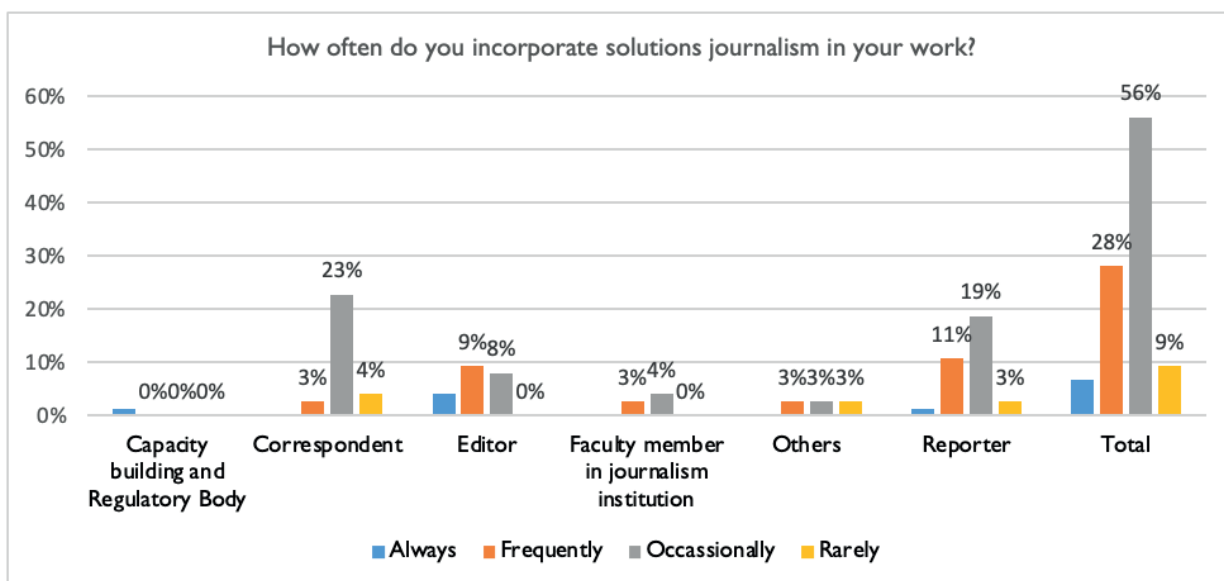


Figure 10: How often do you incorporate solutions journalism in your work?

Many media organizations, such as Science Africa, The Nation Media Group, The Star Newspaper, Royal Media Services, and KBC, have deliberately incorporated SoJo principles into their editorial planning, special projects, and training programs. Editors and reporters are encouraged to look beyond traditional problem-focused reporting and instead highlight evidence-based community responses, particularly in areas like public health, climate resilience, education, and governance. This includes using multimedia formats, data-driven storytelling, and thematic series that track not just the problems but also the outcomes of local interventions.

However, only 18% of respondents reported that their newsroom had a dedicated SoJo desk. This low figure suggests that institutionalization within media organizations remains weak, and without formal support structures, journalists may struggle to apply SoJo principles consistently. Reporters account for the largest share of those without such desks at 24%, followed closely by correspondents at 21% and editors at 15%. Faculty members and capacity-building or regulatory stakeholders also reported the absence of dedicated desks, at 13% and 4%, respectively. Among those with active SoJo desks, the highest presence is seen among correspondents (7%), reporters (4%), and editors (2%). This suggests that while there is growing interest and practice of SoJo, most institutions are yet to formalize it structurally within their newsroom operations.

SoJo stories are shared across a variety of platforms, with online platforms (29%) and social media (22%) leading the way. Print media (14%), radio (17%), and television (16%) also play significant roles. This multi-platform distribution reflects not only the adaptability of SoJo but also highlights the importance of digital spaces in driving its growth.

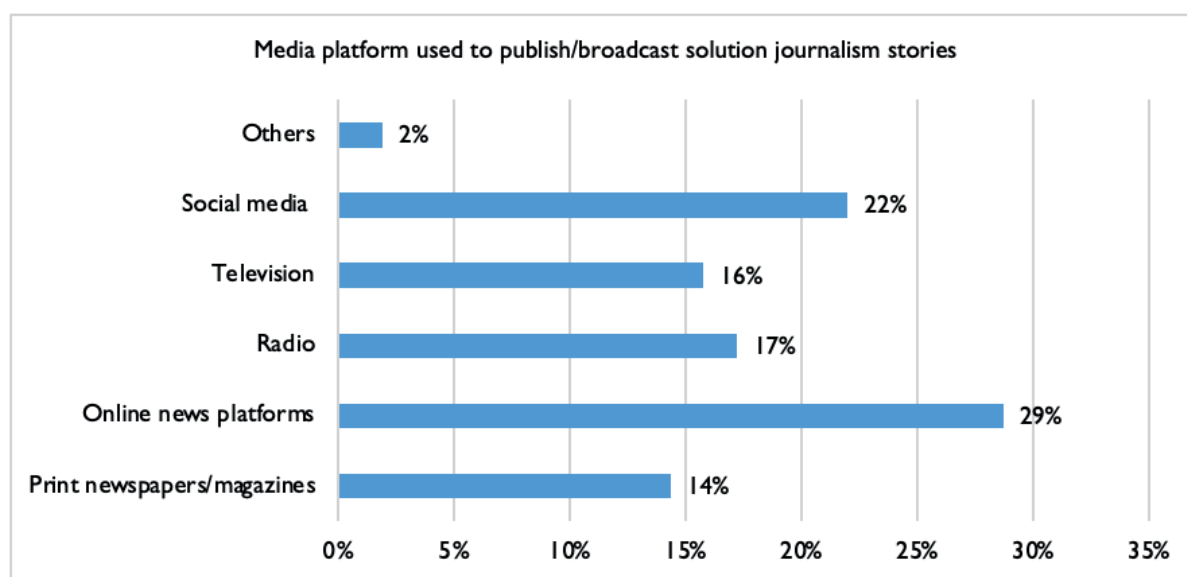


Figure 11: Media platforms used to share SoJo stories in Kenya

To encourage more journalists to adopt SoJo, respondents recommended increased training opportunities (28%), funding for investigative work (28%), and editorial support (21%). Recognition through awards and grants was also highlighted as a motivating factor. These suggestions emphasize that institutional commitment and resource allocation are critical to sustaining SoJo practice.

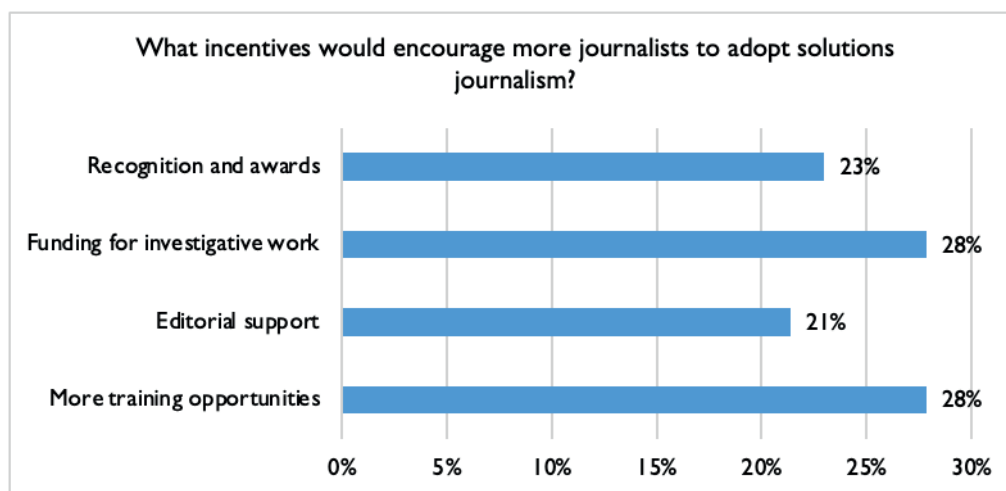


Figure 12: Incentives to encourage adoption of Solutions Journalism in Kenya

In academic institutions such as Rongo University, the University of Nairobi, Maseno University, and Kibabii University, SoJo is being incorporated into curricula, student media, and mentorship programs, promoting deeper analysis and socially responsible reporting. Across both media and academia, SoJo is viewed not only as a method for crafting impactful stories but also as a necessary shift in how journalism can inspire civic engagement, restore audience trust, and influence policy.

These examples highlight a strong academic interest that complements newsroom practice, signaling the establishment of a research base that can inform training, policy, and the broader uptake of SoJo in Kenya. Others indicated they are currently working on related academic research. However, many media houses and practitioners—especially those not affiliated with academic settings—reported having no academic papers or theses written on the topic or being unaware of any existing ones. These highlights both emerging scholarly interest and opportunities for further academic inquiry into Solutions Journalism, which should be nurtured further.

There is limited but notable ongoing research on Solutions Journalism (SoJo) among students and staff. The findings indicate that ongoing research on Solutions Journalism is being conducted across several academic institutions, with a strong focus on student- and faculty-led projects. At the University of Nairobi, at least two master's students are currently working on research projects. One examines the effect of SoJo on audience trust, while the other explores how it enhances the representation of marginalized communities. At Maseno University, two undergraduate students are investigating the uptake of SoJo in vernacular radio and gender-sensitive reporting, while one faculty member is also pursuing related research. At Rongo University, a master's student is conducting a study on media framing of climate change in Kenya through a Solutions Journalism lens. Meanwhile, the Media Council of Kenya has contributed a book chapter, adding to the growing body of scholarly work. These findings highlight a steady expansion of SoJo research in universities and professional bodies, reinforcing its academic and practical relevance in the Kenyan media landscape. However, several others reported no ongoing research within their institutions or were unaware of any such efforts, reflecting a gap in consistent academic inquiry across different media and educational settings.

5.1.5. Impact of Implementing Solutions Journalism

Respondents shared dozens of examples where SoJo stories led to policy reform, infrastructure improvements, community mobilization, or increased public awareness. These included stories on sanitation, security, health, climate change, gender-based violence, and youth employment. The breadth of topics demonstrates that SoJo can be applied across various beats and still yield measurable outcomes.

The SoJo implementation has had a profound impact on participating institutions across multiple dimensions, including professionally, financially, socially, and politically. Professionally, many organizations and academic institutions report increased credibility, enhanced storytelling quality, and recognition from media peers, policymakers, and training institutions.

Several organizations have been invited to participate in regional panels and collaborative projects, and their content has been syndicated or referenced by national outlets. Financially, while SoJo has not always yielded immediate revenue, some outlets and universities have secured small grants from partners such as Science Africa, AHSJI, the WHO, USAID, IDRC, Wellcome Trust, and UNDP, which have supported student projects and special coverage. Politically, relationships with government bodies, county officials, and civil society actors have improved, with several institutions noting that constructive coverage has facilitated policy engagement and collaboration. Socially, SoJo has significantly deepened trust with communities and readers, fostering higher engagement, reader feedback, and, in some cases, inspiring real-world replication of the solutions covered. For instance, stories on school feeding programs, youth employment, and climate adaptation have sparked interest among policymakers and led to community-led action. In sum, SoJo has helped reposition these organizations as credible, community-responsive, and solutions-oriented platforms.

Academic institutions have steadily embraced Solutions Journalism, creating space for both research and practice. At the University of Nairobi, students have benefited from small project grants that fund investigations, with some of their work featured in national outlets. This visibility has strengthened links with officials and communities while also shaping classroom learning. Maseno University has reported access to small research grants, regional recognition for its academic contributions, and new opportunities for students to engage with county leaders, who now invite them to public forums after impactful SoJo projects. At Rongo University, a memorandum of understanding with the African Health Solutions Journalism Initiative (AHSJI) has expanded opportunities for student internships, research support, and influence on policy debates. Together, these cases demonstrate that universities are not only producing knowledge on Solutions Journalism but also integrating it into their teaching and student practice.

Media houses have reported professional, financial, and audience-based benefits from adopting Solutions Journalism. At KBC, editors noted that SoJo has strengthened credibility, improved audience trust, and inspired community replication of positive initiatives such as school feeding programs. Science Africa highlighted that SoJo has attracted international support from partners such as the Solutions Journalism Network and the WHO, the Gates Foundation, as well as New Venture Capital, boosting both funding and professional credibility while influencing national policy discussions in health. The Media Council of Kenya noted financial and professional benefits, including UNDP-funded peace reporting during the 2013 elections. The Star Newspaper and Royal Media Services reported access to grants and stronger professional recognition through regional collaborations, with SoJo stories on climate adaptation and “Ushujaa” features drawing high audience engagement.

In the western Kenya region, smaller outlets such as the Lake Region Bulletin have gained credibility, awards, and advertising revenue by focusing on solutions reporting. At the same time, Ramogi TV/Radio and Mayienga FM have highlighted improved trust among listeners and increased partnerships with NGOs. Collectively, these experiences demonstrate that media houses view Solutions Journalism as a means to enhance their professional standing, attract support, and foster deeper connections with their audience.

A combined 83% of respondents said SoJo is either more engaging or significantly more engaging than traditional reporting. This strong affirmation suggests that audiences are responsive to reporting that highlights solutions rather than just problems.

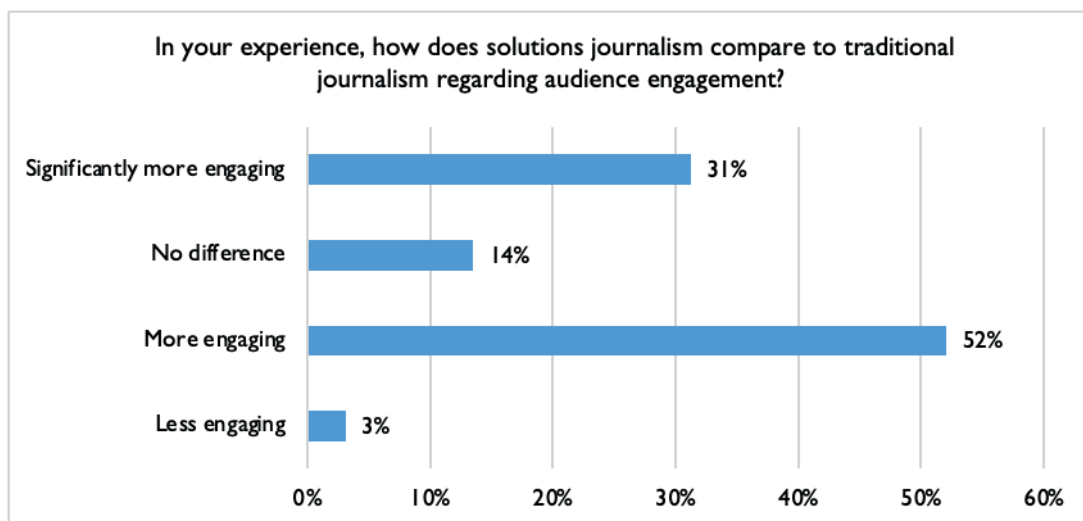


Figure 13: Perceived audience engagement on SoJo in comparison to traditional reporting in Kenya

Most journalists (78%) observed that audiences engage more with SoJo stories compared to traditional reporting. The public appears to be more interested in content that includes pathways for change, which may explain the higher levels of trust and feedback. For instance, stories on community-driven water projects in arid counties, such as Kitui and Makueni, attracted strong reader responses. At the same time, coverage of youth-led recycling initiatives in Kisumu City prompted county officials to pledge support.

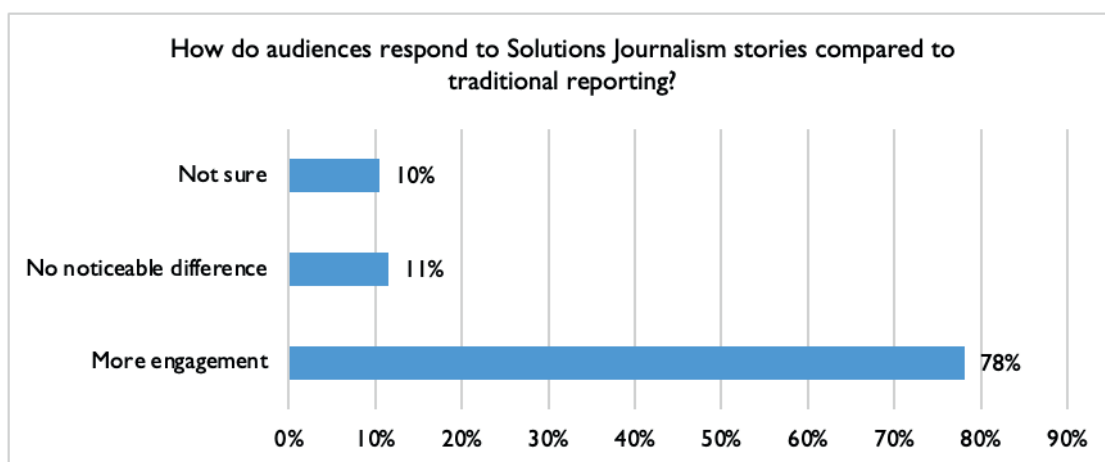


Figure 14: Perceived audience response to SoJo stories

SoJo features on hydroponic farming in Western Kenya, generated lively discussions on social media, and was later cited in county forums on food security. In health, stories about mobile clinics reaching pastoralist communities drew positive feedback from both local leaders and affected families. In governance, coverage of citizen budget forums in Makueni County inspired interest from other counties exploring participatory models. In education, reporting on digital literacy programs in rural schools sparked engagement from teachers and parents, leading to partnerships with NGOs. These examples demonstrate how solution-focused reporting resonates more deeply with audiences, fostering trust, stimulating conversation, and, in some cases, driving policy responses.

Approximately 71% of participants reported observing some form of impact from SoJo reporting on public discourse or policy. This includes follow-up actions by authorities, policy changes, and community-driven responses. These findings reinforce the theory that SoJo can catalyze civic engagement and institutional responsiveness.

In the health sector, coverage on teenage pregnancy prevention led counties such as Kakamega and Kilifi to adopt parent-adolescent communication in their outreach programs. Reporting on mobile clinics in Kisumu resulted in the integration of community health volunteers into the county's health strategy. In agriculture, exposés, such as the fake fertilizer scandal, prompted Parliament to order recalls, compensation, and special audits. Reports on harmful pesticides led the Ministry of Agriculture to publish a list of banned chemicals. Governance and accountability stories also left a lasting mark, with reforms at KEMSA, enhanced feasibility studies following the dams' scandal, and strengthened measures against exam cheating after investigations into KNEC. Additionally, reporting on port delays at Mombasa triggered ministerial and presidential action, while digital safety coverage led the Communications Authority of Kenya to integrate online protection into the school curriculum. These examples illustrate how SoJo-inspired reporting has evolved beyond informing the public to influencing concrete policy reforms at both national and local levels.

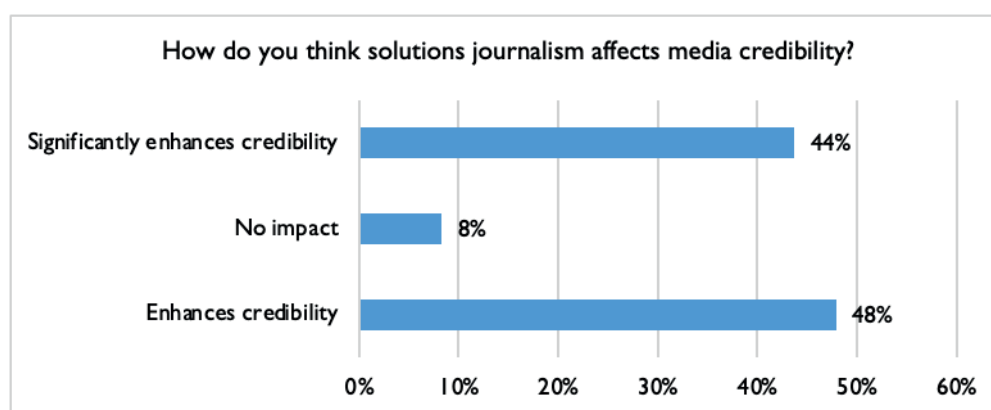


Figure 15: Perceived influence of SoJo on media credibility in Kenya

A large majority of respondents believe that SoJo enhances credibility. About 48% said it enhances credibility, and 44% said it significantly enhances it. These perceptions are vital for media houses seeking to rebuild trust amid widespread skepticism toward mainstream media.

A large portion of respondents believe that Solutions Journalism enhances the quality and credibility of news reporting. Nearly half (49%) strongly agree, and another 36% agree that Solutions Journalism provides a more balanced and constructive narrative than traditional

reporting. This suggests that SoJo is seen not just as a new technique, but as a corrective to the often-problem-saturated approach of conventional journalism.

When asked about its impact on audience trust, 38% strongly agreed and 52% agreed that Solutions Journalism increases public confidence in media. This consensus (90% overall agreement) indicates that SoJo can play a vital role in restoring credibility in journalism, which is especially critical at a time of declining trust in media institutions globally.

The belief that Solutions Journalism can inspire real-world action was even more pronounced. Over half (56%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, and another 32% agreed. Only 1% strongly disagreed. These findings affirm the view that SoJo is not only about telling stories, but it's about catalyzing change through those stories.

Respondents provided rich examples illustrating the tangible influence of solutions journalism across financial, professional, political, and social dimensions. Financially, many outlets and institutions received grants or project-based funding, such as those from the Africa Health Solutions Journalism Initiative (AHSJI), Science Africa, and SJN, as well as development partners, which enabled deeper reporting on issues like climate-smart agriculture, healthcare, and community innovations. Professionally, several teams reported increased visibility, with their work being cited at regional conferences, featured in national outlets, or used as case studies in training workshops. In one instance, Maseno and Makerere universities secured an MOU with the AHSJI and Science Africa, leading to collaborative opportunities in teaching, training, and internships for students.

Politically, SoJo strengthened relationships with public officials and policymakers. For example, after a series on maternal health, health officers were more forthcoming with data, trusting that the stories would fairly assess both problems and responses. Socially, multiple examples demonstrated strong audience engagement, including a school feeding story replicated by nearby communities, a sanitation project that prompted reader follow-ups, and a rooftop farming piece that triggered cross-county sharing of similar efforts. Other examples included positive feedback and the replication of COVID-19 prevention efforts among *Boda boda* riders in Kisumu City, as well as a youth employment story that prompted direct engagement between students and county leadership. These stories demonstrate that when solutions journalism is implemented well, it catalyzes change, deepens trust, and drives community dialogue.

Solutions Journalism has played a significant role in influencing a wide range of public policies across sectors in Kenya. Environmental and agricultural policies have been exceptionally responsive, with media coverage prompting actions such as the banning of harmful pesticides by the Ministry of Agriculture, the adoption of organic farming practices, and a policy-driven shift toward solar energy use in Turkana. Media investigations into sand harvesting in Kisumu County led to a ban that encouraged environmental restoration. Climate-focused SoJo reporting contributed to the passage of county climate change bills and drove public engagement on issues such as plastic pollution and waste management, resulting in policy reforms at the county level. Additionally, coverage of river pollution, particularly around Lake Victoria and the Nairobi River, influenced government interventions and regulatory changes.

SoJo stories have led to important policies and institutional shifts. Health reporting spurred reforms in healthcare administration, CHV engagement policies, and the expansion of mobile clinic services in underserved counties. Reports on teenage pregnancies contributed to the inclusion of parent-adolescent communication in health outreach programs and the rollout

of comprehensive sex education in schools. SoJo also influenced educational reforms, such as KNEC's crackdown on exam cheating and oversight of infrastructure funding, and helped secure policy support for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the education system.

SoJo has shifted journalistic practice for many. Approximately 45% reported that it led to an increased focus on positive impact stories, while 31% noted an improvement in investigative reporting. This suggests that SoJo is not a separate niche, but rather an evolving standard that influences mainstream practice.

78% of the respondents expressed a strong sense of alignment and belonging within the broader solutions journalism (SoJo) ecosystem. Many highlighted shared values, including commitment to constructive, evidence-based storytelling guided by the four key pillars—response, evidence, insight, and limitations. This shared framework has fostered collaboration across institutions, ranging from media houses to academic institutions, through co-hosted workshops, co-publications, and informal networks. While some felt fully integrated—particularly those involved in regional and international SoJo networks—others, especially academic institutions, noted feeling somewhat peripheral compared to newsroom-driven initiatives. A few respondents acknowledged barriers such as limited funding or gaps in coordination and access to training opportunities, yet they still viewed themselves as part of a growing movement. Overall, a spirit of mutual learning, mentorship, and collaboration has helped solidify a sense of community among SoJo practitioners.

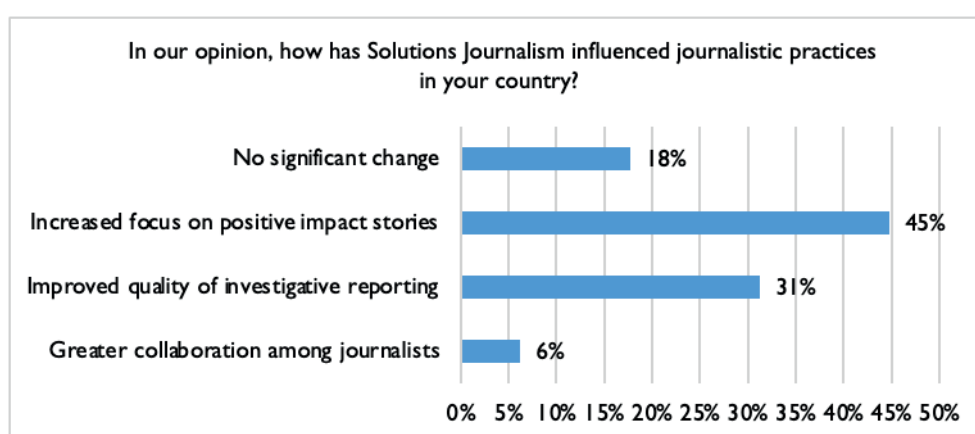


Figure 16: Influence of SoJo on journalistic practices in Kenya

Solutions journalism has led to increased recognition across various institutions, both in media and academia. While not all respondents reported receiving formal awards, 68% cited positive community feedback, professional acknowledgment, and invitations to speak at conferences and workshops as key forms of recognition. Around 25% highlighted that their SoJo work or that of their students has won or been nominated for awards in local journalism competitions, reinforcing the value of constructive reporting. Approximately 18% of the Media houses that adopted the SoJo approach received national and regional accolades, including the Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA) and continental digital journalism honors. In some cases, specific stories, such as those covering climate resilience, maternal health, and community-led sanitation, garnered significant acclaim and visibility. Academic institutions have also benefited, with departments recognized regionally for integrating SoJo into their campus journalism and journalism training programs. Overall, the adoption of SoJo has raised the profile of individuals and institutions, validating the approach and motivating continued engagement.

Respondents also provided a range of compelling examples demonstrating how solutions journalism has reshaped their reporting practices. A typical shift was the move from one-off, incident-based stories to more comprehensive, follow-up coverage that assesses the impact of interventions. For instance, instead of simply reporting on fatalities after a road crash, journalists now verify data through multiple sources, including hospitals, ensuring accuracy and depth. One story critically examined Kenya's free maternal healthcare policy, not only highlighting its intentions but also scrutinizing implementation gaps, such as underfunding and staff shortages. Another outlet revisited a water harvesting project months after its launch to evaluate its real-world impact on the community. Similarly, a story that would have traditionally focused on *Boda boda* (motorcycle taxi) accidents instead highlighted their formation of savings groups and SACCOs to enhance financial security. In an inspiring example of COVID-19 response, reporters chose to spotlight *Boda boda* riders who established handwashing stations, shifting the focus from pandemic casualties to grassroots preventive measures. Other stories covered youth employment solutions, community health initiatives, and anti-corruption efforts within schools. These examples underscore a broader trend: newsrooms are now prioritizing evidence, impact, and constructive narratives, making journalism more meaningful and actionable for their audiences.

Examples of recognition linked to solutions journalism show a wide range of impact. At the community level, several respondents reported local appreciation and positive feedback, even when no formal awards were won. In academic settings, universities that collaborate on curriculum and workshops have acknowledged institutions that integrate SoJo. Meanwhile, some students have received awards at local journalism competitions and recognition from the Media Council of Kenya. Professional journalists also shared notable successes, such as being runners-up in the Annual Journalism Excellence Awards for investigative reporting on human trafficking, as well as nominations for regional awards for stories on sanitation in Kisumu. At higher levels, SoJo stories on climate solutions and environmental sustainability earned both national and continental awards, while health and maternal health reporting received regional recognition. Media houses also stood out, with the Ushujaa series winning the Best Human Interest Feature Award at AJEA 2023 and Mayienga FM earning a top ranking within the KBC fraternity. These examples illustrate how SoJo has boosted individual profiles, strengthened institutional credibility, and increased visibility across local, national, and regional platforms.

The findings show that 92% of respondents reported significant changes in their newsroom practices since adopting solutions journalism, while only 8% indicated little or no change. The most common shift was moving away from problem-centered reporting, which mainly relied on official sources, to a more balanced and evidence-driven approach that highlights responses, community perspectives, and long-term impact. Journalists now emphasize follow-ups, integrate data into storytelling, and prioritize community voices, which has made their work more rigorous, analytical, and relevant to audiences.

Examples of this shift include students critically examining gaps in free maternal healthcare policies rather than only praising the initiative, and reporters following up on county-funded water harvesting projects months later to assess real outcomes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, coverage expanded beyond daily case counts to explore grassroots responses, such as *Boda-boda* operators installing handwashing stations. Similarly, drought reporting evolved to include innovative water harvesting models, while education reporting highlighted anti-corruption campaigns in schools in partnership with the EACC. Audience-driven examples also emerged, such as communities in Kisumu and Siaya Counties, suggesting to journalists stories on cricket farming and climate-smart businesses run by women. These examples show how SoJo has deepened analysis, improved follow-ups, and made reporting more responsive to community realities.

The implementation of solutions journalism has notably transformed relationships between reporters and editors across various organizations. A consistent theme was the shift from hierarchical, top-down editing to a more collaborative approach. Many respondents noted that editors are now more involved in shaping story angles, focusing on solutions, depth, impact, and constructive narratives. This change has fostered mutual respect, with editors appreciating the rigor and public value of SoJo stories. In academic and media settings alike, story development is increasingly co-created, with editors offering support to ensure critical analysis without drifting into advocacy. One journalist cited how their editor allowed a second visit to follow up on a school feeding story—something uncommon before SoJo adoption. Others emphasized that initial skepticism from editors has given way to support, particularly as audience engagement and recognition have grown.

Another example was when a reporter proposed covering youth unemployment, editors pushed them to explore not only the problem but also the impact of government training programs and youth-led entrepreneurship initiatives. Similarly, when a story on a community recycling initiative was pitched, editors guided the reporter to go beyond description and examine measurable outcomes and challenges. In another case, an editor approved follow-up visits months after a story about a school feeding program in Siaya, reflecting a greater trust and recognition of the program's long-term impact. Faculty and student editors also work closely together to refine story angles, ensuring rigor without slipping into advocacy. These shifts have deepened dialogue, strengthened mutual respect, and improved both the quality and impact of reporting.

Several organizations provided compelling examples of how their editorial dynamics have shifted due to the adoption of solutions journalism. One newsroom noted that, previously, stories were framed almost exclusively as crises with minimal guidance. Now, editors actively encourage reporters to seek out responses and frame stories with a solutions lens. In one instance, a proposed story on youth unemployment was refined through collaboration between the reporter and editors to include an analysis of job creation programs and their measurable impacts, ensuring greater depth and balance. Another example came from a feature on informal settlement upgrades in Mukuru, an informal settlement in Nairobi, where the editorial team collaborated closely with the reporter to incorporate community voices, credible data, and comparative analysis, transforming the story into one that influenced national policy discussions. In academic environments, students now edit SoJo stories in studio settings with faculty oversight, fostering a hands-on, collaborative learning environment. Additionally, one reporter shared how coverage of a school feeding program in Siaya was followed up with a second visit, enabled by editor support—something rare before SoJo. These examples highlight how solutions journalism has fostered a culture of thoughtful inquiry, deeper analysis, and collaborative story development in both newsrooms and journalism training institutions. Overall, SoJo has encouraged stronger newsroom collaboration, more intentional story planning, and greater openness to in-depth, evidence-based reporting.

Feedback from policymakers, civil society, and the public on Solutions Journalism (SoJo) has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting its growing credibility and relevance. 78% of the respondents noted that SoJo stories have fostered stronger trust in the media, created more opportunities for public engagement, and encouraged stakeholder collaboration. Fifty-four percent of reporters reported an increased interaction with their audiences, including live calls, comments, and direct inquiries about follow-up actions. Stakeholders, especially in civil society, expressed appreciation

for SoJo's shift from negative to constructive narratives, with some indicating that such stories are more relatable and motivating. This feedback aligns with increased emotional engagement and a greater sense of personal relevance among readers, which many said was lacking in traditional reporting. 28% of the Respondents also mentioned that SoJo stories have inspired innovation, attracted grants, and created momentum for policy reform.

Beyond engagement, SoJo has been credited with influencing actual policy decisions and attracting developmental support. Respondents shared instances where their stories contributed to the adoption of best practices, follow-up funding, or even direct inclusion in policymaking processes. For example, one story on carbon credits led to a journalist joining a policy advisory team, while coverage of community health volunteer efforts encouraged counties to enhance their health strategies. Policymakers themselves reportedly support the production of more SoJo stories and have used them to identify viable interventions. Meanwhile, media houses that have adopted SoJo have seen their reporters win awards and drive public conversation, thereby reinforcing the value of the method. The overall sentiment is that Solutions Journalism is impactful, socially transformative, and urgently needed to break the fatigue of problem-saturated news cycles.

5.1.6. Use of Technology in Producing SoJo Stories

Respondents widely use technology to support SoJo reporting. A majority (78%) believe that AI can enhance the practice of Solutions Journalism, particularly in tasks such as data analysis, transcription, and fact verification. Journalists (i.e., editors, correspondents, and reporters) view Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a supportive tool that can help streamline production and improve accuracy. However, they also stress that AI should complement, not replace, the human element of storytelling, which is central to the SoJo approach.

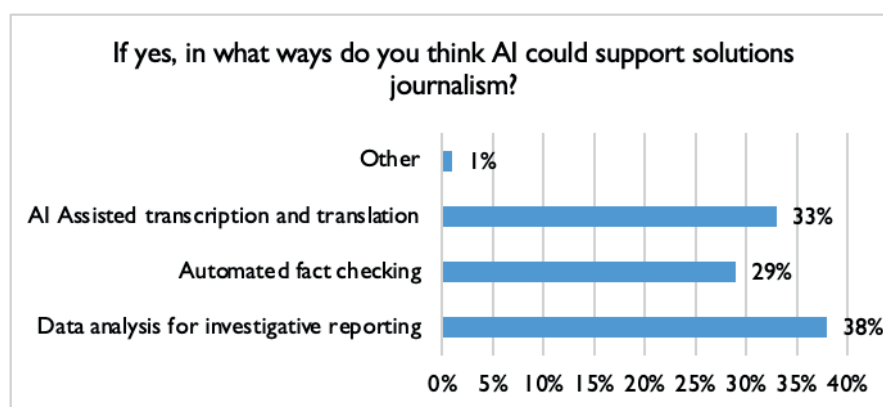


Figure 17: Approaches of AI support to SoJo in Kenya

Despite optimism about AI, respondents raised concerns regarding misinformation, bias, and the loss of authenticity. Many feared that overreliance on AI could compromise the credibility of stories or dilute human-centered narratives. Concerns about plagiarism, ethical misuse, and cultural misrepresentation were also noted. These insights suggest a need for ethical guidelines and training on the responsible use of AI within the journalism field.

74% of the Respondents also anticipate more cross-sector partnerships, policy influence, and curriculum integration in journalism training institutions. SoJo is viewed as a tool that can transform public discourse by fostering societal problem-solving and facilitating participatory journalism.

Several contributors noted that it will shape how news is packaged and consumed, leading to more collaborative work between journalists, civil society, and policy actors. As reporting moves away from sensationalism, SoJo is expected to play a key role in improving mental health outcomes by offering hope and psychosocial support through solutions-oriented content.

5.1.7. Future of SoJo in the Region

Looking ahead, 78% of the respondents expressed a strong belief that continued implementation of solutions journalism will be transformative for their media organizations. Several see SoJo becoming fully mainstreamed into daily reporting practices as the standard for quality journalism. Respondents envision their outlets evolving into trusted, community-rooted platforms known for impactful, balanced storytelling that not only highlights problems but also investigates credible responses.

Academic institutions anticipate becoming regional hubs for SoJo training, producing graduates equipped to influence public discourse and policy. 62% of the respondents foresee enhanced institutional partnerships, technological advancements in media labs, and increased influence on local and national policies, particularly in areas such as health, education, and the environment.

For media houses, the future holds greater trust and engagement from audiences, increased regional influence, and new revenue opportunities through donor and partner support. Outlets like Ramogi TV and The Star envision themselves as thought leaders and partners in community development and civic engagement. Ultimately, the continued integration of SoJo is seen as key to maintaining journalistic credibility, ensuring financial sustainability, and achieving societal impact.

Respondents identified several avenues for improving support for Solutions Journalism across East Africa. These include more donor funding, cross-border journalist collaboration, and increased capacity building for both individuals and institutions. 86% of the respondents highlighted the importance of regional networks in strengthening learning and amplifying the impact of SoJo stories across borders. Journalism schools, nonprofit organizations, and media houses were encouraged to collaborate on creating platforms that facilitate the transfer of skills, mentorship, and editorial collaboration.

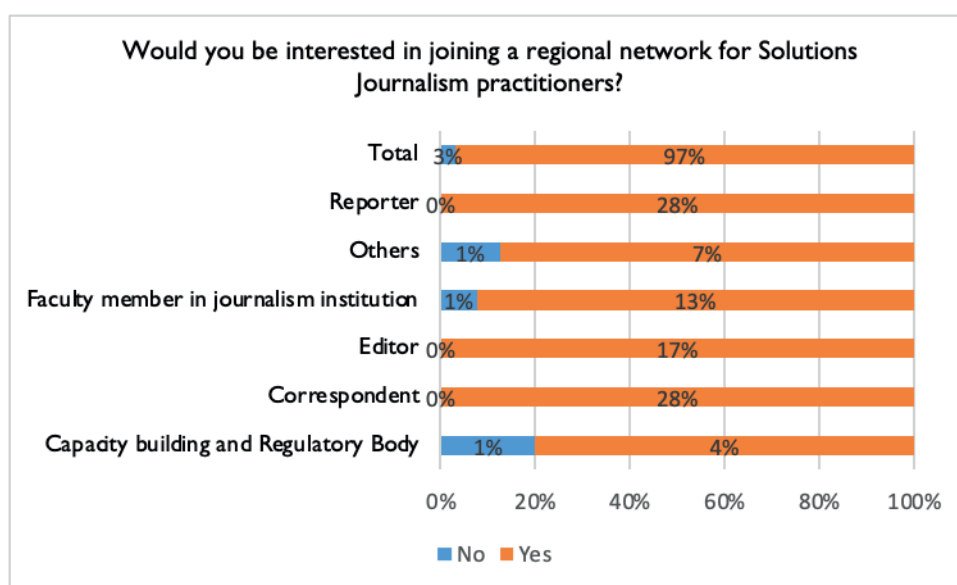


Figure 18: Interested in joining a regional network for Solutions Journalism practitioners?

Based on the responses, SoJo is expected to undergo significant evolution over the next five years, driven by increased institutional support, technological integration, and growing audience demand for meaningful, impact-oriented content. 86% foresee SoJo becoming a mainstream reporting standard in both traditional and digital newsrooms. The majority of respondents (78%) predict an increase in the use of artificial intelligence to guide data-driven and interactive storytelling, aiming to enhance engagement and effectiveness. Media houses are expected to create dedicated SoJo desks, incorporate them into prime-time reporting, and prioritize youth-focused, community-based content. With audiences showing a preference for constructive narratives, many believe SoJo will restore trust in journalism, boost newsroom relevance, and help traditional media compete in an increasingly digital environment.

Institutionalization and sustainability were recurring themes. 64% of the respondents called for incorporating SoJo into journalism curricula, increasing training opportunities, and creating permanent structures within media houses to support solutions reporting. There was also recognition of the role of funders, regulatory bodies, and government in providing an enabling environment through resources, policy support, and editorial independence. Suggestions ranged from face-to-face training and grassroots outreach to mentorship programs and the use of AI tools in story production. Overall, the responses indicate that SoJo is viewed not only as a journalism method but also as a vehicle for societal transformation, with broad potential to shape the future of news and public engagement in East Africa.

5.1.8. Challenges in Adopting SoJo

The most frequently cited challenges were a lack of training (30%), followed by difficulty accessing data (29%), and limited editorial support (25%). Journalists also pointed to resource constraints, resistance to new storytelling formats, and audience preferences for conventional news. These challenges suggest the need for systemic support, both at the institutional and policy levels, to foster a sustainable SoJo culture.

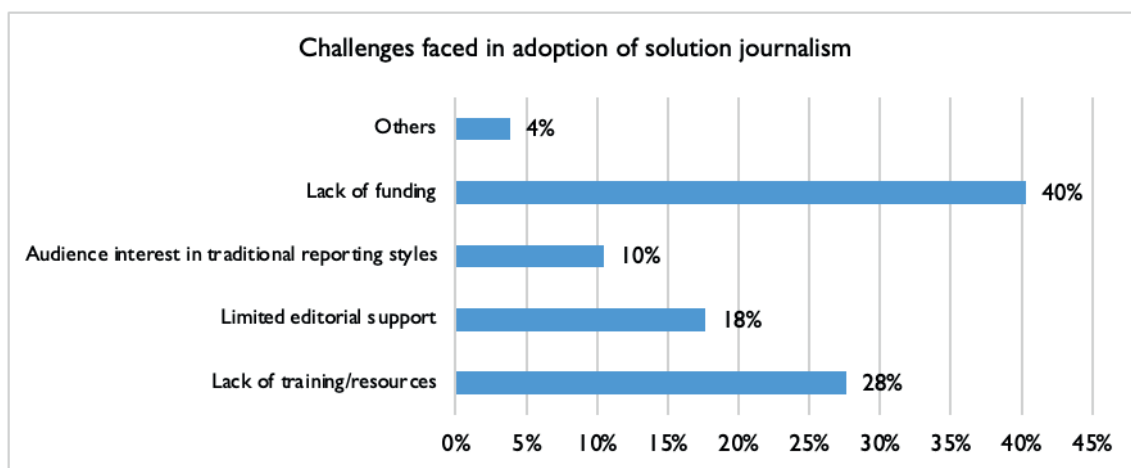


Figure 19: Challenges in the adoption of SoJo in Kenya

The most frequently cited challenges in practicing solutions journalism were a lack of training (30%), followed by difficulty accessing data (29%), and limited editorial support (25%). Journalists also pointed to resource constraints, resistance to new storytelling formats, and audience preferences for conventional news. These structural and cultural barriers must be addressed if SoJo is to move from an innovative to a standard journalistic approach in East Africa.



Figure 20: Challenges in practicing SoJo in Kenya

A significant proportion (38% strongly agree, 42% agree) acknowledged that journalists lack sufficient training and resources to practice Solutions Journalism effectively. This suggests that, while the appetite for SoJo exists, capacity constraints remain a significant barrier to implementation.

Finally, there was an overwhelming agreement on the need for institutional support: 64% strongly agreed and 27% agreed that media organizations should prioritize SoJo as part of their editorial strategy. This clear mandate suggests that newsroom leadership and editorial boards have a pivotal role to play in embedding SoJo within organizational practices and content policies.

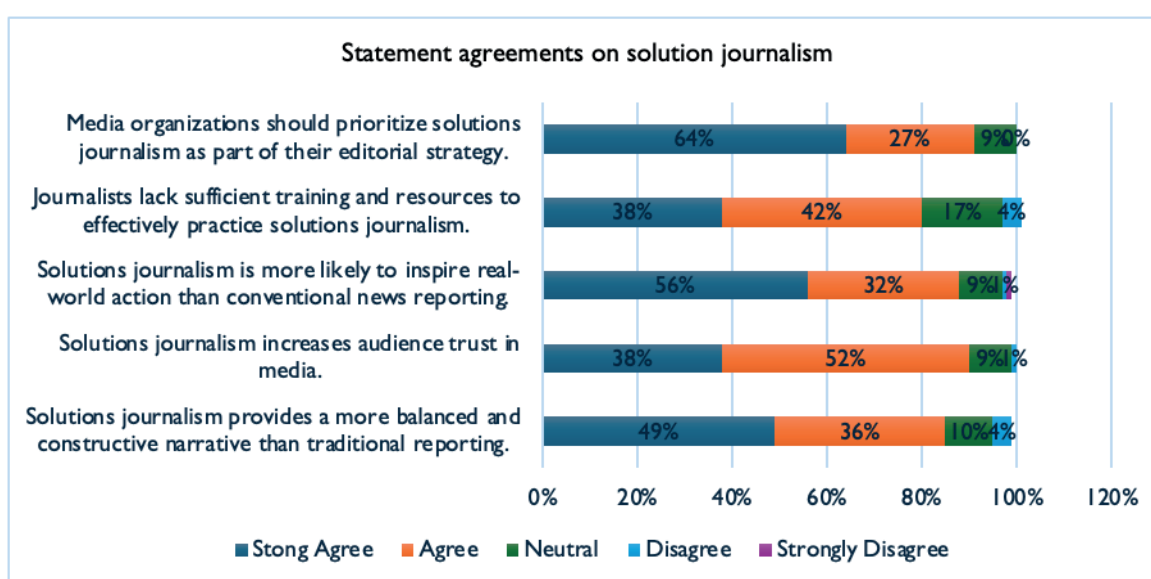


Figure 21: Statements regarding SoJo in Kenya

5.1.9. Lessons Learned in Implementing Solutions Journalism

Academic institutions have reported that SoJo has transformed both teaching and practice. At the University of Nairobi, a faculty member noted that SoJo deepens critical thinking, encourages evidence-based reporting, and motivates students by showing journalism as a tool for solutions rather than only for highlighting crises. A student project on low-cost clean energy

was later shared by NGOs, showing how classroom work can shape policy conversations. At Maseno University, students practicing SoJo have developed more empathetic and investigative skills, with one hydroponic farming story sparking a County-level discussion on food security. Rongo University has integrated SoJo into teaching by showing students how to frame stories comprehensively, especially on issues such as the climate emergency, where credible adaptation and mitigation initiatives need to be canvassed. Collectively, these experiences suggest that SoJo helps students and staff connect academic work with practical societal outcomes.

Media houses described both personal and organizational shifts. At KBC, editors shared that SoJo has strengthened trust with audiences, with stories on health initiatives inspiring other regions to replicate solutions. Science Africa highlighted that evidence-based SoJo increased credibility and respect among scientists and policymakers, with published stories influencing NGO programming and policy decisions. Royal Media Services and the Star Newspaper reported higher audience engagement and constructive feedback on SoJo pieces, with coverage of water projects and food security sparking replication and dialogue. Regional outlets, such as Ramogi TV/Radio, Mayienga FM, Lake Region Bulletin, and Lake Basin Bulletin, emphasized the importance of stronger community trust and partnerships. Examples included youth recycling initiatives that attracted county support and sustainable farming stories that encouraged the adoption of new practices. Editors at People Daily also linked SoJo to good governance by focusing columns on practical remedies. Across these cases, media houses view SoJo as a rigorous, trust-building approach that strengthens reputation, deepens community relationships, and in some instances, influences policy.

5.1.10. Recommendations for Strengthening SoJo

To strengthen Solutions Journalism (SoJo) in Kenya, a large number of respondents recommend prioritizing training, funding, and institutional support. Many called for regular capacity-building workshops and mentorship programs for both budding and experienced journalists. There was a strong push for integrating SoJo into the journalism curriculum at colleges and universities, preferably as a core unit rather than an elective. Respondents also suggested that editors, not just reporters, should be trained to better understand and support SoJo stories in newsrooms. Financial support was a recurring theme, with calls for grants to support the production of stories, especially those involving investigative or data-intensive pieces. Awards and recognition programs were also proposed as incentives to motivate journalists to produce impactful, solutions-focused stories consistently.

Beyond individual capacity and funding, respondents emphasized the need for structural and policy-level changes. Suggestions included creating SoJo desks in every newsroom, encouraging partnerships between media houses, civil society, and government, and establishing a favorable legislative environment for independent journalism. Some pointed to the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) as a key player in institutionalizing SoJo by creating an award category for SoJo stories, supporting curriculum changes, and setting professional standards. Others encouraged media houses to adopt editorial policies that prioritize SoJo, while also proposing collaborations with vernacular stations to expand reach and inclusion. Respondents believe these efforts, if anchored in sustained investment, collaboration, and public engagement, can position Solutions Journalism as a central pillar of Kenya's media landscape, helping it stay credible, relevant, and transformative.

5.2. Rwanda

5.2.1. Introduction

This report was prepared from quantitative and qualitative data to present a fuller picture of how solutions journalism is understood and practiced in Rwanda. On the quantitative side, 96 respondents were surveyed, providing a broad base of perspectives from across the media sector. Reporters made up the largest share at 53%, reflecting their central role in day-to-day news production. Editors followed at 21%, while correspondents accounted for 12%. Practitioners classified under “others,” including those working in non-traditional or specialized media roles, represented 8%. Faculty members from journalism institutions and representatives from capacity-building and regulatory bodies each contributed 3%. This distribution suggests that newsroom actors significantly shape the data, but it is also enriched by perspectives from academia, training institutions, and regulators, who influence the professional environment.

Complementing this, nine respondents were interviewed through qualitative key informant interviews to provide context and depth to the survey findings. Among them, four were drawn from mainstream and independent media houses, including national news agencies, daily newspapers, and dispatch services. Two respondents came from online media outlets, which reflects the growing importance of digital platforms in Rwanda’s media landscape. Two others represented academic institutions, specifically the University of Rwanda and the Catholic University of Kabgayi, offering insights into how solutions journalism is being introduced in training and research. One additional respondent was drawn from community and private radio, bringing in the perspective of localized, grassroots broadcasting.

5.2.2. Awareness, Perceptions and Understanding of SoJo

Among the respondents in Rwanda, 53% were reporters, 21% were editors, and 12% were correspondents.

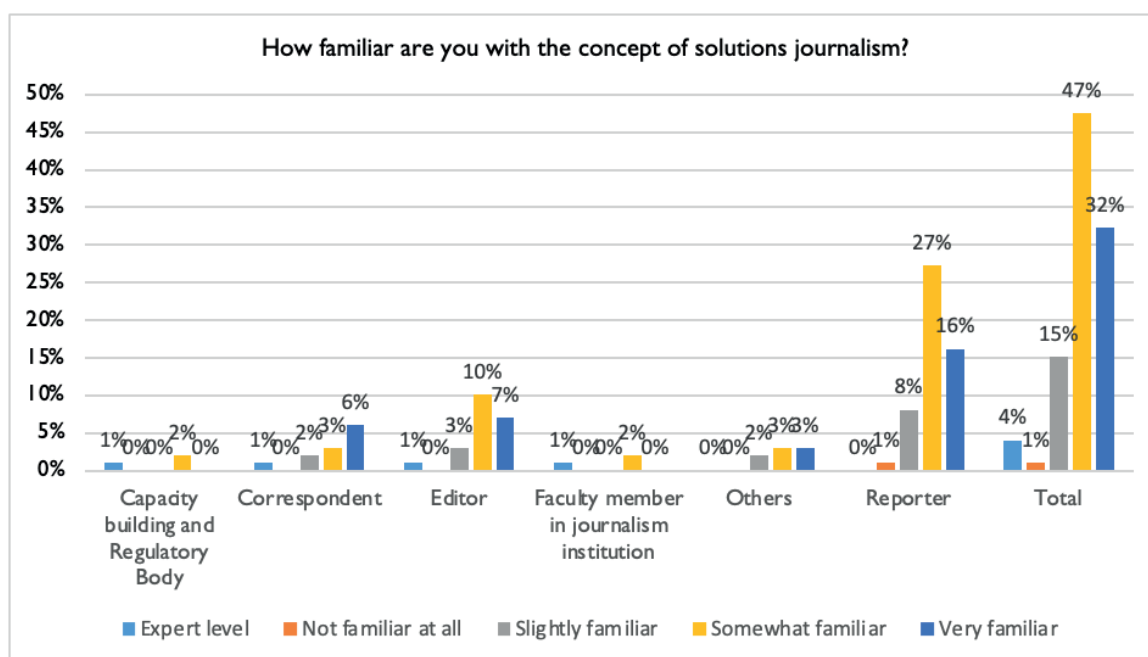


Figure 22: How familiar are you with the concept of solutions journalism?

99% of the respondents reported being at least somewhat familiar with solutions journalism. Specifically, 32% were very familiar, 47% were somewhat familiar, and only 1% were not familiar at all. This high level of awareness suggests the concept is relatively well-known among Rwandan journalists. Reporters mainly described themselves as somewhat familiar (27%) or very familiar (16%) with solutions journalism, though a small fraction (1%) indicated they were not familiar at all. Most described it as a form of reporting that is rooted in evidence, aims to inform and empower audiences, and includes critical analysis of the effectiveness and limitations of proposed solutions. Others demonstrated a relatively solid and evolving understanding of solutions journalism, consistently defining it as a journalistic approach that goes beyond merely identifying and highlighting social problems to investigating how individuals, communities, and institutions respond to them.

Respondents' first experiences with solutions journalism varied but reflected a common theme of discovery through structured training and peer influence. Several participants were introduced to the concept through capacity-building workshops organized by organizations such as Science Africa, FOJO Media Institute, and the Rwanda Environmental Journalists Network. These workshops, often held during the COVID-19 period or shortly after, provided not only an introduction to the pillars of solutions journalism but also practical skills on how to apply them in local reporting. Others learned about SoJo through colleagues or editors who encouraged them to reshape stories using the solutions lens. A few were guided by university professors or discovered it through exploring the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) website. For most, this initial encounter was eye-opening, characterized by a shift in mindset from traditional problem-focused reporting to a more constructive and empowering approach that emphasized responses and their impact. The overall sentiment was one of excitement and professional renewal, with journalists feeling inspired to take a more hopeful and responsible role in their storytelling.

The findings show strong consensus among respondents on the value of solutions journalism in shaping constructive narratives and restoring public trust. Seventy-six percent either strongly agreed or agreed that solutions journalism provides a more balanced and constructive narrative than traditional reporting, with only 9% disagreeing to any extent. Similarly, 79% agreed that this form of journalism enhances audience trust in the media, reflecting confidence in its role in rebuilding credibility in an era marked by media skepticism. While 70% felt that solutions journalism is more likely to inspire real-world action than conventional news reporting, a higher proportion (20%) remained neutral, suggesting that the link between reporting and action is recognized but not yet universally evident.

5.2.3. Education and Sources of Training in Solutions Journalism

63% of respondents indicated that they had received formal training in solutions journalism, whereas 37% had not. This reflects substantial exposure to practice, though it also shows room for expanded capacity building.

Reporters made up the largest share of those trained, accounting for 33%, followed by editors at 13% and correspondents at 7%. Faculty members in journalism institutions and capacity-building or regulatory bodies each contributed 2%, while those categorized as "others" accounted for 5%. On the other hand, lack of training was most common among reporters (19%) and editors (8%), with correspondents at 5%, "others" at 3%, and both faculty and regulatory actors at 1% each.

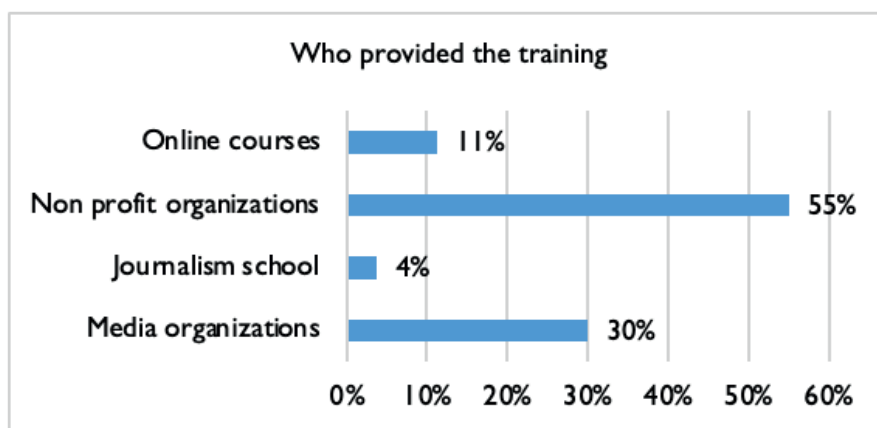


Figure 23: Have you ever received any formal training on solutions journalism?

Among those trained, 55% received training from non-profit organizations, followed by media organizations at 30%. Only 11% took online courses, and a mere 4% received training from journalism schools. The predominance of non-institutional training highlights a gap in the academic integration of solutions journalism.

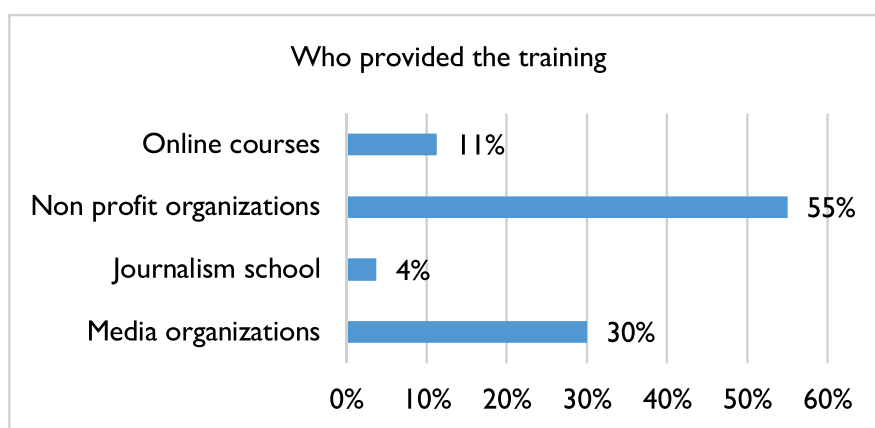


Figure 24: Institution providing SoJo training in Rwanda

In several cases, journalists also supplemented formal training with webinars, SJN toolkits, and peer learning. 20% of the respondents who said that they had not received formal training developed their understanding of SoJo through exposure in the newsroom, editorial feedback, or by informally aligning their storytelling practices with the principles of constructive reporting.

This indicates that while training opportunities are reaching a majority of newsroom actors, especially reporters and editors, gaps remain in ensuring more inclusive capacity building across all cadres. Overall, training was key to helping journalists and educators conceptualize, structure, and implement SoJo practices in their work.

Most respondents confirmed they have received training in solutions journalism, primarily from Science Africa, which played a central role in equipping Rwandan journalists and editors with practical skills on SoJo reporting. Other notable training providers included the Rwanda Environmental Journalists Network (REJN) in partnership with FOJO Media Institute, as well as direct mentorship from chief editors and facilitators trained by the Solutions Journalism

Network (SJN). In several cases, journalists also supplemented formal training with webinars, SJN toolkits, and peer learning. A few respondents had not received formal training. Still, they developed their understanding of SoJo through exposure in the newsroom, editorial feedback, or by informally aligning their storytelling practices with the principles of constructive reporting. Overall, training was key to helping journalists and educators conceptualize, structure, and implement SoJo practices in their work—the predominance of non-institutional training points to a gap in the academic integration of solutions journalism.

In journalism education and training programs, only 23% report solutions journalism being taught as a core topic. A majority, 51%, reported that it is incorporated as an optional topic, with the highest uptake among reporters (26%), correspondents (7%), and editors (9%). Another 23% indicated that it was a core part of their curriculum or training, led mainly by reporters (14%), correspondents (3%), editors (3%), and faculty members (1%). However, 26% stated that solutions journalism is not included in their coursework or training, with reporters (12%) and editors (9%) comprising the majority of this group. The findings suggest that while there is progress in mainstreaming solutions journalism into training, it is still more commonly treated as an elective rather than a mandatory area of focus.

80% of the institutions reported not having any staff members teaching Solutions Journalism (SoJo) or marked the question as not applicable, indicating a lack of formal integration into teaching staff roles. Only the University of Rwanda stands out, with approximately 10 staff members currently teaching SoJo. Another institution mentioned two staff members involved, though they noted a lack of training capacity. This highlights that, while capacity remains limited, early adopters are making progress, especially in institutions such as the University of Rwanda. This suggests that, while institutional integration remains limited, there are promising steps toward embedding SoJo in journalism education in specific academic settings.

Most respondents indicated that no academic papers or theses have yet been written on Solutions Journalism (SoJo) within their institutions. However, there is one notable exception—at the University of Rwanda, where some students have produced academic papers and theses on the topic. This suggests that while scholarly engagement with SoJo is still emerging in many institutions, there are encouraging signs of academic uptake, particularly where SoJo has been introduced more systematically.

Nearly all respondents (99%) expressed interest in receiving additional training in solutions journalism. Reporters made up the majority at 52%, followed by editors at 21% and correspondents at 12%. Faculty members from journalism institutions, capacity-building and regulatory bodies, and others accounted for 3%, 3%, and 8%, respectively. Only 1% of respondents, drawn from the reporter category, indicated no interest in further training. This underscores a strong appetite across the sector to deepen skills and knowledge in solutions journalism.

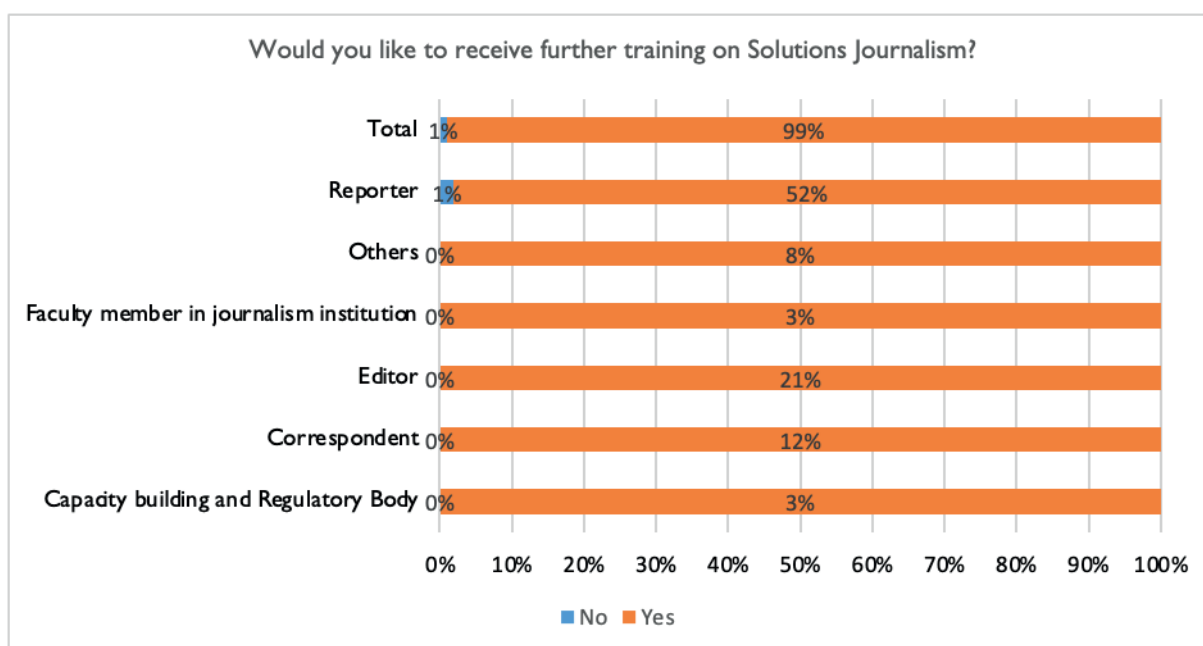


Figure 25: Would you like to receive further training on Solutions Journalism?

5.2.4. Implementation (Uptake) of Solutions Journalism

The implementation of Solutions Journalism across Rwandan media institutions has been primarily driven and supported by external partners, including Science Africa, the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), and the Rwanda Environmental Journalists Network (REJN). These organizations have provided crucial support in the form of training, mentorship, editorial guidance, and grants for the production of stories. In some cases, the support was directed at individuals, which nonetheless benefited their organizations through improved reporting. Some organizations have also acknowledged internal champions—visionary editors or managers—who advocate for Sojo within their newsrooms.

Within media houses, senior editors and a few trained journalists championed the adoption of Sojo, gradually shifting editorial focus based on positive audience feedback. In academia, faculty and university administrators, often trained by external partners like Science Africa, helped institutionalize Sojo through curriculum adaptation and student mentorship. In some cases, local organizations, such as the Rwandan Female Journalists Group Synergy, played a key role in promoting the approach.

Respondents described applying the four pillars of Sojo, focusing on the response, evidence, insight, and limitations to produce more impactful stories that go beyond merely highlighting problems. Several journalists emphasized a deliberate shift in their approach following formal training or workshops, noting that they now intentionally seek evidence-based responses to societal issues when crafting stories rather than just focusing on the problem.

A substantial majority (77%) of respondents have produced a solutions journalism story, with only 23% reporting otherwise. This indicates high engagement with the approach in practice, not just in theory.

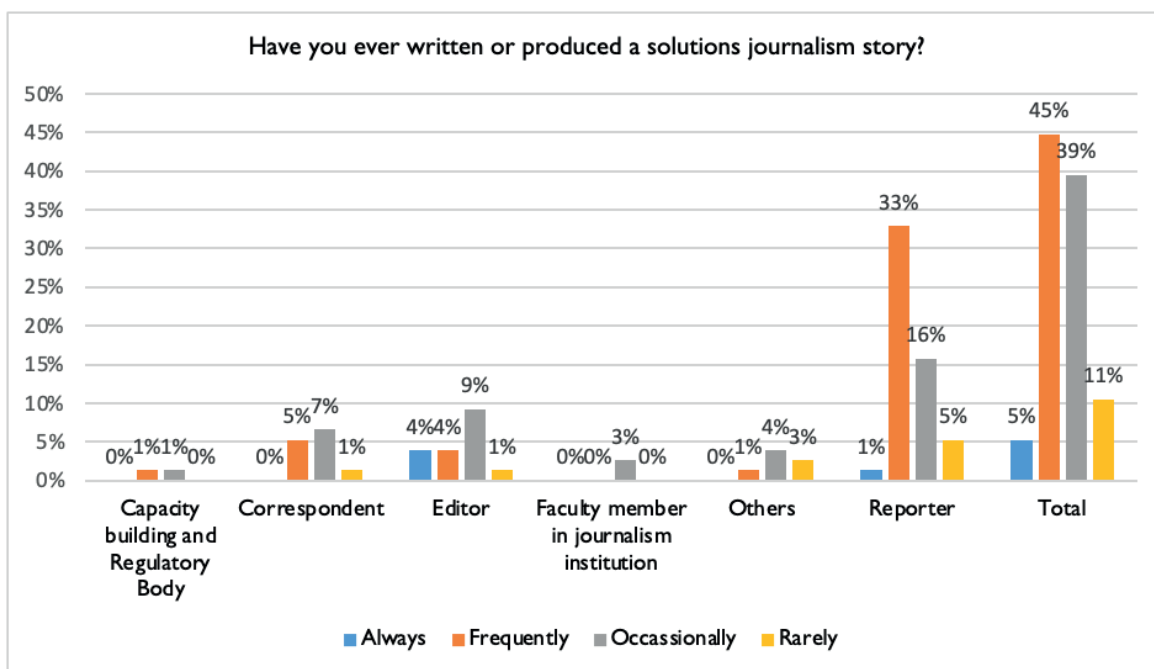


Figure 26: Have you ever written or produced a solutions journalism story?

For example, one journalist reported on bamboo planting along the Nyabarongo River to prevent soil erosion, while another focused on vocational training centres equipping youth with employable skills. These stories not only informed but also inspired replication and support from NGOs and the community.

SoJo has guided content choices around issues such as waste management, climate adaptation, and sustainable agriculture. Editorial teams are increasingly applying the SoJo lens to ensure their reporting is constructive and grounded in real-world impact. Academic institutions, such as the University of Rwanda and Radio Salus, are beginning to integrate SoJo concepts into media training, even if they are not formally included in the curriculum. Collectively, these experiences illustrate that SoJo is viewed as both a transformative professional tool and a means to achieve social impact.

Among the respondents (reporters and correspondents) who are practicing solutions journalism, 45% incorporate it frequently, and 39% do so occasionally. Only 5% always use it, and 11% rarely do. These findings reflect a moderate but consistent integration of the approach into regular reporting routines.

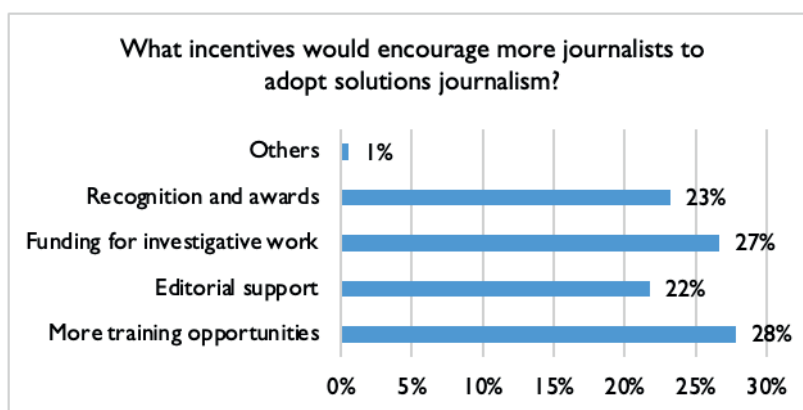


Figure 27: Have you ever written or produced a solutions journalism story?

Capacity-building efforts—including workshops, mentorship, Science Cafés, and peer learning—serve as the primary tools to ensure quality and consistency. However, only 31% of respondents indicated that their media houses have a dedicated desk for solutions journalism, while 69% do not. The absence of a dedicated SoJo desk or integrated newsroom policy means that deployment is often ad hoc and dependent on the commitment of individual journalists and editors, which could limit the consistent production of SoJo stories.

To encourage adoption of solutions journalism, respondents emphasized the need for more training (28%), funding (27%), recognition and awards (23%), and editorial support (22%). These incentives align closely with the practical needs expressed earlier and indicate a demand for institutional and financial support.

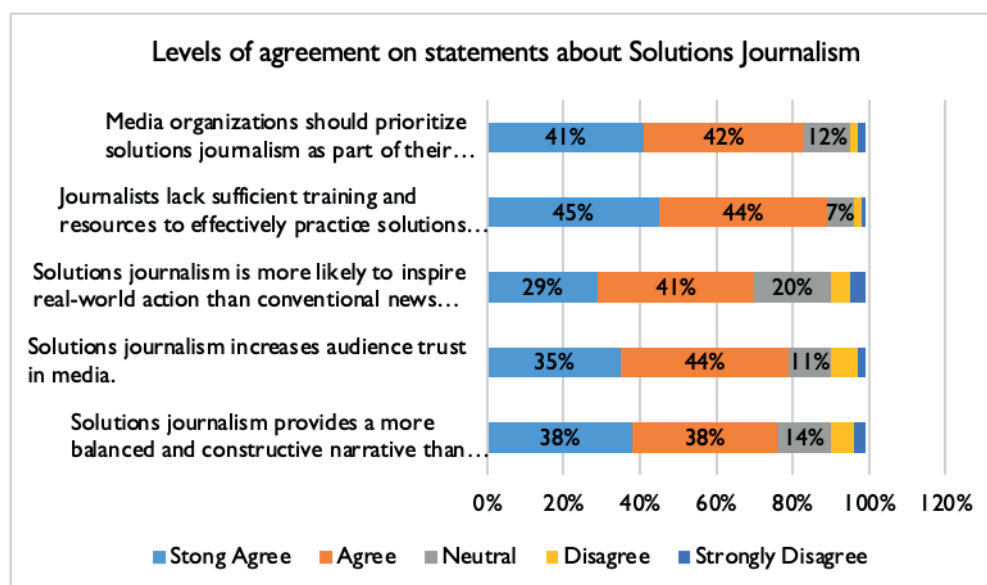


Figure 28: Incentives that would encourage more journalists to adopt SoJo

5.2.5. Impact of Implementing Solutions Journalism

The implementation of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) has had a mixed but increasingly positive impact on Rwandan media organizations. Professionally, many respondents reported enhanced credibility and visibility, with several journalists noting that SoJo stories have attracted collaborations, fellowships, and speaking engagements. Solutions journalism was reported to enhance media credibility by 62% of respondents, and 24% believed it significantly enhanced credibility. Only a small percentage felt it had no impact (8%) or reduced credibility (6%). These responses suggest that audiences view the approach as trustworthy and constructive, adding value to the journalist-audience relationship.

The findings show strong consensus among respondents on the value of solutions journalism in shaping constructive narratives and restoring public trust. Seventy-six percent either strongly agreed or agreed that solutions journalism provides a more balanced and constructive narrative than traditional reporting, with only 9% disagreeing to any extent.

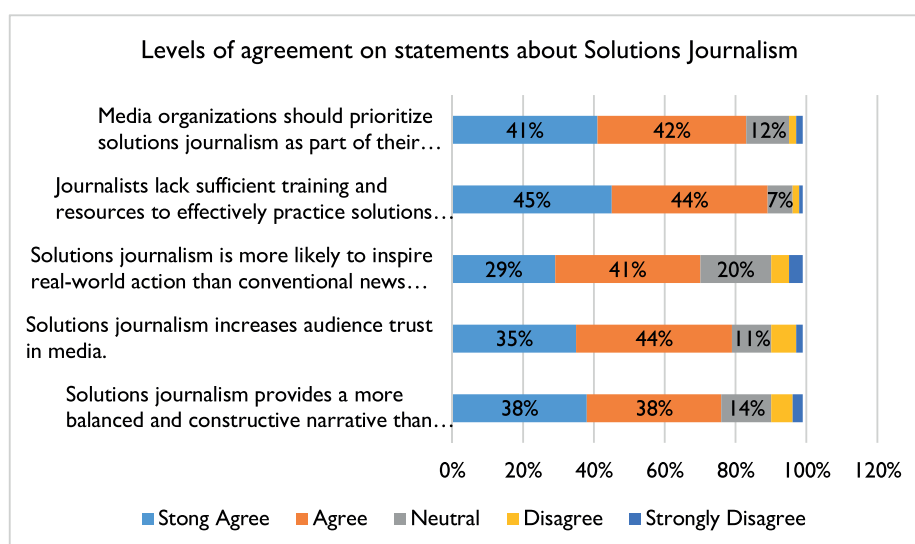


Figure 29: Statements regarding SoJo in Rwanda

Similarly, 79% agreed that this form of journalism enhances audience trust in the media, reflecting confidence in its role in rebuilding credibility in an era marked by media skepticism. While 70% felt that solutions journalism is more likely to inspire real-world action than conventional news reporting, a higher proportion (20%) remained neutral, suggesting that the link between reporting and action is recognized but not yet universally evident.

Some media houses, such as *Kigali Today*, have received prizes and recognition for their solutions-focused reporting. Several Rwandan journalists and media organizations reported that solutions journalism (SoJo) has contributed to increased recognition and visibility, both locally and internationally. Some of the key highlights include:

- Individual awards and fellowships: Journalists shared that their SoJo story pitches have been shortlisted for grants or led to fellowships, affirming the value of their work and boosting professional credibility.
- Media organization visibility: Outlets that have embraced SoJo have noted positive feedback from audiences and acknowledgment by media networks and partners, which has helped expand their reach and influence.
- Award-winning content: A notable example is a story on birth registration in Rwanda published by *Panorama Newspaper*, which received an award for its impactful storytelling ([link to article](#)).
- Sector-specific honors: One journalist reported receiving an award in the ICT sector for a solutions-oriented piece.

One journalist noted that producing SoJo stories, such as those on access to clean water, brought valuable learning opportunities for the community. Another shared how covering a story on Rift Valley fever marked a significant shift towards evidence-based reporting, broadening their perspective. At an editorial level, a Chief Editor emphasized that embracing solutions journalism fostered stronger collaboration and teamwork among reporters, with a focus on impactful stories, exemplified by a story about a community repairing rural roads that generated high engagement. Other reported themes included addressing malnutrition, innovations in the health sector, and community-driven solutions for climate change adaptation. Overall, solutions journalism was seen as a transformative approach, enhancing both journalistic practices and community impact.

Socially, SoJo has helped build stronger relationships with audiences and communities, with readers expressing appreciation for the content's constructive tone and practical relevance. This deeper engagement has, in some cases, translated into story leads, business referrals, and broader community trust. Most respondents (68%) believe that solutions journalism is more engaging than traditional journalism. Another 8% find it significantly more engaging, while 12% see no difference, and another 12% consider it less engaging. This suggests that solutions journalism has a strong potential to capture and sustain audience attention.

Financial impacts remain modest for most respondents, with only 10% noting commissions or new business opportunities linked to SoJo. 6% of the respondents acknowledged the potential for growth if SoJo were more formally integrated and better resourced.

Politically, 30% of the respondents described improved collaboration with local government officials, especially when coverage supported development-focused initiatives. However, others admitted that SoJo has not yet been institutionalized enough within their organizations to yield a significant, measurable impact across all these dimensions. The general sentiment is that SoJo holds great promise, but sustained training, resources, and editorial commitment are necessary to fully realize its potential.

Only 38% of respondents have observed a direct impact of solutions journalism on public discourse or policy change, while a majority (56%) are unsure, and 6% have seen no effect. The uncertainty may reflect a need for better tracking and communication of outcomes resulting from solutions journalism.

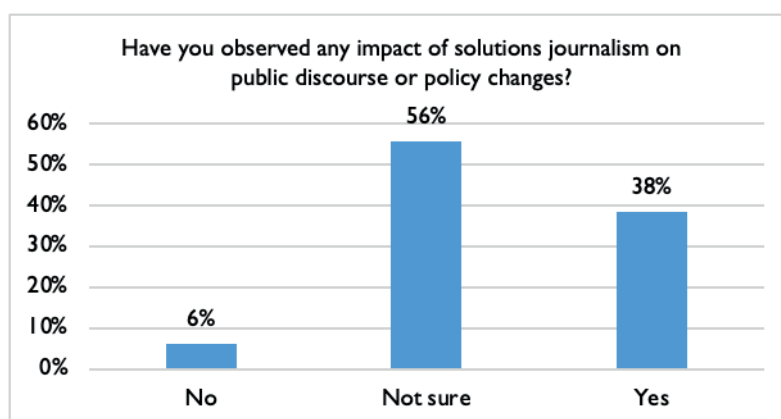


Figure 30: Observed impact of SoJo on public discourse or policy changes

Several concrete examples illustrate how Solutions Journalism (SoJo) has generated tangible impact across Rwandan media organizations:

- Kigali Today was recognized for its efforts in promoting disability inclusion, an achievement attributed to its consistently solutions-driven coverage that highlights underrepresented voices and issues.
- A journalist shared how a story on Syndicat Ingabo, an agricultural cooperative supported by the EU delegation in Rwanda, helped strengthen trust between the donor and local implementers. The story showcased best practices in cassava farming, thereby offering visibility and accountability for the EU's investment and reinforcing the outlet's partnership with the donor.

- Coverage of a local electricity access project not only informed the community but also improved cooperation with government officials, demonstrating how SoJo stories can enhance media–state relations.
- A 2023 campaign in Gakenke District spotlighting youth in agriculture led to the outlet becoming a regional leader in northern Rwanda. The success of this initiative prompted political engagement, with local leaders now actively inviting the outlet to cover other socially constructive topics, including malnutrition.
- *Panorama* highlighted Rwanda’s progress in birth registration through a widely shared article, further positioning the outlet as a platform for developmental storytelling: [Rwanda is overcoming the birth registration challenge](#).

These examples underscore that SoJo can directly influence policy visibility, build institutional credibility, and foster deeper engagement within the media community.

Media organizations in Rwanda report that the adoption of solutions journalism has gradually transformed their newsroom practices. 80% of the journalists noted a clear shift from solely reporting on problems to intentionally including evidence-based responses and their impact. For those who adopted the approach, it led to more structured and thoughtful storytelling, sparked public debates, and enhanced story quality. 60% of the editors noted that their reporters were shifting their focus from sensationalism to original, impact-driven stories aligned with the four SoJo pillars. However, not all organizations experienced changes; a few felt that their practices had already aligned with SoJo principles or that no shift had occurred yet. Academic institutions also noted a pedagogical evolution, with students now being trained to go beyond traditional problem-focused reporting.

The responses indicate that the implementation of solutions journalism (SoJo) has generally fostered stronger and more collaborative relationships between journalists and editors. Several respondents noted that editors are increasingly eager to commission SoJo pitches, reflecting a growing appreciation for the depth and innovation these stories bring. One journalist described building stronger trust with their editor by consistently offering stories that go beyond the usual news cycle. From a leadership perspective, the Chief Editor reported improved teamwork and engagement among reporters, particularly in producing impactful stories, such as community-led initiatives focused on mental health. Similarly, a Managing Editor highlighted enhanced relationships with reporters, who now bring a wealth of SoJo-driven story ideas. However, a few respondents noted no significant changes in their relationships with editors, suggesting varied experiences across newsrooms. Overall, SoJo appears to be strengthening professional ties by encouraging more meaningful and solution-focused storytelling.

Several examples illustrate how SoJo has influenced editorial decisions and follow-up reporting. One journalist shared that after publishing a story on how smallholder agriculture is thriving through renewable energy in Africa, multiple stakeholders requested a follow-up to explore further the limitations of the solution presented. Another recounted that after submitting three SoJo stories, their editor encouraged them to pitch more human-centered solution stories, especially when grant opportunities arise. Recognition also played a role, as one journalist noted that winning an award for a SoJo story inspired their editor to adopt this reporting approach further.

15% of respondents observed more engagement from audiences for solutions journalism stories, while a significant 59% saw no noticeable difference. These findings suggest varied audience

reactions, possibly influenced by the content presentation or the audience's media literacy. Most respondents (68%) believe that solutions journalism is more engaging than traditional journalism. Another 8% find it significantly more engaging, while 12% see no difference, and another 12% consider it less engaging. This suggests that solutions journalism has a strong potential to capture and sustain audience attention.

Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they had seen policy changes influenced by solutions journalism, while 57% were unsure, as shown in the figure below. This highlights an emerging impact that is still not consistently monitored or linked to policy development in a structured manner.

The study found that solutions journalism has contributed to various policy shifts in Rwanda, especially in sectors addressing social, environmental, and governance challenges. Respondents highlighted the role of SoJo in influencing policies such as the Smart Nkunganire agricultural subsidy system, which aims to enhance access to inputs and improve productivity.

Environmental policies were notably influenced by coverage of initiatives like the Green Gicumbi project and the conservation of the Gishwati-Mukura Forest, both of which led to biodiversity restoration measures. In education, health, and transport, respondents linked SoJo stories to reforms and improvements, such as expanded Early Childhood Development (ECD) services, changes in taxpayer and transport policies, and increased awareness of child rights and school accessibility.

In Rwanda, Solutions Journalism played a key role in shaping the country's Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy, introduced in 2016. Journalists had highlighted the struggles of rural women who had no childcare support and were forced to carry their children to the farms. This meant they could neither farm effectively nor give their children the attention they needed. By reporting not only on the problem but also pointing to community-based childcare initiatives that were already working in some areas, journalists drew attention to practical solutions. These stories influenced policymakers to scale up such models, leading to the establishment of the national ECD policy that now provides childcare centers and support systems for families across the country.

Additional examples of influence included poverty alleviation policies, such as Ubudehe, reforms in civil registration through initiatives on newborn documentation, and infrastructure upgrades, such as water utilization on Rebero Hill for electricity generation, currently under parliamentary discussion.

Beyond formal policy amendments, many journalists noted that SoJo has helped shape newsroom practices and public discourse by emphasizing constructive engagement and evidence-based reporting. Although some respondents were unsure of specific policy outcomes, the overall evidence suggests that solutions journalism plays a growing role in informing and inspiring meaningful policy and institutional changes in Rwanda.

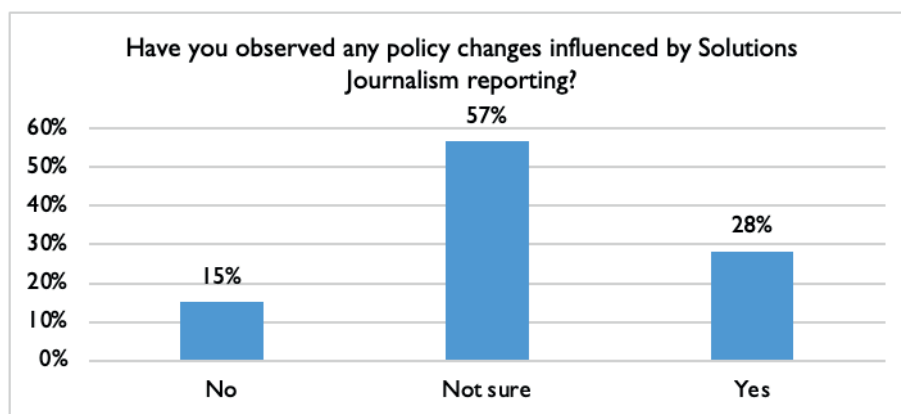


Figure 31: Policy changes influenced by SoJo Reporting

A significant number (65%) of respondents noted that solutions journalism has increased its focus on stories with positive impacts. Sixteen percent noted greater collaboration among journalists, while 12% cited improved investigative reporting, as indicated below, highlighting an overall positive shift in newsroom practices due to SoJo.

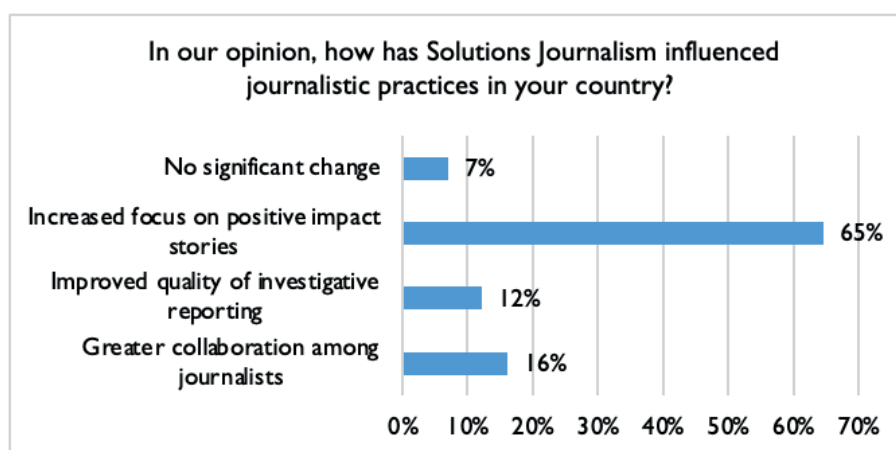


Figure 32: Influence of SoJo on journalistic practices in Rwanda

The feedback received from various stakeholders regarding solutions journalism in Rwanda was mixed but largely positive. 92% of the respondents indicated that policymakers, civil society organizations, and members of the public appreciated stories that focused on constructive, evidence-based reporting rather than mere criticism. Policymakers, in particular, welcomed the shift in tone and approach, noting that such stories helped highlight pressing social issues and existing local interventions, prompting better-informed decision-making.

46% of the journalists shared direct examples of institutional response, including ministries reaching out to address gaps exposed in reporting and encouraging awareness campaigns. Stories have reportedly led to recognition through awards and expressions of appreciation for elevating local success stories and inspiring policy reform.

However, 54% of journalists noted they had received no feedback at all. Some cited structural challenges, such as a lack of visibility, media owner disinterest, or the tendency of stakeholders to confuse SoJo with public relations. Others mentioned that while feedback may not be directly conveyed to the journalist, the media house receives general appreciation.

10% of the responses indicated that stakeholders requested more scientifically grounded stories, particularly in areas like agriculture and climate change. Notably, 80% of the journalists emphasized that civil society and the public are increasingly engaging with and requesting more solutions-oriented content, even if institutional support and financial backing remain limited. Overall, the feedback highlights that solutions journalism is gradually being recognized as impactful, but it still requires more institutional buy-in and public awareness to thrive fully.

5.2.6. Use of Technology in Producing SoJo stories

94% of the respondents reported widespread integration of technology in the production of solutions journalism (SoJo) stories, spanning all stages from research to dissemination. Many journalists rely on digital tools and platforms to gather and verify information, conduct online research, transcribe interviews, and fact-check data.

Technologies such as AI tools, Google, social media, and government portals are particularly popular for idea generation, background research, and identifying evidence-based interventions. Others use online meeting platforms, such as Zoom, to conduct remote interviews, especially in rural or hard-to-reach areas.

80% of the journalists reported using mobile journalism techniques, employing smartphones and apps for field reporting, video editing, audio recording, and photography. The use of multimedia tools, including infographics, video clips, and interactive storytelling platforms, enhances the appeal and accessibility of SoJo stories.

40% of the journalists highlighted AI's growing role in content structuring and audience engagement, while others use platforms like KoboToolbox or Google Forms to collect community feedback. Despite this growing uptake, a few participants noted challenges such as limited access to advanced tools or the misconception that technology alone can analyze complex social problems. Nevertheless, the findings underscore the significant and evolving role that technology plays in amplifying the reach, accuracy, and impact of solutions journalism in the region.

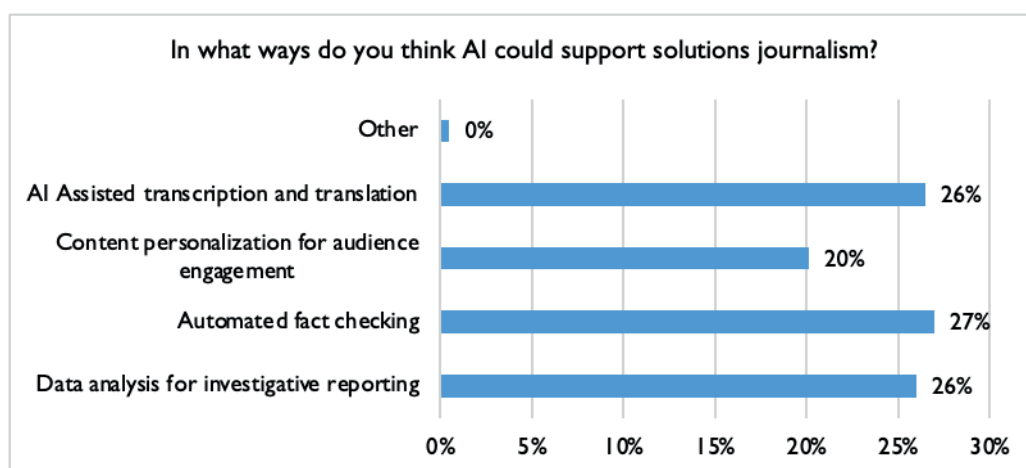


Figure 33: Approaches of AI support to SoJo in Rwanda

Seventy-nine percent of respondents believed AI could enhance solutions journalism, especially in areas such as automated fact-checking, transcription, data analysis, and content personalization. Only 6% said no, and 15% were unsure. The results show optimism about the potential of AI to streamline and enhance journalistic output.

60% of the respondents identified several challenges and risks associated with the use of AI in producing solutions journalism, most notably the potential for misinformation and loss of journalistic integrity. Many participants expressed concern that AI-generated content can sometimes provide inaccurate, irrelevant, or biased information, especially if the tools are trained on flawed or outdated data.

This raises the risk of spreading misinformation, which could damage the credibility of the journalist and reduce public trust in solutions journalism. 30% of the respondents also noted that AI tools often lack contextual understanding, especially in African settings, and may struggle with local languages and cultural nuances. The inability of AI to analyze complex human experiences or assess social impact accurately was flagged as a critical limitation for stories that require depth and nuance.

Another recurring concern was the overreliance on AI, which many felt could lead to journalistic laziness, plagiarism, and loss of originality. 20% of the journalists feared that dependency on AI might reduce critical thinking, creativity, and investigative rigor. Limited access to advanced AI tools due to high subscription costs and digital infrastructure challenges in low-resource settings was also highlighted.

Moreover, 10% of the respondents cited a lack of technical skills, ethical training, and clear editorial guidelines on AI use as barriers. These concerns underscore the need for comprehensive capacity building and responsible integration of AI, ensuring that it complements rather than compromises the standards and values of quality journalism.

5.2.7. Future of Solutions Journalism in the Region

About 79% of respondents believed that solutions journalism has the potential to shape the future of news reporting. They envisioned wider adoption, stronger integration with digital tools, increased audience demand for constructive content, and improved public trust. Only 21% were unsure, and none rejected its future role entirely.

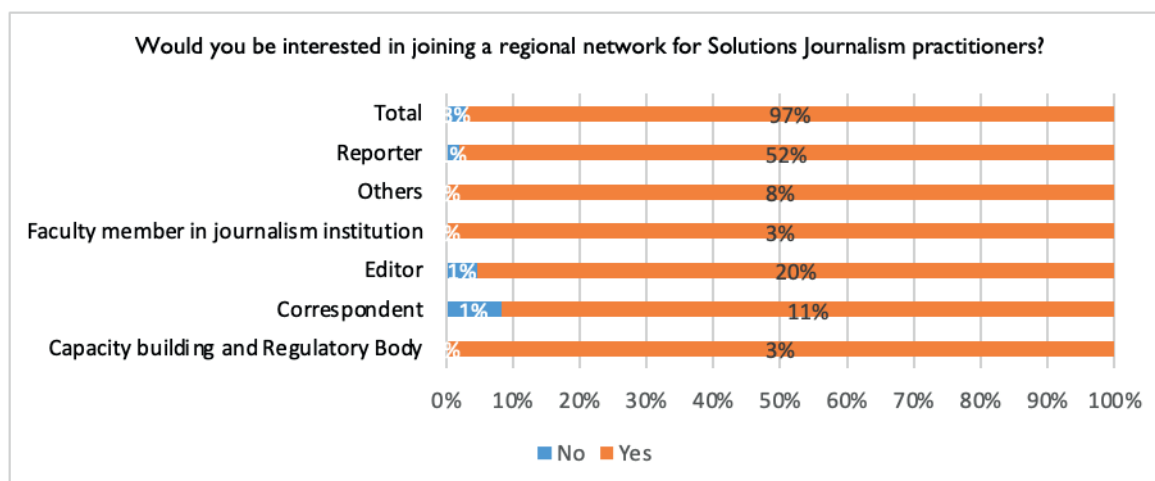


Figure 34: Interest in joining a regional network for Solutions Journalism practitioners?

The findings show overwhelming interest among respondents in joining a regional network for solutions journalism practitioners. A total of 97% expressed willingness to participate, with the strongest representation coming from reporters (52%), followed by editors (20%) and

correspondents (11%). Faculty members, capacity-building and regulatory bodies, and others also showed support, each contributing between 3% and 8%. Only 3% of respondents indicated no interest, spread thinly across reporters, correspondents, and editors. This high level of enthusiasm suggests strong demand for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and regional peer support in advancing solutions journalism.

Looking Ahead

Within the next decade, respondents envision that continued implementation of solutions journalism (SoJo) will significantly transform their media organizations by deepening impact, specialization, and audience trust. 90% foresee the establishment of dedicated SoJo desks or teams focused on producing high-quality, solution-centered stories that resonate with communities. This approach is expected to enhance credibility among audiences, foster stronger community engagement, and elevate public discourse by highlighting not just problems but also effective responses.

10% of the respondents emphasized the importance of ongoing capacity building and support for local reporters, enabling in-depth field reporting and richer storytelling. Furthermore, sustained SoJo practice is anticipated to open new business opportunities, including grants and partnerships, thereby strengthening financial sustainability. Ultimately, media organizations aim to become trusted, audience-focused institutions that not only inform but also inspire and empower their communities through solutions-oriented journalism.

In summary, the future of SoJo is seen as bright—one where it is no longer perceived as a niche or alternative form of reporting, but as a core component of journalism that equips the public with information, hope, and actionable insights.

5.2.8. Challenges in Practising Solutions Journalism

Respondents highlighted several key barriers in their pursuit of solutions journalism, with the most frequently cited being limited resources—both financial and time-related. Many noted that producing high-quality SoJo stories requires travel, in-depth interviews, and evidence gathering, which are often constrained by tight budgets and busy workloads. For example, one journalist mentioned the difficulty of securing funding to report on a community water initiative, which was ultimately dropped due to a lack of editorial support and resources. Short or surface-level training was another concern, with some indicating they didn't receive enough depth to implement SoJo confidently. Editorial resistance also emerged as a significant barrier, where editors either misunderstood SoJo as advocacy or dismissed it for lacking the immediacy of hard news. Additionally, data gaps and a lack of transparency from sources made it difficult to verify the effectiveness of responses being covered. A few respondents, however, reported facing no major challenges, suggesting that supportive editorial environments and institutional backing can help ease the implementation process.

The most commonly cited challenges to adopting solutions journalism are a lack of funding (36%), followed closely by a lack of training or resources (32%), and limited editorial support (23%). These structural constraints highlight the need for institutional and financial investment to sustain the approach.

48% of the Respondents noted that producing high-quality SoJo stories requires travel, in-depth interviews, and evidence gathering, which are often constrained by tight budgets and busy

workloads. For example, one journalist mentioned the difficulty of securing funding to report on a community water initiative, which was ultimately dropped due to a lack of editorial support and resources.

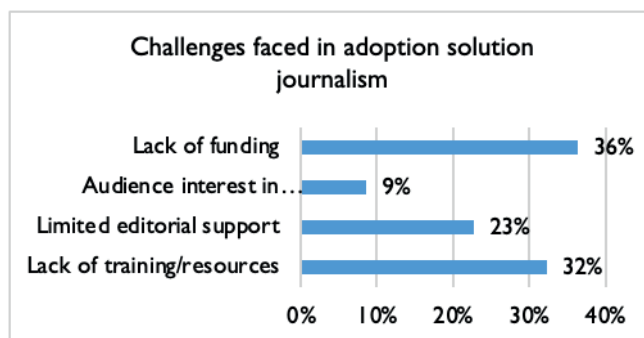


Figure 35: Challenges in the adoption of Sojo in Rwanda

Short or surface-level training was another concern, with some indicating they didn't receive enough depth to implement Sojo confidently. Editorial resistance also emerged as a significant barrier, where editors either misunderstood Sojo as advocacy or dismissed it for lacking the immediacy of hard news. Additionally, data gaps and a lack of transparency from sources made it difficult to verify the effectiveness of responses being covered. However, 10% of the respondents reported facing no significant challenges, suggesting that supportive editorial environments and institutional backing can help ease the implementation process.

5.2.9. Lessons Learned from Implementing Solutions Journalism

Respondents reported that implementing solutions journalism has led to meaningful professional growth, enhanced story quality, and increased audience engagement. Individually, journalists reported becoming more intentional about sourcing, verifying evidence, and framing stories in a way that both informs and empowers communities. For example, one journalist highlighted a vocational training center in Bugesera that was equipping youth with digital and technical skills; the story prompted NGOs to offer additional support to the center. Another report highlighted community-driven solar energy adoption in agriculture, showcasing the role of renewable energy in enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers. These experiences underscore a shift from merely exposing problems to highlighting credible and replicable responses. At the organizational level, media houses like Radio Salus and PANORAMA noted an increase in community trust and dialogue, as stories resonated more deeply with audiences who appreciated practical insights. Additionally, collaborative story development with mentors has enhanced the newsroom's ability to produce high-quality, evidence-based reporting consistently. Even in academic contexts, while structured Sojo programs may still be limited, the methodology is influencing how students and lecturers think about impactful storytelling.

Ninety percent of respondents reported that implementing solutions journalism has led to meaningful professional growth, enhanced story quality, and increased audience engagement. Individually, journalists reported becoming more intentional about sourcing, verifying evidence, and framing stories in a way that both informs and empowers communities. For example, one journalist highlighted a vocational training center in Bugesera that was equipping youth with digital and technical skills; the story prompted NGOs to offer additional support to the center.

Another report highlighted community-driven solar energy adoption in agriculture, showcasing the role of renewable energy in enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers. These

experiences underscore a shift from merely exposing problems to highlighting credible and replicable responses. At the organizational level, media houses like Radio Salus and PANORAMA noted an increase in community trust and dialogue, as stories resonated more deeply with audiences who appreciated practical insights.

Additionally, collaborative story development with mentors has enhanced the newsroom's ability to produce high-quality, evidence-based reporting consistently. Even in academic contexts, while structured SoJo programs may still be limited, the methodology is influencing how students and lecturers think about impactful storytelling.

5.2.10. Conclusion

Respondents highlighted several important aspects regarding solutions journalism (SoJo) and its role within their campus media organizations. Many emphasized that adopting SoJo enhances credibility by fostering in-depth, evidence-based reporting that goes beyond simply highlighting problems. This approach aligns well with the evolving media landscape, where audiences increasingly seek meaningful, impact-driven narratives that inspire action and constructive public dialogue.

32% of the respondents noted that SoJo has transformed how their organizations connect with communities, encouraging positive conversations and equipping student journalists with practical skills to improve their craft. Others stressed the need for dedicated SoJo desks within newsrooms and ongoing training to maintain momentum and build capacity.

Notably, 10% of the respondents emphasized that solutions journalism is not merely promotional content, but a rigorous journalistic methodology that demands the same standards of evidence and accountability as traditional reporting. Overall, SoJo is regarded as a valuable innovation that enhances journalistic quality and fosters deeper community engagement.

5.3. Tanzania

5.3.1. Introduction

This report combines quantitative and qualitative data to present a fuller picture of how solutions journalism is understood and practiced in Tanzania. On the quantitative side, 96 respondents were surveyed, providing a broad base of perspectives from across the media sector. Reporters made up the largest share at 38, representing 53% of the sample and reflecting their central role in day-to-day news production. Editors followed at 26 (21%), while correspondents accounted for 21 (22%). Practitioners classified under "others," including those working in non-traditional or specialized media roles, represented 5 (5%). Faculty members from journalism institutions and representatives from capacity-building and regulatory bodies each contributed three respondents (3% each). This distribution indicates that newsroom actors heavily shape the data, but it is also enriched by views from academia, training institutions, and regulators who influence the professional environment.

Complementing this, 14 respondents were interviewed through qualitative key informant interviews to provide context and depth to the survey findings. Among them were seven editors drawn from mainstream and independent media houses, including national news agencies, daily newspapers, and digital outlets. Six respondents, representing capacity-building and regulatory

bodies, provided insights into how policies, training, and institutional support influence the adoption of solutions journalism in Tanzania. One respondent, representing academia, provided a perspective on how solutions journalism is being introduced in teaching and research within journalism training institutions.

5.3.2. Awareness, Perceptions and Understanding of SoJo

A total of 48% of respondents reported being very familiar with the concept of solutions journalism. Another 19% were somewhat familiar, 12% slightly familiar, 10% considered themselves experts, and 12% said they were not familiar at all. This shows a generally high level of awareness, with room to reach the less familiar group.

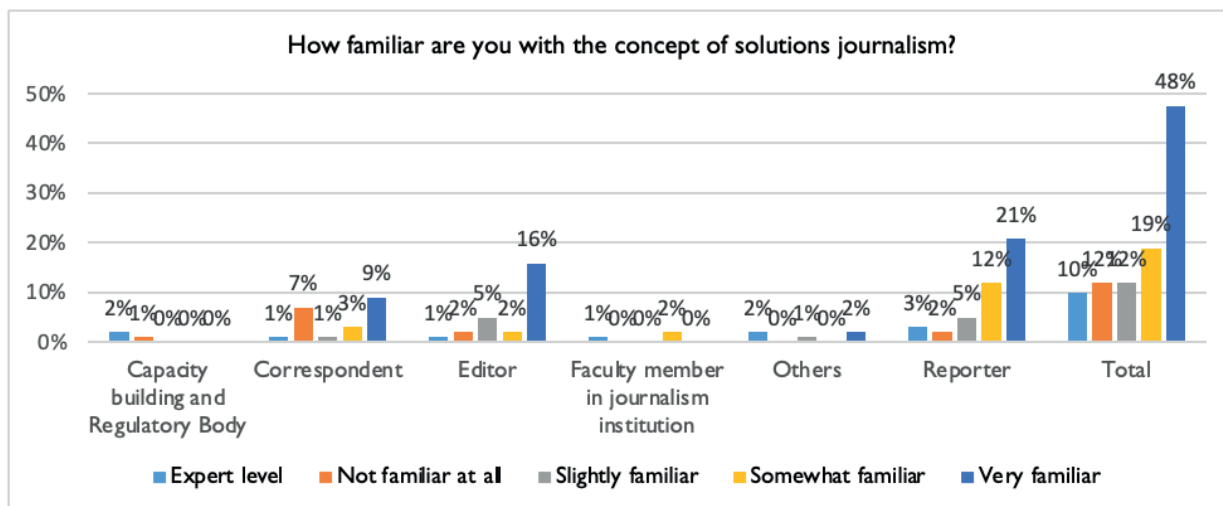


Figure 36: How familiar are you with the concept of solutions journalism?

Respondents widely understand solutions journalism as a form of reporting that goes beyond merely identifying problems to actively exploring credible, evidence-based responses and solutions. It is described as journalism that drives public decision-making and creates positive societal impact by telling stories of change that unite and empower communities. Many emphasized that solutions journalism involves rigorous inquiry—asking what is working, for whom, and why—without sugarcoating or advocacy, thus maintaining accountability and journalistic integrity. It highlights both successes and limitations of interventions, fostering constructive dialogue, public trust, and civic engagement. Within newsrooms like Mwananchi Communications Limited, solutions journalism (often called SoJo) is embraced as a unique content approach aimed at delivering impactful stories that inspire action and offer hope. Overall, it is viewed as a purposeful and in-depth methodology that enriches traditional reporting by focusing on meaningful responses to social, economic, and political challenges.

Respondents' first experiences with solutions journalism (SoJo) were diverse and deeply formative, often occurring through a combination of professional training, newsroom practice, conferences, and self-directed learning. Many were introduced to the concept during journalism workshops or media development training sessions, particularly those organized by local organizations or international partners, such as Thomson Reuters. A notable number discovered SoJo at regional media conferences, especially in Nairobi and South Africa, where facilitators presented compelling case studies and introduced the work of the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN). Others encountered SoJo organically—by reading stories online that focused not just on societal

problems but also on evidence-based responses. For some, it was a hands-on experience in the newsroom, especially at organizations like Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL), which brought in trainers and integrated SoJo into daily reporting assignments. Respondents expressed a range of emotions during these initial encounters—surprise, excitement, and validation—recognizing that SoJo offered a more balanced and empowering alternative to traditional problem-focused journalism. A few acknowledged initial confusions between SoJo and investigative journalism, while others noted that it was not part of their academic curriculum but something they learned through practice. Overall, these early exposures sparked a lasting interest in applying solutions-oriented storytelling to make journalism more impactful and constructive.

The data reveals a broad consensus among respondents on the value of solutions journalism, particularly in shaping more constructive narratives and fostering public trust. A total of 84% agree or strongly agree that solutions journalism offers a more balanced and constructive narrative compared to traditional reporting, while only 3% strongly disagree. An even stronger agreement is observed on the link between solutions journalism and trust in the media, with 96% of respondents believing it increases audience trust. Similarly, 86% believe that solutions journalism is more likely to inspire real-world action than conventional news stories, with just 2% expressing disagreement. These views signal a growing appreciation for journalism that not only highlights problems but also explores responses and efforts to address them.

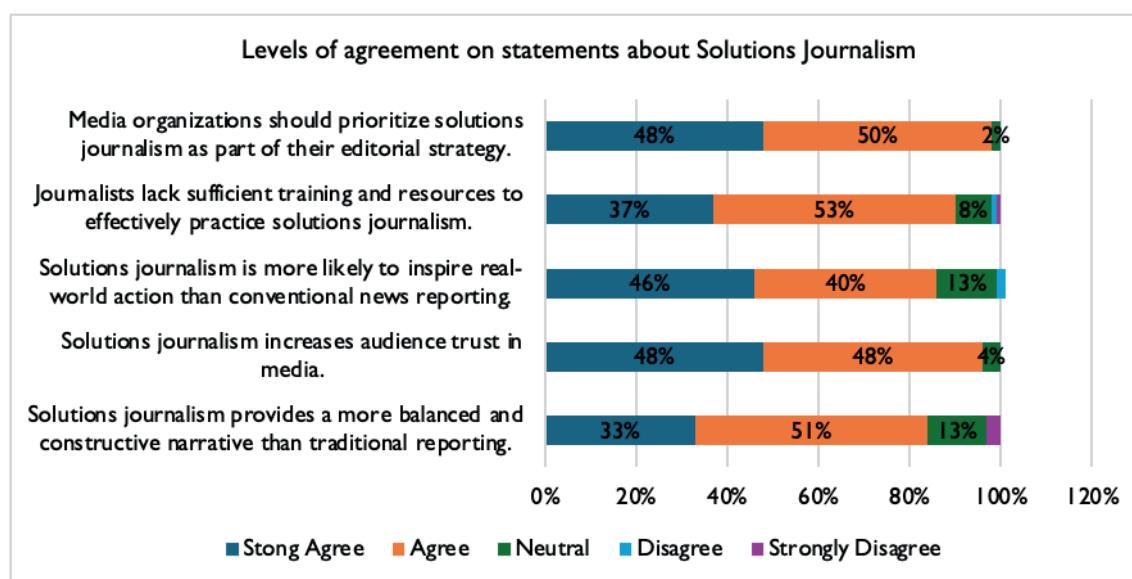


Figure 37: Statements regarding SoJo in Tanzania

Despite this support, respondents also recognize significant barriers to implementing solutions journalism effectively. A combined 90% agree or strongly agree that journalists currently lack the necessary training and resources to practice this approach. This aligns with earlier findings on challenges such as limited editorial support and funding. Additionally, there is strong support for institutional change, with 98% of respondents stating that media organizations should prioritize solutions journalism in their editorial strategies. Together, these findings indicate that while the approach is valued, its full integration into newsroom practice will require deliberate investment in training, resources, and editorial commitment.

5.3.3. Education and Sources of Training on SoJo

About 68% of respondents had received formal training on solutions journalism, while 32% had not. This indicates a significant exposure level among media professionals, although more capacity-building is still needed.

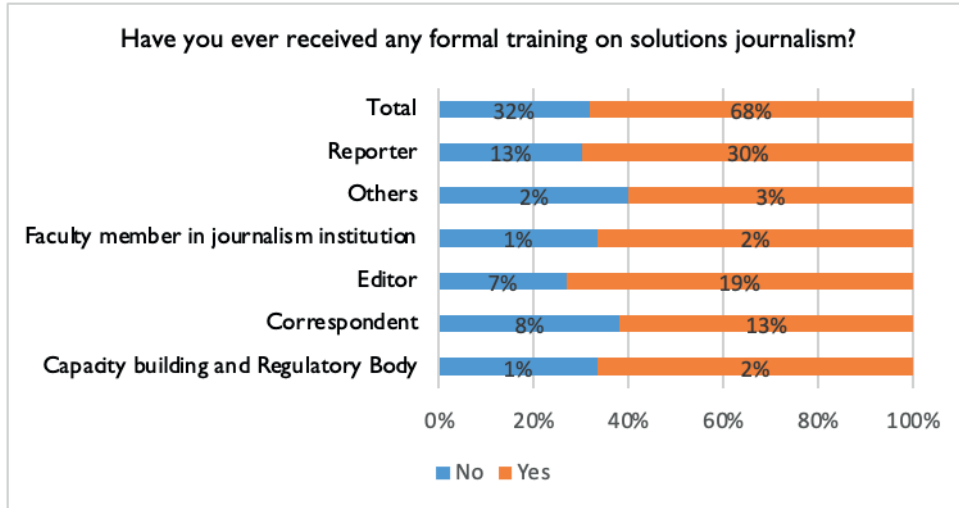


Figure 38: Have you ever received any formal training on solutions journalism?

A smaller portion reported no formal training, signaling an opportunity for further capacity building. Overall, training—whether formal or experiential—has been a crucial factor in facilitating the adoption and application of SoJo in Tanzania.

Training was provided primarily by media organizations (39%) and nonprofit organizations (31%). Online courses accounted for 18%, journalism schools 12%, and government only 1%. This highlights the crucial role of non-state actors in developing SoJo skills.

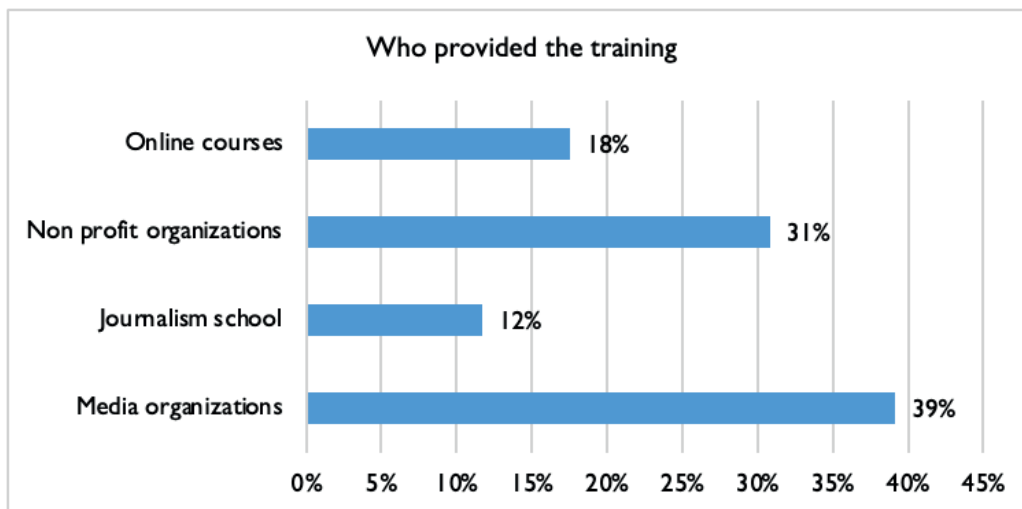


Figure 39: Institution providing SoJo training in Tanzania

The Tanzania Media Fund (TMF) emerged as the most prominent provider of both technical and financial support to newsrooms. Other key training sources included Internews, Aga

Khan University, Science Africa, and Solutions Journalism Network (SJN). Several participants noted receiving in-house training, where experts were invited to train staff directly within their organizations. For some, their understanding of SoJo developed informally through mentorship, investigative or development journalism workshops, or hands-on newsroom experience, highlighting a learning process shaped by editorial feedback, peer learning, and a desire to engage audiences better.

Of the surveyed institutions, only 21% of respondents said solutions journalism was a core part of their curriculum. Another 40% said it was an optional topic, while the remaining 40% reported that it was not included at all. The data indicate that formal journalism education has yet to fully integrate solutions journalism.

The findings indicate that none of the surveyed institutions currently have a formal Solutions Journalism (SoJo) curriculum in place. While one respondent mentioned a publication titled *“Social Actors Shaping Solutions Journalism in Media, Capital Conversions”*, this appears to reference research rather than a structured academic program. A few respondents expressed openness to integrating Solutions Journalism (SoJo) into future curricula. Still, overall, the data underscore a significant gap in formal education and training on Solutions Journalism within academic institutions. This highlights a critical opportunity for curriculum development and integration of SoJo principles in journalism and media studies programs.

The data indicate that a limited number of staff members are actively teaching Solutions Journalism (SoJo) within media organizations and institutions. In contrast, most respondents reported no staff involvement in teaching SoJo; a few noted informal peer training and mentorship, primarily by editors. One large media house, for example, mentioned more than 100 trained staff nationwide, while others cited 2 to 5 editors involved in onboarding or guiding new journalists. However, these teaching efforts are not part of a formal academic structure and rely heavily on in-house or peer-driven knowledge transfer. This suggests a need for institutionalized training frameworks and capacity-building to ensure consistent and widespread understanding of SoJo practices.

The responses indicate a wide variation in the number of individuals trained in Solutions Journalism (SoJo) across organizations, ranging from no training at all to over 200 staff members trained in some cases. A significant number of respondents—particularly from larger media houses—reported that dozens or even hundreds of journalists had received SoJo training, either through in-house programs or via external experts. However, many others noted that no one in their organization had been trained, or that they were unsure of the exact number. This disparity highlights a lack of uniformity in training access and adoption, suggesting the need for more structured and inclusive training programs to ensure broader and more consistent uptake of the SoJo approach across the media landscape.

An overwhelming majority of respondents expressed a strong desire to continue building their capacity in Solutions Journalism, with 99% indicating interest in receiving further training. This underscores both the high level of enthusiasm and the recognition among journalists that additional skills and knowledge are needed to report on responses to social challenges effectively.

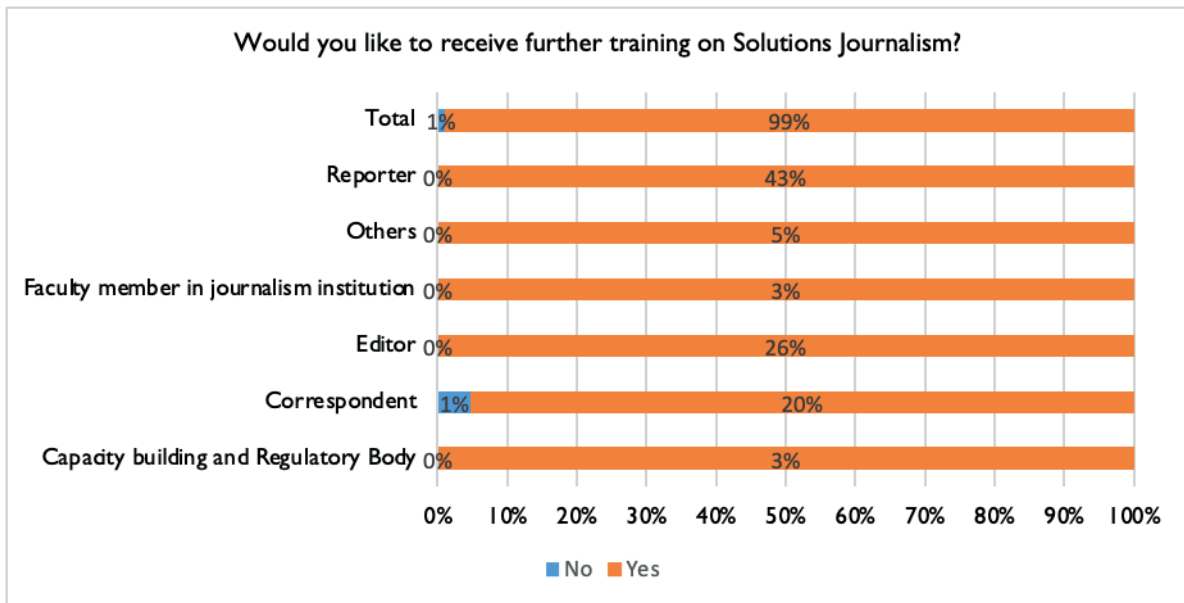


Figure 40: Interest in further training on SoJo in Tanzania

5.3.4. Uptake of Solutions Journalism

The use of SoJo across organizations varies widely, from being deeply embedded in daily operations to still being in the planning or awareness-raising phase. For several media leaders, SoJo is both a journalistic philosophy and a practical strategy that guides their content production and newsroom culture. At outlets like The Chanzo, Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL), Jambo Online TV, and Research.COM, SoJo is seen as a tool for driving public impact, inspiring audiences, and restoring journalism's relevance by focusing not just on problems but on evidence-based responses.

A significant majority, 74%, had written or produced a solutions journalism story, while 26% had not. This suggests that the practice is gaining traction among journalists in Tanzania.

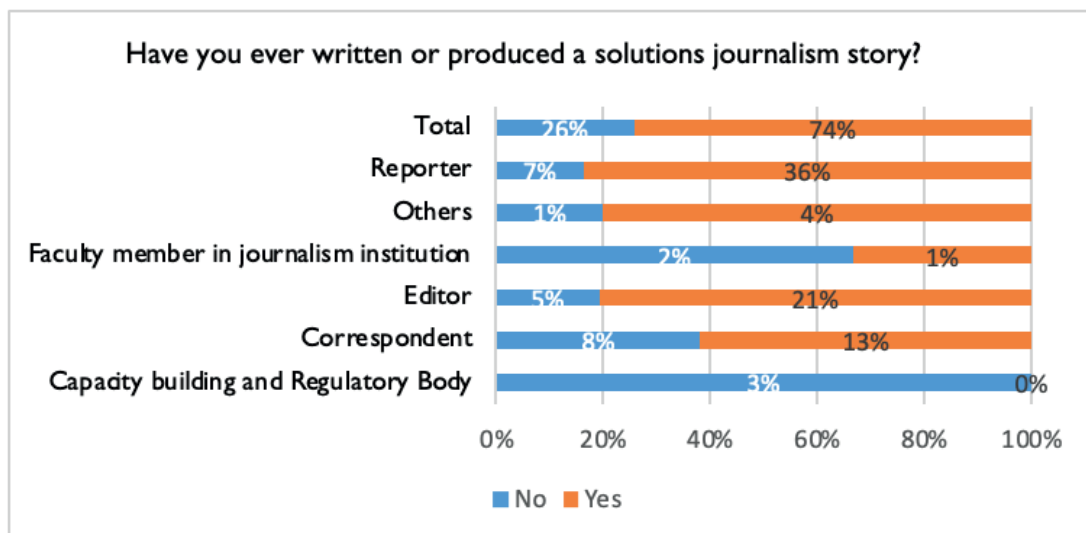


Figure 41: Journalists who have produced SoJo Stories in Tanzania

Among those who practice SoJo, 43% said they incorporate solutions journalism occasionally, 31% frequently, 20% rarely, and 7% always. This indicates varied but growing adoption of the

approach. Only 34% of respondents said their media house had a dedicated desk for solutions journalism. The remaining 66% did not.

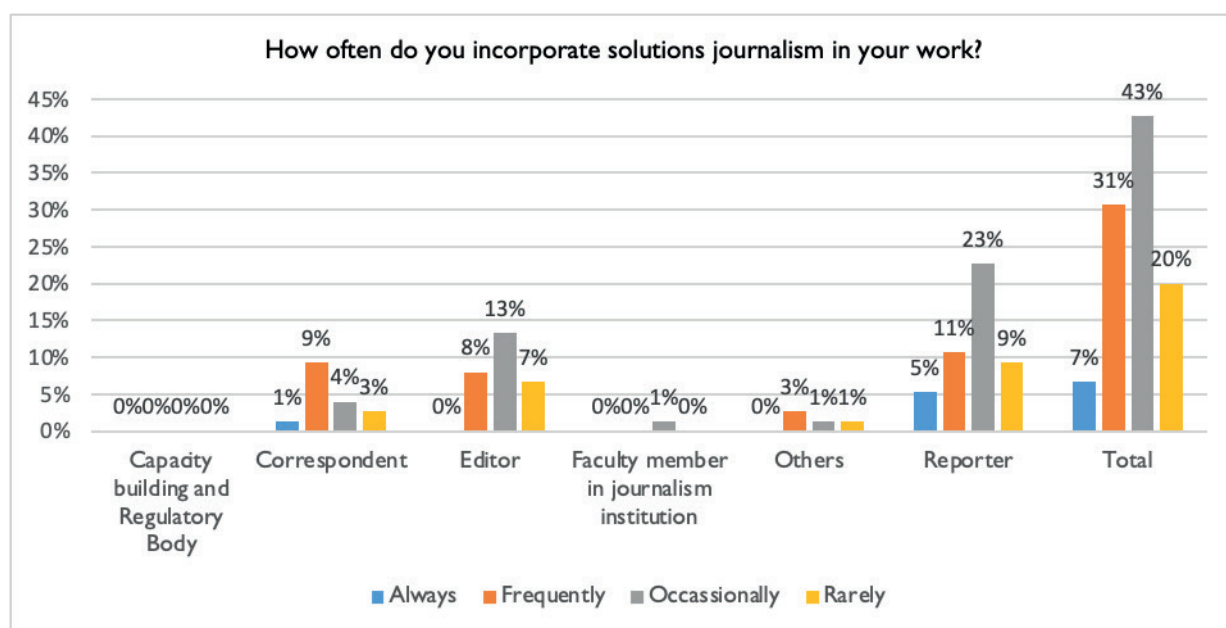


Figure 42: How often do you incorporate solutions journalism in your work?

Only 34% of respondents said their media house had a dedicated desk for solutions journalism. The remaining 66% did not. This points to a lack of structural or institutional support within many newsrooms. Online platforms were the most used for sharing solutions journalism stories at 32%, followed closely by print at 31%. Social media accounted for 23%, while 10% used television and 4% used radio. This shows a balance between traditional and digital publishing spaces.

For some respondents, especially those in academic or research-oriented institutions, Sojo aligns with action-oriented research rather than daily reporting. Others admitted that they are not yet implementing Sojo but are in the early stages of awareness, planning, or advocacy—particularly through editorial leadership, such as that of the Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF), which is working to mainstream Sojo in its member newsrooms.

Findings show that the majority of respondents have neither written nor are aware of any academic papers or theses on Solutions Journalism (Sojo). Only a small number referenced “The Power of Solutions Journalism” by Alexander L. Curry and Keith Hammonds, indicating limited awareness or engagement with academic literature on the subject. This suggests a gap in scholarly production and educational integration of Sojo, particularly within local or regional contexts. Strengthening the academic foundation of Sojo through research, student theses, and curriculum inclusion could enhance its credibility and long-term institutionalization in journalism education and practice.

Findings indicate that there is no continuing research on Solutions Journalism (Sojo) by students or staff members in nearly all the organizations or institutions surveyed. A few respondents expressed uncertainty or lack of awareness about such initiatives, but none confirmed any current research activity. This highlights a notable gap in academic and institutional inquiry into Sojo, underscoring the need for targeted efforts to promote research, stimulate student interest, and support scholarly work in this field, thereby complementing practice-based uptake.

The findings reveal a mixed landscape regarding the enforcement of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) guidelines across organizations. Several respondents reported having no formal guidelines in place, often due to limited or no practice of SoJo. Among those who do engage in SoJo, enforcement mechanisms range from informal daily planning between reporters and editors to structured editorial processes based on the four pillars of SoJo—response, evidence, insight, and limitations.

In organizations with formal enforcement, editors review drafts and provide feedback to ensure adherence to these pillars, sometimes encountering initial resistance that is later overcome through coaching and explanation. Some outlets tie SoJo practices to broader organizational values, emphasizing the importance of societal impact as a measure of success. Examples of impactful stories—such as those addressing fake tire imports or harmful food preparation practices—demonstrate how guidelines, whether formal or informal, can lead to tangible public benefits and policy responses. Overall, while some organizations are institutionalizing SoJo practices, others remain at the early stages of adoption or lack structured enforcement altogether.

When asked about what would motivate more journalists to embrace solutions journalism, 32% of respondents pointed to the need for more training opportunities. This reinforces the earlier finding that lack of training is a key barrier and suggests that many journalists are willing to engage in solutions-focused reporting if properly equipped. Funding for investigative work was also a strong incentive, with 29% citing it as essential.

This indicates that the cost of in-depth reporting remains a significant hurdle for many. Recognition and awards were identified by 20% as a motivating factor, reflecting the value of visibility and professional acknowledgement in encouraging this practice. Lastly, 18% highlighted the importance of editorial support, underlining the role of newsroom leadership and institutional backing in shaping the direction and tone of journalism. Together, these findings highlight the need for both capacity-building and structural support to scale up solutions journalism.

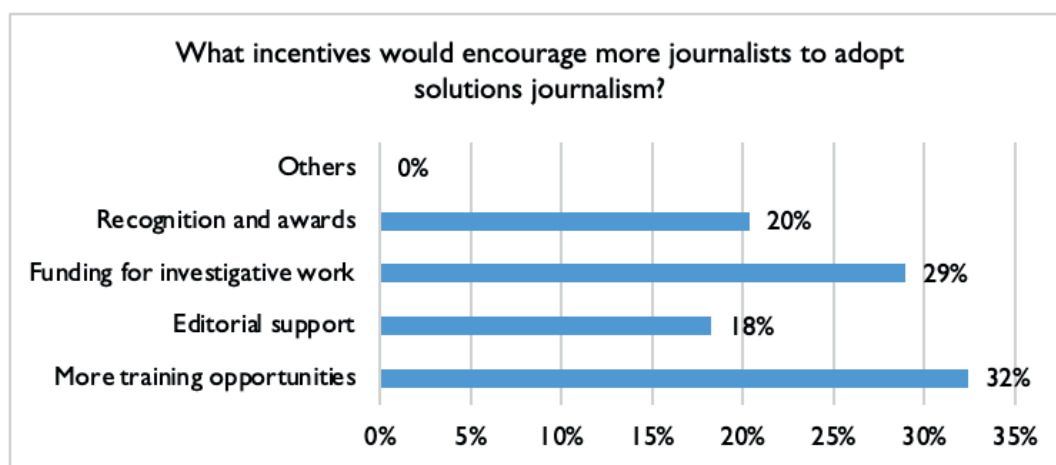


Figure 43: Incentives to encourage adoption of Solutions Journalism in Tanzania

The findings indicate that support for Solutions Journalism (SoJo) in media organizations is inconsistent, primarily driven by a combination of internal champions and external partners. Several organizations have benefited significantly from external support, particularly from the Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF) and the Nation Media Group (NMG), which have provided technical training, mentorship, and financial assistance to facilitate the production of stories.

Others mentioned Internews, the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), and civil society groups as contributors to editorial development and motivation.

In some cases, internal leadership—especially editors or training managers—has been central in promoting SoJo through newsroom strategies and peer training. However, a notable number of respondents reported no support or engagement with SoJo, with some expressing intent to champion it individually in the future. Overall, while there are some encouraging institutional efforts, the data underscores the need for stronger structural, editorial, and financial support systems to integrate SoJo practices sustainably.

5.3.5. Impact of Implementing Solutions Journalism

The implementation of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) has had varied impacts across organizations, with several reporting significant benefits while others have yet to adopt the approach. Financially, some organizations noted increased income through subscriptions, grants, and digital platform monetization, attributing this to the growing credibility and relevance of their content. Professionally, SoJo has enhanced the status of media outlets, attracting collaborations with other news organizations, civil society groups, and development partners.

Socially, many reported stronger engagement with audiences, with readers responding positively to stories that highlight actionable solutions and inspire change. Politically, several outlets noted improved relationships with officials and recognition as agents of societal transformation, although one respondent mentioned a strained relationship with specific sources. For others, especially those still in the planning stages or with limited practice, these impacts remain aspirational. Overall, where SoJo has been implemented effectively, it has contributed to both journalistic excellence and business sustainability.

The data shows that audiences respond more positively to solutions journalism stories compared to traditional reporting. The majority of respondents (77%) indicated that solutions-focused stories attract more engagement from the audience. Only 7% felt that such stories generate less engagement, while 1% observed no noticeable difference. Notably, 15% said they were not sure, suggesting a need for more audience analytics or tracking mechanisms in newsrooms to measure the impact fully. Overall, the perception among journalists is that solutions journalism offers a more compelling and participatory experience for audiences than conventional problem-centered reporting. A total of 70% said solutions journalism is more engaging, and 17% said it is significantly more engaging than traditional journalism. Only 4% said it was less engaging, and 9% saw no difference. This suggests a strong interest in constructive reporting among the audience.

A large majority of respondents believe that solutions journalism has had a positive influence on media credibility. 57% said it enhances credibility, while an additional 36% felt it significantly enhances it. Only 6% indicated that it has no impact, and just 1% believed it reduces credibility. This suggests that most journalists view solutions journalism not only as a tool for better storytelling but also as a way to rebuild public trust in the media by focusing on reporting that is constructive, balanced, and grounded in real-world responses.

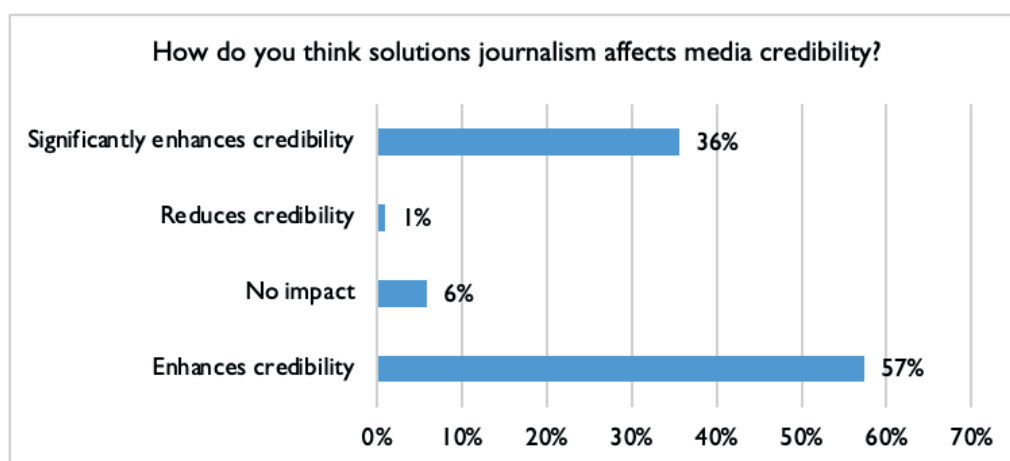


Figure 44: Perceived influence of SoJo on media credibility in Tanzania

Feedback from policymakers, civil society, and the public regarding solutions journalism stories has been largely positive. Many journalists reported receiving appreciation from audiences who felt their concerns were being taken seriously and addressed. Civil society organizations expressed interest in supporting journalists and saw solutions journalism as a tool for advocacy and pushing key issues onto the public agenda. In some cases, journalists were recognized or awarded for their impactful reporting.

In contrast, others shared that their stories were used by policymakers or in legislative processes as references for policy change or administrative action. Several respondents highlighted that solutions journalism fosters trust between the media and the public, enhances collaboration with sources, and encourages ongoing reporting on development-focused stories.

Nearly half of the respondents, 46%, had observed an impact of solutions journalism on public discourse or policy. Another 37% were unsure, and 18% stated that they had not observed any such effect. The findings suggest a genuine, yet evolving, impact of solutions journalism on shaping conversations and decisions.

Findings from the data indicate that solutions journalism in Tanzania has contributed directly to policy responses and improvements in service delivery, particularly in the areas of education, health, infrastructure, and environmental management. Journalists reported stories on issues such as classroom shortages, inadequate school infrastructure, and congested schools, which led to the construction of new facilities and renovations.

In the health sector, the coverage of malfunctioning ICU equipment in Zanzibar, the lack of radiotherapy machines, and poor maternity conditions prompted authorities to supply equipment, repair hospital infrastructure, and improve maternal care. Infrastructure challenges, including inadequate roads, traffic congestion, water shortages, and sanitation issues at bus stations, were highlighted and subsequently addressed by the responsible agencies. Notably, in several cases, stories led to site visits by government officials, the suspension of negligent personnel, and the allocation of public resources to resolve the problems.

Several respondents shared concrete examples of how solutions journalism has influenced policy changes across sectors in Tanzania. In the legal and law enforcement space, a report on fake drug evidence in court led to amendments in drug laws and the establishment of the Zanzibar Drug Prevention and Combating Authority. This also prompted infrastructural and procedural improvements at airports, as well as upgrades to forensic laboratories. Other stories prompted

changes in the media sector, including amendments to media laws and the introduction of new standards for media practitioners. In education, certain stories led to reforms, such as the reinstatement of girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy and changes to the pension formula for public servants.

Health-related stories also had notable impacts. Coverage of radiotherapy machine shortages led to increased investment in cancer treatment infrastructure, including the acquisition of new equipment in hospitals across various regions. Other health-focused stories led to improved maternal care infrastructure and access to free services for pregnant women. In local government, stories influenced changes in city bylaws, waste management practices, and service delivery at hospitals. Additionally, tax and monetary policies were reviewed in light of investigative reports, and electoral reforms were informed by the work of non-state actors, supported by evidence from solutions journalism. Overall, these examples reflect the real-world influence of solutions-focused reporting on public policy and service delivery.

Beyond immediate service delivery, several stories prompted policy and legal reforms. Reports on pension disparities among retirees contributed to adjustments in pension laws. Investigations into land disputes and unlawful government land acquisition led to compensation and legal recognition of affected communities. A report on a flawed national ID policy led to clarification and easing of restrictions on expired documents. Journalists also influenced changes in sports regulations, conservation policies, and even media law reforms that promote solutions-oriented reporting. Some stories empowered marginalized groups, such as teenage mothers and hunger-stricken communities, by prompting emergency relief, inclusion programs, and public accountability. These findings confirm that solutions journalism, when grounded in evidence and the public interest, plays a crucial role in catalyzing change at both community and policy levels.

However, a significant portion of respondents (44%) reported being unsure whether solutions journalism has led to any policy changes. This uncertainty may indicate a gap in tracking or evaluating the real-world impact of such stories beyond their publication. Meanwhile, 25% confirmed observing policy changes influenced by solutions journalism reporting, which demonstrates the potential of this approach to shape institutional responses and reforms. However, 32% said they had not observed any policy impact, suggesting that while some outcomes are visible, the broader systemic influence of solutions journalism still requires further evidence and documentation.

Forty percent of the respondents shared concrete examples of how solutions journalism has influenced policy changes across various sectors in Tanzania. In the legal and law enforcement space, a report on fake drug evidence in court led to amendments in drug laws and the establishment of the Zanzibar Drug Prevention and Combating Authority. This also prompted infrastructural and procedural improvements at airports, as well as upgrades to forensic laboratories. Other stories prompted changes in the media sector, including amendments to media laws and the introduction of new standards for media practitioners. In education, certain stories led to reforms, such as the reinstatement of girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy and changes to the pension formula for public servants.

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Most respondents noted that solutions journalism has meaningfully shaped how journalism is practiced in their country. A majority, 55%, indicated that it has improved the quality of investigative reporting by encouraging deeper inquiry into responses to social challenges. Another 37% said it has shifted the newsroom's focus toward stories that highlight positive impact, helping to balance the often problem-saturated news landscape. While only 3% of respondents observed greater collaboration among journalists as a result of this approach, the minimal number reporting no significant change—just 5%—shows that solutions journalism is gaining traction and gradually influencing reporting standards and editorial priorities.

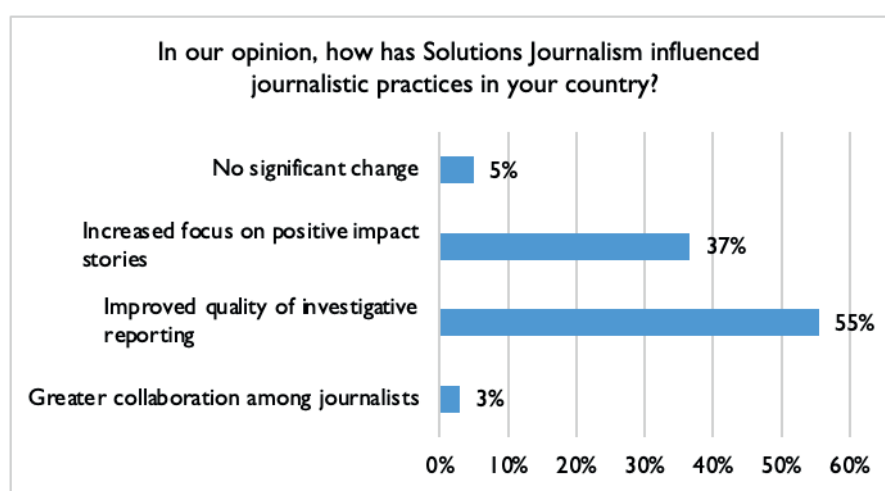


Figure 45: Influence of SoJo on journalistic practices in Tanzania

However, not all journalists received direct or consistent feedback. A number reported having never received comments from stakeholders, or were unsure whether their stories influenced any outcomes. Some noted that government officials can be reluctant to engage with solutions journalism if the stories expose governance failures or push for accountability. Despite this, a common theme was the public's preference for reporting that provides hope, practical insight, and a sense of agency, suggesting a demand for more solutions-driven coverage that addresses everyday challenges.

The most commonly cited challenge among respondents is the lack of training, with 49% indicating that they have not received adequate preparation to practice solutions journalism effectively. This highlights a clear need for capacity building to strengthen journalists' understanding of solutions-oriented approaches.

5.3.6. Use of Technology in Producing Solutions Journalism Stories

Journalists across the region are increasingly relying on technology to support the production of solutions journalism stories. A large number reported using artificial intelligence tools to edit stories, check grammar, translate content, generate ideas, and even enrich storytelling with deeper analysis. Others highlighted the role of AI in data gathering, fact-checking, transcription, and the development of visuals or images. Tools like Google, Adobe, and mapping applications

were frequently mentioned as helpful for background research, location tracking, and cross-referencing information from past reports. Many journalists also use mobile phones and computers to take photos, record audio, conduct interviews, and publish stories.

Beyond AI, respondents emphasized that technology enhances their ability to verify facts, find success stories from other regions, and engage with audiences more effectively. Some noted that digital storytelling platforms, social media, and mobile journalism tools play a key role in reaching broader audiences and tracking the impact of stories. While a few participants indicated limited or no use of technology, the vast majority acknowledged its growing importance. They described it as essential for accessing timely information, improving accuracy, and creating more engaging and credible journalism. For these journalists, technology is not just a tool; it is an integral part of modern reporting, making solutions journalism more impactful and sustainable.

A significant majority of respondents (81%) believe that artificial intelligence can enhance the practice of solutions journalism. This strong endorsement reflects a growing recognition among journalists of AI's potential to improve research, streamline production processes, and support in-depth storytelling. Only 5% of participants do not think AI can enhance solutions journalism. In comparison, 14% remain uncertain, suggesting that while most are optimistic, there is still a need for more awareness or hands-on experience with AI tools in the newsroom.

The overall sentiment points to a broad interest in integrating AI into journalism workflows. From aiding in fact-checking and transcription to generating data insights and enriching story angles, AI is increasingly seen as a valuable ally in telling solution-focused stories. The high level of support also indicates that future investments in AI training and access to tools could further strengthen the quality and reach of solutions journalism across the region.

Respondents raised several concerns about the risks of using artificial intelligence in producing solutions journalism stories. A majority of the feedback highlighted the issue of misinformation, with many emphasizing that AI can provide inaccurate or misleading information if not used with care. Participants noted that AI may generate false statistics, offer unverified data, or distort facts when prompts are unclear or poorly structured. This unreliability highlights the importance of journalists maintaining a high level of discernment and fact-checking when utilizing AI tools. Some respondents mentioned that excessive reliance on AI could weaken critical thinking, reduce creativity, and lead to ethical risks such as bias or data privacy violations.

In addition to concerns about accuracy, respondents highlighted practical limitations, such as limited access to high-quality AI tools, particularly those that require subscriptions or premium versions. Several noted a lack of training and awareness about how to use AI effectively, with some expressing uncertainty or discomfort due to unfamiliarity with the technology. Others pointed out that overuse of AI could make journalists overly dependent and potentially lazy in their research and reporting. A few mentioned broader concerns, such as the potential for AI-generated content to contribute to the spread of fake news or defamation if not correctly managed. Overall, while AI is seen as a powerful tool, there is a strong consensus that it must be used cautiously and ethically, supported by training and editorial oversight.

Among respondents who believe AI can enhance solutions journalism, the most valued application is data analysis for investigative reporting, selected by 35%. This suggests journalists see strong potential in using AI to sift through large datasets, uncover patterns, and support evidence-driven storytelling. AI-assisted transcription and translation follow closely at 27%, underscoring their usefulness in accelerating production and making content accessible across

languages. Automated fact-checking was chosen by 24%, reflecting a growing interest in AI tools that help verify information and improve story accuracy. Meanwhile, 14% identified content personalization for audience engagement as another promising use, pointing to opportunities for tailoring stories to different audiences for greater impact.

These responses reflect an evident appreciation of AI's practical benefits in newsrooms. Journalists are looking to technology not just to make their work more efficient, but to deepen the credibility and reach of their reporting. The absence of "Other" responses suggests that the listed uses capture the main areas where journalists currently see AI making a difference in their work.

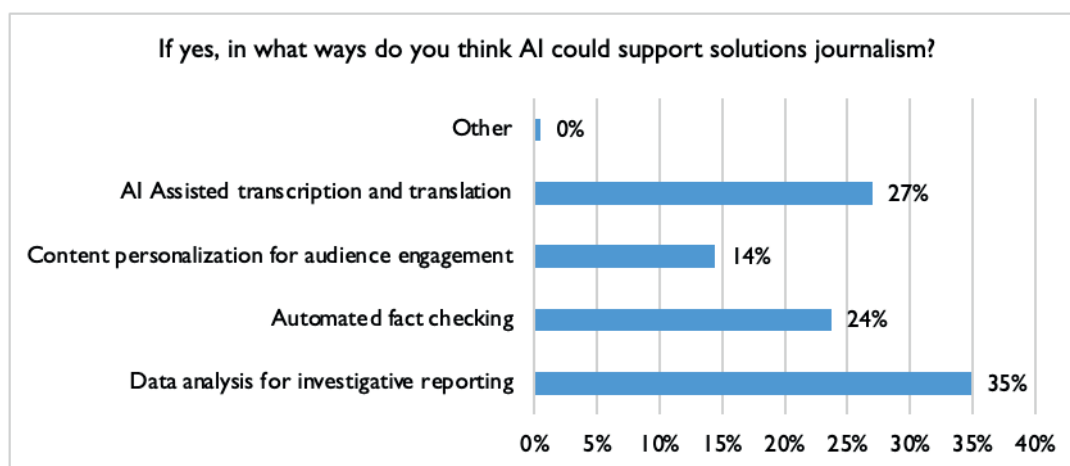


Figure 46: Approaches of AI support to SoJo in Tanzania

5.3.7. Future of Solutions Journalism in the Region

The most common recommendation from respondents on how to improve support for solutions journalism in the region was to increase access to training for journalists. Many emphasized the need for practical, hands-on training and capacity building at all levels—from individual reporters to newsroom leadership. Participants also called for incorporating solutions journalism into journalism education and integrating it more deliberately into media house editorial strategies. Several noted that creating dedicated solutions journalism desks in newsrooms and embedding the approach into institutional routines would help normalize and sustain the practice.

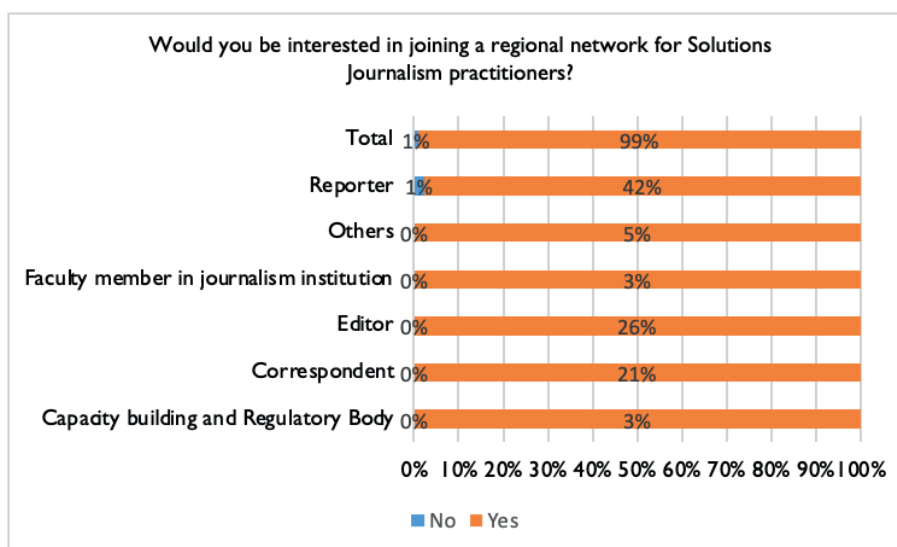


Figure 47: Interested in joining a regional network for SoJo practitioners?

Equally important was the call for more funding. Respondents emphasized that financial support is crucial to facilitate travel, access remote communities, and provide journalists with the time and resources necessary to develop in-depth, evidence-based stories. Some added that external funding can reduce dependence on limited internal newsroom budgets. Press freedom and media policy reforms were also seen as crucial, with a few participants advocating for the repeal of restrictive laws and the implementation of increased legal protections to enable bolder reporting. Overall, journalists agreed that a combination of resources, training, editorial support, and enabling legal environments is necessary to grow solutions journalism across the region.

A large majority of respondents (80%) believe that solutions journalism has the potential to shape the future of news reporting. This indicates strong confidence in the approach as a valuable alternative or complement to traditional reporting. Only 3% expressed outright skepticism, while 17% were unsure, suggesting there is still a need for further awareness and exposure to the model among some journalists.

Over the next five years, many respondents anticipate that solutions journalism will evolve into a mainstream part of newsroom operations and a powerful force for social change. Journalists expect it to help shift media focus from reactive, problem-heavy coverage to more constructive storytelling that highlights what's working. Several anticipate that with adequate training, funding, and editorial support, solutions journalism will enhance media credibility, foster greater public trust, and influence public behavior and policies. Several participants noted that SoJo has the potential to transform journalism into a more people-centered and impact-driven profession that reflects citizens' day-to-day realities and aspirations.

Others see solutions journalism helping reshape journalism education, encouraging innovation, and driving deeper collaboration between journalists and policymakers. Respondents highlighted that its growth will depend on serious investment by media houses and recognition of SoJo's role in strengthening democracy, accountability, and audience engagement. Technology is expected to accelerate this growth, with tools such as AI and data analytics supporting the research and storytelling processes. If these developments take hold, solutions journalism could emerge as the dominant form of reporting in the region, helping redefine journalism as a tool for addressing public problems.

5.3.8. Barriers to Practicing Solutions Journalism

The most common challenges cited were lack of training or resources (42%) and lack of funding (also 42%). Limited editorial support was reported by 14%, while only 1% cited audience preference for traditional styles as the challenge. A few respondents mentioned other issues, such as time constraints or political pushback.

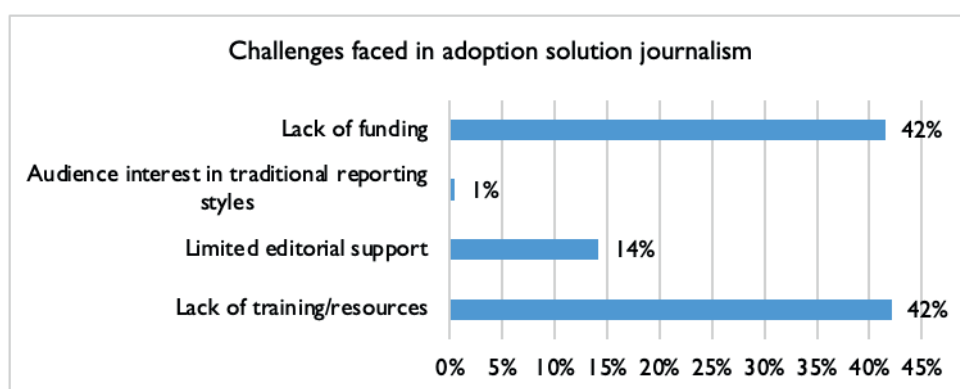


Figure 48: Challenges faced in the adoption of solution journalism

Limited editorial support was also reported by 23% of respondents, suggesting that newsroom leadership may not always prioritize or fully support this style of reporting. Access to relevant data emerged as another barrier, mentioned by 27% of participants in total (20% and repeated 7%), highlighting the difficulties journalists face in obtaining the kind of evidence needed to verify and frame impactful stories. A small portion, 2%, identified other challenges, which may include factors such as time constraints, financial limitations, or lack of institutional interest. Together, these findings point to the structural and professional gaps that need to be addressed to mainstream solutions journalism in the region.



Figure 49: Challenges in the practice of solutions journalism

5.3.9. Lessons Learned from Implementing Solutions Journalism

The responses indicate that implementing Solutions Journalism (SoJo) has led to profound personal and institutional learning for many journalists and media houses. Individually, reporters noted that SoJo sharpened their analytical skills, demanded greater rigor, and inspired more thoughtful, impactful storytelling. At the organizational level, media outlets observed increased audience engagement, improved credibility, and even revenue growth—primarily through digital platforms—once they began producing stories that not only highlighted problems but also explored credible responses. Examples, such as stories about solar dryers reducing post-harvest losses or youth-led waste recycling initiatives, demonstrate how SoJo can drive social change, attract donor and government attention, and deepen public trust. Several participants emphasized that these stories not only gave a voice to the voiceless but also helped the media connect more meaningfully with both readers and sources. However, a few organizations have yet to adopt SoJo and expressed a need for further training, highlighting an opportunity to expand its reach and impact across more newsrooms.

5.3.10. Conclusion

In summary, Tanzanian journalists see Solutions Journalism not just as a reporting approach, but as a powerful tool to restore media trust, support public accountability, and connect newsrooms with the real needs of citizens. However, for it to thrive, systemic support is needed in the form of training, funding, partnerships, and legal protections.

5.4. Uganda

5.4.1. Introduction

This report combines quantitative and qualitative data to present a fuller picture of how solutions journalism is understood and practiced in Uganda. On the quantitative side, 98 respondents were surveyed, providing a wide range of perspectives from across the media sector. Correspondents made up the largest share at 33, representing 34% of the sample, followed by reporters at 28 (29%), and editors at 16 (16%). Faculty members in journalism institutions contributed 12 respondents (12%), while capacity-building and regulatory bodies accounted for five respondents (5%). Practitioners categorized as “others,” working in non-traditional or specialized media roles, represented four respondents (4%). This distribution indicates that the data is primarily shaped by newsroom actors, while also being enriched by the voices of academia, regulators, and non-traditional media players that influence the broader media environment.

Complementing this, 16 respondents were interviewed through qualitative key informant interviews to add depth and context to the survey findings. These included five editors from mainstream and independent media houses, five faculty members from journalism institutions, and one reporter offering a frontline perspective. In addition, one respondent came from a capacity-building and regulatory body, while four were drawn from “others,” representing non-traditional or specialized media spaces.

5.4.2. Awareness, Perceptions and Understanding of Solutions Journalism

Overall, 50% of all respondents reported being very familiar with the concept, with the highest proportions coming from correspondents (14%), reporters (14%), and editors (10%). Another 18% described themselves as somewhat familiar, particularly among correspondents (7%) and reporters (7%). A smaller proportion, 23%, indicated they were only slightly familiar, with correspondents making up the largest share in this category at 15%.

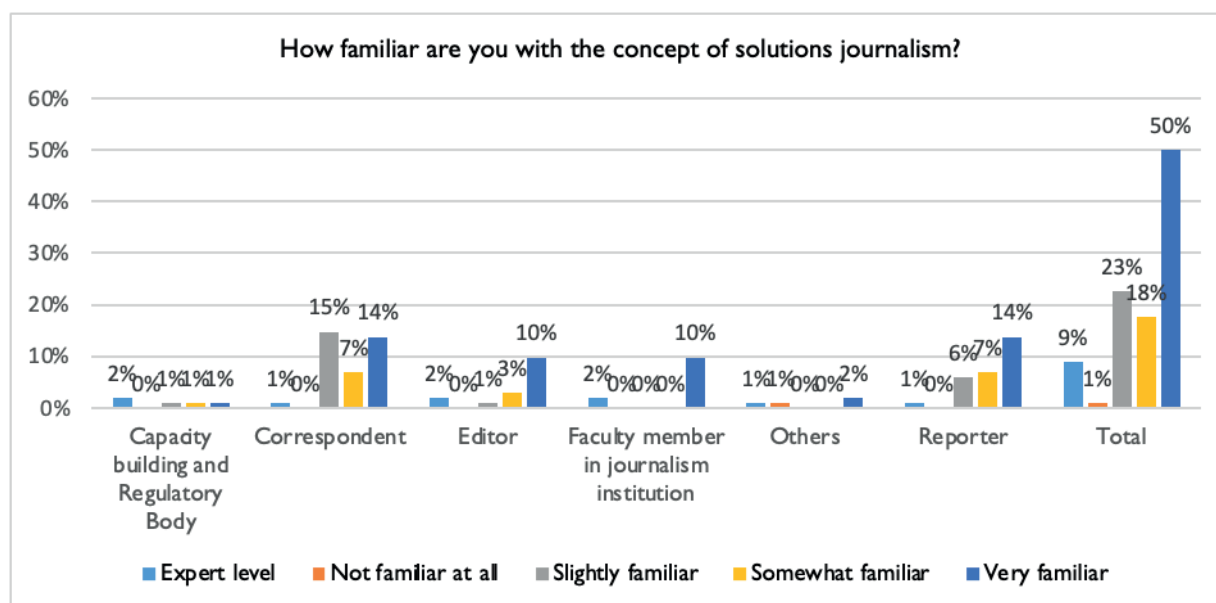


Figure 50: Awareness Levels of Solutions Journalism in Uganda

Notably, 9% of respondents across categories reported expert-level familiarity, while only 1% said they were not familiar at all. Faculty members in journalism institutions contributed a balanced share, with 10% very familiar and 2% at the expert level, suggesting that academia is playing an active role in embedding the concept. Respondents from capacity building and regulatory bodies also showed awareness, albeit in smaller proportions, reflecting their supporting but less operational role. This demonstrates a strong baseline awareness of Solutions Journalism among the study group, although deep expertise remains limited. Overall, the data illustrates that knowledge of solutions journalism is widespread across the media ecosystem, though correspondents and reporters account for the bulk of familiarity.

The responses demonstrated a shared understanding of solutions journalism, defining it as a rigorous, evidence-based approach that highlights how individuals, communities, and institutions are addressing societal challenges. They emphasized that it brings hope, balances negativity in mainstream news, and informs audiences about practical, replicable interventions. Others describe it as journalism that seeks to “provide medicine” to problems, pointing to its curative and proactive nature. Across the board, there is a strong recognition that solutions journalism is not advocacy, but a constructive reporting method that deepens public understanding and inspires action by showing what works and why.

Respondents described a wide range of first encounters with solutions journalism, reflecting both formal and informal entry points into the field. Several learned about it through structured training sessions or workshops, particularly those organized by the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) in Kampala or other regional hubs. Others were introduced to the concept in academic settings—either through lectures, assignments, or media conferences—and found it to be a refreshing alternative to the traditional problem-focused reporting.

A few, especially veteran journalists, realized retrospectively that they had been practicing elements of solutions journalism for years without labeling it as such. Their stories often involved uncovering a social challenge and reporting on individuals or initiatives addressing it, sometimes leading to tangible, positive outcomes, such as community support or policy change. Overall, the first encounter with solutions journalism evoked feelings of inspiration, empowerment, and a renewed sense of journalistic purpose, especially among those seeking to tell stories that uplift and drive change.

A strong consensus among respondents is that Solutions Journalism provides a more balanced and constructive narrative than traditional reporting, with 83% either strongly agreeing (27%) or agreeing (56%) with this statement. A similar proportion, 85%, believe that it increases audience trust in media, suggesting that Solutions Journalism plays a role in rebuilding media credibility. Furthermore, 86% agree that it is more likely to inspire real-world action than conventional news, reinforcing its practical relevance to audiences. However, the majority also recognize barriers to effective implementation, as indicated in the findings below.

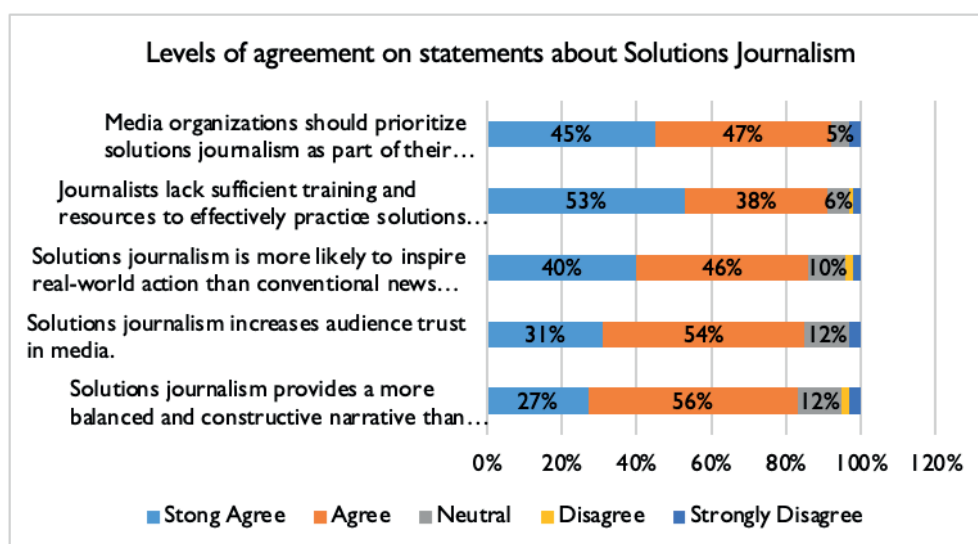


Figure 51: Statements regarding SoJo in Uganda

5.4.3. Education and Sources of Training on Solutions Journalism

A majority of respondents (79%) reported having received some form of training in Solutions Journalism (SoJo), though the depth and format of the training varied. Reporters (23%) and correspondents (26%) accounted for the largest share, highlighting the emphasis placed on equipping frontline news producers with this approach. Editors (13%) and faculty members in journalism institutions (10%) also make up a notable portion, reflecting both newsroom leadership and academia's role in strengthening solutions journalism capacity.

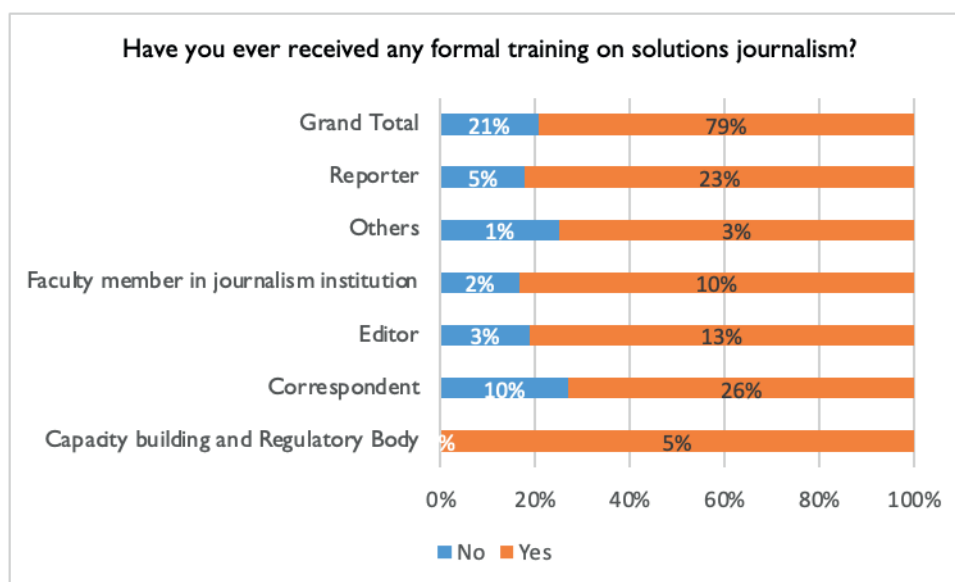


Figure 52: Have you ever received any formal training on solutions journalism?

Respondents from capacity-building and regulatory bodies (5%) and those classified as “others” (3%) also reported receiving training, although in smaller proportions. Only 21% of respondents indicated they had not undergone formal training, with correspondents (10%) making up nearly half of this group.

This distribution suggests that while training has reached most segments of the media sector, gaps remain, particularly among correspondents, who play a key role in field reporting and shaping public narratives.

The sources of training varied, with media organizations leading at 37%, followed by journalism schools and nonprofit organizations at 23% each, and online courses at 18%. This mix highlights the importance of both formal education and alternative training pathways in promoting Solutions Journalism skills.

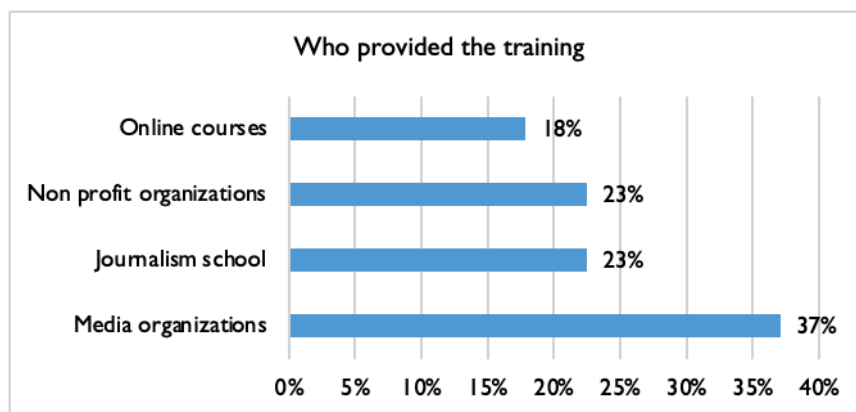


Figure 53: Institutions providing solutions journalism training in Uganda

Many participants cited formal workshops or sessions facilitated by the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME), or Science Africa. These trainings were delivered both virtually and in-person and were particularly instrumental for editors, lecturers, and media leaders in integrating SoJo into newsroom practice or academic curricula. Others were introduced to the concept through university courses or journalism schools, where SoJo was either taught as a stand-alone topic or embedded within broader modules. A few respondents mentioned receiving informal peer-to-peer training or learning through leadership forums and editorial meetings. However, a notable portion had not received formal training but conceptualized their practice through self-directed learning, mentorship, or on-the-job editorial experiences. In such cases, their understanding of SoJo evolved through reading, audience feedback, or the organic adoption of a problem-solving lens in storytelling. This mix of formal and informal exposure highlights both the growing institutionalization of SoJo and the need for expanded training to reach those who are still practicing without structured support.

43% of respondents indicated that Solutions Journalism was a core part of their journalism coursework or training, while 30% said it was only covered as an optional topic. However, 26% noted that it was not incorporated at all. This reveals progress in curriculum integration but also indicates room for standardization across institutions. The findings are shown in the figure below.

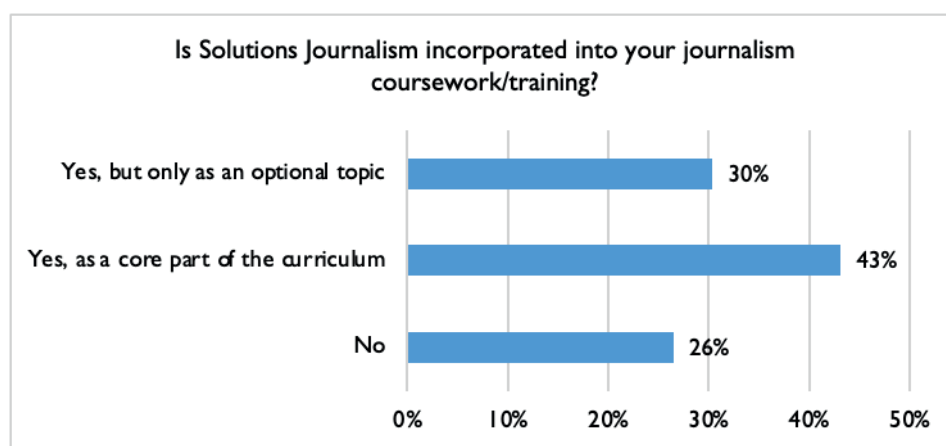


Figure 54: Integration of SoJo into academic curricula in Uganda

Formal SoJo curricula across the surveyed academic institutions are currently limited. Most respondents indicated that their schools do not have a dedicated SoJo curriculum. However, a few noted that discussions are underway to incorporate SoJo principles into existing courses, such as development communication or feature writing. One respondent clarified that SoJo content has been informally integrated into a broader course unit, in alignment with national curriculum guidelines, rather than being taught as a separate subject.

The number of staff members actively teaching Solutions Journalism remains limited across most institutions. In several cases, no staff members are formally teaching in SoJo, or it is not taught as a stand-alone subject. In a few institutions, SoJo has been incorporated by one or two lecturers within broader journalism courses, such as development communication or media ethics. One respondent mentioned that two colleagues are preparing to integrate SoJo into their teaching, suggesting a slow but emerging interest.

No definite numbers of staff members were provided, and some media professionals clarified that while their organizations don't "teach" SoJo, they may mentor or guide journalists on its principles. Overall, the data suggest that dedicated SoJo instruction is still relatively rare, but there are early signs of uptake and growing staff interest in integrating it into journalism education.

The findings indicate a strong demand for additional training on solutions journalism across all respondent categories, with 94% expressing interest in receiving further capacity building. Reporters (27%) and correspondents (32%) make up the largest share, reflecting their frontline role in implementing new approaches in daily reporting. Editors (16%) and faculty members in journalism institutions (12%) also show high interest, underscoring the importance of newsroom leadership and academia in driving adoption and sustainability of solutions journalism. Respondents from capacity building and regulatory bodies (4%) and those categorized as "others" (3%) contribute smaller but still meaningful proportions. Only 6% of respondents indicated they do not wish to receive further training, with the majority of these being correspondents (4%). Overall, the results suggest that enthusiasm for deeper learning is widespread, signaling an opportunity to expand and strengthen solutions journalism practice through targeted training programs.

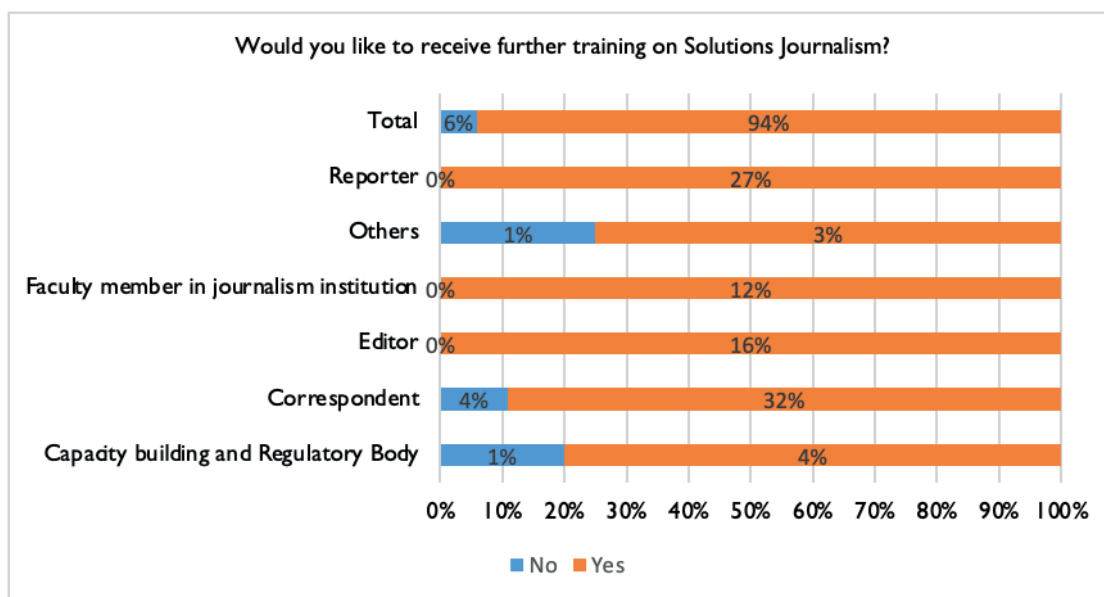


Figure 55: Interest in further training on SoJo in Uganda

5.4.4. Implementation (uptake) of Solutions Journalism

Solutions journalism is used in many ways across both media organizations and academic institutions. Some newsrooms have developed dedicated segments, such as “Positive Pulse” or community-driven storytelling slots, that emphasize constructive responses to social challenges in areas like health, education, climate change, and entrepreneurship.

In contexts like Uganda, SoJo is also viewed as a tool to hold power to account and create pressure for systemic change, particularly in addressing issues such as corruption or state impunity. Overall, the findings show that solutions journalism is increasingly being used not only to report but to inspire, mobilize, and educate.

Most respondents, 79%, have produced at least one Solutions Journalism story, while 21% have not. This reflects not only awareness but also practical engagement with the method, strengthening the case for expanding editorial and institutional support.

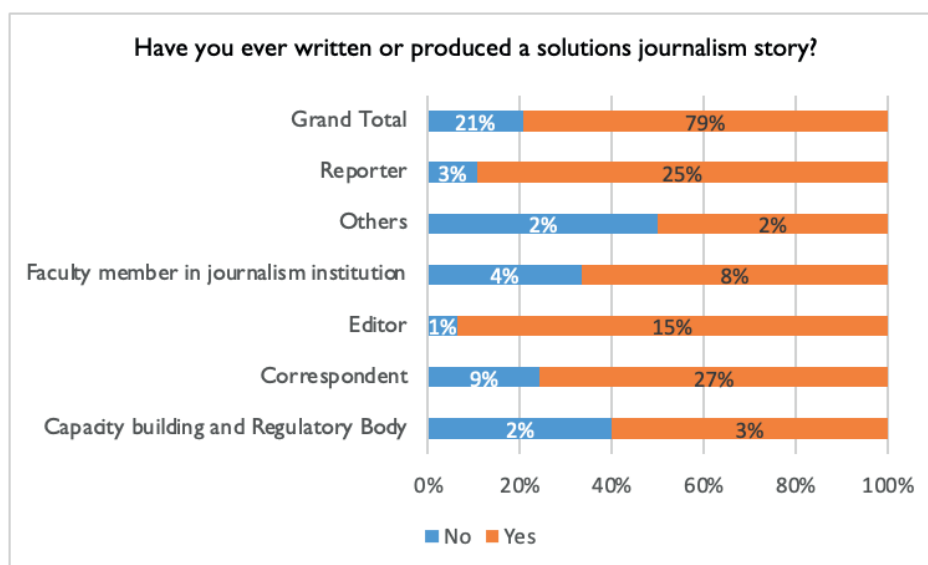


Figure 56: Have you ever written or produced a solutions journalism story?

Among those who have written Solutions Journalism stories, 49% said they do so occasionally, 22% frequently, and 12% always. Only 16% reported rarely applying it. These findings suggest that while most practitioners are familiar with Solutions Journalism, consistent application remains a challenge.

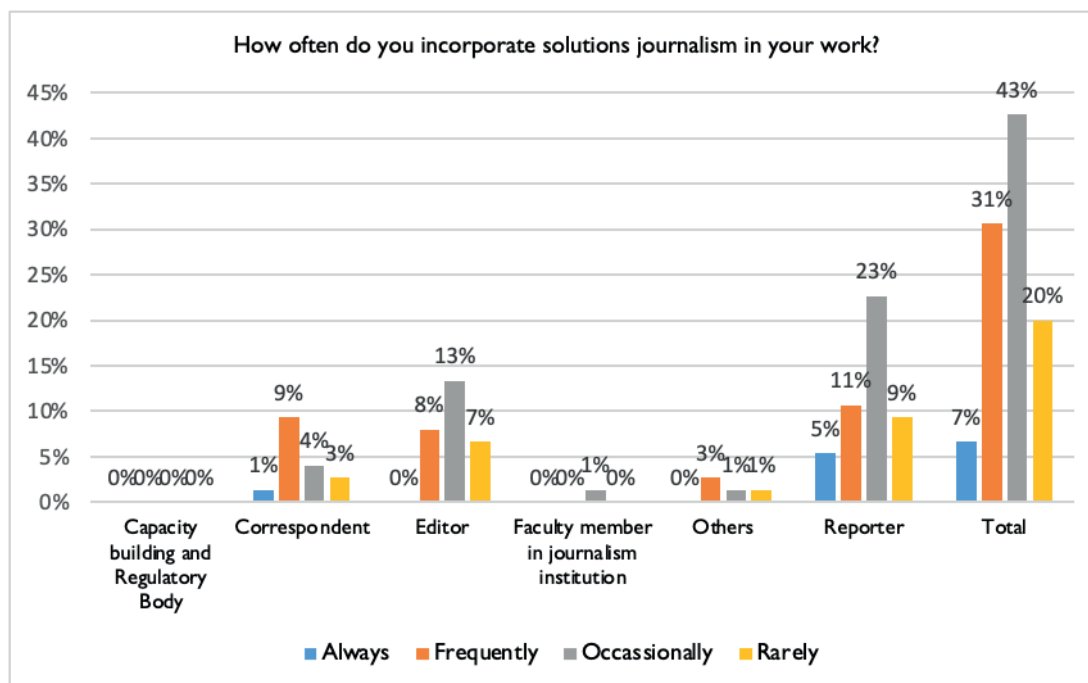


Figure 57: How often do you incorporate solutions journalism in your work?

A variety of platforms are used to publish solutions-oriented stories. Television leads at 25%, followed by print at 21%, online news platforms and social media at 19% each, and radio at 13%. Other platforms, including books and organizational websites, make up 3%. The diversity of platforms suggests a growing footprint, although some formats, such as podcasts, remain underutilized.

42% of respondents reported that their media houses have a dedicated Solutions Journalism desk, while 58% said they do not. This shows that despite interest and experience, structural support for the practice remains limited in many newsrooms.

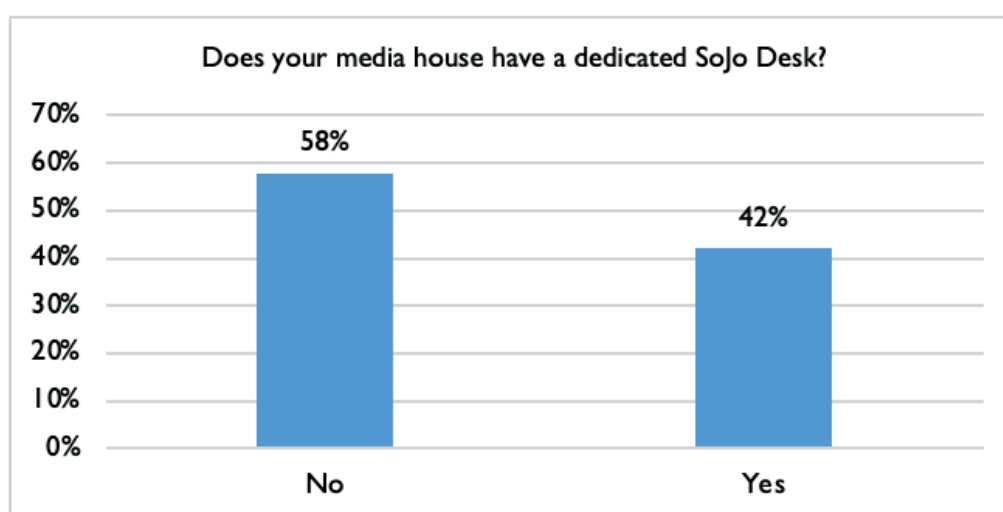


Figure 58: Presence of dedicated SoJo desk in Uganda Media

Editors and managers noted a shift from inadvertently publishing inspiring stories to deliberately producing well-investigated, impact-focused pieces that spotlight both problems and credible solutions. Examples were cited where stories led to real-world changes, such as government compensation or community mobilization, affirming the transformative potential of this approach. Academic institutions have also embedded solutions journalism into their curricula and pedagogy, using it to train future journalists to look beyond problem exposure and focus on informing and empowering communities.

Internally, support has often come from journalists themselves, particularly those trained in SoJo who continue to champion its practice despite limited institutional backing. In academic settings, faculty heads and lecturers have been instrumental in incorporating SoJo into curricula, offering both pedagogical and financial support. At some media houses, top management and editors have supported SoJo by facilitating story production and allocating resources. In a few cases, support is also influenced by faith-based organizations, media councils, and government funding, though these remain less consistent.

Overall, while SoJo is not yet institutionalized across all organizations, it is being pushed forward by passionate individuals, supported by emerging organizational interest and evolving media trends. To encourage the wider adoption of solutions journalism, journalists highlighted several key incentives. Top among them is the need for more training opportunities, with 31% of respondents highlighting the importance of building skills and understanding around this reporting approach. Funding for investigative work followed closely at 26%, indicating that financial support remains a significant barrier to progress.

Recognition and awards were cited by 23%, suggesting that acknowledgement of quality work can motivate journalists to focus on solutions-based storytelling. Editorial support was also noted by 19%, reinforcing the role of newsroom leadership in prioritizing and enabling this kind of journalism. Together, these findings demonstrate that both institutional backing and personal development opportunities are crucial for expanding the practice.

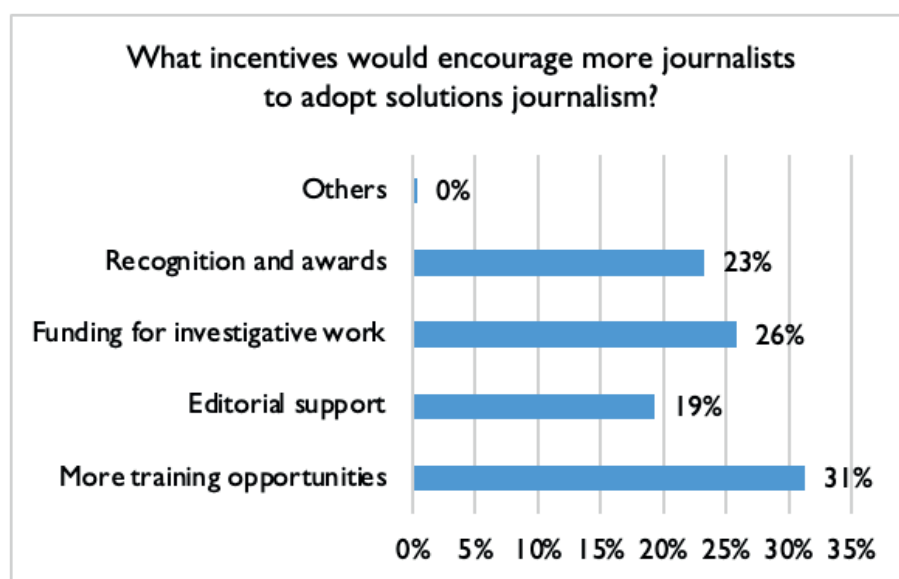


Figure 59: Incentives to encourage adoption of Solutions Journalism in Uganda

5.4.5. Impact of Implementing Solutions Journalism

Most respondents, at 70% found Solutions Journalism more engaging than traditional journalism, with 9% saying it is significantly more engaging. However, 20% reported it was less engaging, and 2% saw no difference. This suggests a strong perception that Solutions Journalism can enhance audience connection, although its effectiveness may vary depending on execution and context. The data shows that Solutions Journalism draws significantly more audience interest compared to traditional reporting. About 78% of respondents observed higher engagement levels when stories focused on responses to social problems rather than just the issues themselves. This suggests that audiences are not only drawn to stories that explain “what’s wrong” but are even more responsive to those that show “what’s being done.” In contrast, 14% reported less engagement, while 3% saw no noticeable difference. These findings point to a strong preference among audiences for journalism that is constructive and action-oriented.

The implementation of Solutions Journalism has had diverse and far-reaching impacts across Ugandan media, influencing financial stability, professional growth, political relationships, and social engagement. Financially, some organizations report increased funding opportunities, sponsorships, and partnerships, particularly with NGOs, faith-based organizations, and international bodies like UNICEF. These partnerships have been driven by SoJo’s alignment with constructive, community-centered storytelling that appeals to development-focused institutions.

Professionally, SoJo has transformed how journalists and students approach content creation, emphasizing depth, evidence, and community engagement. Newsrooms have seen an improvement in credibility and exposure for journalists who are invited to conferences and workshops. Academically, students are increasingly drawn to journalism programs that teach SoJo, finding the model more meaningful and impactful.

Socially, SoJo has fostered deeper trust between media outlets and communities, with audiences appreciating stories that not only highlight problems but also offer realistic pathways to change. This has led to stronger audience engagement, increased readership, and in some cases, real-world responses to published stories—from community mobilization to donor support. Politically, some outlets noted improved relationships with government and policymakers, as SoJo reporting helps frame issues in ways that promote constructive dialogue rather than confrontation.

The majority of respondents (70%) found Solutions Journalism more engaging than traditional journalism, with 9% saying it is significantly more engaging. However, 20% reported it was less engaging, and 2% saw no difference. This suggests a strong perception that Solutions Journalism can enhance audience connection, although its effectiveness may vary depending on execution and context.

More than half of respondents, 53%, observed that Solutions Journalism has had an impact on public discourse or policy change. Another 35% were not sure, and 12% saw no effect. These findings, as indicated in the figure below, suggest that Solutions Journalism is increasingly being recognized as a tool for influence. Even so, more visibility and evidence of its outcomes may be needed to strengthen this perception.

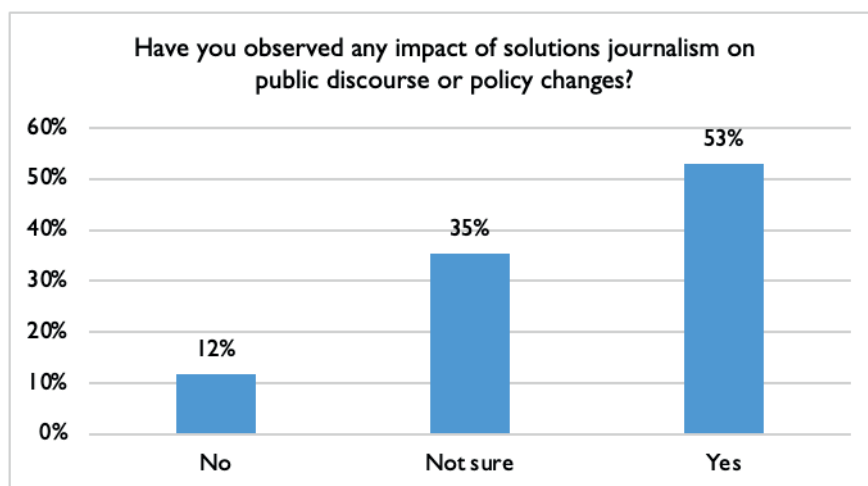


Figure 60: Impact of SoJo on public discourse or policy changes in Uganda

69% of respondents believe that Solutions Journalism greatly enhances credibility, while 29% stated it significantly enhances credibility. Only 1% felt it reduces credibility or has no impact. This shows that the majority of practitioners and media professionals recognize the role Solutions Journalism plays in restoring public trust, offering a more balanced narrative, and demonstrating that the media can play a constructive role in addressing societal challenges, as shown in the figure below.

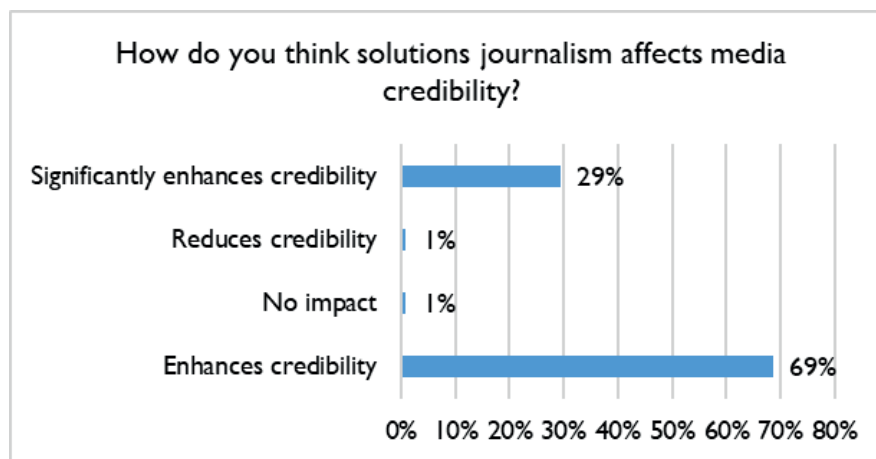


Figure 61: Perceived influence of SoJo on media credibility in Uganda

While the connection between Solutions Journalism and policy change is not always easy to track, 35% of respondents reported that they had seen such stories influence policy decisions. However, a significant portion (46%) was unsure whether any policy shifts had occurred as a result of this type of reporting, suggesting either a lack of follow-up mechanisms or insufficient visibility of those outcomes.

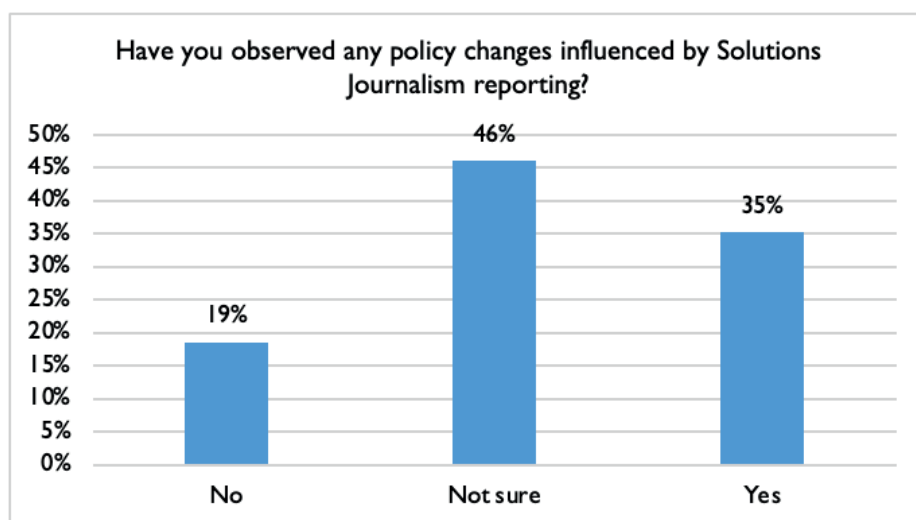


Figure 62: Observed policy changes influenced by SoJo reporting in Uganda

Meanwhile, 19% stated that they had not observed any policy changes as presented below. These responses suggest that while the potential for policy impact exists, more deliberate tracking and documentation may help demonstrate a stronger link between Solutions Journalism and policy influence.

The data reflects a wide range of policy shifts that respondents attribute directly or indirectly to the influence of Solutions Journalism reporting. In the education sector, stories about school feeding programs in Uganda prompted district education officers in Amuru, Gulu, and Kitgum to explore similar models, influencing budget adjustments to support parent-supported school meals. Other stories have reportedly driven reforms in academic curricula to emphasize hands-on skills and enhanced inclusive education and e-health policies. Stories focused on student welfare, such as one highlighting a school headteacher involved in sexual abuse, contributed to the enforcement of stricter child protection laws.

In governance and public service delivery, Solutions Journalism stories have drawn attention to issues such as road safety, sanitation, labour export, and taxation. These stories reportedly contributed to reforms such as improved traffic laws, environmental policies, enhanced access to education for refugees, stricter laws against cattle theft, and improved waste disposal systems.

Other accounts suggest that highlighting community struggles, such as land grabbing, water cuts in prisons, and compensation disputes in oil-rich regions, led to government or institutional intervention. The data also mentions improvements in public infrastructure design, like pedestrian walkways, and strengthened work ethic standards, illustrating the broad institutional and societal impact of Solutions Journalism in the region.

The majority of respondents (55%) believe that Solutions Journalism has improved the quality of investigative reporting in their country. This suggests that by focusing on what works, journalists are digging deeper into the root causes of issues and critically analyzing responses and interventions. Another 37% observed an increased focus on stories that highlight positive impact, showing a shift from solely problem-driven narratives to those that also explore credible responses.

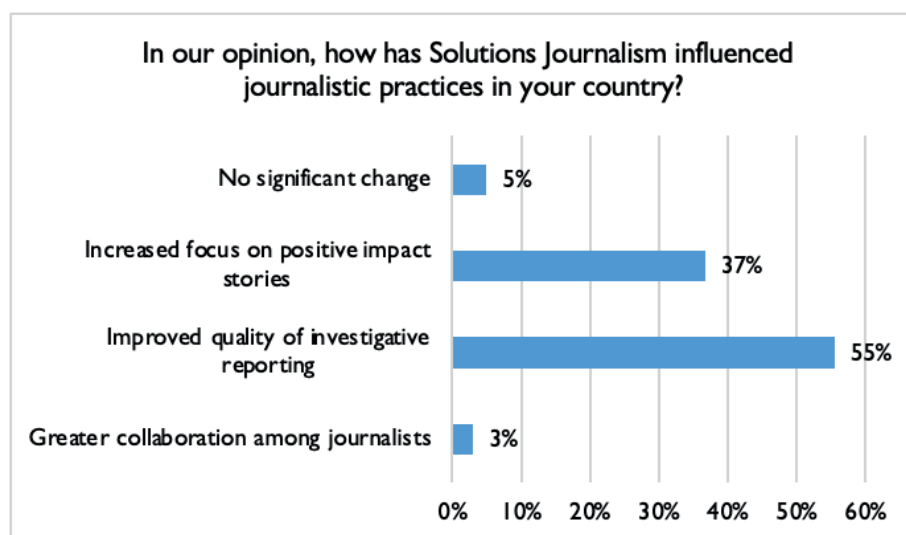


Figure 63: Influence of SoJo on journalistic practices in Uganda

A smaller group (3%) noted that Solutions Journalism has encouraged more collaboration among journalists, possibly due to the need to share resources and expertise in pursuing complex solutions-based stories. Only 5% felt that there had been no significant change, which suggests a growing but not yet universal transformation in reporting practices. Overall, the findings suggest that Solutions Journalism is transforming newsroom culture and editorial choices, emphasizing depth, impact, and constructive storytelling. Results are presented above.

Feedback on Solutions Journalism stories is mixed but largely positive. Many journalists reported receiving appreciation and encouragement from policymakers and the public, particularly when their stories highlighted pressing community issues and led to tangible action. For instance, stories on inadequate school infrastructure, unsafe roads, and labor policies have prompted government intervention, budget reallocations, or public donations. Civil society organizations have also responded by scaling up support for grassroots initiatives.

Some journalists have noted that policymakers view these stories as helpful in informing their decisions and providing credible, community-tested responses to societal problems. However, a few journalists also shared that feedback is not always supportive. In some cases, they faced threats, intimidation, or accusations of bias from those implicated in the stories. Others observed skepticism from audiences who confuse solutions-oriented reporting with public relations or fear that media coverage might expose them to government scrutiny.

Still, the dominant trend is that Solutions Journalism fosters trust, sparks policy interest, and empowers communities to act. Several respondents emphasized that more visibility, support, and understanding of Solutions Journalism could strengthen its role in bridging the gap between media, governance, and public accountability. Many media organizations reported a significant shift in their journalistic practices since adopting solutions journalism. Reporters have moved beyond merely spotlighting problems to actively seeking out and documenting responses. This has led to a change not only in story content but also in tone and purpose—prioritizing language that informs and empowers rather than simply alarming the public.

In educational institutions, instructors now guide students to focus on community engagement, constructive critique, and the transformational power of journalism, as opposed to conflict-

driven narratives. Some noted that they had previously been doing what could be considered solutions journalism, even if they didn't use the label. With a better understanding, their work has become more intentional and impactful.

A few respondents, however, noted no substantial change—either because they hadn't implemented SoJo formally or because their organizations don't engage in news production. Overall, the adoption of solutions journalism has introduced a culture of more thoughtful, evidence-based, and audience-relevant storytelling in many media and academic institutions.

The implementation of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) in many Ugandan media outlets and academic institutions has mainly been driven by a combination of external and internal actors, with varying degrees of support. Key external drivers include the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), which has provided mentorship, editorial guidance, training workshops, and in some cases, funding and equipment. Organizations like the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) and the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) have also played pivotal roles through webinars and resource sharing.

Internally, support has often come from journalists themselves, particularly those trained in SoJo who continue to champion its practice despite limited institutional backing. In academic settings, faculty heads and lecturers have been instrumental in incorporating SoJo into curricula, offering both pedagogical and financial support. At some media houses, top management and editors have supported SoJo by facilitating story production and allocating resources. In a few cases, support is also influenced by faith-based organizations, media councils, and government funding, though these remain less consistent.

Overall, while SoJo is not yet institutionalized across all organizations, it is being pushed forward by passionate individuals, supported by emerging organizational interest and evolving media trends.

5.4.6. Use of Technology in Producing Solutions Journalism Stories

Technology is increasingly playing a central role in how journalists research, produce, and disseminate Solutions Journalism stories. Many journalists already rely on internet tools to conduct background research, identify story leads, verify facts, and track developments on specific issues. Tools like Google, Excel, Datawrapper, and social media platforms facilitate the gathering of data, analysis of trends, and presentation of information in compelling and interactive ways. Mobile phones and cameras are used for recording videos, capturing audio, and taking photographs, enabling reporters to produce multimedia stories that are both informative and engaging.

Moving forward, editing software, transcription tools, and online communication platforms such as Zoom and email will support increased collaboration and content development across teams and media houses. Journalists will also use technology to connect with their sources, receive editorial feedback remotely, and submit stories from the field. Social media is beneficial for amplifying stories, tracking audience engagement, and gauging impact. In some cases, advanced tools like artificial intelligence are being adopted to help generate ideas and deepen research. Overall, the integration of technology has enhanced the speed, accuracy, reach, and quality of Solutions Journalism reporting.

A majority of respondents (56%) believe that artificial intelligence can enhance the practice of Solutions Journalism. This shows growing optimism about the potential of AI tools to improve

efficiency, accuracy, and audience engagement in reporting. However, 25% of participants do not see AI as beneficial to the field, while 20% are uncertain about its benefits. These mixed views suggest that while many see AI as a valuable tool, there is still a need for more awareness, training, and examples of practical applications to help journalists understand how AI can support solution-focused storytelling.

Among those who believe artificial intelligence can enhance Solutions Journalism, 36% point to data analysis for investigative reporting as the most valuable application. This suggests that journalists see AI as a tool to process and interpret complex datasets, helping uncover patterns that can inform solution-focused stories. Another 25% of the value comes from AI-assisted transcription and translation, which can improve workflow efficiency and support multilingual reporting. Automated fact-checking (24%) is also considered necessary for maintaining accuracy and credibility, while 15% emphasize the importance of content personalization to engage diverse audiences better. No respondents suggested alternative uses beyond the listed options, indicating a focused interest in these core applications, as shown in the table below.

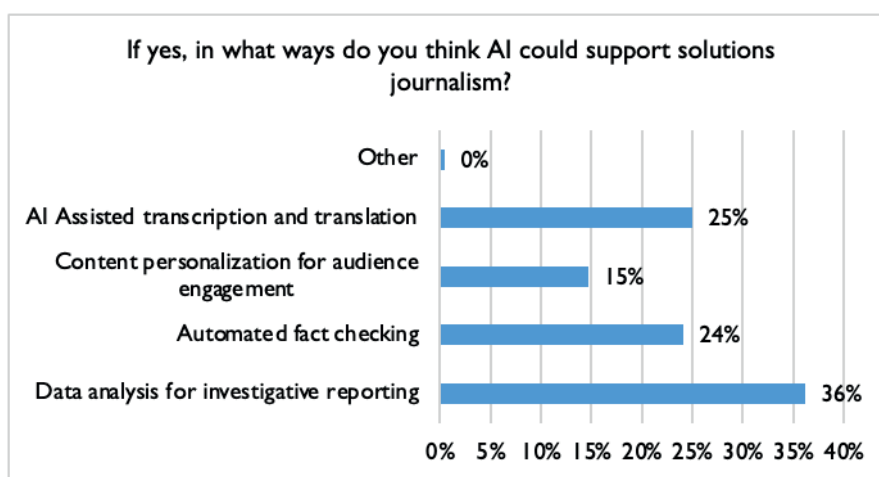


Figure 64: Approaches of AI support to SoJo in Uganda

Many journalists express deep concerns about the use of AI in solutions journalism. A dominant fear is that AI could lead to job losses, with several respondents worried that journalists may be replaced or become overly reliant on automation. Others highlight that AI undermines creativity, authenticity, and journalistic integrity. There's a strong sense that the use of AI encourages shallow reporting, reduces original thought, and erodes the foundational skills that define professional journalism.

Accuracy and credibility are recurring concerns. Respondents worry that AI often generates misleading or incorrect information, particularly when it is not properly fact-checked. The potential for misinformation, disinformation, deep fakes, and plagiarism is considered a significant risk. Some also point out that AI lacks emotional understanding and contextual nuance, which are critical when telling stories that aim to reflect real human experiences. While a few acknowledge AI's potential when used responsibly, the majority of feedback underscores a need for caution, ethical oversight, and complementary—not substitutive use of AI in journalism.

5.4.7. Future of SoJo in the Region

A majority of respondents (65%) believe Solutions Journalism has the potential to shape the future of news reporting. They see it as a refreshing alternative that goes beyond highlighting problems to exploring how people and institutions are responding to challenges. This approach is seen as more constructive and empowering for both audiences and decision-makers.

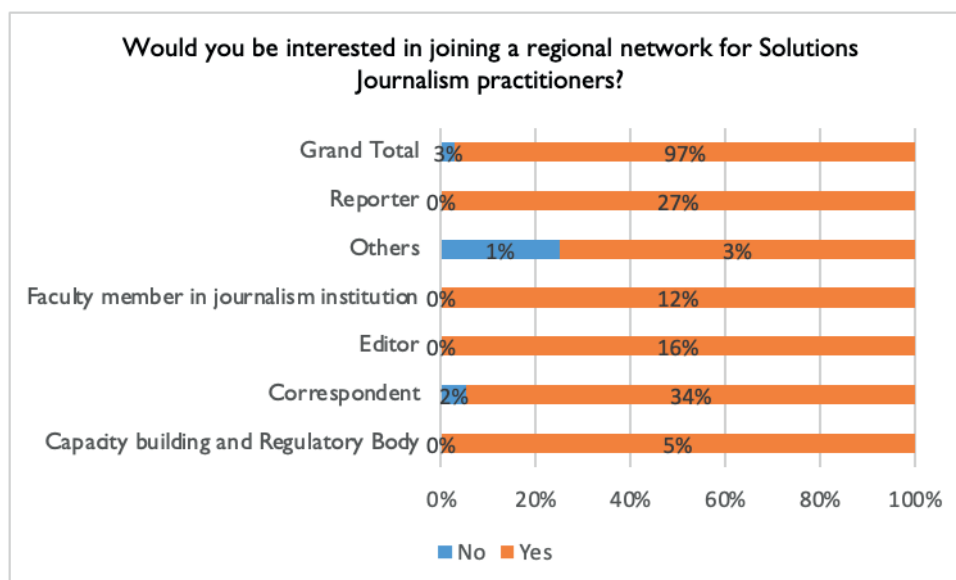


Figure 65: Interested in joining a regional network for Solutions Journalism practitioners

However, a significant portion (33%) remains undecided, suggesting a need for more exposure, training, and evidence on its long-term impact. Only 2% expressed skepticism, indicating that resistance to solutions journalism may be minimal but not absent. Overall, the data points to growing optimism around the idea that solutions journalism can redefine how stories are framed and how journalism contributes to social progress.

Many respondents expect solutions journalism to grow significantly over the next five years, both in terms of relevance and practice. They anticipate that more media organizations and journalism schools will integrate it into their routines and curricula. Respondents believe this shift will lead to more credible storytelling, greater public trust, and tangible societal change. They see the approach helping move journalism beyond simply highlighting problems to focusing on evidence-based responses and real-world impact.

There is also an expectation that, with continued training, funding, and editorial support, more journalists will embrace the model. Respondents noted that the future of journalism will be shaped by audience demand for hopeful, constructive stories. If well-embraced, solutions journalism could redefine reporting styles, influence public policy, and make journalism more people-centered. However, some acknowledged that this evolution will depend on institutional commitment, the enabling environment, and the broader direction journalism takes globally.

5.4.8. Challenges in Implementing Solutions Journalism

Key challenges to adopting Solutions Journalism include a lack of funding (36%), a lack of training and resources (33%), limited editorial support (15%), and audience preference for traditional reporting (15%). These barriers underscore the need for systemic interventions to support

adoption, encompassing funding, newsroom leadership, and audience engagement strategies, as outlined below.

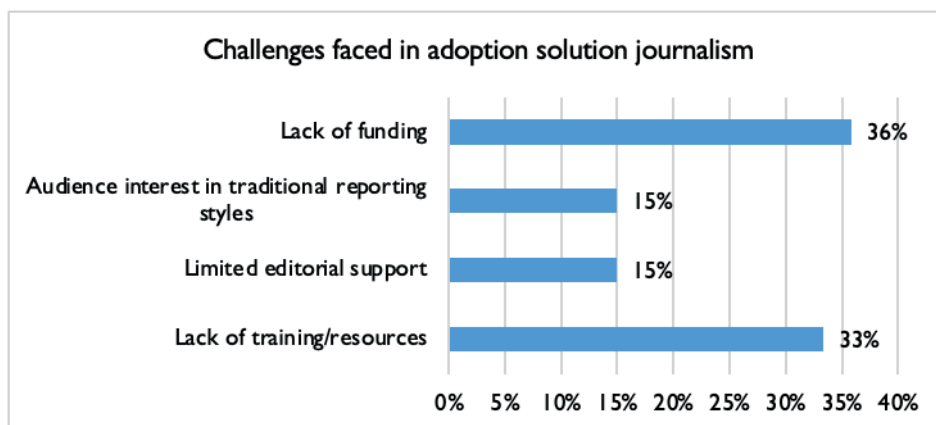


Figure 66: Challenges in the adoption of SoJo in Uganda

One of the main challenges journalists face when practicing solutions journalism is the lack of adequate training, cited by 35% of respondents. This suggests that many journalists lack the skills or exposure necessary to report effectively using a solutions-oriented approach. In addition, 29% struggle with accessing relevant data, which is crucial for developing evidence-based and impactful stories.

Limited editorial support was reported by 21%, suggesting that newsroom priorities or structures may not fully embrace or encourage this style of reporting. Another 14% noted limited audience interest, reflecting the ongoing perception that traditional, problem-focused news continues to dominate public attention. The data points to a clear need for better training, institutional support, and access to reliable information for solutions journalism to thrive. The findings are presented below.



Figure 67: Challenges in practicing SoJo in Uganda

5.4.9. Lessons Learned from Implementing Solutions Journalism

Findings indicate that implementing solutions journalism has led to significant transformations for both individuals and organizations, fostering a more profound sense of responsibility, impact, and audience engagement. Many respondents noted that this form of journalism has helped them move beyond simply reporting problems to actively highlighting credible responses and

inspiring action. Individually, practitioners described feeling more fulfilled and empowered, with several citing examples where their stories led to tangible change—such as increased donor support, government responsiveness, or improved public awareness.

For instance, features on youth-led environmental efforts or government programs, such as the Parish Development Model, not only informed but also connected communities with real opportunities for change. Academics reported that students responded enthusiastically to solutions-focused assignments, showing more community engagement and storytelling depth. At the institutional level, organizations have become more intentional in how they report, relying on data, fieldwork, and community voices to anchor their stories.

5.4.10. Conclusion

The findings leave no doubt about the deep appreciation for the transformative potential of solutions journalism within both the media and academic institutions. Respondents highlighted that solutions journalism reinvigorates newsroom practices by fostering deeper community connections and offering a more constructive form of accountability. For faith-based media, it was described as a ministry aligned with the values of truth and hope. At the same time, educators viewed it as essential for nurturing a new generation of service-minded journalists. Several respondents noted that SoJo should be treated as a foundational approach within journalism education and called for its integration at the grassroots level. But while many expressed enthusiasm for SoJo's role in shifting audience engagement and newsroom culture, there were also calls for stronger institutional support, including funding and government backing, to ensure its full and sustainable implementation.



6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY REPORTS

6.1. Introduction

This section compares and contrasts data from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda to provide a regional overview of the uptake and impact of Solutions Journalism (SoJo). By pooling evidence across the four countries, this section highlights both similarities and differences, drawing lessons that transcend national boundaries.

The analysis is based on a mixed-methods dataset comprising both quantitative and qualitative inputs. A total of 385 survey respondents participated in the study: 95 from Kenya, 96 from Rwanda, 96 from Tanzania, and 98 from Uganda. These surveys captured structured information on awareness, training, institutional practices, and perceptions of SoJo. To complement this, 68 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in Kenya (19), Rwanda (16), Tanzania (15), and Uganda (18) to provide narrative depth and context to the quantitative findings.

This dual approach ensured that comparative analysis does not rely solely on statistical patterns but also integrates practitioner perspectives, institutional experiences, and contextual nuances. Quantitative data has been used to establish trends, proportions, and cross-country contrasts, while qualitative data illustrates how these dynamics unfold in practice. Together, these sources enable a richer understanding of the SoJo ecosystem across East Africa and provide the evidence base for identifying cross-cutting lessons and recommendations presented in the subsequent sections.

6.2. Awareness, Perceptions and Understanding of SoJo

The findings from respondents across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda demonstrate a strong and nuanced awareness of solutions journalism (SoJo) as an emerging, evidence-based approach that goes beyond traditional problem-focused reporting. Rwanda (99%) reported the highest levels of combined familiarity, followed by Kenya (97%), Uganda (96%), and Tanzania (89%). An average of 51% of the respondents reported being very familiar and having expert-level familiarity with SoJo.

Table 2: How familiar are you with the concept of solutions journalism?

How familiar are you with the concept of solutions journalism?	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda	Total
Expert level	9%	4%	10%	9%	8%
Not familiar at all	3%	1%	12%	1%	4%
Slightly familiar	18%	15%	12%	23%	17%
Somewhat familiar	27%	47%	19%	18%	28%
Very familiar	43%	32%	48%	50%	43%

The findings indicate that awareness and understanding of solutions journalism are generally strong among the respondents, with the majority (43%) reporting a very high level of familiarity with the concept. This familiarity is particularly prevalent among reporters (16%), followed by editors (12%) and correspondents (9%).

Table 3: Familiarity of the concept of solution journalism among different target groups.

How familiar are you with the concept of solutions journalism?	Capacity building and Regulatory Body	Correspondent	Editor	Faculty member at a journalism institution	Others	Reporter	Grand Total
Expert level	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	8%
Not familiar at all	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%
Slightly familiar	1%	6%	2%	1%	2%	5%	17%
Somewhat familiar	1%	5%	4%	2%	1%	14%	28%
Very familiar	0%	9%	12%	4%	2%	16%	43%

Across the board, participants described Sojo as a form of journalism that identifies social problems and critically investigates responses, emphasizing how and why specific interventions work, what evidence supports them, and what their limitations might be. Respondents from Kenya frequently referenced the four pillars of Sojo: response, evidence, insight, and limitation, and highlighted the role of Sojo in restoring public trust in media content, inspiring hope, and balancing news narratives. Rwandan respondents noted that Sojo expands the journalistic lens to include problem-solving, public accountability, and citizen engagement, often linking its value to investigative journalism and social justice. Tanzanian journalists emphasized Sojo's power to influence public decisions, spark government action, and build societal trust, with several highlighting the need for impact-oriented, constructive storytelling. In Uganda, respondents highlighted Sojo as a journalism of hope, balance, and solutions, noting its potential to inform, uplift, and drive social transformation. Collectively, the responses across all four countries reflect a shared vision of Sojo as a tool for constructive, actionable journalism that not only informs the public but also empowers communities to engage in problem-solving.

Respondents from four countries reported diverse pathways to discovering solutions journalism (Sojo), with training workshops, conferences, and exposure to published Sojo stories emerging as the most common entry points.

In Kenya, 70% of the journalists first encountered Sojo through media development workshops hosted by organizations such as Science Africa and the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), as well as through self-directed research or exposure to stories on platforms like BBC Africa. For several Kenyan editors and lecturers, these experiences were deeply transformative, prompting shifts in editorial policy, curriculum design, and personal storytelling approaches.

Rwandan respondents similarly reported being introduced to Sojo through capacity-building efforts by Science Africa and local journalism networks. They highlighted how practical training sessions and peer-to-peer learning helped them internalize Sojo principles and apply them in their newsroom work.

In Tanzania, both formal workshops and peer-led newsroom training, particularly within organizations such as Mwananchi Communications Limited, played key roles in mainstreaming SoJo. Some senior editors and reporters recounted their initial exposure to cross-border media events, such as the solutions-oriented road safety reporting workshop conducted by Science Africa and the WHO, or reading impactful SoJo articles in the Kenyan press, including the Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers.

In Uganda, a mix of academic instruction, newsroom practice, and training by regional and local partners shaped respondents' early understanding. Several seasoned journalists revealed that they had been practicing SoJo unintentionally for years, focusing on community problems and responses, before learning that their approach aligned with formal SoJo frameworks. Across all four countries, respondents reported that their initial engagement with SoJo sparked a sense of professional renewal, demonstrating that journalism could both uphold critical scrutiny and inspire constructive action.

6.3. Solutions Journalism Education and Training

Formal training in solutions journalism is available in all the four countries, with some respondents in each country having received it. Uganda leads at 20%, followed closely by Kenya (18%) and Tanzania (17%). Interestingly, while Rwanda had slightly lower training rates (16%), its high level of self-reported understanding suggests that informal or in-house training might be playing a role. Media organizations were the leading training providers in Uganda (12%) and Tanzania (10%), while nonprofit organizations contributed significantly across all four countries. Kenya and Uganda also showed notable involvement from journalism schools. Online courses, although present, had a more minor overall impact. These findings suggest a growing institutional interest in integrating solutions journalism into professional development pathways.

Training in solutions journalism is available in all the countries, although it varies in depth and form across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. In Kenya, most respondents reported having undergone formal training provided by the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), Science Africa, Internews, and the Media Council of Kenya. These trainings focused on story framing, evidence gathering, impact analysis, and integrating SoJo into newsroom practice and journalism education. 13% of the Kenyan media practitioners who lacked formal training cited the SJN website, peer mentorship, or practical newsroom exposure as key to shaping their understanding.

In Rwanda, 61% of journalists reported receiving training through workshops organized by Science Africa, the Rwanda Environmental Journalists Network, and FOJO Media Institute. These sessions provided hands-on experience in SoJo story development and helped solidify the practice within several newsrooms. However, 39% of the respondents admitted to not receiving any training and instead learning through practice or guidance from editors.

In Tanzania, 26% of journalists and editors acknowledged receiving formal training from the Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF), Internews, SJN webinars, and other media development institutions. Many described their learning as both structured and practical, with some organizations launching in-house SoJo training programs. Others, however, noted that they learned the practice indirectly through investigative or development journalism workshops that emphasized depth, evidence, and impact.

In Uganda, several journalists received instruction through institutions such as ACME, SJN, and Science Africa; others noted their training came from peers, academic institutions, or self-directed learning. Several respondents had not received formal training but developed an understanding of SoJo through teaching, newsroom experience, or editorial roles.

Across all four countries, a common theme emerged: even those without formal instruction often found themselves intuitively practicing SoJo principles and later seeking to formalize their understanding through reading, collaboration, or workshops.

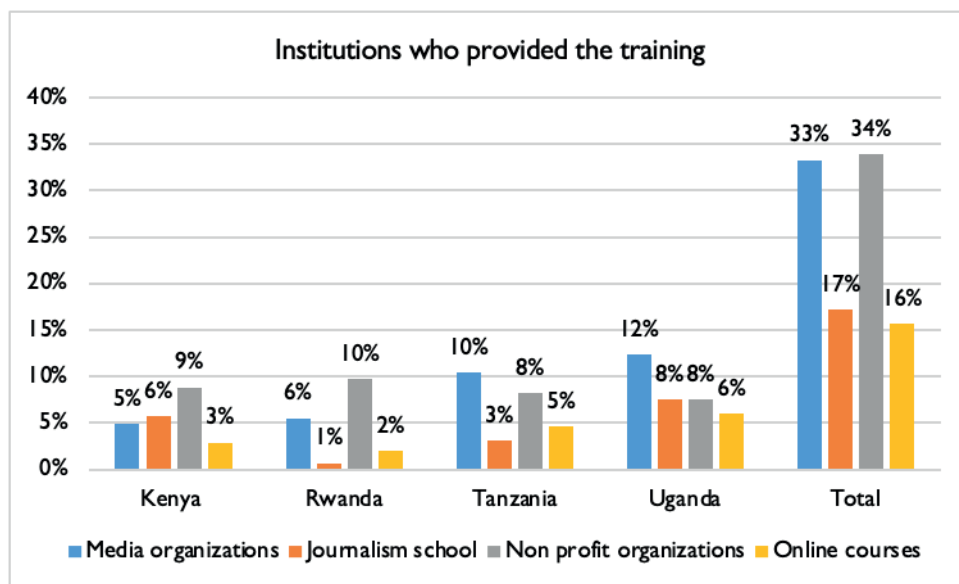


Figure 68: Institutions providing solutions journalism training in the four countries

Solutions journalism has found partial integration into journalism education across the region and is being made in academic inclusion, more systematic curriculum development is needed to standardize SoJo education.

In Kenya, several institutions (University of Nairobi, Maseno University, Kibabii University, and Rongo University) have incorporated Solutions Journalism (SoJo) into their teaching, either stand-alone units (Rongo and Maseno Universities) or as part of broader courses, such as development communication, news writing, and investigative reporting classes. Some schools are using externally developed curricula, such as those from Science Africa via the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), while Rongo University has a dedicated elective SoJo unit. In Rwanda, the University of Rwanda has integrated SoJo into its various units. Tanzania has not yet implemented any SoJo curriculum, with respondents consistently reporting a lack of formal inclusion. In Uganda, there is no widespread adoption of a formal SoJo curriculum, although discussions are underway in some institutions to incorporate it within broader courses, such as development communication. Some universities and media-related programs have incorporated SoJo content informally, often as part of broader journalistic training.

In Kenya, the number of staff members actively teaching Solutions Journalism (SoJo) varies across institutions. 56% report no active engagement, while others indicate active engagement, with at least four lecturers incorporating SoJo into their lessons using SJN materials and local examples. Maseno University reported that three faculty members are currently teaching SoJo, while Rongo University mentioned over 20 individuals are involved. Others rely on informal mentorship, editorial guidance, or are still in the process of rolling out training. In Rwanda,

approximately 10 staff members at the University of Rwanda are involved in teaching SoJo, although some report limited capacity to train others despite adopting the approach. Tanzania presents a mixed picture: while some respondents report that no one teaches SoJo, others highlight editors and media trainers who guide journalists, with numbers ranging from 2 to over 100 individuals trained nationwide, primarily in non-academic settings. In Uganda, Makerere University offers SoJo to its journalism students through courses like health reporting, climate change reporting, and news writing.

A vast majority across all countries believe that solutions journalism has the potential to shape the future of news reporting, with Tanzania and Rwanda expressing the most confidence (20%). Nearly all respondents showed interest in further training and joining regional SoJo networks. This reflects strong regional momentum and readiness for collective action to institutionalize and elevate the practice of solutions journalism.

6.4. Application of Solutions Journalism in East Africa

Media professionals in the region are actively incorporating solutions journalism in various ways, ranging from institutional integration to grassroots storytelling. The qualitative interviews revealed that while the level of institutionalization varies, SoJo has increasingly been embraced as both a philosophy and a practical reporting framework.

In Kenya, SoJo is widely applied in mainstream media, academia, and nonprofit-led reporting. Newsrooms like KBC and The Star have established SoJo-focused series covering topics such as health, education, and the environment. Universities such as the University of Nairobi and Maseno have integrated it into curricula and student-led media projects, while organizations like Science Africa apply it to science, agriculture, and health, combining evidence-based approaches with development communication. An editor at The Star explained, *“When we began framing stories as solutions rather than problems, our readership engagement spiked. People felt there was hope and practical lessons they could take away.”* Similarly, a faculty member from Rongo University noted, *“Our students tell us they feel more motivated learning and reporting SoJo stories because they see how their work connects directly to real-life impact.”*

In Rwanda, the approach is gaining traction in both broadcast and print media. Outlets such as The Rwanda Dispatch, Rwanda News Agency, Radio Salus, Fezaa.com, and Panorama have produced impact-driven SoJo stories on issues including mental health, nutrition security, climate resilience, and waste management. Reporters emphasized the intentional use of the four pillars of SoJo—response, evidence, insights, and limitations—which they felt strengthened their credibility. One journalist explained, *“Audiences started calling back not to complain, but to say, ‘We tried this solution, and it worked for us.’ That kind of feedback is scarce with conventional reporting.”* A lecturer at the University of Rwanda observed, *“SoJo aligns with our national priorities of problem-solving, but we need stronger integration into journalism curricula.”*

In Tanzania, SoJo is becoming a newsroom strategy in leading outlets such as Mwananchi Communications Ltd, The Chanzo, and Jambo Online TV. Journalists now deliberately seek out solutions-oriented angles in their reporting. One reporter reflected, *“Before, we only stopped at exposing the problems, but now we go further to show who is doing something about it and how effective it is.”* Several respondents highlighted SoJo stories that directly influenced policy responses, such as the government’s decision to increase the number of cancer treatment machines or support youth-led climate solutions. A senior editor with Mwananchi Communications Ltd said,

“We realized Sojo is not only a philosophy but also a practical way of amplifying public trust. Our readers feel the media is finally on their side.”

In Uganda, Broadcasters such as UBC, Metro FM, and GoodNews TV, run segments that spotlight community-based solutions. Editors and reporters from The Observer, New Vision, and Daily Monitor noted that even before they formally encountered Sojo, they had been practicing it intuitively. As one senior editor explained, *“When we reported on women’s savings groups in rural areas, the government followed up with financial support. That was Solutions Journalism in practice, even before we called it that.”* Another reporter added, *“Our Sojo coverage on land disputes actually led to displaced families being compensated. That showed us this is not just a theory but a catalyst for real change.”*

Across all four countries, the qualitative interviews reinforced that Sojo is perceived not only as a new journalistic technique but also as a return to journalism’s public service role. Practitioners consistently emphasized that Sojo stories tend to inspire constructive dialogue, build public trust, and foster accountability. As one Rwandan radio journalist put it, *“People are tired of problem-saturated news. They want to know what is working, who is making it work, and how they can be part of the solution.”*

The majority of journalists across all countries have produced a solutions journalism story, with consistent rates of 19–20% in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. However, the frequency of incorporating Sojo varies. Kenya had a relatively higher proportion reporting “occasionally” (14%) and “frequently” (7%), while Uganda had the highest percentage of those who “always” incorporate it (3%). Rwanda led in the “frequently” category at 11%. These patterns indicate a high level of exposure but low depth of integrating Sojo principles into regular reporting.

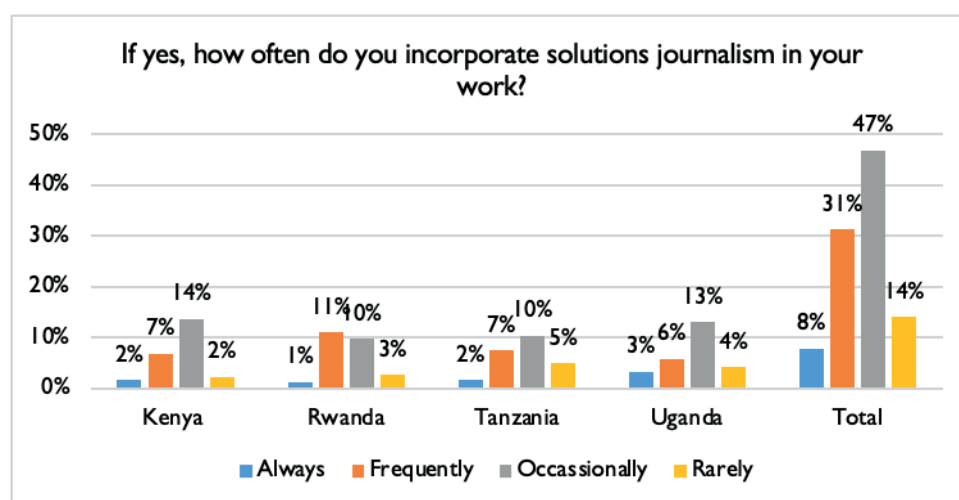


Figure 69: Application of Sojo to media work in the four countries

Dedicated solutions journalism desks remain rare. The majority of respondents reported that their media houses do not have such desks. Uganda had the highest relative presence at 11%, followed by Tanzania (9%). Kenya lagged with only 4% indicating the existence of a Sojo desk. This lack of structured editorial infrastructure could be a barrier to mainstreaming Sojo and scaling its impact across newsrooms in the region.

In Uganda, respondents highlighted that The Observer and New Vision have experimented with Sojo desks or designated editorial teams that commission and edit solution-focused stories. At

UBC, producers reported allocating airtime for a weekly SoJo segment, which functions as a de facto desk within the broadcaster.

In Tanzania, Mwananchi Communications Ltd has piloted SoJo desks within its health and environment reporting units. At the same time, The Chanzo maintains a small but dedicated editorial desk for SoJo projects, often linked to donor-supported initiatives.

In Kenya, although fewer in number, examples include The Star, which established a health-focused SoJo desk supported by training from Science Africa, and KBC, where editors experimented with a solutions-oriented news segment.

The limited presence of dedicated desks underscores the challenges of mainstreaming SoJo. Without a structured editorial infrastructure, SoJo often depends on individual champions within newsrooms rather than being embedded as a sustainable institutional practice. As one Tanzanian editor explained, *“We rely on project funding to run the SoJo desk, but unless the newsroom commits its own resources, it remains a temporary experiment.”*

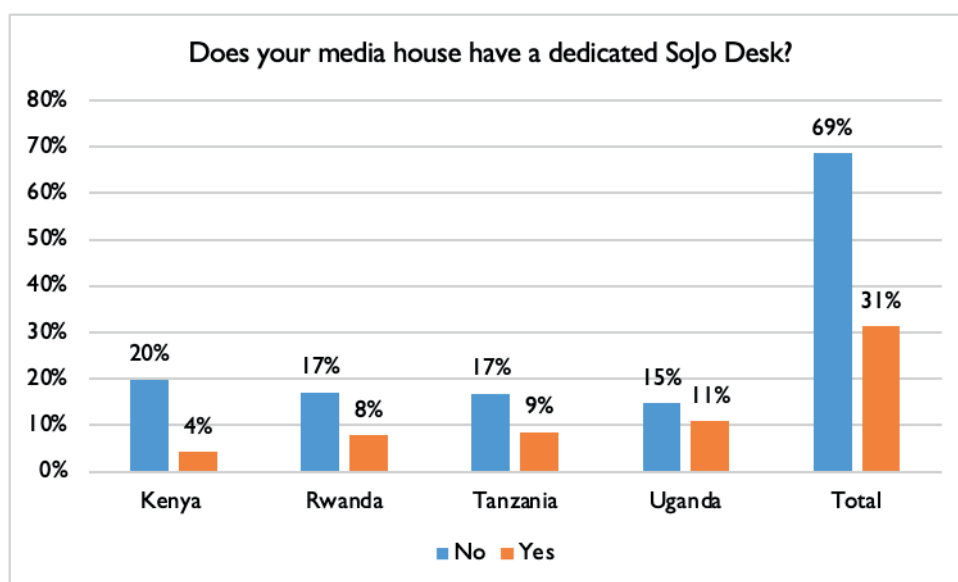


Figure 70: Presence of SoJo Desk among media houses in the four countries

Online news platforms were the most used channel for publishing SoJo stories across all countries, with consistent usage at 8% in Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania. Uganda demonstrated a more balanced use across various formats, including television, radio, and social media, with each format ranging from 3% to 5%. Print media remained relevant, particularly in Tanzania (8%). Social media emerged as a notable distribution channel in all countries, suggesting that SoJo practitioners are leveraging digital platforms to reach wider and possibly younger audiences.

The implementation of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda has been shaped by a mix of internal champions and external support.

In Kenya, faculty members, senior editors, and newsroom leaders have played a crucial role in promoting SoJo through mentorship, editorial integration, and curriculum development. At the same time, organizations such as the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), Science Africa, Internews, DW Akademie, and Hivos East Africa have provided essential training, grants, and technical support.

Similarly, Rwanda's uptake has been driven by institutions such as Science Africa, the Rwanda Environmental Journalists (REJ), and the Rwanda Governance Board, through training, mentorship, and editorial facilitation. Editors and universities have promoted the adoption of SoJo by integrating it into their media practices and educational curricula.

In Tanzania, although institutional support has been uneven, individual journalists (reporters and correspondents) and editorial leaders have initiated SoJo reporting, supported by organizations like the Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF), Science Africa, and Internews through workshops, mentorship, and story grants.

Meanwhile, in Uganda, SoJo has primarily grown from grassroots interest, led by passionate journalists, educators, and civil society, with external input from SJN, the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME), Science Africa, the Health Journalists Network of Uganda (HEJNU), and Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), which have contributed mentorship, training, and some equipment.

Across all four countries, the presence of external partners has been essential in creating momentum; however, the most sustainable progress has been achieved when internal actors, such as faculty champions, trained journalists, and newsroom editors, have taken ownership, influencing curricula, editorial policies, and audience engagement strategies. While Kenya and Rwanda show stronger structural integration, Tanzania and Uganda demonstrate that even informal leadership and editorial initiative can seed meaningful change. **Ultimately, the successful adoption of SoJo has depended on a combination of motivated individuals, institutional-level commitment, and supportive partnerships that provide the skills, tools, and legitimacy needed to scale up solutions-based reporting.**

In Kenya, several academic efforts have emerged around Solutions Journalism (SoJo), particularly within leading journalism schools. At the University of Nairobi, two master's theses have been completed, including a study on the framing of climate change reporting using SoJo principles and another on audience responses to solutions-focused stories in television news. At Maseno University, at least three undergraduate projects have examined the impact of SoJo on local radio audiences, focusing on community engagement and trust-building. At the University of Nairobi, at least two master's students are currently working on dissertations exploring SoJo's impact on audience trust and the representation of marginalized communities in mainstream media. At Maseno University, two undergraduate students are researching the uptake of SoJo in vernacular radio, while at Rongo University, a faculty member is leading a study on gender-sensitive reporting within SoJo frameworks. Additionally, one lecturer at Kibabii University is supervising a project on the media framing of climate change using SoJo principles.

A faculty member from Rongo University also noted co-authoring a book chapter on SoJo as part of a wider volume on media innovation in Africa, marking one of the first contributions by Kenyan scholars to international SoJo literature.

In Rwanda, academic engagement remains limited. Respondents noted that a handful of students at the University of Rwanda's School of Journalism and Communication have written theses that reference SoJo, although these are primarily exploratory in nature. For example, one student assessed how SoJo principles could be applied in covering youth entrepreneurship. Beyond this, however, there is little evidence of formalized or published academic research.

In Tanzania, academic engagement is minimal. Respondents from the University of Dar es Salaam and St. Augustine University of Tanzania acknowledged that while SoJo has been discussed in

lectures, very few formal research projects have been completed. Most academics and students were unaware of existing scholarly work, except references made to [The Power of Solutions Journalism](#) by Curry and Hammonds, which is not region-specific.

In Uganda, there is moderate academic activity around SoJo. At Makerere University, approximately ten undergraduate students in recent cohorts have submitted research projects on audience responses to SoJo stories, particularly in relation to community radio programming and television current affairs shows. At St. Lawrence University, a lecturer mentioned supervising dissertations examining how SoJo influences public trust in the media. While much of this research remains unpublished, it demonstrates a growing interest among young scholars in positioning SoJo as a subject of academic inquiry.

Overall, while Kenya and Uganda are beginning to show meaningful academic engagement with SoJo through theses, dissertations, and book chapters, Rwanda and Tanzania are still at an early stage, with most references being anecdotal or exploratory rather than systematically documented.

Meanwhile, media organizations across East Africa are widely recognized as central to advancing and sustaining solutions journalism. Respondents consistently emphasized the need for institutionalizing SoJo within newsrooms by integrating it into editorial strategies, establishing dedicated desks or beats, and ensuring consistent editorial support. Editors were particularly urged by the respondents to champion SoJo, encouraging reporters to go beyond problem-centered reporting and explore credible, replicable responses to societal challenges. Equipping journalists with the resources and autonomy necessary to pursue in-depth reporting, such as sufficient time for fieldwork, access to data, and multimedia production tools, was deemed critical. 10% of the respondents also highlighted the importance of shifting perceptions among media owners and decision-makers, who may still view SoJo as soft news or confuse it with public relations, thereby hindering its adoption.

In addition to structural integration, 20% of the respondents highlighted the importance of regular training and mentorship, both in-house and through partnerships with external organizations, to build journalists' storytelling skills and deepen their understanding of the SoJo approach. Allocating newsroom budgets to support SoJo reporting, including transport, research, and safety needs, was considered vital. There were also calls for recognition mechanisms such as awards, promotions, and publishing opportunities to motivate journalists and elevate the value of impact-driven reporting. Many advocated for closer collaboration between media houses, civil society, development partners, and policymakers to amplify the reach and influence of solutions stories. Ultimately, media organizations that provide institutional support, editorial leadership, training, and visibility for SoJo are more likely to foster journalism that informs, empowers, and catalyzes meaningful change in their communities.

Across the four countries, the enforcement of Solutions Journalism guidelines largely relies on internal editorial processes, mentorship, and adherence to the four foundational pillars: response, evidence, insight, and limitations.

In Kenya, although many institutions lack formal enforcement mechanisms, editors and faculty members ensure that SoJo principles are upheld through editorial meetings, peer reviews, internal checklists, and mentorship. Some organizations also enforce guidelines through curriculum integration and external partnership requirements, such as those from Science Africa and SJN. For example, pitches of story ideas to Science Africa for funding are vetted

for SoJo angle and evidence of potential impact before approval, and stories are sometimes dropped if they lack verifiable outcomes.

In Rwanda, formal enforcement is limited, but training, mentoring, and editorial oversight play a central role. Some editors guide journalists during story development and editing to ensure SoJo pillars are reflected, while others personally apply SJN standards. Although objections are rare, some journalists still struggle with rigor and differentiation between feel-good and solution-focused reporting. External partners, such as Science Africa, also play a role in validating SoJo stories before they are published, especially if a grant funds the story.

In Tanzania, several media houses use internal editorial checklists aligned with SoJo pillars. Editors, including those from Science Africa, often review and coach reporters before publication, helping them understand the importance of balance, especially when there is a tendency to overlook the “limitations” aspect. Some organizations include SoJo practices in reporters’ key performance indicators (KPIs), while others reinforce the impact-based approach through success stories such as government action following reporting on public issues. Resistance to the methodology has diminished with consistent coaching.

In Uganda, formal enforcement varies. Some organizations use internal editorial guides or checklists modeled on the principles of SJN, while others rely on general journalism ethics. Editors, both internal and external, play central roles in upholding standards through script reviews and coaching. In academic settings, SoJo is assessed in student assignments and end-of-term examinations. Ten % of the respondents highlighted that guidelines often overlap with broader journalistic values, such as balance, fairness, and accuracy, with occasional internal efforts to incorporate these into structured SoJo editorial processes.

The data reveals that the most significant incentive for encouraging more journalists in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda to adopt solutions journalism is access to more training opportunities, cited by 30% of respondents across the four countries. This suggests a strong demand for capacity building to equip journalists with the necessary skills and understanding of solutions-focused reporting. Funding for investigative work comes in second at 27%, highlighting the need for financial support to conduct in-depth, evidence-based journalism. Recognition and awards (22%) also emerged as a key motivator, indicating that acknowledgement of impactful reporting can inspire greater engagement. Editorial support, at 20%, underscores the importance of newsroom-level backing, such as allocation of time, resources, and space for SoJo stories. Notably, no respondents selected “Others,” suggesting that the listed incentives effectively reflect the current priorities and needs of journalists in the region.

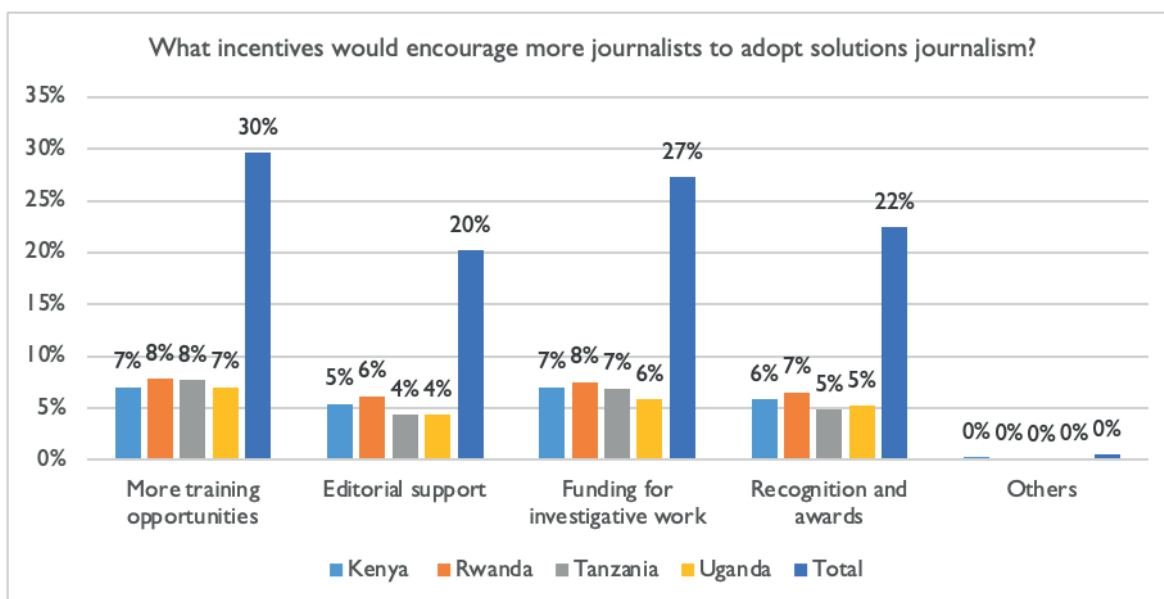


Figure 71: Incentives to encourage adoption of SoJo in the four countries

6.5. Impact of Implementing Solutions Journalism

The implementation of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda has had a significant impact on media organizations and training institutions. However, the scale and depth of this impact vary by country and institution.

In Kenya, the professional benefits have been substantial, with several institutions gaining credibility, visibility, and recognition for their reporting. For instance, journalists from The Star and KBC were invited to regional media panels after their SoJo coverage of public health initiatives, and a Kenyan reporter won a continental award for a series on climate adaptation. Financially, outlets such as Science Africa have secured project-based grants and small story funds from the Solutions Journalism Network and Oxfam to support investigative SoJo projects. Politically, SoJo stories have prompted conversations with government officials. For example, coverage on youth employment initiatives in Nairobi influenced county-level discussions on expanding vocational training programs. Socially, success stories on school feeding programs in Kisumu County and climate adaptation projects in Kitui County have inspired replication in other counties and fostered stronger community dialogue, with one editor noting, “Communities began contacting us to ask if we could highlight their own local solutions.”

In Rwanda, the impact is emerging but promising. Professionally, reporters from outlets such as The Rwanda Dispatch and Panorama have received recognition and fellowships after publishing high-quality SoJo stories on food security and waste management. Socially, their stories have triggered strong audience feedback, with readers providing additional leads and sharing solutions through community WhatsApp groups. Financially, although still modest, media houses such as Radio Salus have attracted new advertising partnerships and collaboration offers after introducing SoJo segments that drew larger audiences. Politically, journalists noted an improvement in collaboration with local authorities; for instance, a story on climate-smart agriculture led to a joint initiative between district officials and farmer cooperatives.

In Tanzania, where SoJo is being gradually adopted, organizations that have embraced it report increased readership, growing digital engagement, and enhanced revenue streams. Mwananchi

Communications Ltd reported spikes in online subscriptions following a SoJo series on cancer treatment access, which also influenced the government to procure additional radiotherapy machines. Financially, donor-funded SoJo projects have supported outlets like The Chanzo to expand their investigative reporting. Professionally, SoJo has strengthened editorial credibility and built trust with civil society organizations, which now collaborate more closely with newsrooms to share story leads. Socially, stories on youth-led climate innovation in Zanzibar and maternal health challenges in rural areas prompted tangible responses, including NGOs scaling up support and local authorities committing new resources. Politically, one SoJo story on road infrastructure in Arusha reportedly pushed municipal leaders to accelerate repair works after the coverage sparked public debate.

In Uganda, the impact of SoJo is gaining traction, particularly in academic and training settings. At Makerere University, students trained in SoJo have produced community-focused projects that are being picked up by local stations, giving them an advantage when entering the industry. Professionally, editors from The Observer and Daily Monitor reported shifts toward constructive storytelling, which they said increased trust and relevance with audiences. Financially, media houses have attracted sponsorships and partnerships with NGOs such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) for SoJo-driven content on health, sanitation, and youth empowerment. Politically, coverage of land disputes through SoJo approaches has led to government compensation for displaced families, and stories on maternal health prompted district-level health reforms. Socially, audiences have responded positively, particularly to community radio segments that highlight grassroots solutions to issues such as corruption, displacement, and educational challenges.

Overall, Solutions Journalism is reshaping the media landscape in East Africa by elevating the role of journalism as a constructive force for change. It is helping media houses build credibility, attract funding, deepen relationships with communities and governments, and redefine the value of journalism in promoting informed, evidence-based public discourse. The inclusion of social, political, and financial outcomes underscores that SoJo is more than a storytelling approach; it is a driver of institutional credibility, audience trust, and developmental impact.

Respondents widely agreed that solutions journalism leads to greater audience engagement, particularly in Tanzania and Uganda (18% each). Kenya and Rwanda also reported positive results, with Kenya having the highest share, indicating “significantly more engaging” content (8%). Very few considered SoJo to be less engaging or saw no difference, suggesting a broad consensus that this reporting style resonates better with audiences than traditional journalism.

Table 4: Perceived audience engagement on SoJo in the four countries

In your experience, how does solutions journalism compare to traditional journalism in terms of audience engagement?	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda	Total
Less engaging	1%	3%	1%	5%	10%
More engaging	13%	17%	18%	18%	65%
No difference	3%	3%	2%	1%	9%
Significantly more engaging	8%	2%	4%	2%	16%

Tanzania and Uganda reported the highest observed policy impact from SoJo reporting (12% and 14%, respectively), while Rwanda and Kenya were close behind. Still, a significant portion in all countries (up to 14% in Rwanda) were unsure about the impact, indicating the need for better tracking and documentation. Uganda stood out as having the most optimism, though actual evidence remains limited.

A majority across all countries believe that solutions journalism enhances the credibility of the media. Uganda had the highest proportion stating it “enhances credibility” (18%), while Kenya led in those who felt it “significantly enhances credibility” (11%). Very few respondents viewed SoJo as detrimental to credibility. These results indicate that practitioners perceive SoJo as a trust-building tool in an era of media skepticism.

Table 5: Perceived influence of SoJo on media credibility in the four countries

How do you think solutions journalism affects media credibility?	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda	Total
Enhances credibility	12%	15%	15%	18%	59%
No impact	2%	2%	2%	0%	6%
Reduces credibility	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%
Significantly enhances credibility	11%	6%	9%	8%	33%

There was overwhelming agreement that solutions journalism offers a more balanced and constructive narrative than traditional reporting, with the highest levels of strong agreement from Kenya (12%) and Rwanda (10%). Similar levels of support were found regarding SoJo increasing audience trust again; Kenya and Tanzania scored higher in “strongly agree” categories. This widespread affirmation underscores a shared conviction in the importance of SoJo in restoring media integrity and fostering engagement.

A high percentage of respondents believe that SoJo is more likely to inspire real-world action than conventional news, especially in Kenya (14%) and Tanzania (12%). At the same time, a large majority agreed or strongly agreed that journalists still lack the necessary training and resources to implement SoJo effectively, with Tanzania and Uganda emphasizing this the most. These contrasting views highlight the potential of SoJo and underscore the need for more comprehensive support.

Support for prioritizing SoJo as part of media development strategy was nearly unanimous, with Kenya reporting the highest “strongly agree” rate (15%). Disagreement was almost non-existent across all countries. This consensus provides a solid foundation for advocating institutional reforms and investments in SoJo initiatives.

When asked how audiences respond to SoJo versus traditional stories, most respondents (19–20% across the board) reported increased engagement. However, policy impact observations were more muted, with less than 15% in any country seeing such effects, while many were uncertain. This suggests that SoJo has successfully captured public attention, but translating it into policy change remains a challenge.

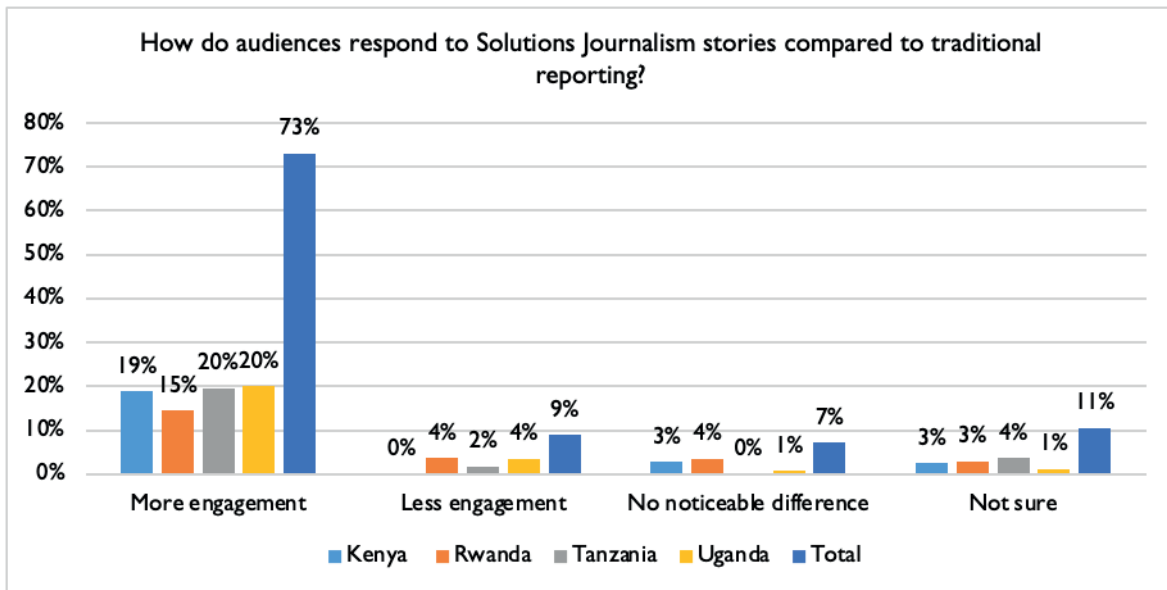


Figure 72: Perceived audience response to SoJo stories in the four countries

Across the four countries, solutions journalism has played an increasingly instrumental role in shaping public policy and institutional reforms, although with varying degrees of formal recognition and implementation. Kenya stands out with a high volume of policy changes resulting from investigative and solutions-focused reporting. Notable cases include reforms following exposés on the fake fertilizer scandal, the introduction of direct electronic school funding through IFMIS, and the integration of Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) into county health strategies with improved compensation. SoJo has also influenced environmental, taxation, education, and media regulation policies.

Uganda has similarly witnessed significant impact, particularly in education, health, and public safety. Stories on maternal health led to improved hospital infrastructure, while coverage on school dropout prevention influenced district-level budgetary adjustments to support feeding programs. Legal reforms in labor rights, environmental protection, and inclusive education were also reported.

Tanzania has seen policy shifts in areas such as pension laws, infrastructure development, and ecological conservation, driven by stories that exposed gaps in service delivery or safety. For instance, reporting on water crises and health equipment shortages prompted governmental interventions and even international donations.

Rwanda, although exhibiting fewer instances of formal policy enactments, has undergone a cultural transformation in journalism practice, with SoJo influencing editorial approaches, newsroom standards, and public engagement. Some direct examples include biodiversity conservation policies linked to the Green Gicumbi project and adjustments in fines for motorbike riders in Kigali. Overall, the data demonstrate that solutions journalism not only amplifies citizen concerns but also directly informs and shapes public policy in diverse governance contexts across East Africa.

Solutions journalism in Kenya has led to a wide range of tangible impacts, influencing policy, catalyzing community action, and shaping public discourse. Stories addressing insecurity prompted local authorities to establish police posts and initiate the Nyumba Kumi programs, which significantly improved safety. Environmental reporting, including coverage of plastic

waste recycling and biogas technology, led to government collaborations and funding. In contrast, coverage of climate change influenced conservation efforts and the adoption of clean energy sources. In the health sector, SoJo stories spurred policy reforms in reproductive health, family planning, and healthcare worker support, and even led to the establishment of daycare centers for student mothers. Youth-focused stories highlighted mentorship programs, football initiatives aimed at combating teen pregnancy, and the empowerment of young agripreneurs.

Solutions journalism in Rwanda has demonstrated meaningful influence in driving policy changes, fostering community empowerment, and advancing sustainable development. A standout example is the impact of stories highlighting rural women's cooperatives that use mushroom farming to combat malnutrition and boost incomes. Such coverage prompted local authorities to visit and support these groups, NGOs to offer grants, and schools to adopt mushrooms into their feeding programs. Agricultural stories also led to tangible change, such as farmers receiving improved avocado seeds or policymakers reacting to challenges in rain-damaged production systems. Environmental and infrastructure-focused pieces have catalyzed action, including managing flood-prone rivers, introducing solar-powered irrigation systems, and improving roads in Kirehe District. SoJo stories have supported social interventions, such as registering newborns, improving school discipline, and enhancing hostel access for homeless students. At the national level, impactful reporting contributed to the development of Rwanda's Early Childhood Development policy, changes in sand mining practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, and reforms in the Girinka (One Cow per Poor Family) program. Media houses such as KT Radio and Kigali Today played pivotal roles in shaping the discourse on poverty and malnutrition, influencing public health and sanitation initiatives, including handwashing campaigns. Even deeply rooted cultural practices have been addressed; one story on the killing of vultures led to new institutional policies promoting mindset change. Overall, solutions journalism in Rwanda has proven to be a powerful tool in shifting narratives from problems to possibilities, mobilizing government response, informing policy, and inspiring citizens to adopt innovative practices.

Solutions journalism in Tanzania has yielded significant and diverse tangible outcomes across various sectors, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, the environment, and governance. Stories highlighting inadequate school infrastructure, such as classroom shortages in Mwanza and overcrowding in Dar es Salaam, led to the construction of new schools and the renovation of existing facilities. In healthcare, impactful reporting has addressed issues such as the lack of radiotherapy machines, deteriorating conditions in maternity wards, and malfunctioning ICU equipment, prompting government interventions and even international support, including assistance from China to improve ICU services in Zanzibar. SoJo reporting also influenced key infrastructure projects: stories on poor road conditions led to repairs; the lack of public toilets in Mbeya and ferry shortages in Kigamboni spurred immediate government responses; and coverage of water scarcity in Dar es Salaam resulted in ministerial action and staff accountability. Environmental and wildlife-focused stories, such as poaching in Manyara and waste mismanagement in Mwanza, led to the establishment of conservation task forces and the improvement of waste collection systems. Furthermore, solutions-focused reporting played a role in resolving land disputes, encouraging school re-entry programs for teen mothers, and exposing corruption within the police and judicial systems, which helped reinforce public accountability. Stories also influenced policy, including changes to pension formulas for retirees, adjustments to national ID regulations, and enhancements to ferry safety and stadium standards. Collectively, these examples underscore the power of solutions journalism in Tanzania to inform

the public not only but also to drive governmental responsiveness, community upliftment, and systemic reform.

Solutions journalism in Uganda has played a pivotal role in catalyzing social change, shaping public policy, and promoting the well-being of individuals and communities. A widely cited example is the story of Night Ampurire, a fruit vendor whose appeal for a better vehicle to support her business led to MTN Uganda donating a brand-new pickup truck after the story aired on NTV and went viral. Similarly, a story on a school using solar energy in Northern Uganda inspired a neighboring institution in Lira to adopt the same model, facilitated by a local NGO. Numerous reports on poor infrastructure, including pothole-ridden roads, inadequate school facilities, and improper waste disposal, have led to direct interventions by government agencies and foreign donors, such as the Japanese Embassy, which has funded the construction of new classrooms in Mbale. Stories focusing on social justice, such as the unlawful detention of women after childbirth due to unpaid bills, prompted public outcry and rescue interventions. Reporting on sensitive issues, such as teacher misconduct, plastic waste, environmental degradation, and timber smuggling, led to reforms, increased community awareness, and enhanced stakeholder engagement. Solutions journalism also contributed to changes in traffic laws, taxation practices, workplace reforms, and education policy. Health-related coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic improved adherence to SOPs and inspired community health initiatives, such as better drug delivery mechanisms for HIV patients. Importantly, SoJo has fostered empathy and public support for marginalized individuals, enabling scholarships, business start-ups, and NGO partnerships, as seen in the support given to the inclusive school “Learning in Difference” in Mpigi. These cases demonstrate how Ugandan journalists are effectively utilizing solutions journalism not only to report problems but also to drive change, empower communities, and bridge the gap between the media, policymakers, and the public.

Solutions journalism appears to be shifting the journalism culture, particularly by increasing the focus on positive impact stories, with Uganda and Rwanda leading the way (12% and 16%, respectively). Kenya and Tanzania emphasized the improvement of investigative quality, while all four countries reported modest gains in collaboration. Overall, the data suggest that SoJo is gradually reshaping newsroom practices and values.

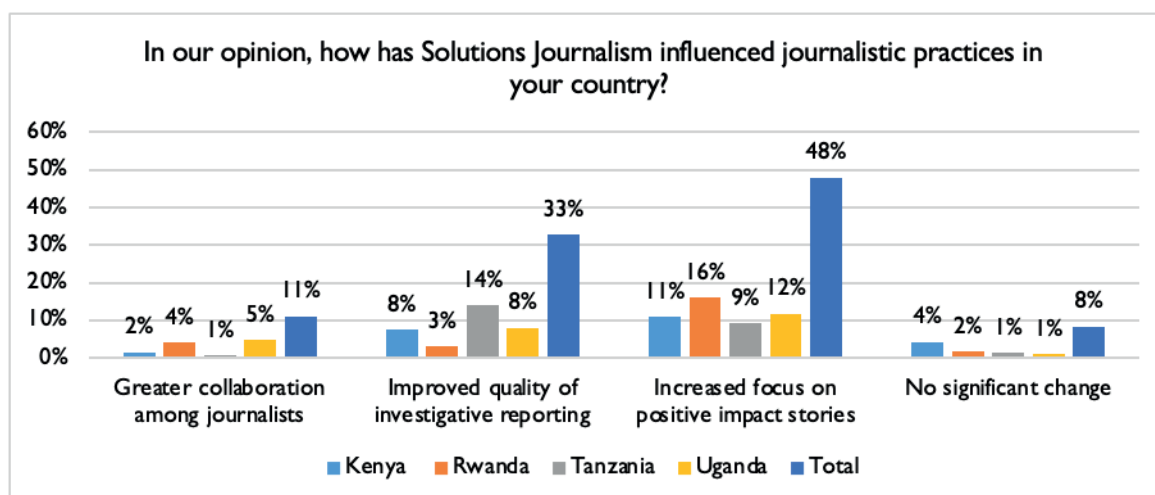


Figure 73: Influence of SoJo on journalistic practices in the four countries

Many organizations across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda have expressed a strong

sense of belonging within the broader solutions journalism (SoJo) ecosystem. In Kenya, 68% of the respondents affirmed their alignment with other SoJo practitioners, citing shared values such as constructive reporting, hopeful storytelling, and capacity building. They emphasized active collaboration through workshops, co-publications, and regional networks. Some, however, acknowledged feeling somewhat peripheral due to limitations in funding, coordination, or being academic institutions rather than traditional newsrooms.

In Rwanda, responses were mixed. While 23% feel part of the SoJo movement due to shared goals and journalistic values, others noted the need for further capacity building, financial stability, and field reporting resources to integrate fully. A few admitted they are still in the early stages of adopting SoJo practices and therefore do not yet feel they entirely belong.

Tanzanian organizations also mostly expressed a positive sense of belonging, with many highlighting shared goals, aligned journalistic standards, and participation in regional collaborations. 19% were uncertain or admitted they had not yet implemented SoJo practices enough to claim full inclusion in the community.

In Uganda, many media houses and academic institutions reported feeling integrated into the SoJo landscape through collaborative initiatives, shared values, and participation in forums. However, some respondents noted that their organizations had not formally structured their SoJo efforts or lacked dedicated desks, making them feel less aligned with more advanced practitioners. A few regulatory or support bodies acknowledged that their roles differ, and as such, they do not fully identify as SoJo producers.

Across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, many individuals and organizations reported gaining recognition, honors, and awards as a result of their engagement with solutions journalism (SoJo). In Kenya, several institutions and journalists have received local, national, and regional awards, including honors from the Media Council of Kenya, the Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA), and East African media forums. Notable projects, such as multimedia series on climate adaptation and health innovations, have garnered widespread recognition, opening doors to international visibility, partnerships, and funding opportunities. Even academic institutions have seen student work win competitions and increase their profile.

In Rwanda, recognition of Solutions Journalism is growing, although it remains limited compared to Kenya and Uganda. Some organizations and individual journalists have noted award-winning stories that have brought visibility to the approach. A notable example is the widely recognized article on birth registration in Rwanda, which examined government reforms and community-driven responses that improved access to civil registration services. The story not only highlighted the challenges families faced in securing birth certificates but also documented innovative local solutions, such as mobile registration units and digital record systems, which were piloted in rural districts.

This piece garnered regional attention, with interview respondents recalling how it was cited in policy discussions and utilized by advocacy groups focused on child rights and legal identity. One journalist reflected, “That story showed us the power of Solutions Journalism because it went beyond reporting the problem—it tracked the response, its limitations, and the lessons others could learn.” The article’s recognition underscored how SoJo reporting in Rwanda can inform both policy and practice while also strengthening the credibility of the journalists and outlets producing it.

In Tanzania, several journalists and media houses reported receiving awards and commendations for solutions-based reporting. Stories focused on innovation, health, sanitation, and the environment were particularly impactful, helping raise public and institutional visibility. Awards such as the Samia Kalamu Awards and innovation reporting honors affirmed the credibility and relevance of their work. However, 27% of the media houses noted that although they had not yet won formal awards, they had received local appreciation and increased trust from their audiences.

Ugandan responses echoed similar trends, with journalists winning awards from institutions like the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME). GNTV, for instance, was recognized by the National Association of Faith Media, while university-based reporters also received local journalism accolades. 46% cited improved professional visibility, invitations to speak at conferences, and new media partnerships as forms of non-trophy recognition that reinforced the value of SoJo in their contexts.

Overall, while some organizations have yet to receive formal awards, the majority report increased recognition, audience trust, and industry credibility through their commitment to solutions journalism.

Respondents across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda overwhelmingly confirmed that their regular news practices have undergone significant changes since adopting Solutions Journalism (SoJo). Previously, reporting was primarily problem-focused, dominated by event-based, conflict-driven narratives with minimal follow-up or analysis. 57% media houses admitted to relying heavily on official voices while sidelining community perspectives.

However, with the integration of SoJo, there has been a conscious shift toward more balanced, in-depth, and community-centered reporting. Journalists now seek out credible responses to societal challenges, explore what works (and why), incorporate data and evidence, and often follow up on the outcomes of reported solutions. Editorial routines have also evolved; 62% outlets now include a “solution angle” in their pitching templates and evaluate stories for impact, replicability, and relevance.

Twenty-eight percent of institutions, particularly academic ones, have noted that students are now being trained to prioritize constructive reporting, with an emphasis on investigation, evidence, and engagement. Some pointed out that the change has not only improved the quality of reporting but also boosted community trust, increased audience engagement, and helped build stronger institutional identities.

That said, 15% respondents, especially in Tanzania and Rwanda, indicated that traditional practices still dominate in some organizations where SoJo has yet to be fully institutionalized. For them, the transition is ongoing or constrained by factors such as limited training, lack of resources, or resistance to change. Nonetheless, even in such cases, many agreed that the SoJo model offers a more impactful and empowering approach to journalism.

Overall, Solutions Journalism has been a catalyst for more meaningful, reflective, and empowering news practices across the region.

Organizations across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda provided concrete examples of how their reporting practices have evolved since adopting solutions journalism. In Kenya, several respondents shared stories that went beyond initial incident coverage to deeper follow-ups, such as tracking the outcomes of water harvesting projects, maternal health programs, and

even COVID-19 community interventions, including boda boda riders setting up handwashing stations. Others mentioned student-led anti-corruption campaigns and features that critically examined the implementation of government policies.

In Rwanda, examples ranged from coverage on access to clean water and malnutrition to innovative health solutions and climate adaptation initiatives. One respondent shared a published article highlighting increased harvests due to agricultural support, a clear demonstration of solutions journalism in action.

Tanzanian media organizations noted shifts in content and storytelling. Examples included stories on recycled school desks addressing infrastructure challenges, gravity-fed water systems improving rural access, and startups addressing youth unemployment. Some have mentioned that the regular publication of SoJo stories has led to increased public trust and even monetization of the content.

Ugandan responses reflected a growing depth in storytelling, from coverage of the Parish Development Model as a tool for poverty alleviation, to improved sanitation reporting in Buddo village, to editorial opinions that prompted public engagement. Others described structural changes, like reshaping editorial planning around SoJo principles or incorporating more transformational narratives in faith-based media.

While a few respondents did not provide examples, the majority offered real cases that showcase how SoJo has enriched their journalistic practice by emphasizing solutions, community voices, impact tracking, and critical evaluation, moving away from reactive, problem-only coverage.

In Kenya, Solutions Journalism has significantly transformed relationships between reporters and editors. There is now more collaboration in developing story angles, with editors actively guiding the process to ensure stories remain critical yet constructive. 41% of the respondents noted that editorial involvement has shifted from merely fixing stories to co-creating them with reporters. Initially, there was skepticism about SoJo's value, but over time, editors recognized its impact and began encouraging its use, especially among students. There's greater mutual respect and trust, and follow-up reporting previously rare is now supported. Interactions have also extended beyond individual newsrooms to include peer training among editors, particularly in regions such as Kisumu and Western Kenya.

The impact of SoJo on editor-journalist relationships in Rwanda has been mixed. 29% of the respondents reported no significant changes, while others noted improvements, particularly in areas such as collaboration and trust. Editors who value depth and innovation are more inclined to support SoJo stories. 13% of the respondents in leadership positions, such as Chief Editors or Managing Editors, mentioned they have used SoJo to enhance teamwork and encourage impactful storytelling within their teams.

In Tanzania, the responses varied widely. Twenty percent of journalists observed no fundamental changes, while others reported that SoJo fostered more collaborative planning and deeper editorial engagement. Editors are increasingly involved in shaping narratives, asking critical questions, and emphasizing storytelling that highlights credible responses. In some newsrooms, SoJo has aligned teams toward common goals, fostering mutual understanding and shared purpose. However, some respondents noted that hierarchical or structural issues, such as being the Editor-in-Chief or limited adoption, meant the dynamics remained unchanged in specific contexts.

In Uganda, SoJo has generally improved dialogue and collaboration within newsrooms. Several journalists reported an increase in open-mindedness and curiosity among editors. The stories produced under SoJo were described as richer, prompting editors to provide more resources and support. Editorial relationships have become more team-oriented, with shared discussions around rollout and implementation. However, a few respondents indicated that they had no noticeable change, and some noted that their administrative roles placed them outside traditional editorial dynamics.

Across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, respondents shared varied but insightful examples of how Solutions Journalism (SoJo) has transformed editorial relationships.

In Kenya, journalists highlighted how editors now guide them beyond surface-level crisis reporting to more rigorous and evidence-based storytelling. For instance, reporters working on stories such as youth unemployment or urban recycling were encouraged to critically assess responses, measure their impact, and include diverse voices. One reporter was allowed a rare follow-up visit to a school feeding program in Siaya County, illustrating newfound editorial support. In some cases, editors who were trained in SoJo later mentored others, reinforcing collaborative newsroom culture.

In Rwanda, a journalist covering renewable energy in agriculture noted how the story generated stakeholder interest and editorial support for further exploration. Others shared that SoJo's success led editors to request new solution-focused pitches proactively.

In Uganda, respondents described an improvement in creativity and teamwork, with editors actively guiding story angles and facilitating coverage of remote areas. Academic and professional environments also benefited, with discussions on ethical storytelling fostering stronger collaboration and unity among journalists and editors.

In Tanzania, examples focused on internal change, one newsroom transitioned from isolated reporting to a shared editorial standard, and an initially resistant editor was trained into a strong SoJo proponent. Regular postmortems and structured planning now ensure stories are well-developed and balanced.

Feedback from policymakers, civil society organizations, and the general public across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda reveals an overwhelmingly positive reception toward solutions journalism, underscoring its growing influence in transforming media narratives and fostering societal change.

Across the region, policymakers have consistently expressed appreciation for stories that move beyond blame to offer actionable insights, with many citing such reporting as a trigger for policy amendments, service delivery improvements, and institutional accountability. Civil society actors view SoJo as a valuable advocacy and mobilization tool, often seeking collaboration with journalists to amplify grassroots innovations and promote evidence-based interventions.

In Kenya, for example, Science Africa has partnered with NGOs working on agriculture and climate resilience to highlight farmer-led innovations such as drought-resistant crops in Kitui County, which later attracted government extension support. Similarly, civil society groups working on youth employment have used SoJo stories from Nairobi's informal settlements to lobby for expanded vocational training programs at the county level.

In Rwanda, environmental CSOs collaborated with reporters from Rwanda Dispatch to cover waste management and recycling initiatives in Kigali, using the stories as advocacy material

during municipal policy consultations. One respondent noted that “when journalists frame solutions with evidence, it gives our campaigns credibility.”

In Tanzania, Mwananchi Communications Ltd partnered with health-focused CSOs to spotlight gaps and responses in cancer treatment access. Stories documenting shortages and community responses contributed to both public awareness campaigns and government commitments to increase the number of radiotherapy machines.

In Uganda, ACME (African Centre for Media Excellence) has facilitated linkages between journalists and civil society organizations, leading to impactful SoJo coverage of land rights and maternal health. For instance, Observer and Daily Monitor stories on displacement and access to healthcare, supported by CSOs, contributed to compensation for affected families and policy reforms at district level.

These collaborations demonstrate that SoJo not only strengthens journalism but also multiplies the influence of civil society by bringing grassroots innovations into national conversations and policy arenas.

Public response has been especially enthusiastic, with many praising the constructive tone, emotional connection, and hope that SoJo stories provide, which fuels increased trust in media, stronger civic engagement, and even grassroots initiatives such as health clubs, climate action groups, and educational improvements.

However, while the feedback is predominantly positive, several challenges persist. A lack of widespread understanding of SoJo as a distinct journalistic practice sometimes leads to confusion with public relations. 22% of the journalists reported receiving mixed responses, ranging from recognition, awards, and invitations to stakeholder forums, to resistance, threats, or indifference, especially from individuals or institutions that had been negatively portrayed in the media. Despite these hurdles, SoJo is gaining traction as a credible and impactful journalistic approach. The consistent demand for more solution-oriented reporting reflects a paradigm shift across East Africa, one that repositions journalism as not only a watchdog but also a catalyst for positive change, capable of bridging the gap between media, policy, and public service.

In Kenya, solutions journalism has generated a tangible impact at both the community and institutional levels. A story on local school feeding programs led neighboring communities to replicate the model. Several media outlets secured grants, such as through the Africa Health SoJo Initiative, to fund rural reporting and support training. One institution produced a widely appreciated climate adaptation series in coastal Kenya, while another launched a multi-part series on climate resilience in Turkana and Marsabit thanks to development funding. Stories have influenced policy and civic participation; for example, youth employment reporting led to student inclusion in county forums. Other high-impact cases include investigative work on community health volunteers and COVID-19 prevention strategies among boda boda riders, which sparked action in multiple counties. Recognition came in the form of editorial invitations, awards, expanded syndication, and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with SoJo training bodies, showcasing that constructive reporting is both professionally empowering and socially influential.

In Rwanda, notable examples of solutions journalism include award-winning coverage by Kigali Today, particularly in the area of disability inclusion. Reporters have helped bridge the trust between stakeholders, such as when highlighting an EU-funded agricultural cooperative

that enhances visibility for both the funders and the initiative. Stories about malnutrition and electricity access also boosted engagement with local officials, who later invited journalists for more coverage. The media's leadership in agriculture storytelling in districts like Gakenke in 2023 further cemented their influence. A prominent online example is a Panorama Rwanda piece on overcoming birth registration challenges, which contributed to the ongoing discourse on access to civil rights. These examples demonstrate that while SoJo is still growing in Rwanda, it is already helping journalists forge political trust and deepen public awareness.

Tanzania showcases a variety of SoJo impacts. Professionally, outlets have won journalism awards for impactful stories, such as “Tunasubiri Maafa?” and investigations into poor conditions at the Pugu slaughterhouse, which led to improvements. Financially, some outlets report significant growth in followers and engagement, one citing an increase from 12,000 to 60,000 Instagram followers due to compelling storytelling. Stories on youth innovation, civic tech, and plastic waste recycling have drawn partnerships with development agencies and NGOs and even earned invitations to policy dialogue panels. For example, a story on solar-powered irrigation in Simiyu led to visits from NGOs and further funding for the featured community. While not all organizations have implemented SoJo, those that have report an improved reputation, expanded audience trust, and, in some cases, a widened market share and revenue.

In Uganda, solutions journalism has led to community change, educational enrichment, and funding opportunities. A powerful example is the story of the Kitezi dumping site disaster. Journalists followed up on community-proposed waste management ideas, which were later adopted, highlighting how SoJo can amplify the voices of those often overlooked. Another impactful case came from Buddo, where reporting on unsanitary diaper disposal led UNICEF to sponsor both more stories and community support. Stories on the Mpox outbreak and NIRA registration also led to increased public engagement and follow-up awareness campaigns. National broadcasters have utilized SoJo to highlight government programs, such as Emyooga and PDM. Academic institutions have embedded SoJo into their curriculum, boosting student enrollment and capacity. Internship supervisors have praised students' SoJo outputs, and some schools report becoming regional leaders in training journalists on the approach. These examples demonstrate SoJo's cross-cutting impact in Uganda, spanning social transformation to educational leadership.

Overall, the majority across the four countries feel they “fit in” with the solutions journalism community, citing shared purpose, growing partnerships, and common journalistic values, even if some are still building capacity or formalizing their approaches.

6.6. Use of Technology in Producing SoJo Stories

The findings reveal that technology plays an essential and transformative role in the production of solutions journalism (SoJo) across East Africa. Journalists use a wide range of digital tools throughout the reporting process, from idea generation to story dissemination and impact tracking. Typical applications include conducting online research, collecting and analyzing data, verifying facts, and accessing case studies or past reports relevant to ongoing societal challenges. Tools such as Google, Datawrapper, Excel, and KoboToolbox enable journalists to interrogate budgets, policies, and statistical trends that support evidence-based storytelling. AI-powered platforms like ChatGPT are increasingly being used to generate ideas, structure stories, refine language, and support research, though some newsrooms remain cautious about their full adoption. Reporters also use mobile journalism equipment, including smartphones,

digital cameras, and portable audio recorders, to gather interviews, photos, and videos in the field. Editing and transcription software, such as Grammarly and Otter.ai, help streamline content production, while translation tools break down language barriers, allowing stories to reach a more diverse audience. Social media platforms like Twitter (X), Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are instrumental in publishing and amplifying stories, engaging audiences, and receiving real-time feedback. Furthermore, virtual communication platforms such as Zoom and email support remote collaboration, interviews, and mentorship, especially for journalists working in underserved areas. Despite these advantages, a few respondents indicated limited or no use of technology due to inadequate training, lack of access to digital tools, or restrictive newsroom policies. Nevertheless, the widespread integration of technology is enhancing the quality, efficiency, and reach of Sojo stories, ultimately fostering more informed, empowered, and solution-oriented societies.

There is strong optimism about the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing Sojo, especially in Tanzania (21%) and Rwanda (20%). Key areas where AI is expected to help include data analysis, fact-checking, transcription, and audience engagement. Kenya demonstrated notable interest in personalization and analytics, while Uganda focused on transcription and training support. This suggests an opportunity for tech integration as part of Sojo advancement strategies.

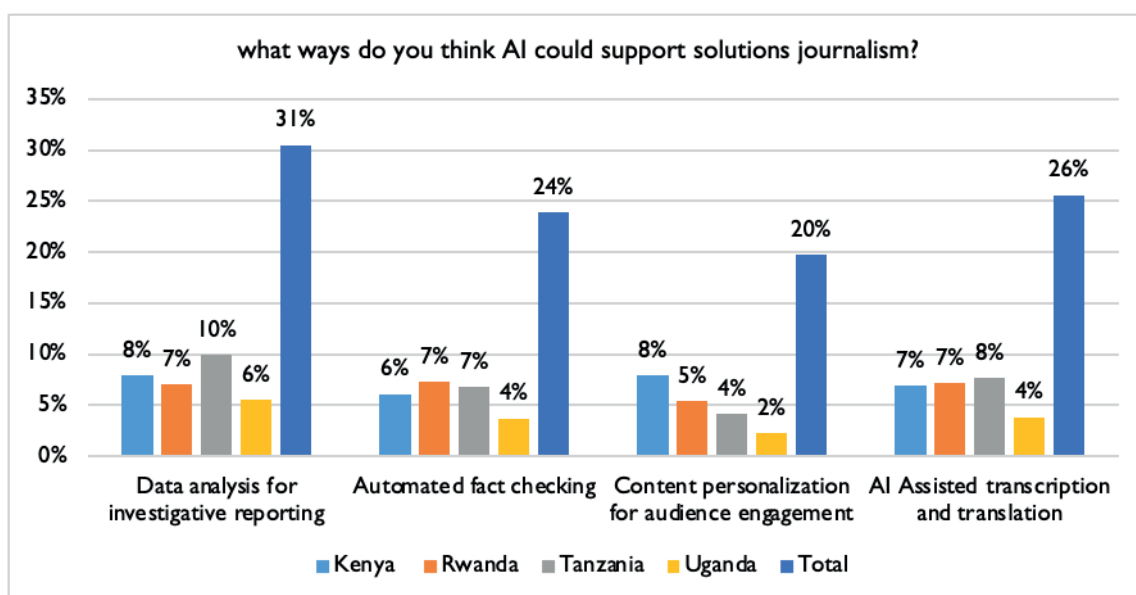


Figure 74: Approaches of AI support to Sojo in the four countries

The findings reveal that while artificial intelligence (AI) offers opportunities for enhancing solutions journalism, its adoption comes with numerous challenges and risks. One of the most prominent concerns is that misinformation AI can generate plausible yet inaccurate or outdated content, particularly when journalists are unfamiliar with how to verify data generated by AI. This raises serious issues around credibility, accuracy, and public trust. Respondents frequently mentioned the risk of overdependence on AI, which could erode journalists' creativity, critical thinking, and field-reporting instincts, ultimately leading to shallow, less authentic storytelling. In addition, bias in algorithms, especially when trained on Western-centric or non-local datasets, was seen as a significant drawback that can misrepresent African contexts or fail to capture cultural nuances.

Language barriers and limited contextual understanding by AI tools further complicate storytelling in diverse linguistic and cultural settings across East Africa. Some journalists noted that AI tools struggle with local dialects or mistranslate key concepts, undermining the integrity of stories. There is also concern that AI could reduce human engagement, a vital component in solutions journalism, where empathy, trust, and lived experiences matter. Moreover, cost and accessibility were highlighted as significant challenges, particularly in low-income settings, where advanced AI tools often require expensive subscriptions or specialized, high-tech infrastructure. Ethical concerns, such as plagiarism, data privacy, deepfakes, and content ownership, were also raised, along with fears that AI could lead to job losses or diminish the role of journalism. Overall, while AI has potential, the findings emphasize the need for strong editorial oversight, capacity building, and balanced integration to ensure AI enhances rather than compromises the core values of solutions journalism.

6.7. SoJo and the Future of Journalism

Across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, media practitioners anticipate that the continued integration of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) will have a profound impact on their organizations over the next decade. In Kenya, respondents foresee SoJo becoming central to newsroom culture, no longer treated as a niche but embedded across all beats. They envision increased trust from audiences, more substantial influence on policy and development conversations, and expanded partnerships with institutions and funders. Some see universities evolving into regional hubs for SoJo training, producing graduates who are known for their balanced and impactful reporting. Others anticipate enhanced academic reputations and modernized media facilities due to SoJo's growing relevance. In Rwanda, journalists predict that SoJo will help build audience credibility, encourage reporter specialization, and potentially lead to the establishment of dedicated SoJo desks. They also expect greater training opportunities and business growth through quality reporting and deeper community engagement.

Tanzanian respondents imagine their organizations becoming leading platforms for constructive journalism, trusted by the public and attractive to funders. Many predict larger audiences, stronger editorial standards, a digital transformation, and more structured training and SoJo-focused desks. Even skeptics acknowledge SoJo's potential to build societal trust and influence national discourse. In Uganda, the future of SoJo is envisioned as both transformative and essential. Respondents view their media outlets as becoming regional leaders in constructive journalism, launching SoJo training centers, publishing scholarly work, and expanding their community impact. Some believe this journalistic approach will shift public perception, restore trust in media, and lead to more solutions-driven civic engagement. Overall, there is a strong shared belief across all four countries that SoJo will not only redefine journalism practices but also reshape how societies interact with media and governance.

In the next five years, solutions journalism is expected to become increasingly institutionalized, impactful, and central to media practice across East Africa. Respondents envision SoJo being fully integrated into newsroom operations, with dedicated desks, editorial prioritization, and consistent resource allocation for in-depth, evidence-based storytelling. There is widespread belief that journalism education will evolve to include SoJo as a core module, equipping new generations of journalists with the tools to pursue solution-focused reporting. Increased training for both reporters and editors, combined with the adoption of digital technologies such as AI, data analysis, and multimedia storytelling, is seen as an essential driver in scaling SoJo's reach

and impact. Respondents anticipate that this evolution will not only enhance the quality and relevance of journalism but also foster greater public trust, drive audience engagement, and amplify the influence of media on policymaking.

At the same time, many believe that SoJo will shift the journalistic paradigm from reactive, crisis-centered coverage to proactive, community-driven narratives that highlight replicable solutions. Respondents expect that with stronger institutional support and continued investment, SoJo will become a pillar of responsible journalism capable of inspiring public action, catalyzing social change, and restoring the credibility of the media. They foresee more partnerships with civil society and governments, a surge in youth participation, and the growth of cross-border collaborations addressing regional challenges. While concerns persist regarding restrictive media laws, funding constraints, and lingering perceptions of SoJo as soft or advocacy journalism, there is a broad consensus that, if adequately supported, solutions journalism will not only endure but also redefine the role of media as a force for accountability, empowerment, and progress in society.

6.8. Future of SoJo in the Region

The recommendations for enhancing support for solutions journalism (SoJo) across East Africa are consistent and multifaceted, centering around training, funding, institutional integration, and cross-sector collaboration. A majority of respondents emphasized that capacity building is fundamental, calling for widespread training not just for reporters, but also for editors, media executives, and journalism educators. Many advocated for embedding SoJo in journalism school curricula as a core module rather than an elective, to nurture solutions-focused thinking early in journalistic careers. In-service training programs, refresher courses, and mentorship schemes were also widely proposed to upskill active journalists. Respondents stressed that without a strong knowledge base, journalists may misrepresent SoJo or conflate it with public relations. Some also suggested engaging governments and journalism training institutes to institutionalize SoJo as a professional standard, while raising public awareness to build demand for solutions-based content.

Equally crucial is financial support. Many noted that SoJo often demands in-depth research, travel, and time resources that most journalists and media houses in the region cannot afford without external support. Respondents urged donor agencies, governments, and media development organizations to provide reporting grants, equipment, stipends, and travel support. Some proposed the establishment of dedicated SoJo desks in newsrooms, the creation of awards for outstanding SoJo stories, and the development of cross-border collaborative platforms where journalists can co-produce and share impactful content. Suggestions also included building media-civil society-government partnerships, encouraging editorial buy-in, and improving journalists' access to data and information. Ultimately, the collective sentiment is clear: training and funding must go hand in hand to empower journalists, embed SoJo in newsroom culture, and position it as a transformative force for constructive public dialogue and evidence-based decision-making across the region.

6.9. Challenges in the Adoption of Solutions Journalism

Lack of funding and insufficient training/resources were the two most significant challenges across the four countries. Tanzania and Rwanda each had 10% of respondents citing funding issues, and similar percentages identified training as a significant gap. Uganda was comparatively

better off, with lower percentages for both problems. Editorial support and low audience interest were secondary challenges. Additionally, qualitative feedback revealed concerns like difficulty generating original ideas, resistance from authorities, and time constraints, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania. These structural and political barriers reflect the complex environment in which SoJo is practiced.

Table 6: Challenges in the adoption of SoJo in the four countries

Challenges faced in adopting solution journalism	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda	Total
Lack of training/resources	6%	9%	10%	8%	34%
Limited editorial support	4%	6%	3%	4%	18%
Audience interest in traditional reporting styles	2%	2%	0%	4%	9%
Lack of funding	9%	10%	10%	9%	38%
Others	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, practitioners of solutions journalism (SoJo) identified several recurring challenges that hinder the consistent implementation and growth of this approach. One of the most cited barriers was the perception and cultural resistance within newsrooms. Many journalists and editors initially regarded SoJo as “soft news,” mistaking it for advocacy, public relations, or overly optimistic storytelling. This misconception made it challenging to gain editorial buy-in, especially in environments where sensationalism and crisis reporting have long dominated journalistic practice.

Resource constraints also emerged as a significant hurdle. SoJo often requires more time, deeper investigation, field visits, data collection, and multiple interviews to verify whether solutions are credible and scalable. This makes it more expensive and labor-intensive than conventional news reporting. In Kenya and Tanzania, for instance, journalists reported delays and even cancellations of stories due to a lack of funding, transportation, or access to official data. One Kenyan journalist recalled the challenge of accessing crash data for a road safety story, while another noted difficulty in obtaining evidence of effectiveness from a rural water project.

In Rwanda and Uganda, limited access to training and teaching materials was a concern. Some journalists mentioned receiving only brief exposure to SoJo or relying on foreign case studies that felt disconnected from their local realities. Others highlighted the need for more localized examples and long-term mentorship to fully grasp and apply SoJo principles. Several also flagged limited institutional support, especially in universities, where students and faculty still equated journalism with exposing problems rather than evaluating credible responses.

Additionally, journalists frequently faced logistical challenges in conducting follow-ups and accessing hard-to-reach communities. In Uganda and Rwanda, journalists shared cases where community members or government officials were reluctant to share information, fearing repercussions or simply not understanding the value of such stories. In Tanzania, issues of understaffing and time management made it difficult for journalists to step away from daily duties to pursue deeper, evidence-based SoJo pieces.

Finally, audience reception was occasionally seen as a barrier. Some respondents from Uganda noted that audiences often preferred sensational or emotionally charged news, making it harder

to sell solution-focused stories. However, this was countered by others who found that when executed well, SoJo built trust and engagement.

In summary, while the commitment to solutions journalism is growing, practitioners across the region face intersecting barriers, including mindset, financial constraints, time constraints, skill gaps, and inadequate institutional support. Many emphasized that overcoming these obstacles requires a shift in newsroom culture, increased investment, and more localized capacity-building efforts.

6.10. Lessons learned from implementing Solutions Journalism

Respondents stated that they have gained a deeper appreciation for the value and impact of solutions journalism after applying it in their work. Individually, 82% have noted that solutions journalism increases journalistic rigor, encouraging them to ask more profound questions, evaluate evidence, and critically examine limitations. It has led to more constructive, balanced, and hopeful storytelling that engages audiences and builds community trust. In Kenya, 10% of the journalists and educators reported that SoJo has become central to their newsroom strategy and teaching philosophy. It has strengthened relationships with readers and prompted policy conversations, such as those sparked by stories on youth innovation and local health interventions.

In Rwanda, respondents shared that implementing SoJo has helped them focus on evidence-based reporting that captures real impacts. Many journalists have highlighted stories on climate resilience, youth empowerment, and food security, which have led to tangible responses from policymakers, communities, and NGOs.

In Tanzania, SoJo has helped media houses rebuild trust with audiences, increase digital engagement, and strengthen their editorial integrity. Some reporters shared how audience feedback and institutional recognition followed their solutions-focused stories, and others noted a shift toward more hopeful newsroom cultures.

In Uganda, solutions journalism has been embraced in classrooms, radio programming, and newsroom reporting. Respondents reported that stories highlighting constructive action have inspired community responses and policy shifts. Collectively, the region's experience suggests that SoJo not only enhances storytelling but also bridges the gap between journalism, civic engagement, and social transformation.



7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Recommendations for Strengthening SoJo in Kenya

The respondents provided some detailed recommendations around thematic areas to help guide the growth and institutionalization of Solutions Journalism (SoJo) in Kenya and the broader East African region:

a. Expand and Strengthen SoJo Training

Continuous Professional Development: Organize regular workshops, refresher courses, and mentorship programs targeting journalists, editors, and media trainers. Prioritize practical, story-driven formats that integrate fieldwork and feedback.

Editor and Newsroom Leadership Training: Extend training beyond reporters to include editors and media managers who shape editorial priorities. Their buy-in is critical for long-term adoption of SoJo principles.

Curriculum Integration: Collaborate with universities and journalism schools to embed SoJo as a core component of media training. Move beyond elective modules and develop full-fledged units supported by case studies, reporting tools, and assessments.

b. Institutionalize SoJo in Newsrooms

Dedicated SoJo Desks: Encourage media houses to establish internal SoJo desks or integrate solutions-focused roles within existing editorial teams. Assign reporters to produce regular SoJo content and give them editorial support.

Editorial Policy Reforms: Advocate for newsroom policies that prioritize balanced reporting and allocate space or airtime to SoJo stories. Editors should actively pitch, review, and promote such stories as standard reporting, not just special features.

Mentorship and Peer Learning: Build newsroom capacity through in-house mentors and peer learning circles. Journalists with SoJo experience should be supported in mentoring colleagues and fostering collaborative learning.

c. Increase Funding and Incentives

Story Production Grants: Partner with donors and development organizations to offer grants that cover travel, research, and production costs for in-depth SoJo stories, especially those requiring investigative or data-driven work.

Awards and Recognition: Establish national and regional awards for Solutions Journalism to motivate excellence and spotlight impactful stories. Collaborate with institutions like the Media Council of Kenya to create specific SoJo award categories.

Freelancer Support: Establish funding and training pipelines tailored specifically for freelance journalists, who comprise a significant portion of SoJo practitioners and often face resource constraints.

d. Promote Cross-Sector Collaboration

Media-Civil Society Partnerships: Facilitate collaboration between media houses and civil society organizations that are implementing solutions to social problems. These partnerships can provide story leads, context, and evidence.

Engage Policymakers and Regulators: Work with government agencies and oversight bodies to recognize and support the role of SoJo in shaping public policy. Explore collaboration with the Communications Authority of Kenya and other bodies to promote public-interest journalism.

Regional Networks: Support the formation of a regional SoJo network to facilitate cross-border reporting, training exchanges, and joint editorial projects. Such a network can standardize best practices and advocate collectively for institutional support.

e. Leverage Technology for SoJo

Digital Tools and Platforms: Train journalists on using AI, data visualization, and transcription tools to enhance story quality and workflow. Encourage the use of social media and online platforms to amplify reach and interactivity.

AI Ethics and Literacy: Develop guidelines and training on the responsible use of AI in SoJo reporting. Journalists must understand how to maintain story integrity, human-centered narratives, and avoid bias or misinformation.

Podcasting and Multimedia Formats: Support journalists in adopting new formats, such as podcasts and interactive documentaries, which are particularly effective for in-depth solutions stories, especially among young audiences.

f. Reach and Inclusion

Vernacular and Community Media Support: Invest in community and vernacular media to ensure SoJo content reflects local realities and reaches marginalized audiences. Tailor training and tools for rural journalists who operate outside major media hubs.

Youth-Focused Engagement: Promote SoJo through university clubs, student media, and youth-led initiatives. Young journalists can be key drivers of innovation in storytelling and audience connection.

g. Monitor, Evaluate, and Document Impact

Track Outcomes: Develop simple frameworks for journalists and editors to track the public and policy impact of their SoJo stories. Capture changes in audience engagement, community response, or institutional action.

Case Study Compilation: Publish regular casebooks or digital libraries of high-impact SoJo stories from across the country. These can serve as learning tools and demonstrate the value of the approach.

Research and Feedback Loops: Encourage partnerships with research institutions to study the impact of SoJo on public discourse and policy. Use findings to continually refine training and editorial strategies.

h. Build Enabling Environments

Regulatory and Policy Support: Engage with media regulators, journalism associations, and government agencies to support SoJo as part of broader media development policies. This may include accreditation, funding, or content standards.

Sustainability Planning: Design SoJo programs with long-term sustainability in mind. Encourage institutional ownership, recurring funding, and integration into broader development and communication strategies.

These recommendations reflect the feedback and insights of journalists, educators, and media leaders in Kenya and align with regional aspirations for a more constructive, impactful journalism culture. Implementing them will require coordinated action from media houses, funders, regulators, and academia, but the potential for public benefit is clear and measurable.

7.2 Recommendations to Strengthen Solutions Journalism in Rwanda

Training and Capacity Building: Provide regular and comprehensive training for journalists, editors, and media owners, and integrate SoJo into university journalism curricula and academic programs. This could be achieved by conducting workshops, mentorship programs, and on-the-job training to strengthen SoJo skills. Mainstream capacity-building efforts for both active and upcoming journalists are also crucial.

Financial and Logistical Support: Allocate funding and establish grant opportunities to support SoJo fieldwork and production. Provide logistical support, including travel facilitation, access to digital tools, and editorial time. Encourage media houses and development partners to invest in SoJo stories.

Institutional Support and Media Engagement: Encourage media organizations to integrate SoJo into their editorial strategies, including establishing dedicated SoJo desks within newsrooms and assigning specialized reporters to cover the topic. Motivate editors and newsroom managers to prioritize solutions stories and shift newsroom culture to appreciate SoJo alongside traditional reporting.

Partnerships and Collaboration: Foster collaboration among media houses, civil society organizations, government agencies, and NGOs to identify and amplify effective solutions. Organize national and regional networks of SoJo practitioners to exchange ideas and support.

Awareness and Public Engagement: Raise awareness among the public, media stakeholders, and institutions about the value of SoJo. Also, promote SoJo as a credible and impactful form of journalism, distinguishing it from PR or advocacy, and encourage local authorities to collaborate with journalists instead of treating them as adversaries.

Recognition and Incentives: Establish awards, fellowships, and recognition programs to motivate and celebrate impactful SoJo reporting.

Policy and Legal Support: Advocate for stronger implementation of access to information laws to support evidence-based journalism and encourage media policy reforms that promote responsible, solutions-driven journalism in the digital era.

7.3 Recommendations to Strengthen Solutions Journalism in Tanzania

To strengthen solutions journalism in the region, respondents highlighted several practical and strategic recommendations:

Increase training and capacity building: Increase training opportunities at all levels, including newsrooms, universities, and professional associations. Integrating Solutions Journalism (SoJo) into journalism schools' curricula so that emerging journalists are prepared from the start. Others recommended refresher courses and in-house mentorship for current reporters and editors.

Expand funding and material support: Dedicate a fellowship fund for travel, research, and production of in-depth SoJo stories. Media houses should allocate budgets for SoJo desks and programs, while donors and civil society partners should support long-term investment in SoJo reporting.

Improve editorial support and newsroom culture: Respondents noted that SoJo stories are often sidelined or killed due to editorial resistance or a lack of understanding. Thus, they recommended building editor buy-in, setting up SoJo desks, and incorporating SoJo into daily editorial planning. Recognizing and rewarding SoJo work within newsrooms can also boost morale and uptake.

Reform restrictive media laws and protect press freedom: To remove legal and political barriers to SoJo practice, advocate for the repeal of repressive media laws, expand protections for press freedom, and create a legal environment where journalists can report solutions-focused stories without fear of censorship or retaliation.

Strengthen partnerships and collaboration: Media houses, civil society organizations, and government agencies should collaborate to support SoJo. Partnerships can facilitate data access, source stories, foster trust with communities, and amplify impact. Some suggested forming associations or coalitions to advocate for SoJo.

Institutionalize Solutions Journalism: Formalize recognition of SoJo in national media strategies or journalism policies. This could include guidelines, frameworks, and standards to support ethical, evidence-based reporting that focuses on responses, not just problems.

Promote recognition and incentives: Awards, fellowships, and public recognition were seen as key motivators. Journalists suggested that honoring impactful SoJo stories can encourage more practitioners to adopt the approach and build a culture of solutions-driven reporting.

Regional Collaboration: Foster closer cooperation among journalists, media houses, and governments across East Africa by establishing a regional network for SoJo practitioners, creating East African exchange programs for journalists, hosting an annual East African Solutions Journalism conference, and encouraging cross-border story development and learning.

7.4 Recommendations to Strengthen Solutions Journalism in Uganda

Expand Access to Training and Capacity Building: Establish a more structured and regular training program for both practicing journalists and journalism students. Suggestions included integrating Solutions Journalism into university curricula, hosting regional workshops, and offering mentorship programs.

Increase Funding and Editorial Support: Media houses should create dedicated Solutions Journalism desks and allocate budgets for investigative work. There is room for external support from donors, governments, and development organizations.

Protect Journalistic Freedom and Safety: Advocate for freedom of the press and unfettered access to official information.

Collaboration and Networks: Create regional networks or chapters to promote cross-border cooperation and share success stories. Foster partnerships among media organizations, government agencies, civil society, and academia to increase the visibility and impact of Solutions Journalism.

Raise Awareness and Promote Public Engagement: Public understanding of Solutions Journalism remains low. There are suggestions to use community radio, digital platforms, and outreach campaigns to engage audiences and showcase how constructive reporting can drive social change.

Leverage Technology Responsibly: Though AI presents obvious pitfalls, its potential in data analysis and transcription is immense. Its contribution must be enhanced to complement—not replace—human creativity and judgment.

Recognize and Reward Quality Work: There is a need to establish recognition mechanisms, such as awards, fellowships, and public acknowledgment of impactful Solutions Journalism stories, to motivate journalists and raise standards.

7.5 Cross-Cutting Recommendations

To strengthen solutions journalism, respondents across the region emphasized the urgent need for sustained investment in capacity building, training, and mentorship for journalists, editors, and media owners. Integrating SoJo into journalism school curricula, from the early stages through to the university level, was frequently cited as a way to cultivate a new generation of solution-focused storytellers. Respondents also recommended offering refresher workshops and specialized programs, both within newsrooms and in collaboration with external institutions, to enhance skills and understanding of SoJo principles. A significant theme was the need for dedicated funding and logistical support, including travel, multimedia tools, and time to carry out in-depth fieldwork and community engagement. Media organizations were encouraged to institutionalize SoJo by establishing dedicated desks, implementing editorial support structures, and integrating SoJo into their routine editorial agendas. In contrast, governments and media regulators were encouraged to offer legal protections, access to information, and policy reforms to safeguard journalistic independence and freedom.

Additionally, respondents advocated for cross-sector collaboration involving media houses, civil society, academia, policymakers, and local authorities to drive impactful storytelling and ensure SoJo stories influence real-world solutions. Awards, recognition programs, and networking platforms were also proposed to incentivize and celebrate outstanding SoJo reporting. There was a strong call to shift the mindset of media owners and the public, many of whom still view solutions journalism as secondary to problem-based reporting. Raising public awareness about the value of SoJo in promoting hope, civic engagement, and accountability was considered essential. Ultimately, respondents argued that aligning training, funding, institutional support, policy reform, and cultural change will create an enabling environment for solutions journalism to flourish, transforming not only newsrooms but also the role of journalism itself in East African societies.

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