

Annual Report
2018-19

Our answer is journalism



IMS 

IMS Annual Report / June 2018 - June 2019

Published in Denmark by IMS in 2019

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Publisher

IMS

Design

NR2154

Print

Narayana Press

Cover Photo

An injured member of the media is seen during a rally against the government of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro and to commemorate May Day in Caracas, Venezuela May 1, 2019.

Photo: Ueslei Marcelino / Reuters / Ritzau Scanpix

ISBN

978-87-92209-99-3

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IMS (International Media Support) is a non-profit organisation working to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

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Contents

Foreword	4
Where we work	6
Building coalitions – getting the fundamentals right	12
#Time's Up for media's gender blind spot	20
Media & elections – Building coalitions for partnership and media safety	28
Independent media: between algorithms and a hard place	38
Financial overview <i>2018</i>	46
IMS board <i>2019</i>	47
Public events highlights	48



BARZEI DISTRICT, NORTH OF PALMYRUS, SYRIA, APRIL 2016 / PHOTO: LOUIE BESHARA / GETTY IMAGES



*People need reliable
information to hold
power to account*

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Coalitions are a strategy for survival

Shortly before the publication of this report in May 2019, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, the two Reuters journalists jailed on dubious charges in Myanmar for their coverage of the Rakhine crisis, walked free after serving 18 months of their seven-year sentences. Their release was hailed as a victory for the joint advocacy efforts led by local and international press freedom actors, Reuters, and with widespread international political backing.

Around the same time as this good news was announced, 12 media development organisations met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the occasion of UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day celebrations. The aim was to discuss the importance of coordinating efforts to ensure that the country's media development agenda moving forward remains owned and led by Ethiopian media actors. This collaborative initiative was prompted by Ethiopia's recent change in government and improved conditions for independent media.

The fact of the matter is that the most effective results happen when media and press freedom actors align themselves

around a common cause and pool their efforts. For this reason, coalition-building is the cross-cutting focus of this year's IMS Annual Report, where we zoom in on the results of our collaboration with partners within and beyond the media development sector in our programme countries. Whether in the shape of a united call advocating for the release of imprisoned journalists in Azerbaijan, Myanmar, Turkey, or Syria, or setting up a network of young, independent, progressive media in the Middle East and North Africa such as the February Meet-up Network, these partnerships often go beyond their initial remit. In the Philippines, a unique scenario is unfolding under difficult circumstances, with media and press freedom organisations coming together across the country to develop a national UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists – the first in Asia.

In 2018-2019, press freedom declined for the 13th consecutive year with a greater number of governments tightening control of media and the space for civil society shrinking. Over the last year, we have worked with our media partners and with

civil society organisations to identify joint strategies to address these challenges and continue the work of securing the safety of journalists, better laws for media, access to reliable and diverse journalistic content and inclusive working environments in media for women and other marginalised groups. Our priority has been to go beyond partnerships in the media sector – because the media cannot go it alone – working with the UN, tech companies, academia and government authorities and with CSOs that focus on women, youths and migration in order to reach and make heard the voices of marginalised groups.

To ensure a balanced representation of women and women's issues in media, whether as working journalists, as sources and in content, lies at the core IMS' media development efforts. In Syria, our partner Syrian Female Journalists Network has worked intensely with scholars, journalists and feminist activists to produce a dozen articles on taboo topics such as sexuality and gender roles in the Middle East. This is one of many examples highlighted in Chapter 2 on gender equality in media.

"The most effective results happen when media and press freedom actors align themselves around a common cause"

PHOTO: ANGELIQUE SANOSSIAN, IMS



Jesper Højberg, IMS
Executive Director

Media's role in providing the public with access to balanced information during elections is the focus of Chapter 3 where collaboration within and beyond the media sector again plays a key role. We've seen this to be the case when pushing for collaboration between parties who are often at loggerheads such as media, security forces and government election entities. This type of collaboration can mean the difference between a peaceful or violent election cycle. Our work in West Africa and Zimbabwe shows that through dialogue and cross-border experience sharing between media and police, and in Zimbabwe's case media, citizens and the government's election commission, it is possible to establish a basis for mutual trust that allows for better access to information. In Zimbabwe, initial monitoring shows an improvement in balanced journalistic coverage of the October 2018 elections.

June 2018 to June 2019 was also a year where populist, political rhetoric and anti-democratic voices contributed to the public's concern over what is real and what is fake online. Media, political actors and to a large extent public opinion turned against Silicon Valley's tech

giants for failing to respond adequately to the damage inflicted on democratic institutions by the spread of disinformation and election-meddling via their platforms. We address this issue in Chapter 4.

Our answer is good journalism

As the title of this year's report indicates, we believe that one of the antidotes to disinformation is a healthy media ecosystem, with ethical and investigative journalism as important pillars to ensure this. Once again, collaboration becomes an important means to an end. The journalism that is produced both within IMS-supported investigative journalism networks in the Middle East and Russia and in international investigative journalism networks is strong because of the collaboration that takes place between media within and across borders. In addition, good journalism can go from local to global through positive engagement with information technologies. One such example is the work being done by IMS, Danwatch and Indieframe, in partnership with the Google Digital Innovation Fund to develop a platform that allows local media to post

stories that are shared directly with big international media houses, thus with a potential for reaching a broader audience.

We cannot underestimate the effects of the increasing shrinking space for press freedom and civil society in a growing number of countries. Our media partners face rising restrictions, safety issues, and a fiercely competitive information environment. But the generous support of our donors allows us to continue to work with our partners to find new avenues to address these challenges and doing so through new strategic partnerships beyond the media sector. In the mean time, the unrelenting perseverance of our media partners to deliver journalism that holds decision-makers to account, confirms me in my belief that good, reliable journalism will continue to play a vital role in the development of stable and peaceful societies.

Jesper Højberg

IMS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Where we work

IMS works across four continents to support local media in challenging circumstances. Since mid 2018, IMS has embarked on or revived shorter or longer term engagements in the following countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Nicaragua, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Belarus.



Programme countries

Countries with full-scale IMS programmes

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 Afghanistan | 8 Morocco | 15 Serbia |
| 2 Algeria | 9 Myanmar | 16 Somalia |
| 3 Burkina Faso | 10 Niger | 17 Sri Lanka |
| 4 Egypt | 11 Pakistan | 18 Syria |
| 5 Iraq | 12 Palestine | 19 Tunisia |
| 6 Jordan | 13 Philippines | 20 Yemen |
| 7 Mali | 14 Russia | 21 Zimbabwe |



Countries with smaller or regional programmes or short term engagements

Countries with small-scale activities, smaller regionally linked projects and countries with short-term engagements and engagements connected to thematic issues such as safety of journalists or investigative journalism.

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 22 Armenia | 29 Kenya | 36 Sudan |
| 23 Belarus | 30 Lebanon | 37 Tanzania |
| 24 Cambodia | 31 Libya | 38 Uganda |
| 25 Colombia | 32 Moldova | 39 Ukraine |
| 26 Ethiopia | 33 Nepal | 40 Venezuela |
| 27 Georgia | 34 Nicaragua | 41 Zambia |
| 28 Indonesia | 35 Nigeria | |



47%

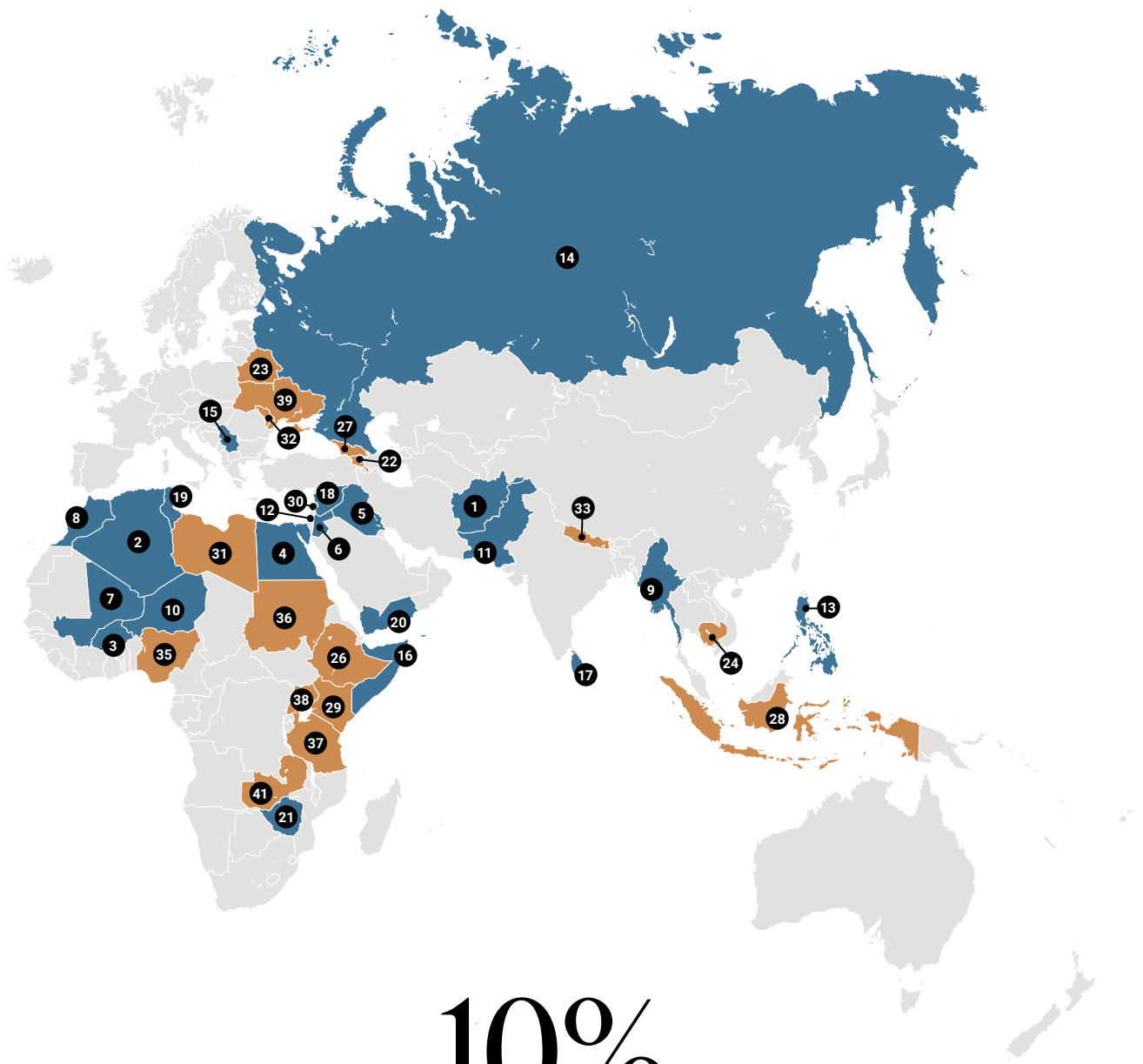
OF OUR WORK IS FOCUSED ON
MEDIA CONTENT AND PRODUCTION

17%

OF OUR WORK IS FOCUSED ON
INCLUSIVE WORKSPACES

26%

OF OUR WORK IS FOCUSED ON
SAFETY AND PROTECTION



10%

OF OUR WORK IS FOCUSED ON
POLICY AND LAW REFORM

Middle East & North Africa

30

STORIES PUBLISHED BY ARAB REPORTERS
FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Documentary film

The sensitive issue of sexual and gender-based violence was presented at the Carthage Film Festival in Tunis under the IMS segment "No means No" which included the screening of five documentaries and a panel debate.

Palestine

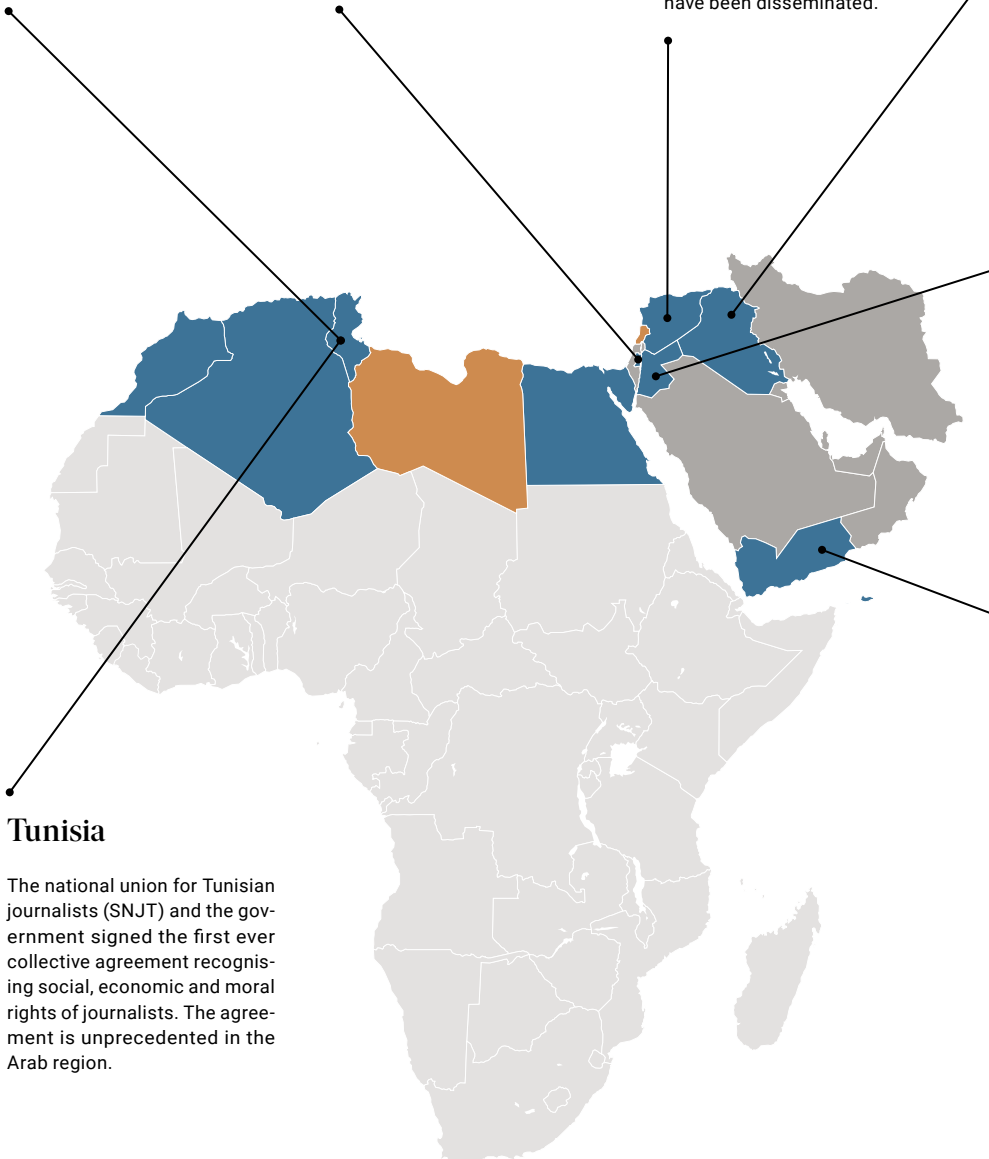
The third Palestine Digital Activism Forum, organised by 7amleh (The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media) in Ramallah, gathered more than 700 specialists, human rights activists and stakeholders to discuss digital rights and activism.

Syria

IMS and nine Syrian partners have produced a Syrian Safety Guide for the media sector, which documents 22 different threats – including gender sensitive threats – faced by Syrian journalists and how to deal with these threats. More than 2000 physical copies have been disseminated.

Iraqi Kurdistan

METRO Center provided legal support to over 70 journalists in an environment where legislation protecting freedom of the press may be in place, but is not yet enforced.



Jordan

The podcast Eib (*shame*) made by digital frontrunner SOWT is the number one Arabic podcast on iTunes after three seasons. Eib discusses taboo topics like divorce, gender stereotypes and sexuality.

Yemen

A trauma-counsellor hired to provide psycho-social support for journalists and media workers, is now on a weekly show with Radio Lana to share the knowledge of how to deal with trauma with a broader audience.

Tunisia

The national union for Tunisian journalists (SNJT) and the government signed the first ever collective agreement recognising social, economic and moral rights of journalists. The agreement is unprecedented in the Arab region.

Investigative Journalism

An Arabic-language documentary produced by Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism about arms smuggling in Yemen was aired by Deutsche Welle in December 2018. They later translated the film into German, Spanish and English.

South / Southeast Asia

Afghanistan

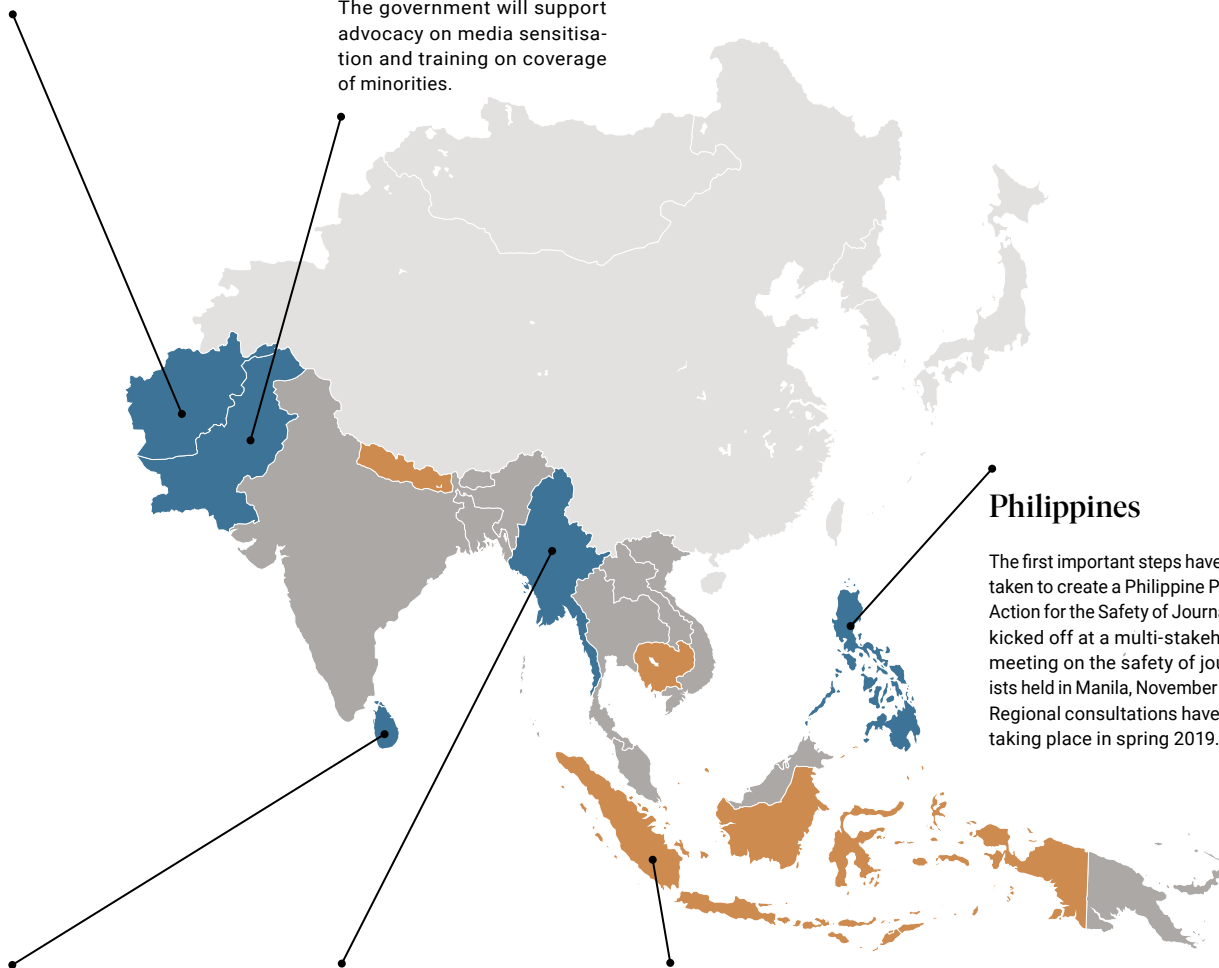
An Anti-Sexual Harassment policy for media houses has been developed by IMS partner Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) and introduced to 156 editors and journalists across the country.

Pakistan

A baseline study on media's portrayal of (non-Muslim) religious minorities revealed gross under-representation and overt stereotyping, effectively leaving nearly 10 million without a voice in the national discourse. The government will support advocacy on media sensitisation and training on coverage of minorities.

620

MEDIA WORKERS IN AFGHANISTAN RECEIVED SAFETY TRAINING



Sri Lanka

Verité Research, an independent think tank, started Sri Lanka's first independent fact-checking service. FactCheck.lk monitors key newspapers and fact checks statements attributed to top policy makers and legislators – at least one parliamentarian has corrected himself in Parliament following a fact-check.

Myanmar

The development of Standard Operations Procedures for the Protection of Journalists was the result of a panel debate on safety organised by IMS at the 7th Media Development Conference bringing together for the first time representatives from the police, military and journalists.

Indonesia

When a tsunami hit Palu city and the Sulawesi island in September 2018, media were affected as much as the local community. Through the DJ-IMS Safety Fund, 46 journalists took part in trauma healing sessions and learned how to cope with emotional stress and how to continue reporting.

Philippines

The first important steps have been taken to create a Philippine Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists, kicked off at a multi-stakeholder meeting on the safety of journalists held in Manila, November 2018. Regional consultations have been taking place in spring 2019.

Europe & Eurasia

Serbia

A Media Literacy Working Group with members from key ministries, institutions and media has been established with the aim to develop a handbook for teachers in secondary schools to improve access to and processing of materials on media literacy.

Denmark/HQ

IMS and a coalition of Danish civil society organisations and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are developing suggestions for joint strategies to fight the closing space on rights and freedom of expression. The strategies were a result of a large-scale international conference in March 2019.

Russia

Through training in investigative journalism (IJ), Russian journalists are spending more time on research and ensuring accuracy. A pool of trained journalists has on their own initiative begun teaching IJ to peers.

Mediabridge

IMS, Danwatch and Indieframe have received support from the Google Digital Innovation Fund to launch a platform enabling contact and exchange of stories between mainly European media and local media in hard-to-reach areas.



Latin America

50

PEOPLE IN LATIN AMERICA
TRAINED IN CONFLICT
SENSITIVE JOURNALISM AND
CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM

Nicaragua

An internal desk study on the rapidly closing space for independent journalism has established initial contacts with local and international media stakeholders ensuring a better coordinated future action in support of Nicaraguan media.

Venezuela

Dialogue meetings between pro-government and opposition media have resulted in a written statement underlining common professing in a democratic system and values such as freedom of expression and the right to information.



3

PROGRAMME COUNTRIES WITH IMS STAFF PRESENCE

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sahel

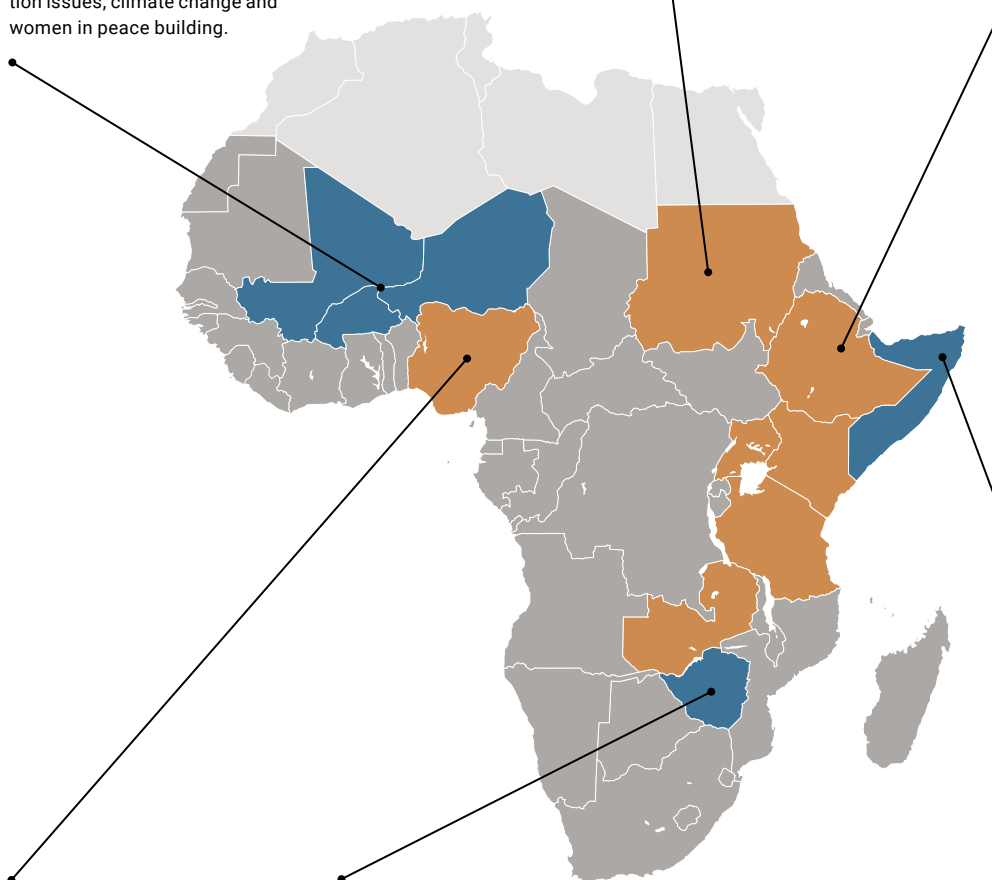
A network of 15 community radios and 30 women's listeners' clubs has produced 185 local radio programmes in five different languages reaching up to one million potential listeners. The programmes touch upon e.g. local conflict resolution, migration issues, climate change and women in peace building.

Sudan

Following the ouster of President Bashir and calls for reform, IMS supported activists and journalists in creating an online feed which documents history in the making and is a platform for reporting and debate.

Ethiopia

In partnership with the Danish Refugee Council, IMS has trained 49 young Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region on radio production, enabling them to tell their own stories and address problems faced in the refugee camps, thus making their voices heard.



Nigeria

Media and police dialogues were held in Nigeria in connection with the 2019 presidential elections. 87 media and police officers took part in meetings set to promote mutual understanding, improve relations and secure peaceful elections.

Zimbabwe

During the first elections of the country after Robert Mugabe stepped down, an IMS media and elections programme helped to ensure that alternative media platforms promoted political pluralism by giving media space to budding politicians and women candidates and encouraged youths to participate in electoral and governance processes.

Somalia

30 media houses, four media organisations and the Ministry for Information have signed The Gender Respect Declaration developed by Somali Women Journalists. The declaration addresses sexual harassment, equal pay and equal career opportunities.

Migrant Voices

An Algerian journalist won an EU-funded Migration Media Award for an article written for Migrant Voices, an IMS regional programme, which trained journalists from four African sub-regions in reporting on migration issues.

Building coalitions

– getting the fundamentals right



In media development circles coalition building has become a buzzword. For IMS, the approach has been deeply integral to the organisations' work for more than 15 years. This article explores the strategic considerations that form the basis of IMS' coalition building history and the adjustments made moving forward

By Asger Gørup Nielsen



Protesters raise placards in a rally for press freedom in Quezon City, Philippines.

Big problems call for big solutions. The logic is clear and so are the examples of coalitions having real developmental impact. Coalition-building within the media and media development sector is increasingly being recognised by donors and media stakeholders for the value it adds.¹ With more than 15 years of experience in instigating and building multi-stakeholder coalitions, IMS has a wealth of experience to share. The early examples of IMS' coalition building efforts mainly focused on coordinating the work of international organisations to harmonise and align their efforts. More recently the focus has shifted to strengthening the capacity of local media and civil society actors to ensure that the national media development agenda is locally owned and led rather than driven by the international aid community. These ideas are a direct reflection of what is already outlined in the OECD Paris Declaration dating back to 2005.²

At an overall level, the list of benefits and positive aspects of building coalitions is long. Through coalitions scarce resources can be pooled to reach shared objectives, individual skills and networks can be utilised for the benefit of all, influence can be leveraged at both national, regional and international levels, advocacy efforts will be broader based and calls for change amplified, the resilience of individuals is strengthened through unity, and activities will be better coordinated to maximise synergy effects.³ There are many reasons for engaging in coalition building and with the space for civic action continuing to shrink and with a crisis in independent media the importance is bigger now than ever.

“Keeping societies open has become an absolute imperative in the world today where we see authoritarian regimes continuously limiting the space of civil society and thus undermining the democratic development. Building strong coalitions has therefore become an approach to these complex global challenges, and there is an emerging and positive realisation that this approach can generate scale, participation and impact,” says Jesper Højberg, executive director of IMS.

This point is also emphasised in a recent report by Nicholas Benequista, research manager and editor at the Center for International Media Assistance, who also points to multi-stakeholder coalitions as one solution since “journalists and publishers alone cannot save journalism.” He writes:

“Multi-stakeholder coalitions are also emerging as a promising way to build strategies for survival. With diverse members brought together by a shared interest in protecting the information space, these coalitions can work across borders and institutional barriers, and at multiple levels from the local to the global.”⁴

A history of coalition building

IMS' coalition building efforts have generally focused on three categories of intervention: Advocacy, emergency and long-term media development.

The examples of coalitions are many and geographically diverse. In Azerbaijan, from 2014 to 2016, IMS was leading a multi-stakeholder coalition of international and regional organisations from different sectors such as NGOs focusing on human

Coalitions and networks are usually difficult to manage because you have competing interests within the group and then there's the challenge of competing for the same resources.



PHOTO: IMS

In December 2018, IMS convened the Regional Sahel Media & Development Network meeting in Niamey bringing together media actors from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger to coordinate activities and information on the challenging context for media.

rights and environmental protection and European financial institutions, which eventually gained so much traction that scores of political prisoners were released from Azerbaijani prisons. In Nepal, from 2005 to 2015, IMS led an annual mission with representatives from a dozen different international media development organisations. Apart from harmonising media development efforts, the group managed, together with IMS' Nepali partner, The Federation of Nepali Journalists, to set the media development agenda in Nepal by leveraging the group's collective size and by consistently following up with yearly visits. These both functioned as learning experiences and a constant moral backing for the local media partners who were gradually capacitated to drive the national media development agenda themselves on issues such as safety and increased professionalism within community media.

Zimbabwe is also a case where coalition building has had long-term effects. Since its inception in 2003 the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) has become a leading media network of organisations and outlets that both strengthens the individual members and has effectively helped shape the national media development agenda and the national media legislation.⁵ An example of a more recently established coalition is the network of independent digital media from the Middle East and North Africa, often referred to as the February Meet-Up Network. IMS helped bring the group together in 2016 for their first meeting and has supported them since. The purpose of the February Meet-Up Network is to strengthen the sustainability of the involved media through the sharing of best practices in relation to business models, content production and in countering government repression.

Common and competing interests

Despite the differences in geography and political, economic and social contexts, the described interventions all share several characteristics. First, coalitions must reflect the shared interests and visions of the involved parties. This may sound obvious, but bringing and keeping actors together demands a substantial element of diplomacy to convince them of the elements unifying them and the positive benefits of working together, explains IMS' Zimbabwe-based Sub-Saharan advisor, Rashweat Mukundu:

“Coalitions and networks are usually difficult to manage because you have competing interests within the group and then there's the challenge of competing for the same resources. In Zimbabwe, what we've succeeded in doing is to emphasise the benefits of working together and the benefits of sharing skills and resources. You need to identify the issues that bring the partners together without necessarily undermining the specific mandate or role of each partner.”

However, what becomes clear in the process of agreeing on a common vision and a strategy is that an outside catalyst is almost always needed to bring the parties together; a catalyst with regional and national insight who has the overview to identify coalition possibilities and political openings. IMS has often played this role with the added value that the organisation has no predefined vested interests is driven by donors according to the "arms-length" principle, but with a rights-based approach.

Long-term investments

A second fundamental element of establishing multi-stakeholder coalitions is the recognition that it is a long-term investment that must be tailor-made for each intervention. In other words, it takes time to bring people together and settle on a way forward in every specific context. In Nepal and Zimbabwe it took years of effort to reach a level of measurable impact. With

CASE / TUNESIA

Statements will not change the world

A Ukrainian proverb goes: "One person is not an army".

Everyone who has worked to promote a case, knows that this is true. We depend on collaboration to make our voices heard, our cases understood.

But why continue to be limited by our geographical box-thinking when sharing experiences? Why not let partners from different regions meet and exchange knowledge and expertise?

This was the thinking behind a meeting in Tunisia in late March bringing together IMS partners from Ukraine and MENA who work with rights advocacy and media law reform. Learning from successful experiences with knowledge sharing across continents on the safety of journalists, the meeting piloted a new cross-regional approach for IMS within advocacy and law reform work while underlining the importance of coalition building:

“Statements and reports will not change the world. In order to make progress, we need to establish coalitions and create communities – we need to collaborate.” says director of IMS, Jesper Højberg.

Around 30 participants took part in the meeting including two Ukrainian experts who shared their experience with coalition-building and successful promotion of law reforms after The Revolution of Dignity in 2014.

The decision to establish a very large coalition of Ukrainian CSOs and experts advocating for reforms in diverse areas, and not confined to a specific right, had a particular resonance for MENA partners as they individually face increasing pressure and isolation.

“To learn about the Ukrainian experience amazed me and opened my eyes to other tools and other possible solutions to the obstacles we face here in Tunisia,” says Nedra Boukesra, who represented the Tunisian media freedom association Vigilance at the meeting.

“It was very concrete, and I think that it can be transferred to Tunisia – that we really can create something similar here.”

Jesper Højberg, director of IMS, and Nedra Boukesra from Vigilance at a meeting in March 2019 between various IMS partners from Ukraine and the MENA region.

PHOTO: GERD KIEFFER-DØSSING



the February Meet-Up Network there was also more than a year of talks and preliminary considerations between IMS and the founding members before even setting up the first meeting in 2016.

Asked about IMS' specific contribution to the process - in addition to financial support - Michael Irving Jensen, Head of IMS' Middle East and North Africa department, says it is all about being available, engaged and asking constructive questions.

"Everything is in the conversation. The conversation is a value added. It's a matter of taking the engagement that we jointly work on seriously," he says and continues:

Everything is in the conversation. The conversation is a value added. It's a matter of taking the engagement that we jointly work on seriously.

"Sometimes it's not clear what the partners want from the beginning, but because there is a continuous conversation, ideas we've discussed develop. And all of a sudden, they are rolling them out. I think this is actually a good example of what conversation can lead to, and why this continuous conversation is valuable," says Michael Irving Jensen.

The continuous conversation ensures that coalitions remain relevant to the involved parties, since the conversations keep affecting the coalitions according to the changing circumstances. This has certainly been the case in Zimbabwe, explains Patience Zirima, coordinator of the Media Alliance

of Zimbabwe (MAZ) and director of the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe:

"The coalition has been instrumental in identifying common priorities and goals for media reform in Zimbabwe. One case in point was a project for the 2018 elections where Media Monitors along with seven other MAZ partners monitored the media and produced analytical reports on their performance, which has been used by partners in the alliance for advocacy and training," she says.

With MAZ, over the years several emerging issues have been on the agenda such as media legislation, basic resource sharing and streamlining of international media aid flows, which has all helped to keep the network relevant for its members. Also, the fact that MAZ has become more institutionalised has made it capable of reacting faster to occurring events such as the national unrest in early 2019 where several journalists needed immediate protection and, with the help of MAZ, were moved to safety outside of the country. In general, the intervention in Zimbabwe has succeeded in having a sector-wide approach instead of a more narrow *journalism only* approach.

"For IMS it's a deliberate decision to support coalitions that seek to improve the framework conditions that independent media need, rather than strictly focusing on training journalists. If proper legislation, business models and security conditions are not in place for media workers then the whole effort could essentially be redundant," says Jesper Højberg.

Securing local ownership

A third important element in ensuring that the coalition building efforts are not in vain, is to secure local ownership. This is in part ensured through continuous conversation, but also through casting and capacitating the right partners in the first place, says Rashweat Mukundu says:

"To support local ownership there is sometimes a need to develop the local capacities. That is why we invest in capacity building

CASE / PHILIPPINES

Nation-wide boost to media safety in the Philippines

“When you look at the issue of safety for the journalists in the Philippines you need to address issues like media ownership, politics and policies in the government, and economic conditions for journalists leading to unethical practices. All of this collectively creates an environment that is not safe for journalists,” says Rowena Paraan, Journalist and Safety trainer for NUJP since 2005 and advisor to IMS.

The Philippines ranks in the top five of the most dangerous countries for journalists according to the Committee to Protect Journalists’ most recent index. The lack of safety for journalists in the Philippines is now being addressed by a multi-stakeholder process on developing a national Philippines Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists (PPASJ), which builds on UNESCO’s UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity adopted in 2012. The PPASJ would be the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific.

In November 2018, the first national multi-stakeholder coalition meeting took place in Manila with more than 80 representatives from 47 civil society, research, media organisations and government institutions actively taking part and

supporting working together to improve the situation for journalists in the Philippines. In the research presented in *Defending Journalism*, a global study released by IMS in 2017 on best practices from seven countries, commitment from a broad coalition of stakeholders across sectors was highlighted as one of the main factors for seeing real impact of national safety mechanisms.

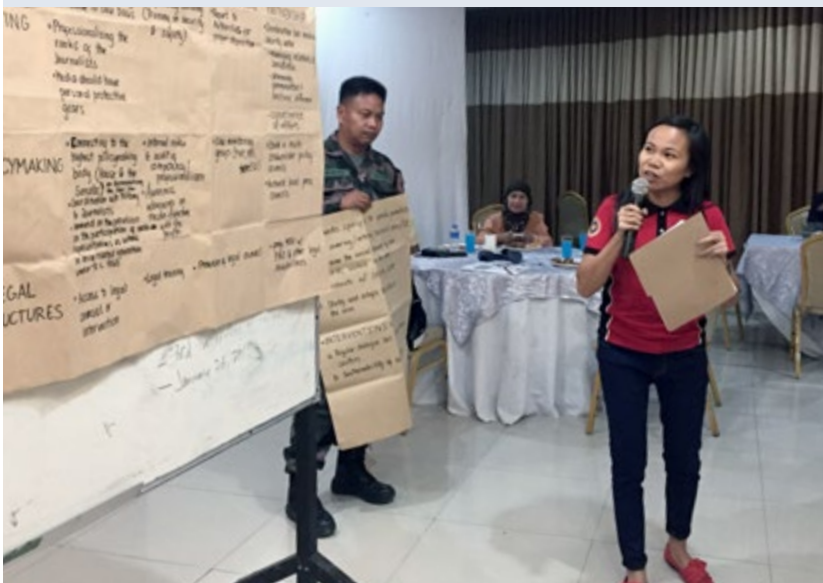
Following the national meeting, three regional consultations across the Philippines have been held with wide-ranging and active participation from the communities.

“The consultations have clearly opened doors between different sectors – security forces, journalists, authorities and civil society – and made them realise that despite different approaches we are working towards a common objective: to improve the safety of journalists,” says Victor Redmond S. Batario, IMS Advisor on Policy Dialogues and Advocacy on Safety of Journalists.

The safety consultations were organised by the Asia Institute for Journalism and Communication and IMS.

Regional consultation on the development of the Philippine Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists in May 2019, Cotabato city, Mindanao, the Philippines.

PHOTO: AIJC



with partners who have the right policy in place and are therefore more likely to take ownership in a contrast to other actors, who might be stronger institutionally, but don’t share the same values.”

Experience shows that local ownership grows from a shared recognition of the cause and the collective benefits and a shared set of values, ethical standards and transparency in the joint operation. However, working to strengthen partners can be seen as an indirect way to try to influence the direction taken by coalitions. It is thus a balancing act for an outside catalyst since it can leave partners feeling that their and mandate is being undermined.

When asking one of the members of the February Meet-Up Network, Ramsey Tesdell from the Jordan-based media Sowl, he is very open about his commitment to the network, but he is also clear about the red lines when working with IMS.

“I do feel ownership towards the network, for sure. It’s really important to me that this network thrives. However, I think it is a really important point that the other organisations that are involved in the network, my own included, would not necessarily be involved if it was donor-driven. If that was the case the whole idea of being an independent media fizzles away,” he says.

Breaking out of the media development bubble

From a funding perspective, supporting coalitions may not always be the preferred solution. There is an obvious clash between the quick results that some back-donors wish to see and the time-consuming engagement that is required to work with and develop locally anchored coalitions.

“Time and again we’ve seen donor support for coalition-building erode or weaken once the initial crisis or international focus is over. However, we must acknowledge that coalition building is a long-term endeavor. It takes time and the results and impact happen through a consistent focus on improving the coalitions,” says Jesper Højberg.

Asia's vibrant media start-up scene was well represented when journalists and media entrepreneurs from across Asia met early May 2019 at the first-ever Splice Beta Festival in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The festival, supported by IMS, consisted of talks, masterclasses and workshops. On the photo people discuss how to develop a membership model for Rappler, an online news site in the Philippines.



PHOTO: ALAN SOON / SPLICE

One example of how IMS has made direct use of its network of international donors to confront this issue is with the February Meet-Up Network for which there initially was no funding. Here IMS acted as an intermediary between the network's partners and an international donor who's focus is primarily on social justice and who was convinced of the initial idea.

Echoing Nicholas Benequista's statement that "journalists and publishers alone cannot save journalism", another way of confronting the crisis in journalism and the issues of funding is by encouraging more North/South collaboration. This is done by more regional collaboration and more cross-sector collaboration and by going outside of the media and media development sector. One such example is the Global Network Initiative, which apart from IMS and other NGO's and CSO's working to improve human rights and access to information, includes a long list of influential tech, telecom and insurance

companies such as Microsoft, Google, Vodafone and Orange.

In a time where technological and political change is constantly challenging media actors and activists around the world, there is a need for a broad partnership and support base for media actors also outside of the media sector. When looking at the bigger picture, coalition building within and across sectors is instrumental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The realisation of all SDG's will rely on populations having access to information they can trust and use in order to hold their national governments accountable to their promises and commitments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Asger Gørup Nielsen is a journalist and IMS consultant

Notes

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#TimesUp for media's gender blind spot

*Underrepresentation of
women in the media is
a serious impediment to
democracy.*



PHOTO: REZA MOHABBATI

"There's no such thing as freedom of expression if it is a privilege of some and exclusion of others," said Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, at the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2018. And yet, the Global Media Monitoring Project shows that women remain severely underrepresented in the news throughout the world. In 2015, women made up only 24 per cent of the persons heard, seen or read about in the newspapers, television and radio news – exactly as they did in 2010.¹

These figures are supported by IMS' own research. The landmark study "Gender in Myanmar News"², conducted by IMS-Fojo in late 2017, found that women only make up 16 per cent of the people heard or read about across TV, radio, print and online news. For example, when one of the mainstream Burmese newspapers reported on the labour rights of over 1000 workers from a garment factory – 90 per cent of the workers being women – they referred to only one female source. "This case is typical of how the media ignores women in Burmese news reporting," comments IMS-Fojo Gender Adviser, Ellie Swindon.

News anchor from Afghan television station Tolo. Afghan female journalists have to overcome not only the general security challenges, but also cultural restrictions and pay discrimination, harassment and threats in the work place.

CASE

Women's voices help to further peace in the Sahel

In the conflict-ridden border zones between the three Sahelian countries Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, combining women listeners' clubs and community radios has proven a solid approach not only for change, democratisation and rural development, but also for countering conflict and consolidating peace.

"We try to avoid that society's social tissue is torn apart," says Aminata Idrissa, a mother of six and the president of a listener's club in the city of Gao in Northern Mali.

A listeners' club is a group of local citizens meeting on a regular basis with the aim of listening actively and discussing the content of community radio programmes and applying any new knowledge or insights in their personal lives and in the community as a whole.

Through IMS' Sahel Programme the clubs and radios are co-creating the programmes: The clubs identify themes relevant to the local populations in their communities, and the radios come to record and broadcast their discussions.

"My vision is, that the clubs will develop the communities; that the clubs are able to debate the problems of their societies and find a

solution or create behavioural change," Aminata Idrissa says with a confident smile.

This has already proven true.

Radio programmes on early marriages and conflicts between farmers and herders broadcast in the lucrative hours where most people are listening (early in the morning, during the mid-day break at 2 PM and in the evenings) have resulted in positive changes and created better understanding.

Both radio and the members of the listeners' club get a lot of reactions from the listeners congratulating them on their programmes.

"Some call us the sentinels of democracy in Gao. If I said there was no impact, I would be lying," Aminata Idrissa says.

As part of IMS' Sahel media development programme, covering the conflict-ridden border zone between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, 20 all-women listeners' clubs have connected with ten local community radios which broadcast the discussions of the clubs.

This is a serious problem not only related to gender inequality but is also a serious impediment to media development and democracy. Indeed, true democracy is contingent on gender equality. This is why IMS has been championing gender equality in and through the media across Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Eastern Europe. Our commitment to gender equality can be summarised as (i) promoting gender sensitive, ethical and diverse media content as a driver of change, (ii) fostering gender equality in media houses and (iii) striving for equitable access to media and information.

Who is afraid of breaking taboos?

In our present times of democratic decay and increasing threats against human rights, innovative, bold, representative and diverse journalism is dearly needed to disrupt echo chambers, open minds, fight gender inequality and challenge persistent stereotypes and discrimination based on race, gender or sexual identity. In recent years, feminist journalism has emerged as an inspiring success story; one that takes on regressive gender stereotypes and stands out from the noise of tabloid journalism and disinformation and stimulates public debate.

In Syria, where the protracted humanitarian crisis has brought disastrous consequences for women and girls, IMS's partner Syrian Female Journalists Network sees an opportunity. Director Rula Asad notices that the breakdown of social structures that typically follows an armed conflict has made it possible for the emerging Syrian media to discuss topics previously not spoken loudly about – sexuality, gender roles, feminism, emancipation of women etc. In that context, IMS is working to end gender stereotypes, empower female journalists and movements, and promote women's leadership in conflict-resolution, peacebuilding and recovery. Supported by IMS, Syrian Female Journalists Network conducted workshops with journalists, feminist activists and scholars, which resulted in a dozen articles – written by



PHOTO: AMADOU / RADIO SONI ANSOUGO, MALI

‘Feminist journalism: political economic, sociological commentary, feminist cultural criticism and women’s first-person narratives and personal essays’

Alyssa Rosenberg (2014)

writer, *The Washington Post*

both men and women – on gender and sexuality in the Middle East.

In Jordan, the IMS-supported podcast *Eib* (“shame” in Arabic) examines how the lives of ordinary people have been affected by society’s gender prejudices and discriminatory stereotypes. *Eib* has become a platform for people to anonymously share their stories about sexual orientation, divorce and relationship, reproductive health, sexual violence and much more. Aya Ali, from IMS’ partner organisation SOWT and producer of the *Eib* podcast, explains that “only in the media, people might find the integrity and anonymity they need to discuss topics that are considered shameful, such as gender-based issues and sexuality.”

Gender-based violence and harassment are rarely openly discussed in society and they remain one of the most widespread and destructive types of discrimination. A culture of silence continues to prevail, preventing victims from speaking out and seeking support and justice. In IMS we have been asking ourselves how media may provide a meaningful response to this challenge? How can documentary film amplify and transform the debate surrounding sexual and gender-based violence

across cultures and taboos? What is the role of media and documentary film in driving social change and raising awareness of sexual and gender-based harassment as a human rights violation, particularly in light of the #TimesUp and #MeToo movements? Those questions became the catalyst for the creation of the theme “No means no”, which was presented for the first time at the Carthago Film Festival in Tunis in 2018. Focusing on the above-mentioned questions, the festival triggered a dynamic debate following the screening of five films from Afghanistan, Denmark, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, all dealing with the theme of gender-based violence.

Reaching the most remote and rural places

While feminist media content is a crucial buffer against misogynist conservative ideologies, ensuring access to quality and innovative media remains a priority focus in the struggle against disinformation and resurgence of obscurantism. Engaging the most marginalised populations and reaching out to women in rural areas are important objectives in both development and peace building efforts and increasingly becoming a focus of IMS’ work.

In this regard, the digital gender gap – the difference in Internet access between men and women – remains a major obstacle for both democratisation and development. According to OECD calculations, women are on average 26 per cent less likely to own a smart phone than men, and the global digital gender gap is 11 per cent. At the same time, the UN University-led EQUALS Research Group reveals that irrespective of a country's overall ICT access levels, economic performance, income level, or geographic location, a gender digital divide persists. The report argues that the gender digital divide widens as technologies become more sophisticated and expensive³.

While Internet reach continues to grow – also among women, low educated populations and in remote areas – radio remains the main source of information and news in the least-developed parts of the world and especially in Africa.

In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger IMS has established women's listeners' clubs where women from the most remote rural communities gather to listen and discuss community-based programmes. Inspired by the programmes, these women then go back to their communities and households to influence a positive change. The listeners' clubs have proven an effective tool in promoting gender equality as a core tenet of democratisation, rural development and peace building.

Development is not only about local action and change. The experience from IMS' work with empowering women in rural areas made its way to a high-level UN forum—the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls was a core theme of the spring 2018 CSW session. IMS shared our best practices and success stories from Sahel and Somalia –and the conclusions of the 62nd session reflected IMS'testimony with the UN and its member states committing to:

“recognising the important role the media can play in (...) empowering women and girls and the elimination of discrimination against and exploitation of women and girls.”⁴

A woman's place is in the media

Robust feminist journalism is needed to resist the current democratic and civil rights backlash, but the question remains: Is there an enabling environment for innovative, female journalists to thrive?

Many women struggle to realise their professional ambitions in the media, facing the absence of work-life balance, prejudices or conservative views on women, the gender pay gap, the lack of female leadership and a glass ceiling, and a disproportionate harassment of female journalists. These were some of the findings from IMS recent research report on women's work conditions in Jordan⁵. Other IMS supported research from e.g. Somalia⁶ and Afghanistan⁷ highlights a public perception that journalism is not an “appropriate” profession for women, resulting in significant social pressure for women to leave the profession or refrain from entering it altogether.

In Africa the proportion of women using the internet is 25% lower than the proportion of men.



PHOTO: CARTHAGE FILM FESTIVAL

IMS introduced the theme on sexual and gender-based violence at Carthage Film Festival 2018 in Tunis - the biggest film festival in the Middle East. Grouped under the headline "No Means No", the theme was presented to a Tunisian audience through film screenings and a panel discussion. In 2019 this thematic approach is featured at festivals in Algeria, Morocco and Palestine.

Other research reveals alarming discrimination. In the UK alone, female journalists earn up to 22.7 per cent less than their male colleagues⁸. Almost a third of female journalists consider leaving the profession because of the threats, intimidation or attacks they endure, and these figures are even higher in fragile contexts and conflict zones. More than a third of female journalists avoided reporting certain stories for the same reason - almost half of female journalists experience online abuse. Many of them indicate the abuse has led them to become less active or even inactive on social media, while it's a crucial part of the job⁹. The voices of far too many female journalists are silenced, which leads to many untold stories. Balanced representation in the newsroom is thus essential to effectively talk to everyone.

How can more feminist journalism emerge without gender equality and diversity in the profession? This is the causal chain that IMS' work strives to address when promoting female leadership and equal representation in the news rooms; when enquiring about fair and equal working conditions in the media profession; when assessing equal pay and analysing the safety conditions and risks specifically faced by women journalists. IMS seeks to bring men into these efforts by changing attitudes among men and boys in order to create lasting improvements for women and girls.

Gender-based violence is one of the gravest and most reprehensible forms of discrimination against women. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination



PHOTO: SWJ

against Women explicitly regards violence against women as a form and manifestation of gender-based discrimination against women, used to subordinate and oppress them. Through its flagship Global Safety Programme – structured around the UN Plan of Action for Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity – IMS conducts research on gender-based threats and develops relevant and responsive solutions and mechanisms. The most recent research examines initiatives on gender-based safety in nine countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Somalia. The research looks into violence against women journalists and the ways in which it is being addressed by a range of engaged stakeholders including intergovernmental organisations and civil society groups, at local, regional and international levels. The main takeaway from the research – that the specific and distinct impacts of human rights violations experienced by women journalists must

be addressed in the broader context of discrimination against women – has become a guiding method for IMS' work.

Global challenges require cooperation from the local to the global level. Consequently, our ambition is to help minimise the major global and local threats and gaps to equality, development, gender equality, inclusion, freedom and democracy. From a media development NGO perspective, this can be achieved through innovative, non-traditional partnerships, increasing duty-bearers' and right-holders' awareness about these challenges – and by encouraging feminist and innovative thinking to address major global risks and inequalities more inclusively, more equitably, and ultimately more effectively.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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In December 2018 the Gender Respect declaration developed by Somali Women Journalists network (SWJ) was signed by 30 media houses across Somalia and four media organisations, as well as the Ministry of Information. The declaration advocates the rights of women in media. IMS-Fojo has worked with SWJ for the past three years. Left to right: Mohamed Adan Seed, Fu'ad Mohamud Mohamed and Bile Mire Mohamed.

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CASE / PALESTINE

The Female Journalists' Club reconciling fractions

"With the amount of attacks on freedoms coming from everywhere, we need to restore solidarity and build coalitions. It is the best response to attacks. We need each other as women. It is not only attacks on media, but also attacks on women. We needed to have this network and this coalition," says Wafa' Abdel Rahman.

She works for Filastiniyat, a non-profit media-advocacy organisation in Palestine, which in 2009 created a Female Journalist Club. The club quickly became the NGO's flagship project and today has more than 600 members from both Gaza and The Westbank.

The Palestinian media scene is male-dominated and patriarchal-led. Women's access to high positions in editorial rooms and management is poor, equal salary are not common and the majority of females graduated as journalists chose to not work as journalists because of the difficult conditions.

Aside from providing a much-needed network for female journalists, the club empowers its members to overcome the bias of the Palestinian media by providing all sorts of capacity building and advocates for improving the conditions for female journalists.

This work recently had a breakthrough, as the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, after years of resistance, not only has recognised the club, but also promised to work for a quota of 40% women in the syndicate.

The syndicate has also asked the club to lead a reconciliation initiative to unify the polarised Palestinian media, which since 2012 has been divided in a Fatah and a Hamas fraction affecting everybody in the industry.

For Wafa' Abdel Rahman, this underlines the legitimacy and capability of the club:

"I am very proud of this. It says a lot. We women, who were not part of the divide, who did not take side against each other but decided to come together and build something different, we are the only ones who can promote reconciliation and peace on the media scene."

Behind the scenes in Filastiniyat's talk show studio in front of Gaza Port, November 2014. The show is hosted by Wafa' Abdel Rahman, Filastiniyat Founder and Director. The show employs only female journalists in the production and hosts only female guests. The show's topical focus is on general news and issues of concern to the Palestinian society at large. From left: Amani Dwedat, camera woman, Bisan Shehadeh, show producer and Suheir Kharraz, reporter and researcher.



PHOTO: FARHIA KHEYRE

Media & elections

– Building coalitions for partnership and media safety

A free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote, but to ensure a participatory process in which citizens have access to the information needed

By Michelle Betz



Members of the Independent National Electoral Commission check the electoral materials before bringing them to the polling stations ahead of Nigeria's general election on 15 February 2019. A total of 73 candidates were on the ballot in the sixth election in 20 years since Nigeria returned to democracy after decades of military rule.

PHOTO: YASUYOSHI CHIBA / AFP

Hacking, leaking, social media manipulation. These are just some of the techniques that foreign actors are using globally to meddle in, and ultimately influence the outcomes of, elections. In the U.S. these techniques were used effectively to sow discord, attack Hillary Clinton and boost Donald Trump in advance of the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections.

In Europe, the Europeans are so concerned about “external forces” trying to influence the EU’s legislative elections in May 2019 that European Union President Donald Tusk backed a call by French President Emmanuel Macron for an EU-wide agency to protect voting from “cyber-attacks and manipulations.”

In last year’s elections in Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa’s main opponent

accused Russians of helping Mnangagwa manipulate the polls. Mnangagwa’s ruling Zanu-PF party denied any Russian involvement in the election.

While elections are perhaps *the* defining process of a democracy or burgeoning democracy to establish the legitimate authority of governments, never before have they been such a target for foreign interference.

In the lead up to the recent elections in Nigeria, the media focused almost exclusively on the two leading contenders – despite the fact that there were over 70 presidential candidates.

A free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote but to ensure a participatory process in which citizens have access to the information needed to cast that vote and to engage in public debate. The media play a critical role in ensuring such participation and are essential to democracy by safeguarding the transparency of the process. A democratic election is virtually impossible without media that is unfettered, responsible and safe. Yet it is precisely these democratic processes that are being undermined due to cyber-attacks and manipulation.

But if elections around the world are more and more prone to interference and violence than ever before with the media not only the targets but also the distributors of malicious or unfactual content, how can media support organisations like IMS work with media around the world to counter these techniques? Can collaborative efforts and partnerships work to counter or at least hold the line against such interferences? If so, how?

Partisan media and horse races

Partisan and party-aligned media are a critical factor in facilitating and exacerbating today's increasingly polarised

environment, an environment that often becomes more acute during election periods. The mere virtue that party-aligned media occupy so much space in the media landscape makes it “difficult for voters to distinguish between valid criticism of one party and biased reporting from a partisan shill.”¹ As a result, voters can easily dismiss “one-sided criticism as biased, thereby enabling extremism and dishonesty” and often creating an ethical dilemma for journalists.² For in striving for objectivity, journalists will often aim for the precise middle ground between covering one party or another simply to avoid a charge of bias.

One way out of this dilemma is to alter the frame through which a journalist tells the story leaving much of election reporting being told through a game frame: journalists reporting elections as a sporting event. News reports become stories about winning and losing and not about addressing issues of relevance to the community. Election campaigns are a game typified by conflict. The potential negative effects of game framing on the functioning of democracy, be it emerging or established, are alarming.³

Evidence from around the world suggests that this is precisely what is happening – and to the detriment of voters everywhere.

As Kenya was experiencing a devastating drought, local media houses were “talking elections only” as opposed to covering an issue that affected millions of Kenyans and one that political candidates also should have been talking about.⁴

In the United States recent research found that “news organisations’ choices to rely heavily on game-frame election stories are dependent on both news-making and political contexts”.⁵ Findings revealed that the highly competitive online environment, opinionated story types and issues focusing on the functioning of democracy fuel the use of the strategic game frame in political news coverage even in non-electoral times.

In the lead up to the recent elections in Nigeria, Africa’s largest country, the media focused almost exclusively on the two leading contenders – despite the fact that there were over 70 presidential candidates.

There are several ways to address the challenges of partisanship and game framing during elections, but they can’t be done alone.

In most countries where IMS works with partners during electoral periods, significant work is done with journalists and editors to ensure there is a clear understanding that journalism is a practice of ethics and that voters’ voices are a critical element to many stories and shed light on issues of concern to the electorate.

Particularly effective in countering partisanship and game framing are collaborative efforts. The cornerstone of the IMS Zimbabwe media and elections programme 2016-2018 funded by the EU and Norwegian government was the collaboration between media and the Zimbabwean government's electoral commission and citizens in both rural and urban areas. In addition, nine implementing partners

Nigerian police officers monitor the counting of votes at Shagari Primary School polling station in Yola, Adamawa State on 23 February 2019 after the polls were closed during the day of the General elections.



PHOTO: LUIS TATO / AFP / RITZAU SCANPIX

CASE / ZIMBABWE

Media election coverage surpasses expectations

Up to, during and after the 30 July 2018 elections in Zimbabwe, media monitoring in Zimbabwe was conducted by one of IMS's implementing partners, Media Monitors as part of IMS' EU and Norwegian funded media and elections programme. The monitoring covered the period from the day the election was announced, May 31, to August 24 when the election results were announced and included a select group of private and state-owned radio, print and television media. The study monitored the representation of political parties, candidates, government officials and the prevailing issues, as well as the professional conduct of the media.

Initial findings from an internal evaluation of the media monitoring, fact-checking and dialogue activities carried out by the IMS Zimbabwe media and elections programme suggested that mainstream media coverage of the electoral process was far better than it has been in the past, even though mainstream media remained polarised and politically compromised. Meanwhile, "alternative" media (mostly citizen journalists and community

media using social media apps) managed, in a relatively small but still significant way, to create a more diverse, less polarised discourse at a more localised level that left audience members (those who participated in the evaluation's focus group discussions) feeling they were far better informed about the electoral process than in the past.

The evaluation found an interesting dynamic around the combination of both fact checking and media monitoring which seemed to act in tandem to hold both media and politicians more accountable for what they were, respectively, reporting and saying. Crucial to this seems to have been the credibility of the fact checking and media monitoring initiatives in question such as IMS-supported Zimfact and, based on this, the way election monitors and editors used and engaged with their findings. This kind of constructive engagement with those with influence has often been missing from previous media monitoring initiatives like this, and it appears that the fact checking and the media monitoring may have re-enforced each other.

Riot police arrive at a hotel in Harare where journalists and international observers gather for a press conference of MDC opposition leader Nelson Chamisa on August 3, 2018.



PHOTO: MARCO LONGARI / AFP / RITZAU SCANPIX

oversaw the monitoring of media elections coverage and fact-checking.⁶ Journalists interacted directly with electoral technicians to understand the election process rather than only focusing on political personalities. In addition, several citizens meetings were held in rural areas with election officers, media and the communities to push for better access to information about elections. The broad collaboration took place throughout the entire election cycle and kept the media focused on issues of public concern.

"We worked closely with civil society organisations, involving them in voter education material," says Joyce Kazembe, from the Zimbabwe elections commission. "We gained better outreach and people were more informed during this election with less polarised media than previous years."⁷

Dis-, mis- and just too much information

Changes in technology have significantly altered the media landscape and how elections are covered; disruptions to digital media are a common occurrence. There were 310 documented shutdowns in Asia alone while in 2015–16 governments ordered internet shutdowns in half of the Sub-Saharan African countries as voters headed to the polls for presidential or parliamentary elections.⁸ Governments often cite national security concerns or fears of the spread of fake election results to justify these shutdowns. However, it is more likely that governments are afraid that citizens will organise protests or expose election malfeasance.⁹ In almost half of the countries where internet freedom declined, the reductions were related to elections.¹⁰

Authoritarian rulers will often, but not always, manipulate elections to ensure their prolonged rule – and this is often through the perceived success of internet shutdowns.¹¹ But to what extent is the social media landscape a legitimate concern for governments and voters alike and what can coalitions do to address these challenges?

Journalists can fact-check all they want but there will be cases where they just won't be believed due to the lack of trust. In some cases, audiences simply don't care.

Social media play a significant role in distributing information (as well as dis- and mis-information) and political campaigning and are essentially non-neutral platforms “which are distinct from, yet interact with, mainstream media”.¹² There have also been changes in how the media interacts with the public, candidates and the campaigns.

Social media has become “a constant megaphone” for political parties to amplify their messages. When those tools are used as weapons or as an instrument of social polarisation during electoral periods the damage ultimately goes beyond the framework of the election.¹³

In Kenya, for example, messaging services such as Telegram and WhatsApp have been used as a tool for both supporter coordination and a means to disseminate party propaganda. Many of these groups were also a breeding ground for the spread of memes, viral media and fake news delivered in formats and themes recognisable “to Kenyan society, such as religion, sensationalism, song, sermons, story-telling, tribal languages and more.”¹⁴ These types of apps are being used more and more in other pre-election countries such as Ethiopia and there is considerable concern that they will be used to spread hate and foment violence.

Fact-checking activities have boomed in recent years. Currently there are 160

fact-checking projects globally, up from 114 just two years ago. Some of these are collaborative, election-related efforts including IMS’s media and elections programme in Zimbabwe. The ZimFact platform, through fact-checking of stories and statements contributed to combating misinformation and ensuring citizens were able to make informed decisions based on accurate and factual information. In some cases, politicians withdrew their claims or corrected their statements after fact-checking on ZimFact. In one case, a government acknowledged that the \$100 million loan sourced from the United Kingdom was specifically a business loan and would not ease the cash crunch as initially implied after being fact-checked.

Other examples include Pop-Up Newsroom *Riksdagsvalet* 2018, which brought together more than 100 journalists to design solutions to assist with monitoring of digital information in the final days of Sweden’s 2018 election. Some of the most successful projects are also some of the oldest: FactCheck.org and Politifact in the U.S.

But such efforts can only go so far to combat mis-information. Perhaps the biggest complicating factor is that of trust. Journalists can fact-check all they want but there will be cases where they just won't be believed due to the lack of trust. In some cases, audiences simply don't care.



PHOTO: ANNA MARCHENKO / TASS / RITZAU SCANPIX

Journalists at Volodymyr Zelensky's campaign office during the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election, 31 March, Kiev. He was later declared the winner.

All eyes on safety

The high stakes of elections also mean that journalists often face heightened safety risks – be it at the hands of security forces, politicians or voters. Here too, the importance of coordination and working with like-minded partners is critical.

Afghanistan has long been one of the most dangerous countries for journalists, yet many of these risks were largely mitigated during the October 2018 elections: only two incidents of violence against journalists took place. IMS's partner, the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee, attributes this to their longstanding advocacy efforts towards coordination between journalists and security forces prior to elections and ensuring the country's journalists were prepared both operationally and equipment wise. Also key to this success were partnerships involving a range of stakeholders including journalists, security forces, government officials and local organisations.

IMS's work in West Africa provides another example of how such partnerships are critical in ensuring enhanced security in a region that is often characterised by violent conflicts during national elections. "In such cases, journalists should ordinarily be able to look towards law enforcement agencies for protection. However, experience has shown that in many cases, law enforcement agents are either complicit in the attacks on journalists or are disposed to turn a blind eye to the violence."¹⁵

To address this, IMS has partnered closely with the Media Foundation of West Africa (MFWA) and national partners in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mali and most recently Nigeria to implement dialogues between media and security forces, conflict sensitive election reporting and safety training. Pursuing such a multi-stakeholder approach has meant that all involved – media, security forces, regional and local media bodies – have buy in and are thus committed to ensuring the safety of media workers.

Best practices

Much can be learned from the work of IMS and its partners during electoral periods: Collaboration – whether between parties sometimes at odds, but all significant to media’s ability to cover the elections, is fundamental to improving media’s election coverage. Elections are a participatory process involving a holistic partnership approach with a variety of actors that include security services, technology, the media sector, electoral officials, and political operatives.

The Zimbabwe programme’s successes likely would have been muted had it not been for the partnership approach, but perhaps more importantly the dynamic around the combination of fact-checking and media monitoring activities which together held both politicians and media accountable for what they were respectfully saying and reporting.

Putting media workers and police officers together in a room is often met with a fair amount of skepticism by both parties and in some cases raised voices, heated discussions and passionate disagreements.

What the IMS experience in West Africa has shown is that building relationships of trust is a long term endeavour which must not start and end with elections. In Nigeria, follow-up meetings between police and media have taken place after the spring elections where only a few cases of man-handling of journalists were reported and no arrests of journalists were made. In Ghana, the media and police continue to work together and are currently developing a Framework on Police-Media Relations and Safety of Journalists aimed at improving relations between the two institutions and protecting the safety of journalists building on the dialogue in that country in late 2016. In Sierra Leone media and police continue to actively use their WhatsApp group to discuss issues such as media pointing out the need for additional police presence to address the huge crowds attending football matches and for police to share breaking news with the media.

CASE / AFGHANISTAN

Protecting journalists a benefit for voter turnout

“The media can promote transparency and inform the public of the manner in which the elections are conducted.”¹⁶ That’s according to the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) director, Najib Sharifi, who argues that media coverage is essential for the success of elections in Afghanistan. Yet Afghan media workers work in one of the most inhospitable safety environments in the world.

It was with this in mind that IMS’ elections-related intervention in Afghanistan was largely focused on safety issues and media monitoring – due to the country being the deadliest place for journalists in the past year with 13 journalists killed in 2018. Journalists are frequently targeted by ISIS, Taliban and government security forces.

A fully accessible and functioning hotline was in place prior to the October 2018 elections and provided instant security updates, safety instructions for journalists in need while also receiving journalists’ reports and feedback for immediate resolution or for future legal actions. AJSC also prepared in advance for evacuations and attacks against the media community.¹⁷ This

type of work, however, requires a longer-term vision: the ability of AJSC to set up an effective country-wide, locally-anchored mechanism is the result of a 10-year partnership with IMS.

Prior to the electoral period, AJSC had trained journalists in safety, risk management as well as conflict-sensitive election reporting. Gender-based safety challenges were addressed on AJSC’s social media platforms, which reached some 3,500 journalists, to empower female journalists to cover the elections despite the conservative environment in rural areas, where women often are targets of assaults.

AJSC also provided some media houses with body armor and helmets so that journalists had an opportunity to report directly from polling stations, which are often targeted by terrorist organisations.

According to one journalist “the media’s conflict sensitive coverage of elections not only minimised how terrorist attacks could discourage of voters, it encouraged people to go to the polling stations and cast their votes.”¹⁸

During the Afghan elections in October 2018, IMS worked with the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee to improve the safety of journalists



Additional best practices gleaned from IMS's work include the use of good journalism training, professional media monitoring, and fact-checking entities including social media to identify fake news, mis- and dis-information and to map the balance of coverage between political candidates and issues.

Such monitoring and fact-checking in tandem can help serve to hold decisionmakers accountable for their statements, can be a guide for media and be a media literacy tool for audiences.

Clearly, the key to most of these successes is collaboration, be it collaborative journalism efforts to cover elections, collaboration between partners who are sometimes at odds but critical for free, fair and non-violent elections; and collaborations with civil society and electoral bodies to ensure that citizens have the information they need to make informed decisions.

Perhaps the most important lesson learnt from IMS' efforts to support the improvement of election coverage is that timing is key. To properly ingrain new and better practices in journalists to improve election coverage and cement new collaboration with other media stakeholders like election commissions, police and political entities, these efforts must span the full electoral cycle and ideally go well beyond. New relationships and new media practices need time to take hold and for mutual trust to develop in order to deliver to citizens the information they need to make informed decisions.

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CASE / WEST AFRICA

Media and police find common ground during elections

Most problems arise when security agencies are trying to conceal information while the media is doing all it can to expose it. "I have learnt to minimise anything that could heighten friction between the police and the media". That was the reflection of Muhammad Abbah Sadiq, a public relations officer with Nigeria Police Service, following his participation in a media during the media-police dialogue in Abuja earlier this year.

For many of the journalists, this was their first opportunity to sit alongside police officers and find ways to better serve their communities by working together.

Both police and journalists said the Abuja workshop was eye-opening. "Security agencies need to come clean in all their official engagements. That's crucial to aiding their transparency with the media. Most problems arise when security agencies are trying to conceal information," said one Nigerian police officer. He went on to add that the seminar "opened his eyes to the need for greater synergy between police and media".

Journalists also said this gave them an opportunity to forge new relations with the police in their states and ideas on how to work and collaborate with security agents.

"It opened a new vista for me in the areas of attending to personal safety while covering dangerous and volatile assignments such as elections," one journalist said. For most of the journalists, this was their first exposure to physical and digital security training.

Over the past three years, IMS and the Media Foundation West Africa have partnered to carry out a series of dialogues and trainings across West Africa in the run-up to elections to promote better relations between media and police. The most recent activity was held in Nigeria in early 2019.

"In Nigeria, we try our best to ensure a good relationship with the police," said Nigerian journalist Kemi Yusufu, who took part in the Abuja dialogue with police. Often, during elections, media houses send more journalists into the field, and this can create friction. But when we met in February 2019, we decided to be honest with one another on how best to manage ourselves and we have had follow-up meetings since. This relationship-building must not start and end with elections."

Similar activities were undertaken by the MFWA, IMS and local partners in Ghana (2016), Liberia (2017), Sierra Leone (2018) and Mali (2018).



Strengthening police and media relations for the safety of journalists and peaceful, free and fair elections in West Africa

MAY 2018 | A joint initiative by MFWA and IMS in cooperation with ECDWAS



The publication "Strengthening police and media relations" was published in May 2018 by IMS, showcasing a number of media and police dialogue initiatives in West Africa.



PHOTO: MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / SCANPIX

Shut out by mainstream media and too scared to hustle on the streets, Bangladesh's main opposition party has been reduced to social media lobbying for votes in this week's

national elections. A Bangladeshi street vendor sits next to a posters of the election candidates in Dhaka on 25 December 2018.

Notes

- 1 Buchler (2016).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 For further discussion on this see: Schmuck, D. et al. (2016)
- 4 ALNAP (2018), p. 267.
- 5 Dunaway and Lawrence (2015).
- 6 Media Matters (2018), p. 1.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Bryant (2018).
- 10 Murray (2018).
- 11 Freyburg and Garbe (2018), pp. 3896-7.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Shahbaz (2018).
- 14 See for example Freyburg and Garbe (2018).
- 15 Verdegem and D'heer (2018).
- 16 Iyengar (2019).
- 17 Mutung'u (2018), p. 16.
- 18 International Media Support (2018a), p.7.
- 19 See for example Pingree, RJ et.al. (2018).
- 20 IMS (2018b).
- 21 Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (2018), p. 3.
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Independent media: between algorithms and a hard place



Globally, media have been beaten at their own game of curating news and information by new technology. Is regulation of global internet companies the answer?

By Andreas Reventlow

Through the ubiquitous presence in search engines, social media, and messaging, artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms play a dominant role in how information spreads and who gets access to it. With tailored content and targeted advertising that rely on the constant tracking of the behaviours and interests of users, large internet companies like Facebook and Google have proven a remarkably friendly environment for deceit — for disinformation, hate speech, and propaganda — and for the censorship of dissent.

The amplification of deceit and decline of diversity

Relying on massive data sets about our behaviours and interests, AI shapes the information environment of the individual, influencing the dissemination of knowledge in opaque ways that prioritise engagement

and clicks to maximise profits.¹ Sustaining that engagement requires personalisation that reinforces biases and which in some cases incentivise the promotion of inflammatory content and disinformation.² At the same time, by seeking to optimise for virality and engagement, algorithms will typically deprioritise news and information with lower levels of engagement, sending independent media content into oblivion.³

Disinformation is used by all sorts of actors trying to manipulate public opinion, including those who want to dissuade people from vaccinating their children as well as governments and politicians trying to influence who you vote for in elections — whether it's in their own country or abroad.⁴ As the last couple of years have demonstrated, disinformation has become almost emblematic of — and a contributing factor in — the collapse of public trust in the media and public

PHOTO: NOAH BERGER / AFP / RITZAU SCANPIX



Employees in Facebook's "War Room," on 17 October 2018, California. The unit at Facebook's Menlo Park headquarters is the nerve center for the fight against misinformation and manipulation of the largest social network by foreign actors trying to influence elections in the United States and elsewhere.

institutions. Internet companies like Google and Facebook bear part of the responsibility for enabling this change by facilitating and optimising for how news and information can travel virally and enabling manipulative and extreme material to find large audiences.^{5 6} Another part of the problem, of course, is the age-old issue that governments and others in power very often are just not telling the truth and actively seek to mislead and manipulate.

The rise in disinformation and the decline in the individual's access to a diversity of independent views have been met globally with a shared sense among governments and civil society that internet companies are not doing enough to rein it in, and that they have failed to take responsibility for undermining and eroding public trust in independent media and public institutions.

The risk of censorship

Globally the go-to response has been heavy-handed regulation, imposing large fines on platforms when they fail to restrict

certain types of vaguely defined content. But while disinformation poses real threats to people's ability to engage in public discourse and take part in democracy, the same can be said for regulatory responses that may very well result in censorship and a loss of diversity in voices from marginalised and suppressed groups. In addition, many of the proposed types of regulation outsource the problem to companies, potentially turning them into the roles of adjudicators of fact and fiction – paradoxically giving internet platforms even greater power over the rules of public expression.

Disinformation is used by all sorts of actors trying to manipulate public opinion [].

While TV remains the most popular news medium in Myanmar, social media - and Facebook in particular, is catching up, shows a study conducted by IMS-Fojo and Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation, published in May 2018. The study also finds that people prefer local media and news on topics related to their everyday lives and challenges. The picture below shows community radio reporters receiving training.



PHOTO: CHRIS PEKEN

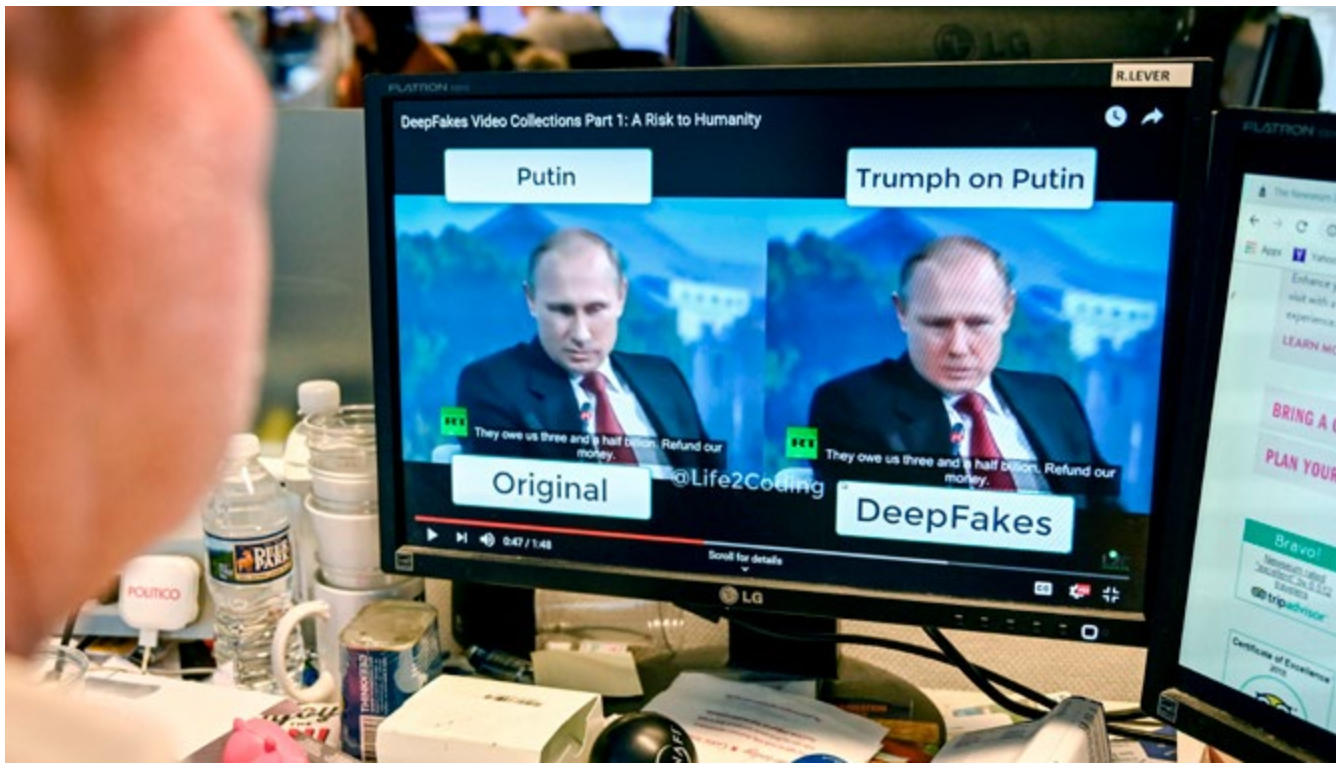


PHOTO: ALEXANDRA ROBINSON / AFP / SCANPIX

An AFP journalist views a video on 25 January 2019, manipulated with artificial intelligence to potentially deceive viewers, at his newsdesk in Washington, DC. "Deepfake" videos that manipulate reality are becoming more sophisticated and realistic as a result of advances in artificial intelligence, creating a potential for new kinds of misinformation with devastating consequences.

Heavy-handed regulation has in large part been driven by Europe, where countries such as Germany, Italy, France and the UK have seen it as their responsibility to get companies to crack down on disinformation, political manipulation and "terrorist" content. Leaving it largely to companies to enforce, adjudicate and remedy, governments have been unwilling or unable to think creatively and holistically about broader policy agendas that include civil society and public institutions such as the judiciary, or of finding new ways to incentivise compliance with the rights of users.⁷

Unsurprisingly, the European frenzy to regulate has fed into legislation that could undermine press freedom in countries where independent journalism struggles to survive against government pressure. In these parts of the world, the global enthusiasm to ban disinformation has served as pretext for repressive practices for authoritarian regimes who themselves are among the leading practitioners of spreading false information to undermine their opponents

and those who dissent. In such settings, the go-to response for a lacking ability to control disinformation and dissent from spreading has often been to shut down access to certain platforms or the internet in its entirety.

Algorithms designed to detect "extremist" content or disinformation have shown some promise, but they remain nonetheless largely unable to take into consideration cultural context and irony or to avoid undermining freedom of expression or restrict people's right to access information.⁸ As companies slowly inch closer to an inadequate response that combines human analysis and machine-learning, an overriding concern remains. If you rush to prohibit disinformation outright, rather than finding a combination of technical, educational and legal solutions, this will undermine the right to freedom of expression in the long term. It will make demands of platforms which will push them to become arbiters of truth, increasing their power in the process.⁹

CASE / SYRIA

War crime footage censored as "terrorist" content

Attacks on civilians, torture and the use of barrel bombs and chemical weapons feature heavily in the videos that IMS' partner Syrian Archive since 2014 has downloaded from YouTube and archived. In addition to highlighting the reality of the conflict, the footage also documents crimes in violation of fundamental rules of war and could serve as evidence in future legal cases. More than 1.5 million items of digital content have been downloaded and archived so far.

But in 2017 something changed. The footage of potential war crimes and crimes against humanity began disappearing from the platform faster than Syrian Archive could download them.

YouTube was coming under increasing pressure by governments to remove so-called terrorist content – "content that promotes terrorist acts, incites violence, or celebrates terrorist attacks" – and the platform started deleting content that could fall under this description.

To deal with the enormous amount of content (users upload nearly 450 hours of content every minute), YouTube relies in part on Artificial Intelligence to identify whether videos violate their content standards. Although troubling footage of violence and death may be allowed if it has "educational, documentary, scientific or artistic value", automatic removal tools are unable to tell whether videos have such value or whether they simply break the rules.

Furthermore, with the risk of facing huge fines, the video platform is often more likely to err on the side of caution, censoring content of critical importance for documenting the atrocities of war and for delivering justice to those affected by it.

As long as ineffective regulation and minimum transparency and accountability towards the public is the norm, a small handful of private technology companies will continue to decide whether the public should have access to such critically important information. Until that changes, Syrian Archive will be running against the clock to continue to preserve all the material they can.

Social media platforms have become accidental archives, but takedowns have proven they are no place for long-term, safe storage of materials depicting human rights violations.

Diversity, privacy and accountability

Because the amplification of platforms and the pervasive nature of disinformation have undermined the public's trust in both the media and public institutions in such fundamental ways, regulation of content is not going to solve the problem alone. The core dynamics of the problem need to be addressed by a broad policy agenda, which includes at least three core areas: furthering access to a diversity of views and fostering competition amongst media and technology platforms; protecting the privacy of citizens; and promoting transparency and accountability of internet companies.¹⁰

Here, independent media have a critical role to play. The most obvious one is perhaps the need for providing people with a greater diversity of news and information gathered at all levels, from hyper-local to national, regional and global. Currently, internet companies like Facebook are the main gatekeepers of news and information – and in some cases such as Myanmar virtually the only gatekeeper.¹¹ This immense power is at odds with independent, public-serving media where little to no advertising income is available. Because the relationship between market power, competition and the problem of disinformation is partly structural, imposing regulation to counter monopolistic internet platforms will also affect the ability of citizens to access information¹² – whether they are in New York or New Delhi. Examining how to regulate internet platforms along the lines of how public utilities like transport and electricity are regulated has been suggested numerous times by leading experts.¹³

Breaking up monopoly-like entities like Google or Facebook will not automatically provide access to more diverse news and information, but with the right measures alongside it, it could help foster a more competitive landscape.¹⁴ It would be a landscape that would need strong media platforms supported by civic institutions that promote public service values as opposed to just commercial profit.¹⁵ For something like this to work, critical independent



ILLUSTRATION BY SYRIAN ARCHIVE, 2019.

media must be available in every region of the world which would require governments to, for example, organise a public media trust fund that could redistribute financial contributions to journalistic initiatives, something which a variety of scholars have raised on numerous occasions.¹⁶ Addressing the fact that over 70 per cent of global internet advertising revenue is captured by Facebook and Google alone, this could go a long way in restoring the strength of struggling media around the world – media like IMS’ independent partners in Somalia, Syria and Myanmar which, whether they like it or not, rely heavily on social media platforms to drive traffic to their content and reach their readers, viewers and listeners.

An indirect, but major, contributor to the problem of disinformation, are the business models of the large internet companies which rely on technology designed to get as much personal data from us as possible. The short version is that the less privacy we as users have from the prying

eyes of the platforms, the more precisely algorithms can target content and ads.¹⁷ This means that better tools for promoting our right to privacy are key allies in addressing the problem of disinformation and promoting a diversity of views.

GDPR influence

Europe’s current regulatory framework for data protection, the GDPR, is one promising tool. Although it originates from Europe, it has wider, global implications because companies serving EU citizens may choose to adopt some of the standards for their worldwide operations and because legislation tends to get exported to other regions over time. Although it may be peripheral to our understanding of what makes independent media flourish, the GDPR is vital because it offers citizens more power in the face of dominant internet companies. It provides, for example, very effective ways of restricting automatic profiling of individuals

A demonstration of facial recognition technology from the artificial intelligence company SenseTime in Shanghai, on 17 April 2018. In a major ethical leap for the tech world, Chinese start-ups have built algorithms that the government uses to track members of a largely Muslim minority group - the first known example of a government intentionally using artificial intelligence for racial profiling, experts said.



The elephant in the newsroom when discussing the impact of new technology on media is how far behind the curve the media is when it comes to utilising new technology.

which limits the ability of internet companies to make certain inferences about people without their knowledge. This is important because it is not raw data that allows companies to personalise advertising and content – it is inferences about us, our personalities and behaviours that make their algorithms tick. European data regulation will not solve the problem of disinformation, but it is an example of the many tools that are necessary to restrict the ability of internet companies to drive a profit by ignoring people's right to privacy and by undermining independent media's ability to thrive.¹⁸

The need for greater transparency and accountability of internet companies towards users is underlined by the asymmetry of knowledge between the two. Ad-driven disinformation, for example, flourishes because people have very limited ways of knowing from where paid political advertising comes from and how it is targeting them. Efforts to address this should go hand-in-hand with broader transparency efforts undertaken by internet companies, such as exposing bot accounts, and making explicit where and how the use of AI technology is used on their platforms.¹⁹ Experts suggest that companies could, for example, innovate in how users are made aware when they are subject to an AI-driven decision making process, such as when AI is used to take down content they have posted.

Of traditional methods that promote transparency and accountability of powerful entities, independent media is perhaps the most celebrated. And for good reason: investigative journalism has played a massively important role in exposing the wrongdoings of global technology companies as they have prioritised profit over the rights of their users. Over the years, the most powerful people in tech have been challenged when journalists have exposed the truth and shed light on scandals like Cambridge Analytica. The global conversations we are now having on holding companies to account and enacting well-designed regulation, are driven in part by such exposés and a global sense that more needs to be done. Enabling media in contexts where democracy is fledgling and where freedoms and rights are more explicitly suppressed, to shed light on the practices of governments and technology companies and how they affect people, is crucial. That is why developing strong and independent media and promoting the right to freedom of expression everywhere is so critically important.

Artificial intelligence in the newsroom

The overlooked elephant in the newsroom when discussing the impact of new technology on media is how far behind the curve the media is when it comes to

utilising new technology. Media globally has been overtaken and beaten at its own game of curating news and information for their audiences. Occupied with lamenting the negative fall-out of the profit-driven ambitions of internet companies, we as journalists, freedom of expression and media development professionals sometimes neglect to think about the wonders of innovation and how the media can benefit from technological advances.

Independent news media will not reach its full potential in a reality where algorithms increasingly dominate if the news media itself is not actively developing solutions that shape that reality.²⁰ As Jarno M. Koponen from the Finnish national public broadcasting company YLE puts it: “*Innovation and digitalisation doesn’t change the culture of news media if it’s not brought into the very core of the news business.*”²¹ He is not the only one who holds that view. Countless scholars and media practitioners have noted in recent years that the news media has never grasped the opportunities of going fully digital in their approach to user experience, business logic and content creation.²² Although the media has certainly changed in response to the internet, the change has been reactive rather than proactive.²³

Content insights

Independent news media – and especially those who produce independent content – have one thing that internet companies do not have: they dominate the journalistic content creation process and have specific expertise of how that content works. By combining this knowledge and insights into their audiences, independent media can make use of AI to assist in content creation as well as in how people consume their journalism. In his research, Koponen provides an excellent point of departure in his research for how to do this.²⁴

How about an intelligent notification system that sends personalised news notifications, optimising content and its distribution as it is being produced and serving content on the fly in the form of voice, video, photos, or augmented reality

material, based on users’ preference and context?²⁵ Or algorithms that diversify our news experiences instead of creating filter bubbles – understanding what people are unlikely to have seen before by knowing what they have already seen.²⁶ By turning the dynamic and logic of personalisation upside down, news media could make a recommendation engine that actually amplifies the diversity of independent voices, instead of limiting it, Koponen suggests.²⁷

These ideas complement how journalists can leverage AI to help them create better journalism: knowing how stories are connected based on their tone of voice or other metadata such as location or sources and helping journalists anchor their content into a more meaningful context faster and more accurately. AI solutions can help journalists detect and analyse hidden biases in their reporting and determine whether certain groups of people are over-represented, whether sources represent a diverse selection of society in terms of ethnicity, gender, and location.²⁸

All of these ideas are not going to be possible or relevant for every media outlet in the world, not least those in countries where markets are under severe pressure, or where repressive authorities represent the first and biggest hurdle. But, as Koponen argues, tomorrow’s independent news media will need to embrace at least parts of the technology which have so forcefully upended their businesses and couple it with their knowledge of the political, social and cultural local context, of their audiences and their journalistic expertise. This raises the bar for the field of media development as well, which needs to make sure it is able to support such endeavours when they are relevant and possible. With a thoughtful and well-designed public policy agenda seeking to counter disinformation and by developing AI solutions and other technological tools that can aid rather than hinder independent media, there is plenty of room for optimism and excitement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Notes

- 1 The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2018), p. 7
- 2 Tufekci (2018)
- 3 The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2018), p. 7
- 4 Bradshaw (2018), p. 3
- 5 Tufekci (2018)
- 6 The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2018), p. 7
- 7 Kaye (2019), p. 4
- 8 The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2018), p. 14
- 9 Kaye (2019), pp. 44-47
- 10 Ghosh (2018)
- 11 Roose (2017)
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ghosh (2018)
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Kaye (2019), p. 64
- 16 Ghosh (2018)
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Koponen (2018)
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Hermida (2017)
- 23 Koponen (2018)
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Möller et al. (2018)
- 27 Gershgorn (2018)
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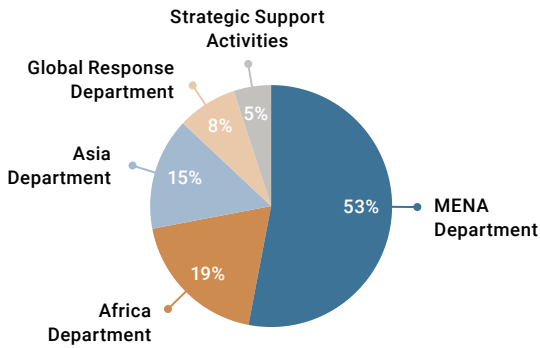
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UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2018), *The A/73/348, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression: Note by the Secretary-General, Mapping AI’s Impact on Freedom of Expression*, available from <https://freedex.org/mapping-ais-impact-on-freedom-of-expression/> [Accessed 30 April 2019]

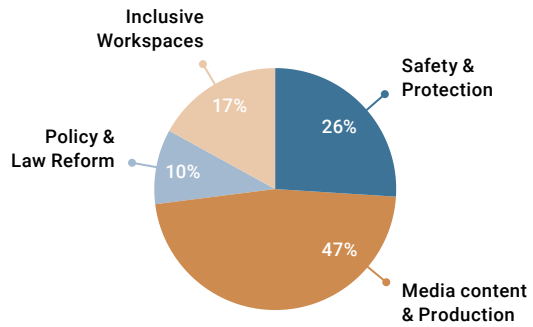
Financial overview 2018

IMS is generously financed by Nordic donors, the EU and global foundations.

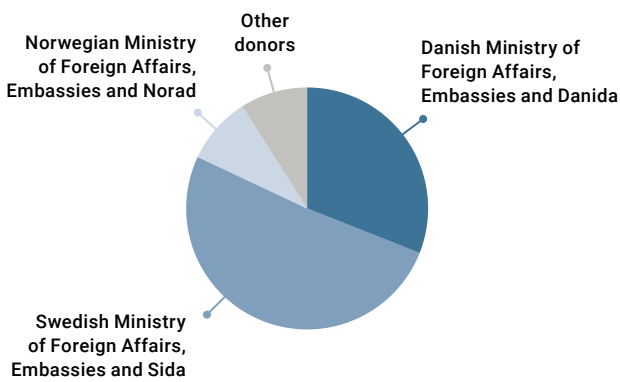
IMS funding / departments



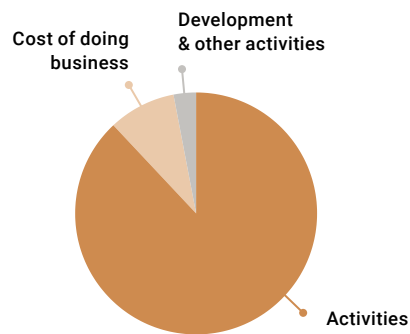
IMS activities / service lines



Funding



Expenditures



	EUR	%
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Danida	5,759,432	31%
Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Sida	9,463,618	51%
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Norad	1,577,696	9%
Other donors	1,584,671	9%
Other income and funding	1,344	-
Total funding	18,385,417	100%

	EUR	%
Activities	16,160,640	88%
Cost of doing business	1,588,794	9%
Development & other activities	635,983	3%
Total expenditures	18,385,417	100%

IMS quick facts*

* 2018

101

STAFF MEMBERS

31

NATIONALITIES

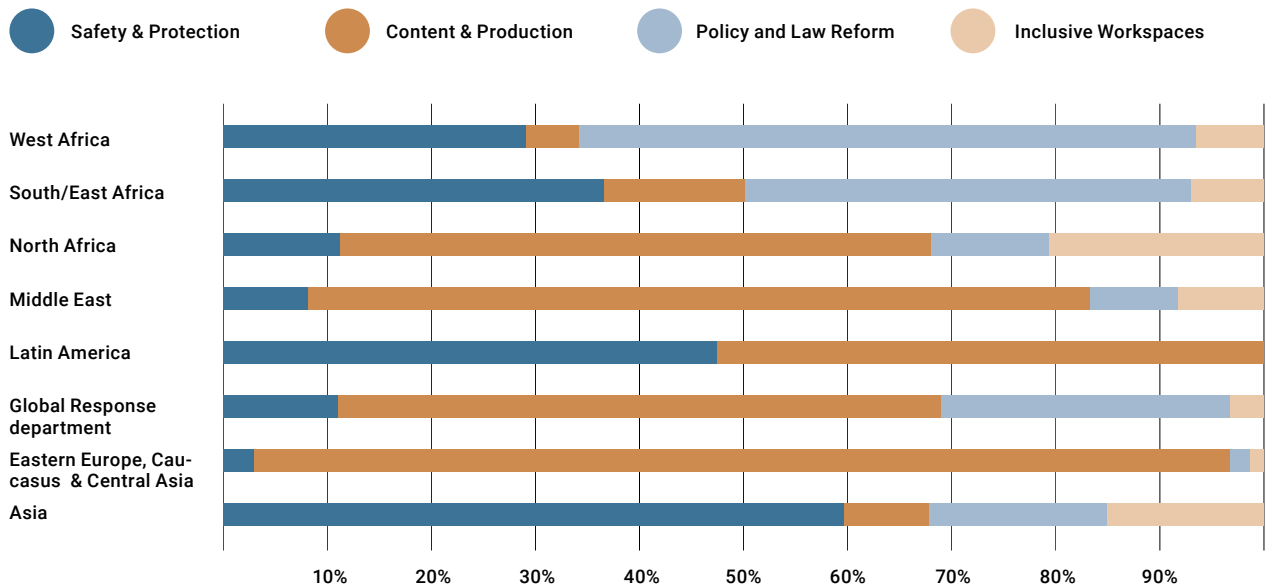
55%

WOMEN

41

STAFF AVERAGE AGE

IMS Work/ Geographical Areas



IMS Board 2019

Andrew Puddephatt

Chair of the Board, International Media Support,
Executive Chair, Global Partners Digital
UNITED KINGDOM

Gene Kimmelman

President and CEO, Public Knowledge, Georgetown University
UNITED STATES

Holger Rosendal

Head of Legal Department, The Association of Danish Media
DENMARK

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DENMARK

Edetean Ojo

Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda
NIGERIA

Moukhtar Kocache

Independent advisor and consultant
LEBANON/UNITED STATES

Tine Johansen

Vice-president, The Danish Union of Journalists
DENMARK

Charlotte Flindt Pedersen

Director, Danish Foreign Policy Society
DENMARK

Public events



PHOTO: ANGELIQUE SANOSSIAN

IMS marked World Press Freedom Day in May 2019 with a debate in Copenhagen. First comment from the audience: 'THANK you for having an all-female panel.'



PHOTO: IMS

At CPH:DOX 2019 IMS and MENA filmmakers were present with a range of activities focused on the MENA region and topics such as life during war, sports, children.



PHOTO: IMS

With a banner saying 'No democracy without free media' IMS set up shop in a tent for a few days during the Youth Democracy Festival in Copenhagen, September 2018. The aim was to engage in meaningful conversation and make visitors aware of the importance of freedom of expression in any democratic society.



PHOTO: IMS

Copenhagen, 4- 5 March 2019: IMS, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CSO network Globalt Fokus held a conference on strategies to counter the shrinking space for civil society and media. Gulnara Akhundova, IMS Head of Global Response, took part (middle).



PHOTO: IMS

As part of the International Training Program implemented by IMS, Niras SE, Fojo and Global Reporters, IMS hosted a study week in Copenhagen for media VIPs from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe during which they met online media Altinget inside the Danish Parliament.



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IMS (International Media Support) is an NGO working for global press freedom supporting local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

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