International Media Partnerships

This report is based on a meeting on
International Partnerships hosted by International Media Support
in Copenhagen on 24 and 25 September 2009

Contents

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the discussions and findings from the 'International Partnership Meeting' held in Copenhagen in September 2009, as well as the best practices and lessons learnt from organisations engaged in Partnerships over the past years.

Representatives of twenty one international media support and press freedom advocacy organisations met to assess the experiences of working together in Partnerships, and explored ways to further improve collaborative support to media in countries affected by conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

This report has three main parts:

–   The first provides a brief overview of the history, background and rationale for the creation of Partnerships.
–   The second consists of a summary of the discussions held during the meeting in Copenhagen and the experiences and lessons learnt by the participating organisations, with each sub-section highlighting focus areas in terms of lessons learnt and vision for the future.
–   The third section lists potential conclusions, recommendations and follow-ups for further discussion and refinement amongst involved organisations.

What is a Partnership?
The term Partnership can have a number of different connotations. For the purpose of the meeting, the term was used to describe a process of collaboration and cooperation amongst national, regional and international organisations engaged in media support and press freedom advocacy activities in seeking to increase the impact of their activities and avoid duplication in a specific country or on a given theme.

Over the past years a number of organisations have worked towards building and participating in various Partnerships. However, this report does not seek to only reflect the lessons learnt and best practices of one or another organisation, and recognises that each has a different set of institutional criteria that makes processes they engage in or lead unique. In this regard, the goal is that this publication serves as a starting point for discussions amongst a wide range of organisations and can be further jointly shared understanding, and where appropriate define tools and methodologies, for Partnerships.

1 Background

1.1 The need for partnerships

During the 90s, media assistance became a growing sector in international development cooperation strategies in open and post-conflict countries, as well as in transitional states, whilst focus on press freedom as a crucial element of democratic development and good governance has also grown. In the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Africa, most stakeholders have affirmed the need for "media assistance", although it often differs from what they consider their priorities. Whereas one actor was setting freedom of expression as a prerequisite of peace-building and democratisation, others conceived media assistance as an educational or communications initiative.

The heterogeneity of intentions by donors and implementing agencies in the field of media resulted in a wide variety of outputs, sometimes with short-sighted and non-sustainable approaches, or with overlaps and inefficiencies to the detriment of the development of an environment conducive to an independent, professional, pluralist and sustainable media sector.

Professor Monroe Price observed that the major resource for enhancing an enabling environment for free media is "indigenous talent because, ultimately, the answers must almost always be local." One approach is to ask what forms of assistance are most useful in strengthening local media and, following that, what tools exist to facilitate an enabling environment for effective media reform.

As some of the gaps and failures in the international media support became clear to those stakeholders involved - whether donors, international specialised organisations or national media partners - a process to create a system to tackle the weaknesses began.

In 2003, a seminar on "Assistance to Media in Tension Areas and Violent Conflict" took place in Vaxholm, Sweden, organized by SIDA and UNESCO. It brought together a number of specialised NGOs, UN agencies and donors to discuss various experiences and perspectives on assistance to media.

On the occasion of the 2004 World Press Freedom Day, the participants at the UNESCO conference on Support to Media in Violent Conflict and Countries in Transition in Belgrade, agreed on a variety of best practices on media assistance, and especially invited the international partners to "co-ordinate their responses for greatest effect." The push towards better harmonisation and coordination was further pursued by donors also in the name of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

At that stage, it was clear that Partnerships were a sine-qua-non modality in addressing any field of cooperation, and especially media assistance because the challenges of carrying out media development, press freedom and freedom of expression promotion demand complex and extensive collaboration involving national, regional and international actors.

Genuine Partnerships show ability to prioritise and a practical will to align efforts with nationally set demands. Coming to a consensu s on needs, priorities and strategic approach must be a collaborative process. For training,

infrastructure, policy, lobbying and advocacy activities, Partnerships are a means to ensure increased impact.

1.2 Pilot partnerships

As a consequence of the above-described awareness on the need to improve coordination and harmonisation of media support for greater effect, a process of collaboration among media support and press freedom organisations began. For many of the organisations present at this meeting, this process took the form of building Partnerships, for countries such as Tunisia, *Liberia* or *Nepal*.

Many of the Partnership processes in which IMS was involved were established around so-called "international missions" such as for *Liberia*, *Togo*, *Mexico*, *Nepal* and *Sri Lanka*, dealing with a combination of media development and press freedom. This approach was derived out of recognition that in complex situations, it was difficult to separate media support from press freedom, with the two often greatly overlapping. In those contexts where press freedom advocacy was having the desired impact, media support activities (such as professionalisation or institution building) would be required to help fill out the Freedom of Expression space being created, whilst in countries where the Freedom of Expression space was being reduced, media support activities were needed (such as safety or support to exiled/ underground media) to defend the dwindling space.

International collaboration mechanisms have also been set up for international and national media organisations to compliment and coordinate with one another more effectively, such as those used in Belarus and *Zimbabwe*.

The beginning of this process can be dated back to 2003, when a group of media assistance organisations initiated a consultation process in *Liberia* between Liberian, West African and international actors to develop and test a Partnership approach to post-conflict media development in the war-torn region. Twelve international and regional media support organisations jointly engaged with local *Liberian* media actors to assess the media development challenges in the post-conflict setting. This resulted in the drafting of strategic priorities, including professional training, infrastructure reconstruction, media law reform and a number of others areas. The role of media in the peace process was not specifically recognised in the peace agreement, but the presence of international media organisations helped put media on the agenda.

In *Nepal*, the "Royal Coup" in 2005 was followed by calls from national and international media and freedom of expression organisations to engage and act. Since then five subsequent missions have visited *Nepal*, each with a specific focus and objective aimed at supporting an environment conducive to a pluralist, independent and sustainable media sector. The consistent attention and follow-up over the last five years in *Nepal* by the mission group has helped produce notable improvements for media in the country.

In *Sri Lanka*, political developments over the past years have shown the ability of repressive regimes to silence an otherwise professional media. A Partnership mission in defence of press freedoms took place in 2006, with four missions having taken subsequently. The focus of these missions has been on advocacy to improve the press freedom situation, as well as building safety mechanisms to improve the working environment for media. The Sri Lankan experience has also raised the difficult question of whether building safety and pursuing advocacy are mutually reinforcing activities.

In *Mexico*, in April 2008, twelve international and regional media and freedom of expression organisations visited the country as part of an international advocacy mission to address the dangerous environment under which journalists are working. Focus was on protection, self-censorship and impunity and the agenda was determined by national Mexican actors. The mission helped bring international attention to the numerous murders of journalists and media workers, as well as the situation of almost total impunity in *Mexico*. The feedback from the local media community is that the international mission report was useful in their advocacy and lobbying efforts.

In the case of *Zimbabwe*, in 2005 national media and international media organisations met in South Africa to discuss common needs and challenges and to formulate a Zimbabwean strategic platform for a media sector programme, including the exiled media. The priorities identified in the strategy and the mechanisms established for ongoing consultations between national and international partners have since guided the support of the media inside and outside the country.

International coordination and collaboration has also been pursued under country specific Partnerships in *Colombia*, *Gambia*, *Sudan*, *Togo*, and the *Maldives*, with processes currently underway to build Partnerships for *Afghanistan*, *Honduras*, *Nigeria*, *Philippines*, *Uzbekistan* and elsewhere.

Amongst others, the regional and international organisations that have engaged in those Partnerships mentioned above, as well as others, have to date included:

1. ARTICLE 19
2. Civil Rights Defenders
3. Committee to Protect Journalists
4. Danish Union of Journalists
5. Deutsch Welle
6. European Federation of Journalists
7. Foundation for Press Association
8. Freedom House
9. FreeVoice
10. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
11. Heinrich Böll Stiftung
12. Hirondelle Foundation
13. Index on Censorship
14. Institute for Further Education of Journalists - FOJO
15. Institute for War and Peace Reporting
16. Inter-American Pres Association
17. International Federation of Journalists
18. International Media Support
19. International News Safety Institute
20. International Pen
21. International Press Institute
22. International Publishers' Association
23. Internews
24. IREX
25. Journalists for Human Rights
26. Media Development Loan Fund
27. Media Foundation for West Africa
28. Media Institute of Southern Africa
29. Media Rights Agenda
30. National Endowment for Democracy

31. Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa
32. Network of African Freedom of Expression Organisations
33. Open Society Institute
34. PressNow
35. Radio Netherlands Training Centre
36. Reporters Without Borders
37. Rory Peck Trust
38. South Asia Media Commission
39. Southeast Asian Press Alliance
40. UNDP
41. UNESCO
42. World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
43. World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers
44. World Press Freedom Committee

In addition to this, based on the country where the Partnership has taken place, there have been an even greater number of *national organisations* involved. As an example, in *Nepal*, where the Federation of Nepali Journalists was the lead organisation for the Partnership, more than twenty others national organisations were also actively engaged in the process.

1.3 Purpose of the meeting in Copenhagen

Since the first Partnership missions in *Liberia* and *Nepal*, the mechanism has been continually refined and consolidated. The Partnership approach has not been about levelling the playing field amongst national or international actors or between themes, but recognising that the challenges facing media and press freedom are best acted upon in a focused, coordinated, and strategic manner. What works in some countries may not work in others.

Solidarity and genuine Partnership has in most cases provided national partners with a moral boost and an incentive to also better coordinate their actions. International partnerships have also sought to instigate pressure on governments with weak human rights records and has also ensured more substantive impact of activities through addressing the multiple overlapping and mutually reinforcing fields found within media at once.

However, among Partnership participants, there is awareness that the challenge of measuring impact remains, as well as the issue of ensuring an effective follow-up and continuity. The more the Partnership approach grows into a systematic response to critical situations in a given country, the more the issues of structures for collaboration and measuring impact need to be addressed.

In order to address these questions, there was a wide consensus among Partnership members that a specific gathering was needed to review achievements to date and begin to explore the following questions:

- How is the 'joint action' approach most effectively used to support local media?
- How can Partnerships be improved and how can media organisations ensure that they remain relevant, effective and flexible in dealing with media development?

2 Main themes of discussion: Lessons learnt and key considerations

Building a successful Partnership requires mutually agreed modalities that support joint strategies and actions from beginning to end. Over the course of the two-day meeting, participants assessed good practices and lessons learnt from existing and past Partnership processes.

The following sections of the report summarise the assessment and vision discussed by participants, with the aim of improving the sustainability and impact of the Partnerships.

These sections are based around the main thematic areas presented in the conclusions of the meeting and serve as a starting point for the further elaboration of the Partnership model. They do not offer set guidelines on how Partnerships should be pursued, but rather issues for reflection and further refinement by all actors involved. One key reoccurring point made during the meeting was that different countries demanded tailor-made Partnerships. The findings outlined in this report therefore may be usefully applied in some contexts and not in others.

2.1 Building partnership structures

Lessons learnt

Consultation is the very foundation underpinning sustainable accomplishments in the media development sector. "As a group it is clear there is a need to ensure that there are proper preparations and follow-up to what we do in terms of working with national partners", said Jesper Højberg (IMS). Therefore, pre-mission objectives and expected outcomes need to be clarified in order to build sustainable and locally-owned processes.

An example of good practice mentioned during the meeting was the Partnership for Media and Conflict Prevention in West Africa that initially sought to establish a systematic approach to identifying the challenges and needs of the media in *Liberia* and Ivory Coast, and has later also addressed *Gambia* and *Togo*.

In this case, the partners agreed to engage at three levels which involved: a) information sharing of activities in West Africa, b) jointly identifying media concerns in West Africa based on this information, c) establishing the long-term needs of the media community and mobilising their support.

In *Liberia*, the pre-agreed strategy paved the way for defining a *joint strategic media development framework* and cooperation on a number of activities, including media policy reform, training, the *Liberia* Media Centre and more.

However, a weakness of the pre-planning phase was the lack of a *fundraising strategy*. "The low levels of funding available to the partnership impacted negatively on the ability of the partners to implement proposed interventions", said Edet Ojo (Media Rights Agenda). "We created expectations that we were unable to fulfil. If we do not have serious programmes to follow up our missions, then we are in trouble" he said. As a sort of response to these observations later in the discussion Gordana Jankovic (Open Society Institute)

emphasised the West Africa Partnership would also have benefited from involving donors more proactively in the mission from the very beginning.

In was also noted that there must be clarity from the outset as to what a Partnership was supposed to achieve. In this regard *three types of Partnerships* were mentioned during the meeting, including:

Advocacy Partnership – aimed at pursuing lobbying and advocacy related objectives with national or third party governments, or multilateral bodies. Such processes are normally focused on Freedom of Expression, press freedoms and safety issues.

Emergency Partnership – aimed at providing rapid and flexible support to a media community as a result of conflict or natural disasters. Such processes could have a broad range of focuses, including conflict mitigation, infrastructural/ professional support, raising awareness, humanitarian information and so forth.

Media Development Partnership – aimed at building holistic broad-based support for the development of a media community over a longer timeframe. Such processes could target media policy and institutional building, as well as professionalisation and sustainability issues.

It was noted that these three types of Partnerships are not mutually exclusive, but rather in any given country they many run either in conjunction or in parallel with one another.

The need for *pre-established follow-up mechanisms* was another key concern voiced by many of the participants. Sarah de Jong (INSI) stressed that the lack of predefined resources stopped the needs on the ground from being met and that the lack of interest and commitment to follow-up activities hampered outcomes. Moreover, the absence of well-defined follow-up mechanisms in place from the outset of a Partnership was also pointed out as a weakness in the joint efforts in *Mexico* by Agnes Callamard (Article 19), which was a mission that was otherwise largely successful in putting the spotlight on the Mexican government's responsibility vis-à-vis widespread impunity for crimes against reporters.

The discussion on the lack of adequate follow up was also picked up by Steve Buckley (AMARC) on the case on *Nepal*. While acknowledging that the missions brought high-level attention to the problems of media in the country, he considered the lack of clear vision on follow-up meant that local partners were unable to initiate projects.

While assessing *Sri Lanka*, Jacqueline Park (IFJ) highlighted the need for a Partnership to have in place a process for investigating and reporting on issues in order to have *sustainable advocacy efforts*.

Jesper Højberg (IMS) said that IMS had been hesitating to "institutionalise" the processes around Partnerships, including establishing fixed processes and criteria, because of the threat this might pose to the functional relations and processes already in place. Mogens Schmidt (UNESCO) agreed to this approach, adding that the *Partnerships should not be overly formalised*, as this might impact on their flexibility. Oliver Money-Kyrle (IFJ) also warned against over managing the Partnership process, and that one of the successes of the processes to date was its flexibility and adaptability.

A discussion was also held on the *optimal size of Partnership groups*. For instance, Binod Battharai (IMS) spoke about the missions to *Nepal* and that

too large a group, although a strong collective voice, can be logistically difficult to manage and difficult to accommodate in terms of different interests and priorities. A large number of partners can result in the lowest common denominator deciding the course in mission reports and statements. Jacqueline Park (IFJ) also agreed that large missions can be unwieldy, whilst Jesper Højberg (IMS) remarked that sizable international missions could offer advantages in terms of visibility, such as in *Mexico*.

Key considerations

1. Though realising the need to remain adaptable, pre-partnership considerations should include a flexible check-list of issues for discussion, such as agreement on the type and objectives of the Partnership (advocacy, emergency or media development), information and communication processes (reports, blogging, etc), accessing funding, commitment for follow-up, and so forth.

2. Pre-partnership consultation processes should involve the development of overarching objectives, interlinking with those of local partners and international donors.

3. Possible areas for follow-up activities should be identified in advance, to ensure a broad understanding of the direction the process might take (although flexibility is required in changing these if required).

4. Dialogue with donors and their involvement should be secured from the earliest juncture.

5. Pre-agreed fundraising strategies should be place early on, thereby helping organisations fundraise from their activities, ensuring a comprehensive approach and avoiding duplication.

6. A clear idea of the structure, roles and expectations of the members of a Partnership is necessary from the outset.

7. The overall process of Partnership building should remain as a loose network, flexible to adjust to the different scenarios and environments.
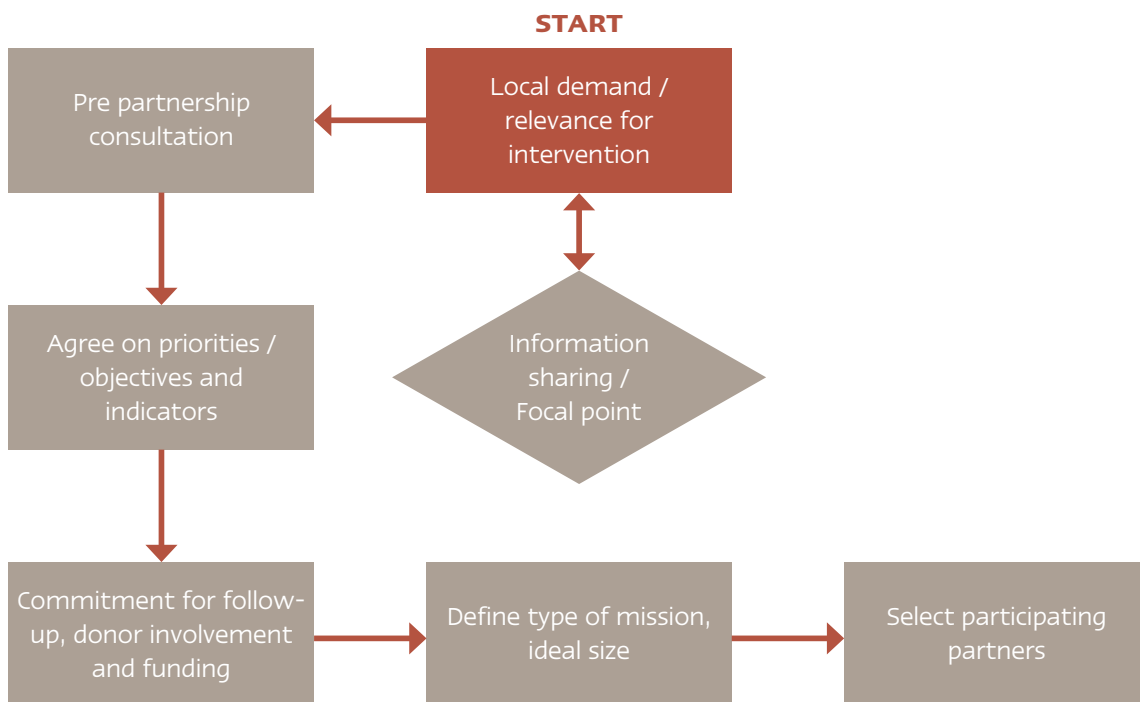
> *A suggested flexible pre-partnership checklist:*
>
> - Consult with broad spectre of potentially interested international organisations on developing a country-specific Partnership
> - Share background information and field research about the target country
> - Jointly identify the threats and needs of FoE and media community in the target country
> - Map competencies and roles of national actors in the target country
> - Consult with potential national partners in the target country
> - Engage in dialogue with donors
> - Build a strategy for the overall Partnership, including the structure, organisational roles, expected duration and exit strategy
> - Clarify objectives, outputs and outcomes of individual actions/ missions, including indicators for measuring impact
> - Designate focal points/ organisations responsible for facilitating different activities under the Partnership
> - Identify focal points in each partner organisation as part of a coordinating group

- Agree on funding strategy with partners and donors
- Agree on information sharing and reporting processes and standards
- Ensure priorities are coordinated with donors and national partners
- Agree as much as possible on potential areas for follow-up activities in advance

Based on suggestions made during the meeting, a conceptual model for the development of Partnerships could be as below:

A conceptual model for building Partnerships

START

Local demand / relevance for intervention

Pre partnership consultation

Information sharing / Focal point

Agree on priorities / objectives and indicators

Commitment for follow-up, donor involvement and funding

Define type of mission, ideal size

Select participating partners

2.2 Target countries and national partners

Lessons learnt
The identification of a target country should ideally start from local demand. In connection with this, Steve Buckley (AMARC) felt that there was a need to *improve the process of country selection*, which was ad-hoc and sometimes resource-driven.

Moreover, there needs to be clarity and transparency on the *reasons why certain national partners are selected* to act as the local facilitator to a Partnership, based on the needs of the group and the type of intervention to be carried out. There also needs to be room to invite new members into the group.

Jacqueline Park (IFJ) voiced concern over the fact that *international missions can change the local dynamics*, pushing local actors into taking on roles they are not comfortable with or experienced with handling. In addition, it can warp the balance between national groups, artificially empowering one or another.

Gordana Jankovich (OSI) added that international organisations should *make more use of local capacity* and not ignore potential national partners because of their poor language or presentation skills.

It was also recognised that national partners *did not necessarily have to agree on all issues*. One lesson from *Nepal* is that at a local level it was not really a natural alliance, but the organisations came together for the purpose of facilitating the International Partnership and its missions. Jacqueline Park went on to say that IFJ works hard to create unity and in fact there is often a thin line in promoting alliances that are not natural. Internationals therefore need to be careful when they go into a country that they respect the organisational structure on the ground. Thomas Hughes (IMS) added that whilst respect is needed, the internationals must recognise that their action will influence that of the national partners, and that by building cooperative relations, national counterparts would be encouraged to do likewise.

Within this framework, Steve Buckley said there is also a general need to rethink the North-South dynamic and to employ more *independent in-country experts* to work with and support Partnerships and their missions.

Another issue raised was that in order to ensure the sustainability of Partnerships, it was crucial that there be local ownership and inclusion. The experience to date was that at some point the international organisations would have to ensure a hand-over of the Partnership process to national actors as and when the funding and institutional focus of these organisations came to an end. If there was not a realistic hand-over and commitment to the process, then the benefits derived from coordination and collaboration could not continue. Moreover, the international organisations should remain alert and responsive to calls from the national partners about their needs as and when they 'take over' and drive Partnerships.

Key considerations

1. The process of identification of target countries should be undertaken in a more collaborative and transparent manner, where possible involving regional and national counterparts.

2. Although there should be no restrictions or limitations placed on the actions of organisations, some basic flexible standards about the steps required for identifying and selecting target countries could be useful.

3. National partners should be identified based both on their legitimacy to play such roles within their own communities, as well as their abilities to administratively and logistically take on such roles. In this regard, a proper assessment of the competencies of national partners should be undertaken.

4. The ability of national partners to absorb international missions and whether international partner organisations should encourage their partners towards a national alliance should be assessed on a country basis.

5. The development of a Partnership strategy and identifying activities and priorities for fundraising, project development and capacity building should be done in coordination with national partners.

Suggested countries for 'new' Partnership processes:

During the course of the meeting a number of countries were suggested for consideration for which to build Partnerships. These include:

Azerbaijan
DR Congo
Ethiopia
Honduras
Italy
Nigeria
Pakistan
Philippines
Thailand
Venezuela
Vietnam
Yemen

2.3 Information sharing and coordination

Lessons learnt

The structure of communication and information sharing amongst partner organisations was a recurring theme through the presentations and discussions at the meeting. It was clear that a one of the *largest obstacles was the lack of communication* amongst international partners and international and local partners.

For instance, in the case of the West Africa partnership experience, Edet Ojo (MRA) said that the mechanisms put in place for systematic sharing information among partners and coordination of partnership activities were insufficient. This was the case despite the fact that an explicit provision was contained in the strategy paper for the Partnership. According to Edet Ojo one of the reasons for this was that a few partners did not feel sufficiently involved and/or did not to secure the funding needed and therefore dropped out. Regular communication would go a long way in helping local partners, said Steve Buckley (AMARC), for instance with the translation into local languages of mission reports.

Key considerations

1. Partnering organisations should ideally seek to share as much information about their planning and ongoing activities with others.

2. Mechanisms for systematic information sharing and coordination of activities on a regular basis are needed.

3. Agreements should be in place for how information materials are produced and published, including 'live' online content.

Suggested steps for information sharing and improving coordination:

During the meeting a number of mechanisms for systematic information sharing were proposed, including:

– Regularising annual Partnership meetings to discuss individual countries and issues of cross-cutting or strategic relevance
– Skype conferences with focal points and designated minute-takers
– Setting up a website or wiki with documents for a Partnership
– Establishing an e-mail list with all partners to send out regular updates
– Identify one focal partner organisation responsible for centrally managing communication
– Translate mission reports into relevant languages
– Ensure better national and international media coverage of Partnership activities and mission reports

2.4 Donor engagement and fundraising

Lessons learnt

Discussions at the meeting focused on the need to engage, nurture and maintain donor interest and commitment throughout a Partnership.

The ability to successfully *fundraise can determine the success or failure* of a Partnership approach. However, a key question here is whether by choosing to work together organisations are undermining or strengthening their ability to access funds.

Mark Harvey (Internews) stated that there is an important job to be done in *donor education and lobbying.* A lot of initiatives are running into trouble because there is no interest from donors on the ground. Advocacy and lobbying are therefore essential components of any Partnership.

Decentralisation of development aid amongst donors, such as in Scandinavia, is making it easier to access funds locally, said Jesper Højberg (IMS). However, in the United States the situation is opposite and Mark Whitehouse (IREX) said that much of the decision-making was done from Washington DC. Moreover, political lobbying was also important, as depending on which country the report addresses, it may capture the attention of Congress and put pressure on the donor agencies.

The issue of how to access EU funds was also raised by Mike de Villiers (IREX). Belarus was used as an example of how IMS and other actors are currently feeding into the EU's human rights dialogue with the Belarus government, thus perhaps providing an opening for closer collaboration with the EU.

Finn Rasmussen (IMS) noted that there are no clear categories for media support within the EC mechanisms for financial assistance. It is either linked to human rights or other headlines, and suggested that media organisations come together to lobby the EU to establish a specific category for media support.

Linking country media development strategies with the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) could be a way of getting donors on board and

matching priorities. According to Mark Harvey (Internews), Oxfam, Save the Children and Red Cross have done just this, which has been especially useful in connection with conflict zones. This would be a way to categorise media support.

Bart Djikstra (FreeVoice) suggested aligning and linking country media development strategies with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a way of getting donors on board and matching priorities.

In reaction to this, Thomas Hughes (IMS) voiced concern about the connection between Freedom of Expression (FOE) and the MDGs, as he feared this involved having to jump through too many hoops to make this plausible argument. Therefore, in addition to the MDG's, he suggested framing media development within the area of good governance and human rights, which would have a clearer and stronger direct connection.

Mogens Schmidt (UNESCO) emphasised that while the MDGs is a big issue for UNESCO, it is also slightly difficult. "We target MDGs through education, but when we point out that FOE is important for democracy and dialogue, it is a difficult sell. We have tried to use World Press Freedom Day to show how FoE is fuelling democracy, dialogue and development."

Key considerations

1. Donors should be brought on board in the initial stages of a Partnership and efforts should be made to ensure that activities are tied in with donor strategies and frameworks.

2. A fundraising strategy should ideally be in place early on in a Partnership, so as not to miss opportunities and to have a clear understanding amongst members.

2.5 National capacity building and ownership

Lessons learnt

The outcome of media support efforts has depended largely on the local political circumstances and the ability of local partners to remain united and lead processes. *Capacity building of local partners* to do this and ownership were two key issues raised during the discussion on national inclusion, as a defining component for a successful Partnership approach.

Based on the *Zimbabwe* experience, Gordana Jankovic (OIS) emphasised that international partner organisations should rely much more on the *capacities of local persons and organisations in-country,* as there often existed the required skills and expertise to carry out activities. This would also be a long-term investment.

Vincent Brossel (RSF) also pointed to the need to help local organisations to manage donor funds and strengthen *accounting and financial reporting practices,* which often creates problems between local actors, referring to *Sri Lanka* as an example.

Thomas Hughes (IMS) stated that although the ideal must be to have national and international partners working as closely as possible, and to capacity build and empower the local partners, this may not always be practical. In some situations, *close association with international organisations may bring*

threats against national counterparts. Moreover, some discussions, including funding or leadership issues, may prove counter-productive for consensus building and cooperation amongst actors until a modus operandi for handling such matters is in place.

Key considerations

1. National ownership and capacity building should be primary elements for Partnerships, particularly in areas of programme and budget management

2. Based on a country to country assessment, national partners should be more included in Partnerships

2.6 Assessments and setting benchmarks

Lessons learnt

The *Media Development Indicators (MDI)* developed by UNESCO in cooperation with civil society and endorsed by the Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), formed the basis of the discussion on assessment and benchmarks. Mogens Schmidt (UNESCO) said the MDI are being tested in a number of countries, including Mozambique, Bhutan, Croatia, Maldives and elsewhere. The MDIs serve as a good framework for identifying what needs exist in any given country.

Jesper Højberg (IMS) pointed out that while he found the MDI provided a clear comprehensive structure which also benefits local actors, the indicators should not be used as a check list.

Lars Bestle (UNDP) added that the UNESCO indicators provided a holistic overview, but as an advocacy tool they were not as useful as they are quite technical.

Vincent Brossel (RSF) said that *press freedom country ranking indexes,* as produced by RSF and Freedom House, were useful for advocacy. He stressed that rankings could be used to raise attention. As an example, with Italy was on the same level as Benin, this has created allot of attention. Speaking about the IREX's Media Sustainability Index, Mark Whitehouse (IREX) said this index was developed to give a macro level status to be able to compare countries.

Key considerations

1. Partnerships should make use of existing frameworks both to guide activity selections and as baseline surveys upon which to measure progress.

2. Monitoring and evaluation processes should be agreed, ideally based around the pre-defined objectives and outcomes, and measured against a set number of clearly defined indicators.

3 Conclusion

At the end of the two-day meeting, it was widely agreed that the different Partnerships currently and previously underway around the world were on the whole having positive impacts. However, it was noted that each Partnership was different and was having a different impact.

In particular, there was consensus that the collaborative approach should start from pre-partnership consultations, which should involve setting priorities and objectives matching those of local partners and donors. Follow-up activities should be established in advance where possible, while donors' involvement should come as early as possible, based around an agreed fundraising strategy.

The process of selecting countries should ideally start from local demand, whilst there needs to be more clarity and transparency on the inclusion of national partners. Moreover, more clarity is needed on the fact that there are different types of Partnerships, from one-time advocacy missions to influence a particular event, such as an election, to log-term media development and fundraising processes.

Furthermore, whilst developing country strategies, the international organisations must critically assess the relevance of the Partnership model and its use in that particular country context.

In terms of the Partnership structures, it should remain as a loose network, flexible to adjust to different scenarios. However, in order to improve the Partnership's impact in future, there is a need to work jointly on strategies.

Vital for the functioning of the Partnership model is information sharing amongst partners. Mechanisms for systematic information sharing and a coordination of activities on a regular basis are therefore needed and may need to be overseen and maintained by focal persons/ organisations.

The process of developing models and practices to strengthen national ownership, and local capacity building also needs further consideration and to be prioritised within Partnership processes.

Next steps

Based on recommendations made in the course of the meeting, IMS agreed to identify and propose for discussion a list of countries for future Partnerships. Moreover, IMS would consult with the participants in order to outline an agenda for continued discussions and plan a date for follow-up meetings. In this regard, the Open Society Foundation suggested that the next meeting could be hosted by them and take place in late January 2010 in New York.

Annexes

Annex 1

International Partnership Meeting
Copenhagen 24–25 September, 2009

PARTICIPANTS LIST (alphabetically per last name)

Ms.	Maria	Aslamazyan	Internews
Mr.	Lars	Bestle	UNDP
Mr.	Binod	Bhattarai	
Mr.	Martin	Breum	Consultant
Mr.	Vincent	Brossel	Reporters Sans Frontieres
Mr.	Steve	Buckley	Amarc
Ms.	Agnes	Callamard	Article 19
Ms.	Elisabeth	Cantenys	The Rory Peck Trust
Ms.	Klara	Chlupata	INDEX
Ms.	Lotte	Dahlmann	IMS
Ms.	Sarah	de Jong	News Safety Institute
Mr.	Mike	de Villiers	IREX
Mr.	Bart	Dijkstra	FreeVoice
Ms.	Annie	Games	IFEX
Ms.	Thora	Gehl	IMS
Mr.	Mark	Harvey	Internews
Mr.	Thomas	Hughes	IMS
Mr.	Jesper	Højberg	IMS
Ms.	Susanna	Inkinen	IMS
Ms.	Gordana	Jankovic	OSF
Ms.	Lis	Jespersen	IMS
Ms.	Oktavia	Jonsdottir	IMS
Ms.	Virginie	Jovan	WAN/IFRA
Ms.	Manja	Kamwi	IMS
Mr.	Ronald	Koven	World Press Freedom Committee
Mr.	Oliver	Money-Kyrle	IFJ
Mr.	Lars	Møller	Chairman of the Advisory Council to the Board
Ms.	Helle	Nordberg	IMS
Mr.	Edet	Ojo	Media Rights Agenda
Ms.	Jaquiline	Park	IFJ
Ms.	Anne	Poulsen	IMS
Mr.	Finn	Rasmussen	IMS
Mr.	Johan	Romare	FOJO
Mr.	Mogens	Schmidt	UNESCO
Ms.	Biljana	Tatomir	OSI
Ms.	Barbara	Tronfi	IPI
Mr.	Mark	Whitehouse	IREX
Ms.	Elisabeth	Witchel	CPJ

Annex 2

International Partnership Meeting
Copenhagen 24-25 September, 2009

AGENDA

Thursday, 24 September

12.00	*Lunch*

13.00   **Welcome and introduction**

The past and future for collaborative partnerships
Jesper Højberg – Executive Director, International Media Support

13.30   **Five case studies**
Institutional and personal reflections from international organisations on partnerships in Liberia, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Nepal, as well as discussions and sharing of experiences

Edet Ojo – Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda

Agnes Callamard – Executive Director, Article 19

Jacqui Park – Asia-Pacific Director, International Federation of Journalists

Biljana Tatomir – Deputy Director, Open Society Institute – Media Network Programme

Binod Bhattarai – South Asia media expert

15.30   *Coffee Break*

16.00   **Theme 1:**
The UN perspective on international partnerships
Mogens Schmidt – Assistant Director-General, UNESCO

16.30   **Theme 2:**
The perspective of international membership & representative organizations

Steve Buckley – President of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)

Oliver Money-Kyrle – Projects Director, International Federation of Journalists

17.30   **End of Day**

19.30   *Dinner*

Page 1 of 2

International Partnership Meeting

Copenhagen 24-25 September, 2009

AGENDA continued

Friday, 25 September

9.00	**Theme 3:** **Partnerships and collaboration with established international networks** *Annie Games* – Executive Director, International Freedom of Expression Exchange
9.30	**Theme 4:** **Partnerships and specialized international organizations** *Vincent Brossel* – Asia Coordinator, Reporters Without Borders *Sarah de Jong* – Deputy Director, International News Safety Institute.
10.30	*Coffee Break*
11.00	**Building a shared approach** Facilitation: *Jesper Højberg and Thomas Hughes* – Needs and relevance of partnerships in different contexts – Added benefit to institutional and shared objectives and national partners
12.00	*Lunch*
13.00	**Building a shared approach – continued** – Structures for collaboration and implementation – Ensuring continuity of partnerships and sustainability
15.00	**Summing up**
15.15	*Coffee and departure*

Page 2 of 2