



Linnaeus University

Sustainable Journalism

Vision 2030 and Strategy 2022-2025

This vision and strategy document forms the basis for all of Fojo's operations during the period 2022-2025.

All programmes, projects, training, and events are governed by the vision and strategy.

This applies to Fojo's activities in Sweden and internationally.

Vision 2030

The world is facing an era of immense environmental, social, and economic challenges, both at a local and global level. These challenges demand a new understanding of the role of journalism in society.

Just as independent journalism is an inalienable part of democracy, Fojo sees it as an essential element of a environmentally, socially and economically sustainable society. We call this new way of looking at the role of journalism sustainable journalism.

On this basis, Fojo has formulated its vision:

The public has access to the journalism it needs to make informed and sustainable decisions so that people have power over their lives and can, together with others, form sustainable, democratic, and inclusive societies.

Linnaeus University Vision 2030

Fojo Media Institute is part of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Linnaeus University in Sweden. As such, we strive to uphold Linnaeus University's vision:

We set knowledge in motion for a sustainable societal development

In order to set knowledge in motion for a sustainable societal development the following is required:

1. Innovative academic knowledge creation
2. Sustainable excellence
3. Culture and common ways of working

Mission

Together with partners we strengthen journalism, enabling democracy and sustainability.

Our work is guided by five international governance documents:

- *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), where Article 19 declares the right to freedom of opinion and expression, a prerequisite for independent journalism.
- *The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* (1987), which first defined environmental, social, and economic sustainability, providing the foundation for our concept of sustainable journalism.
- *The Beijing Platform for Action* (1995), especially Section J on Women and the Media. Gender equality is one of Fojo's areas of priority and a fundamental requirement for social sustainability.
- *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). How well humankind is able to fulfil the SDGs formulated in Agenda 2030 will be crucial to achieving sustainable development. Poverty is not solely a matter of lacking food, money, healthcare, and education, it also deprives people of the opportunity to obtain knowledge and to engage in and contribute to a more equitable distribution of power. From this multidimensional perspective on poverty, independent journalism is important to enable people to have power over their lives.
- *The Paris Agreement* (2016). The future of humanity rests on how well the signatories to the Paris Agreement fulfil their undertakings on climate change. Independent journalism is needed to hold those in power to account and to provide people with the information they need to be able to contribute to a sustainable world.

Strategy 2022–2025

Strategic objective

Working with partners, we strengthen journalism that

- contributes to the sustainability of the media and society
- safeguards its independence
- holds power to account

Background and analysis

Journalism is an inalienable part of a democratic and sustainable society

Fojo supports journalism that promotes democratic, sustainable development. Our points of departure are two concurrent sustainability crises:

- *The sustainability crisis facing society*, related to climate change, poverty, inequality, and crumbling democracies.
- *The sustainability crisis facing journalism*, which stems from an erosion of revenue streams, fierce competition from the global social media companies, media capture, disinformation and deteriorating public trust in the media.

We view these two crises as intrinsically intertwined. A sustainable society – environmentally, socially, and economically – demands journalism that explicitly addresses the sustainability challenges faced by society. Journalism must in turn have ability to meet this demand to stay relevant and financially viable.

Based on this logic, we see a clear need to expand the traditional role of journalism to entail what we call sustainable journalism: an independent journalism that not only safeguards and promotes democracy, but which is an enabler of a sustainable society.

Sustainable journalism is not simply a matter of reporting the events of the day. It also reflects on how decisions, processes and activities will affect the ability of future generations – our children and grandchildren – to enjoy the same or improved opportunities as our own generation; as well as how local and global events are interconnected. It also includes seeing environmental, social and economic sustainability not as just another subject, but as a prism through which everything else is to be seen.

Fojo's strategy answers the need to improve the economic sustainability of journalism while at the same time improving journalism's contribution to a sustainable society.

The crises and opportunities facing society and journalism are one and the same

The climate crisis demands fundamental changes to our fossil-based economy, changes that are not taking place at the required pace. Democracy is in retreat. Globally, progress towards gender equality is slowing down.

There is, however, another picture: never before in human history have so many people been committed to saving the environment, to halt climate change and ensure gender equality. Nor have there ever been so many creative initiatives and collaborations between the media, civil society, academia, and the public to safeguard democracy and promote sustainability. We also see increasing interest on the part of businesses and philanthropists in supporting innovative, independent journalism.

Independent, quality journalism is under threat from political repression. Independent media outlets are being captured by corporate and state powers and global social media corporations have seized the lion's share of digital advertising revenues. And yet, on a daily basis, we see outstanding journalism produced, exposing abuses of power, enlightening the public about the climate threat and explaining how society functions – or doesn't function. Journalism that is based on a deep knowledge and extraordinary communicative ability.

Evidence-based knowledge is challenged by populist leaders who, without any scientific arguments, question the conclusions of researchers and their right to autonomy. And yet the scientific community and journalists continue to create and communicate the knowledge we need to confront the challenges we face today and tomorrow. Innovative solutions emerge from collaborations in research, from dialogue and discussions, from listening to and learning from each other and building knowledge together, based on gender equality, diversity, and a respect for human rights. Journalism plays a crucial role in this process.

The increasing polarisation in society in combination with large groups not having access to quality journalism are increasing societal gaps. There can be many reasons for a lack of access to relevant journalism; poverty, language, place of residence, level of education, gender or disabilities. Journalists who know their audiences and want to reach new groups are reporting on relevant issues and publish in accessible and attractive formats. This way they help to bridge gaps in society and empower marginalised groups.

Many journalists live under threat – harassed, persecuted, even murdered – and yet the commitment of the United Nations, democratic governments and civil society makes it possible for journalists to continue to hold power to account and provide the public with the information they need to make informed and sustainable decisions.

Today's journalists pursue a demanding profession. They must learn the craft of journalism in an age of digitisation that requires them to master text, photographs, video and audio. They need to have a solid grounding in the issues facing the society and communities they report on, not least when it comes to sustainability.

There is a great need, as well as significant opportunities, to develop qualitative, independent education institutions and long-term in-house training programmes for journalists, both within academia and for mid-career professional development.

Fojo's role and identity

Faced with these challenges and opportunities, it is more important than ever to strengthen public access to reliable information. This will require increased collaboration between journalists, media publishers, civil society, researchers, state actors and the business community in both rich and poor countries.

Fojo approaches this task as an institution having 50 years' experience working to strengthen and develop journalism in Sweden and 30 years internationally. During this time, Fojo has trained over 60,000 journalists from more than 100 countries and assisted and supported media organisations and media houses in over 35 countries, often working with local and global civil society organisations. As an institute based at Linnaeus University, we are part of academia and enjoy academic contacts at universities around the world. Fojo's ideal position at the intersection of these stakeholders provides us with a potential to manage the challenges that journalism is facing today.

Our core values are based on the international human rights system and the values that apply to all public-sector employees in Sweden, as well as the following fundamental principles: the equal worth of all people, sustainability, long-term commitment, partnership, local ownership, a holistic approach, conflict sensitivity, transparency and responsibility, gender equality, inclusion, antiracism, and non-discrimination.

Geographical focus

Fojo continues to develop programmes and support partners in Sweden and the rest of Europe, the Caucasus, South Asia, Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.

This is how Fojo contributes to change

Theory of Change

We strive to meet our long-term vision:

The public has access to the journalism it needs to make informed decisions so that people have power over their lives and can, together with others, form sustainable, democratic, and inclusive societies.

This is accomplished via the following three closely interconnected processes:

As knowledge of new perspectives on journalism and their practical application increases, the role of journalism is expanded to also encompass sustainability.

By linking research on environmental, social, and economic sustainability with the practice of journalism, Fojo and its partners contribute to broadening and deepening knowledge of various aspects of sustainable journalism and its practical application. This knowledge provides an important foundation for discussing and identifying solutions to the challenges facing journalism.

As knowledge and experience is developed, disseminated, and debated within the collaborations and networks that Fojo leads and participates in, norms, attitudes and behaviour are gradually altered at an individual, organisational, and systemic level. Relationships are created between different actors that work together to make change. As knowledge about sustainable journalism spreads between media stakeholders, researchers, interest groups and professional organisations, understanding and commitment is strengthened.

Over time, as a result of these change processes, more and more professionals will strive to alter their approach to journalism, expanding and strengthening its role in society. This change will gradually increase the amount of sustainable journalism produced.

As the ability to produce and publish sustainable journalism is strengthened, the conditions will be created to meet the new challenges facing journalism.

By training media executives, journalists, and journalism teachers, and in doing so developing their organisations, Fojo helps to create the necessary conditions to meet the new challenges facing journalism.

As collaboration between innovative educational institutions and media producers is strengthened, favorable conditions are created for innovative teaching, as well as the ability to put new skills and knowledge into practice. As Fojo contributes to building bridges between stakeholders, journalism training will become increasingly geared towards practice and meeting the needs of media producers, as well as increasing the relevance of education.

Fojo also contributes to increasing the capacity of institutions by developing working methods for organisations that produce and/or contribute to the production of sustainable journalism.

Based on these change processes, more sustainable journalism will eventually be produced and made available to the public.

As economic viability and sustainability is strengthened, the diversity of viable media producers and the quality of their journalism will be increased.

By developing and strengthening sustainable financing models for media organisations, Fojo helps to create the conditions for high-quality journalistic content to be produced, for editorial independence, and a deliberative dialogue with the public.

This will be achieved by generating in-depth knowledge about innovative business models at both an organisational and a systemic level, about media user needs and behaviour, and how new target groups can be reached and understood through measures such as an analysis of gender-equality and diversity. This will offer media producers new opportunities and ways to engage the public and attract new audiences.

In the long term, these change processes will allow more media stakeholders to develop new and improved models for economic sustainability, which will lead to a greater diversity of viable media producers that enjoy public confidence.

These changes are mutually reinforcing

By linking these three change processes, they reinforce one another. Knowledge development based on research and proven practice increases understanding and contributes to the continuous development of methods and tools for the journalistic craft, as well as to viable financial models.

Likewise, new practical experiences are part of the continuous development of knowledge, understanding and working methods. Networking is a catalyst to change in norms and behaviour, leading to more sustainable journalism being produced and made available to the public. This in turn improves the conditions for different groups of women, men and non-binary individuals in society to access information and power and to influence.

Partnerships create change

Fojo cannot create change alone – this can only come about through close cooperation with others. If our strategy is to meet expectations, a range of other conditions will also need to be met. These include improved legislation and regulation to guarantee media freedom, freedom of expression and public access to information, the safety of journalists, their improved working conditions, and resources and infrastructure to facilitate both the distribution of media content and access to information. By cooperating closely with local, national, regional and international partners in our research and capacity building projects, and by supporting relevant policy advocacy, Fojo can do its part in creating change that moves us closer to a shared vision based on our Vision for 2030.

An adaptive approach based on tangible use

Fojo's work is result-based and adaptive. We manage complex issues in rapidly changing contexts and act accordingly, learning together with partners. Our approach is local-global, where people's motivation and culture are central to a process based on gradual development and realistic goals that are of tangible use and lead to long-term resilience.

Fojo's work contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

The concept of sustainable journalism, on which this strategy is built, is closely related to monitoring the Agenda 2030. We will specifically focus on the following SDGs:

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- 4.4 Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

- 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

- 17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
- 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships Data, monitoring and accountability

Fojo's strategic objectives and priorities

Fojo's objective for the strategy period is: Working with partners, we strengthen journalism that contributes to the sustainability of the media and society; safeguards its independence; holds power to account.

Based on this objective and our Theory of Change, we have defined four strategic results:

1. The further development and dissemination of the concept sustainable journalism.
2. Strengthening the ability of journalists and media producers to produce sustainable journalism.
3. Collaboration with media producers to further develop sustainable economic models.
4. Strengthening Fojo's internal systems, procedures and specialist competencies and creating a diversified, long-term funding model to implement this strategy.

Our expectation is that by the end of the strategy period we will have achieved four strategic results (pages 12-15).

Strategic Result #1:

Increased knowledge of and commitment to the concept of sustainable journalism and its practical application.

Knowledge and communication are crucial to any normative change in our attitudes and behaviour. During the strategy period, Fojo will contribute to developing and disseminating the concept of sustainable journalism, both as theoretical concept and as a professional practice.

By harnessing our experience and insights from our partners, and by keeping up with, participating in, and promoting relevant research, we will stimulate debate and learning about the role of journalism in society. In doing so journalism will be strengthened. Among other things, we will establish a global network, the Sustainable Journalism Partnership, which will serve to link innovative learning with the innovative production of sustainable journalism. Change will be generated at three levels: individual, organisational and systemic.

Methods

Depending on the context, Fojo uses different methods to achieve the desired results at each level. The methods complement and reinforce one another:

- Initiate, support, participate in and conduct studies with a specific focus on sustainable development, intended to strengthen and develop journalism.
- Identify and collaborate with organisations and institutions that have relevant thematic expertise to link sustainability and journalism.
- Network with stakeholders and partners at the local, national, regional, and international levels.
- Participate in conferences, seminars, and meetings in order to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the link between sustainability and journalism.
- Develop and promote tools, methods, and concepts for practising sustainable journalism, ideally focused on gender equality and social inclusion.
- Exert influence over strategic Swedish and international stakeholders to raise their awareness of the vital link between sustainability and journalism and its significance for the development of journalism.

Example partners

- Academic institutions
- Interest groups/professional organisations
- Media producers and individual journalists

Strategic Result #2:

Increased ability to produce and publish sustainable journalism.

For media producers to be able to contribute to ensuring the availability of meaningful information at various levels of society, the necessary pre-conditions need to exist: they need the knowledge, tools, and motivation to meet the challenge of producing and disseminating appealing and accessible sustainable journalism and engaging in an interactive dialogue with media users.

Methods

- Train journalists and journalism teachers to strengthen their theoretical and practical knowledge of effective journalistic methods.
- Collaborate with educational institutions that are interested in developing and strengthening sustainable journalism.
- Reinforce the organisational capacity of stakeholders striving to produce sustainable journalism.
- Develop, strengthen, and apply policies and tools for a sustainable, diverse, gender-balanced and inclusive media.
- Develop and disseminate practical tools and initiatives to facilitate fact-checking and investigative journalism.
- Promote and reinforce cooperation between media producers and civil society to increase participation, interaction, and co-production.
- Facilitate learning and exchange, and the dissemination of good examples and best practices, by linking media producers to innovative tools and knowledge platforms.
- Promote cooperation between innovative educational stakeholders and innovative media producers on sustainable journalism.
- Secure funding for the organisational changes necessary to strengthen the production of sustainable journalism.

Example partners

- Educational organisations and individual journalists
- Media organisations, media companies
- Civil society organisations
- Interest groups/professional organisations

Strategic Result #3:

The economic viability of media producers striving to produce sustainable journalism has increased.

Viable business models are required if the media are to produce sustainable journalism and retain their editorial independence. These models must be based on the quality of the content produced by journalists as well as how that content is valued by media consumers. Viable business models are also closely linked to the technological development of the media market.

Methods

- Strengthen, coach and train media executives to make strategic decisions and develop and apply sustainable business models for journalism.
- Initiate and support surveys and studies to learn about the behaviour of media consumers to improve the interaction between the media and the public.
- Strengthen cooperation with educators who have business administration competence.
- Support innovative start-ups and other initiatives in their effort to develop sustainable business models.
- Promote networking, discussion, exchange, learning and the dissemination of good examples of sustainable journalism. Connect individual journalists and media producers using innovative tools and platforms.
- Support partners in advocating for sustainable financial conditions for the media.
- Promote the analyses of gender equality and diversity by media producers as part of the development of sustainable business models.

Example partners

- Media producers and professional organisations
- Civil society organisations
- Academic institutions
- Private-sector media companies interested in sharing their knowledge of and resources for strengthening media viability.

Strategic Result #4:

Fojo's systems, procedures and specialist competencies have been strengthened and are more diversified, and longer-term funding has been secured to facilitate the implementation of this strategy.

To be able to meet the desired results of this strategy Fojo will carry out internal and external institutional development in the following areas:

Internal processes and structures

- Fojo's identity
- Internal governance and control
- Management system
- Management: planning, implementing, evaluating, and learning
- Resources

External areas – interaction with society at large

- Collaborations with stakeholders and partners
- Impact on institutional and legal frameworks
- Relationships with financiers

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