

## 1. Executive summary

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This impact assessment takes stock of Open Briefing's strategic period (2023–26). It examines (1) how well Open Briefing's programmes meet stakeholder needs, (2) what outcomes are being achieved, (3) where gaps and unmet needs persist, and (4) what internal and ecosystem conditions enable - or constrain - impact.

Findings draw on various evidence streams: interviews with grassroots partners, clients, funders, board members, and Open Briefing staff/consultants; a desk review of Open Briefing impact reports, case studies, and an external evaluation; survey data combining quantitative ratings and qualitative free-text inputs from multiple stakeholder groups, and validation conversations with internal and external stakeholders sharing initial findings.

### External Impact: What Open Briefing enables

#### Continuity under threat

The most consistent outcome described - across grassroots actors, clients, funders, and Open Briefing staff - is that people and organisations **continue operating where they might otherwise have paused, withdrawn, or collapsed**. Respondents describe concrete shifts: being able to publish sensitive investigations, travel safely, keep programmes running, move from paralysis to action, and stay active while navigating relocation, exile, or asylum processes.

#### Fear doesn't disappear - but agency, preparedness, and calm increase

Stakeholders describe a critical psychological and operational shift: from panic, paralysis, or denial toward **preparedness, clarity, shared responsibility, and decision-making capacity**. This reframes success: Open Briefing's work changes **how people relate to risk** and how organisations **hold risk together**, not whether risk exists.

Moreover, this preparedness and agency is sustained through changes at the organisational level and behavioural changes by those trained. In several cases, respondents went further explaining how their learnings were cascaded out to their communities, partners and others needing protection, spreading the impact beyond Open Briefings direct interventions.

#### The holistic model and the "how" of delivery are the differentiators

Stakeholders repeatedly value Open Briefing's holistic security approach as practical rather than theoretical: physical and digital threats intersect with stress, wellbeing, and organisational behaviour, so support must integrate these domains. This integration, along with the expertise, judgement and professionalism of Open Briefing staff, are experienced as genuine differentiators.

Equally important is the method of implementation of this approach: stakeholders attribute trust and cultural appropriateness primarily to **how** support is delivered - listening, respect for lived realities, co-design, and non-prescriptive guidance - rather than to claims of being "experts in every place."

### Responsiveness and adaptability recognized

Many partners describe Open Briefing as a default first call because of speed, clarity, and the ability to stabilise situations. This “front door” function is itself an ecosystem contribution. At the same time, some stakeholders note that as capacity tightens, delays and “at capacity” signals can impact urgent referrals, leading to delays for the people being referred and the intermediaries referring them.

### Accessibility is both a strength and a challenge

Remote and hybrid delivery has expanded reach, enabling whole teams - often far from capitals - to access support. Growth in global staffing and language/cultural coverage has also increased accessibility. Yet as visibility and awareness of Open Briefing’s offer grows, new limitations are felt, including **connectivity and device constraints**, which can block engagement; **digital security guidance** has at times feel overly technical for wider staff, and the **lack of funding to support implementation of mitigations or recommendations**. Stakeholders are not necessarily asking Open Briefing to become a funder, but they do want protection advice to come with credible pathways to implementation.

### Localisation and continuity-of-care are emerging as the scalability pathway

There is evidence of increasing integration with local and regional ecosystems, as well as room for further strengthening this: language capacity, trusted local legal/protection/psychosocial networks, and stronger continuity-of-care pathways so that support feels like part of a journey rather than a one-off handoff. This is framed as a path to scale and equity **without mission creep**: Open Briefing does not need to become a provider of every adjacent service, but it does need strong, trusted pathways to those who can provide what Open Briefing cannot.

### Internal systems: what enables Open Briefing to have Impact

The overall pattern is that whilst internal systems have enabled strong impact as demand increased and Open Briefing grew rapidly, internal and external stakeholders note growing friction and strain on these systems.

The most acute pressure point is **cross-workstream coordination**: siloing and limited visibility across domains can weaken sequencing on cross-workstream cases and subtly undermine the external experience of a holistic offer. This is also where there appears to be the greatest leverage for improvement - through clearer coordination structures, better triage and capacity signalling, simpler SOPs (including communications approval), and stronger learning loops that turn experience into organisational memory rather than leaving it primarily with individuals.

The other recurring internal risk is sustainability: meeting load, limited protected reflection time, and “firefighting” dynamics are seen as key elements to address lest they begin to affect judgement quality, relational practice, and delivery credibility in high-risk work.

Taken together, the evidence paints a picture of an organisation which has rapidly scaled its team and impact over the past 3 years, growing to play a pivotal role in the protection

ecosystem. Stakeholders consider there is now a need for further evolution of Open Briefing's internal systems to sustainably maintain and scale this impact.

The core strategic challenge the report surfaces can be summarised as: **to preserve what makes Open Briefing trusted - its relational, co-designed, holistic practice - while deliberately strengthening the internal and ecosystem conditions that allow Open Briefing's impact to endure and scale as risk, demand, and complexity accelerate.**