

Annual Report
2022

Collaborating for good journalism



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Caption: *Palestinian photojournalists walk during stormy weather along a beach by the Mediterranean Sea in the southern Gaza Strip, on 19 January 2022.*

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IMS (International Media Support) is a non-profit organisation supporting local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. We push for quality journalism, challenge repressive laws and keep media workers of all genders safe so they can do their jobs. Peaceful, stable societies based on democratic values rely on ethical and critical journalism that aims to include, not divide.
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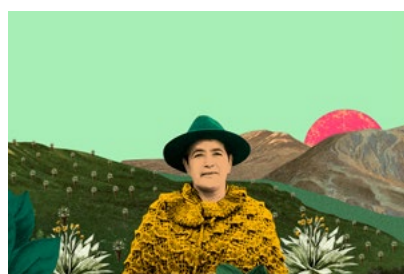
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Working together to protect good journalism

IMS Executive Director Jesper Højberg reflects on another year of democratic backsliding, the consequences for press freedom and why collaboration will better prepare us for the challenges ahead.

Some statistics are so shocking, you assume they must contain a typo. A case in point? Since 2000, more than 160 journalists in Pakistan have been killed on the job. It's a horrifying number made worse by the fact that the deaths of just two victims resulted in convictions.

Amid such impunity, it might be easy to lose faith and believe progress is impossible. Yet in recent years, Pakistan has made major strides towards becoming safer for journalists and media workers. Two years ago, the country's parliament passed a special national law on the safety of journalists. Then, in late 2022, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif promised that his government would enforce the law.

The new law was the culmination of years of hard work by IMS and our partners in Pakistan. It was also a reflection of our shared commitment to long-term goals, our faith in the power of incremental gains and our belief that collaboration is the cornerstone of successful media development.

Of course, a law is only as good as its enforcement, which is why Sharif's promise was particularly meaningful. As was the forum he chose. The prime minister made his pledge at an event that IMS organised in Islamabad to mark the 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UNPA).

The UNPA is one of the most important documents in the field of media development. For a decade, it has been the basis of a global effort to ensure the most important condition that journalists need in order to do their jobs: their safety.

In fact, as underscored by the UNPA, coalitions of key stakeholders are the foundation of improving the safety of journalists. For years, IMS and our international colleagues have worked hard to bring together various actors to safeguard media in countries such as Colombia, Iraq and the Philippines. Our collaborative approach also underpins the role that

national human rights institutions can play to protect journalists and promote media freedom.

That role was as relevant as ever in 2022. Continuing the trend of the past decade, much of the world experienced democratic backsliding, as well as mounting threats to journalism from mis- and disinformation spread by bad faith actors – happening in

“Reaching out to partners and sharing their experience can help keep hope alive when physical and operational threats loom everywhere.”

PHOTO: LARNE POSSELT



Jesper Højberg, IMS Executive Director

the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine – and ever darker days for independent media in Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Against this backdrop, the UNPA remains central to IMS' work – precisely because of its comprehensive and collaborative nature. As our annual report shows, building coalitions and working with many stakeholders goes far beyond the issue of safety.

One such example is the series of roundtable meetings that began in Ukraine in 2022. The meetings, which IMS coordinated with support from the Danish Tech for Democracy initiative, brought together local Ukrainian partners, national authorities and global tech companies to promote quality public interest journalism and

protect it from mis- and disinformation.

Other examples of IMS' ability to collaborate and coordinate, to establish and maintain contact with stakeholders, were legion in 2022. In each case, working with local partners not only strengthened the relationship but delivered concrete results – often after years of making incremental gains in the face of staunch opposition.

For example, in Tanzania, we helped the country's press clubs engage in a series of dialogues with police – a breakthrough that has helped reduce conflict between journalists and police. In Moldova, we re-established an expert working group that successfully blocked anti-disinformation legislation that threatened the freedom of online media. We also helped forge a new

relationship between investigative reporters from Georgia and Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), our long-standing partner in the MENA region.

Strong relationships also underpinned many of the biggest stories produced by IMS partners in 2022. The Febrayer network of independent Arab media organisations shed new light on the explosion at the Port of Beirut in 2020. And two IMS partners – Daraj, in Lebanon, and ARIJ, in Jordan – were part of the global team that published the Ericsson List – a report revealing that Swedish telecom equipment company Ericsson had made tens of millions of dollars in suspicious payments in Iraq.

The value of collaboration in a crisis became acutely apparent in 2022, too. IMS responded rapidly when one of its partners in Ukraine had to relocate its operations to Lviv. Through partners, we were also able to help media outlets forced into exile from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Syria. Meanwhile, our support for partners in Somalia helped them publish life-saving coverage during a drought and a cholera outbreak.

Ultimately, of course, what every relationship has in common is a human connection. Reaching out to partners and sharing their experience can help keep hope alive when physical and operational threats loom everywhere. That kind of thinking has been at the heart of everything that IMS has done for over 20 years – because media development *is* an act of collaboration. Collaborations that ultimately make it possible for local media and journalists to be the ones to report on their reality, be it the conflict in Ukraine, environmental hazards exacerbated by climate change or the reality of displaced people in Burkina Faso.

As we look to an uncertain future, this approach will better prepare us for the challenges we already see – the rapid emergence of AI, the shifting fault lines of our increasingly multipolar world – and the ones we cannot. In this light, working together isn't a choice. It's a necessity. This year's annual report, which highlights our and our partners' work in 2022, celebrates just that.

Jesper Højberg

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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الرحمة لأرواحهم
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IMS 

GOOD JOURNALISM | BETTER SOCIETIES



“In a meeting held by Filastiniyat to listen to the testimonies of Palestinian women journalists of their coverage of the Israeli attacks on the West Bank, I raised a question: ‘Did the Israeli targeted killing of Shireen scare you? Are you having a second thought of career change?’ The 30 women present in the meeting answered with a big ‘NO’. On the contrary, it motivated us or maybe added a new reason to why we should continue the coverage exposing Israeli crimes. Shireen once said: ‘It might not be easy to change the reality, but at least I could bring people’s voice to the world.’ It is the new bible Palestinian women journalists are holding in their hearts.”

Where we work

IMS works where the need for reliable, fact-based information is greatest and the risks to independent media are most perilous: in countries experiencing armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, rapid political change or authoritarian rule.

Programme countries

In 2022, IMS worked with partners in 26 long-term programme countries. Engagement over long periods of time enables the organisation to build up relationships as well as react to opening and closing civic spaces.

- 
- 1 Afghanistan
 - 2 Algeria
 - 3 Belarus
 - 4 Burkina Faso
 - 5 Cambodia
 - 6 Ethiopia
 - 7 Georgia
 - 8 Indonesia
 - 9 Iraq
 - 10 Jordan
 - 11 Mali
 - 12 Moldova
 - 13 Morocco
 - 14 Myanmar
 - 15 Niger
 - 16 Pakistan
 - 17 Palestine
 - 18 Philippines
 - 19 Somalia
 - 20 Sri Lanka
 - 21 Syria
 - 22 Tanzania
 - 23 Tunisia
 - 24 Ukraine
 - 25 Yemen
 - 26 Zimbabwe

Thematic interventions, regional programmes and short-term engagements

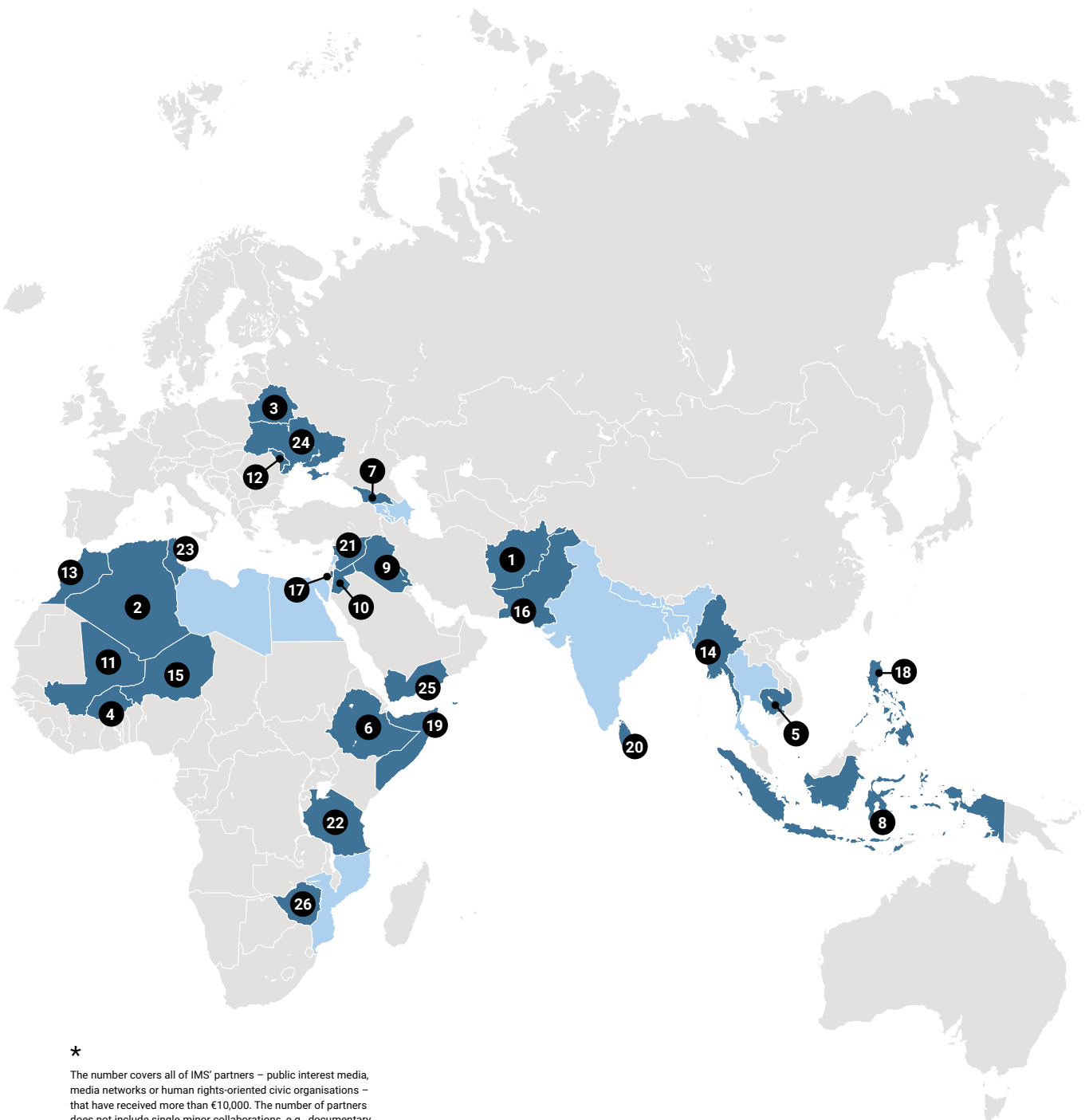
In addition to long-term country programmes, IMS engages in global and regional programmes, thematic interventions and short-term projects, and also responds to crises through IMS' rapid response mechanism.

260

PARTNERS RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM IMS IN 2022*

81%

OF IMS PARTNERS SURVEYED REPORT THAT THE QUALITY OF THEIR MEDIA CONTENT HAS IMPROVED AS A RESULT OF SUPPORT FROM IMS.



★

The number covers all of IMS' partners – public interest media, media networks or human rights-oriented civic organisations – that have received more than €10,000. The number of partners does not include single minor collaborations, e.g., documentary film projects or rapid response.

Recalibrating the interest in public interest journalism

Journalism is in a state of flux, which allows us to recalibrate what journalism is and the contribution it can and should make towards improving societies.

By Clare Cook & David Lush

Clare Cook, Head of Journalism and Media Viability, and David Lush, Senior Adviser, Organisational Learning.

The transformation in how journalism is produced and consumed has blurred the boundaries between journalists and their audiences, and journalism is no longer the exclusive domain of professionals working for specific institutions. This challenges the traditional notion of “public interest journalism”: who is “the public” when media audiences are so fragmented and so diverse? And whose interests is journalism serving? And who gets to decide?

The tendency to frame public interest journalism by its role in relatively stable, western, liberal democracies is rightly questioned by those who try to uphold rights-based, internationally recognised journalistic values in the many illiberal and undemocratic societies where most IMS partners operate.

Often out of necessity, our partners have, for many years, embraced changes to innovate and adapt to their already volatile environments: for example, journalists moving to YouTube after becoming disenchanted

with or made redundant by their former employers; citizen journalists on WhatsApp challenging stale, politicised and polarised narratives peddled by captured mainstream media; women activists given a platform by a leading newspaper to tell their own stories in refreshingly honest and powerful ways; and journalists driven into exile or operating in war zones who strain every sinew of their resilience and ingenuity to keep a light shining in the fog of disinformation, censorship and internet shutdowns.

IMS’ job is to complement and support partners with funds, advice and knowledge, while encouraging solidarity and self-help by facilitating coalitions, networks and alliances between those with similar values and missions, both nationally and across borders.

It is also IMS’ job to scan the horizon for new trends, and to help partners turn these into opportunities, too. For example: how to produce journalism that appeals to young people; how to break out of echo chambers and connect with untapped and underserved audiences; how to cover the climate crisis; and how to make sense of artificial intelligence and to use it to enhance their journalism.

Amid the flux we are beginning to

see emerging common denominators for contemporary public interest journalism. Some are familiar: contributing to debate, informed decision-making and holding power to account. Others point to a welcome reorientation of values, with greater emphasis on inclusivity, diversity and transparency. But some indicate a shift in values: empathetic storytelling rather than aloof objectivity; journalism that contributes to agency rather than journalism that passively observes; journalists in Majority World countries emulating their forebears who aligned with anti-colonial struggles and actively opposed Cold War tyranny.

Today, public interest journalism is more about the qualities of the story and the practices of getting journalism done than the status of the institutions and individuals telling it. The values underlying public interest journalism not only determine how the story is told, but also how public interest journalism can be sustained by being of use to its audiences and being something audiences can appreciate and identify with. This requires journalists, the media operations they work for and organisations like IMS who support them to be in tune and engaged with the interests of the publics that journalists strive to serve.



A woman participates in a mobile journalism training course for internally displaced people in Burkina Faso.

PHOTO: FAAMA FILMS

Partnership with Danish investigative journalists on digital publishing platform

DENMARK – IMS and Danish investigative media outlet Danwatch launched the Digital Publishing Lab, a platform for testing and sharing digital publishing technology solutions with media partners in IMS country programmes.

The Digital Publishing Lab helps media partners while supporting localisation: overcoming common pain-points through testing, evaluating or building tools, such as optimising websites suitable for local contexts, and promoting partner-to-partner knowledge exchanges.

The Digital Publishing Lab is a team of digital and journalism experts from Danwatch and IMS, including IMS Rapid Response, which helps identify situations where new tools or methods could be tested, responding to partner requests

for assistance, while providing best practices from rapid response interventions. For example, the first project was initiated by Rapid Response in a situation where Cambodian newsroom VOD Khmer was forced to quickly convert from radio broadcasting to internet publishing. The lab also works externally with strategic-, project- and technology partners or consultants in programme countries.

Since its launch, the Digital Publishing Lab has worked with Lebanese media organisation Daraj both to optimise their existing site and to launch Moor, a platform on which seven independent outlets from five countries share content focused on water resources.

The lab has also worked with Mozambique's Voz de Cabo Delgado to improve their web templates, making it easier to publish daily news about Cabo Delgado in Portuguese and to publish two-to-three podcasts per week in five local languages, broadening access to information in the region. The Digital Publishing Lab is also assisting African partner CITE in automating social media publishing and demystifying artificial intelligence functionality within newsroom processes.

Using TikTok to reach youth with news from the parliament

SOMALIA – IMS partner Kalfadhi has launched a TikTok account as one of a raft of innovative steps to reach young audiences with content on Somali parliamentary and governance issues. It's probably the first time a Somali media outlet has harnessed TikTok to spread public interest content.

From September 2022, IMS supported Kalfadhi to create a new video-driven content strategy targeting young women and men using TikTok, Instagram and other more established social media platforms in Somalia.

Kalfadhi succeeded in doubling its Facebook followers in the last quarter of 2022, and in gaining more than 30,000 likes on TikTok just two months after launching its account.

Business viability: what it means and what it takes

By Clare Cook

Head of Journalism and Media Viability

Solid business models are needed for media organisations to continue operating. IMS' business viability work helps our partners build resilient outlets.

Business viability is necessary for media outlets to protect their editorial independence and remain part of plural media landscapes. With a few digital platforms dominating publishing opportunities as well as audience attention, our partners find themselves in a business viability quandary. On the one hand, the production of good quality journalism and content is key. On the other, outlets must continually re-evaluate audience needs, content performance and iterations of digital distribution experiments. For independent media to retain the claim of being at the heart of democracy, IMS not only supports the production of fair and unbiased journalism that serves the interests of the public, but ensures the coverage reaches the publics they serve and connects outside like-minded bubbles, confronting prejudices and reaching marginalised rural and peri-urban communities.

IMS' advisers work in long-term collaboration with media partners, offering technical support and assisting them with newsroom transformations. Audience growth and engagement are key to social impact, and we work to help partners understand how they can connect the issues they care passionately about with a public that is often not

yet invested. We have shown that it is possible for media and civil society organisations to break out of their echo chambers and engage mainstream society on issues such as migration and economic rights. And, as the growth for multiple partners in the Middle East and North Africa last year demonstrates, it is not necessary to follow the lead of dominant tech companies. Instead, we are developing models of digital communication that work to spread pro-rights ideas in the societies where they are most needed.

IMS works with partners in all programmes with a view to sustaining their operations and business development, including broadening revenue foundations, moving from legacy platforms to online platforms as audiences migrate to the internet for news and information, and strengthening their management fundamentals. We also support regional networks, as we can see from the growing Asia regional startups' network. We believe in collaboration and work closely with partners on their priority projects, helping them get on top of tech, production and strategy so that they can develop the skills needed to continue to drive long-term growth and find workable revenue diversification.

Young filmmakers keep independent film alive



YEMEN – After completing an intensive mentorship programme with IMS partner Comra Films Academy, seven aspiring Yemeni filmmakers presented moving, personal perspectives of the complex traumas of today's Yemen in their film dossiers.

Comra experts mentored the three young women and four young men through the stages of filmmaking, providing them with grants for their projects, acting as sparring partners in developing their film ideas and guiding them through to the production phase.

One of the Comra mentees received the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture development grant to complete his film entitled "There is No Space", about a man pressured by his family to get married who decides to escape from the reality of a Yemen that has become unliveable. Another mentee was shortlisted for possible support by Doha Film Institute.

Support for Georgian journalists at Arab media forum

GEORGIA and MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

– In December, IMS facilitated a bilateral meeting between two partners, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) and Georgia's Investigative Media Lab (IML).

ARIJ is the MENA region's first and leading media organisation dedicated to promoting investigative journalism across the Arab world.

IML is a newly launched hub for investigative journalism in Georgia.

To facilitate the first-of-its-kind meeting, IMS invited representatives of IML to ARIJ's annual forum, in Amman, Jordan.

At their meeting, journalists from ARIJ provided IML with hands-on advice and shared knowledge and strategic thinking about how to develop an investigative journalism hub.

The meeting also demonstrated how IMS can use its global network to facilitate peer-to-peer learning between partners.

Asian media startup network extends reach



ASIA REGIONAL – An IMS-facilitated network of independent media startups in Asia almost doubled in size, gaining five new members last year to take its total to 14.

It includes media startups in eight Asian countries: Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar and Cambodia.

The network was born at the IMS-supported Splice Beta festival for media in South and Southeast Asia, which took place in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in November 2019 and again in October 2022. The festival, which offers new journalistic ideas and, for some, new avenues of income, attracted more than 400 media startups and experts from across the region.

The network's aim is to provide members with a sense of community and a way to share ideas on collaboration and best practices about business strategy and content production and distribution platforms with like-minded organisations facing similar challenges.

Having received support from IMS to develop a curriculum, one of the network's former members – PumaPodcast in the Philippines – is now in a position to provide podcast training for other IMS media partners in Asia. An introductory training session has been completed for Myanmar media, and more in-depth training is underway for Myanmar and Sri Lankan media partners in 2023, in line with IMS' regional approach to link and mutually strengthen independent media across the region. Tribal News Network, a media outlet aimed at minority audiences in the border regions of Pakistan, also shared lessons learned from the network workshop on social media revenue models and constructive journalism with the DigiMAP network of 13 independent media in Pakistan, ensuring a flow of information from regional to national level.

Significant growth for independent media



YEMEN – Yemeni news platforms Khuyut and Al-Mushahid attracted larger audiences to their digital platforms, thanks in part to editorial support from IMS.

The Khuyut platform saw a 16 percent increase in visitors to its website, a 33 percent increase in Twitter followers and a 400 percent increase in YouTube followers compared to 2021.

Founded by journalists, researchers and civil activists, Khuyut provides "journalistic and informative content about Yemen in its local perspective." It combines well sourced, inclusive and highly professional content with a well-defined identity that emphasises an in-depth approach to human interest storytelling.

IMS encouraged Khuyut to improve its website's visual appeal using photos, video and infographics and to focus on its target audience. IMS also shared comparable experiences of similar platforms in the Middle East and North Africa.

Digital news platform Al-Mushahid also reached more people on social media after upgrading its website and improving its content, including using more infographics, leading to a 96 percent increase in Facebook followers and a 129 percent increase in Twitter followers compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile, three community radio stations in Yemen launched more relevant and diverse programming with IMS support.

Radio Lana and Yemen Times Radio introduced programmes aimed at local farming communities, while Radio Seiyun launched a programme discussing solutions to key challenges of the day.

Radio Lana also introduced a new programme about public safety and security, plus an educational programme for rural women. Radio remains an important source of news and information in Yemen, especially among women and in rural areas.

The introduction of new programmes followed an IMS-supported needs assessment of audiences in the regions where the community stations broadcast.

As well as analysis and discussion of results in a series of workshops, IMS provided partners with intensive editorial training, including mentoring their production teams.

Displaced people become citizen journalists

BURKINA FASO – IMS partner Fama Films gave mobile journalism training to internally displaced people (IDPs), empowering them to tell their own stories and allowing them to share often overlooked perspectives on what it means to be displaced.

The five citizen journalists – three women and two men displaced from villages in the northern part of Burkina Faso – were trained on topics such as fake news and accountability. The five films tell personal stories of life as internally displaced: households struggling to survive without humanitarian assistance and girls living far away from their parents becoming victims of abuse.

A key objective of the IMS-supported project was to share the stories with humanitarian actors central to the localisation agenda. On 13 December 2022, the five short films were screened at a meeting of the Community Engagement and Accountability Working Group, a coordination mechanism that includes 80 humanitarian organisations with members like Save the Children and Oxfam.

Major gains for business viability

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA – IMS provided training in critical areas such as content strategy and production, audience insights, data analysis, branding and revenue generation to improve the business viability of several media partners in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

As a result, several media partners made progress in addressing or solving major challenges.

One partner, an online independent media platform in Lebanon that produces multimedia content covering current affairs and social and cultural commentary, saw 100 percent growth in organic traction after IMS discussed strategies to increase audience engagement.

Another partner, satirical news outlet Al Hudood, saw a 20 percent increase in new members and a 120 percent increase in traffic through the sign-up page after an IMS-assisted project to boost its membership programme.

Watching the watchmen

Self-regulation is often the most effective way to hold the media to account and improve journalistic standards.

By Roman Kifliuk
National Adviser, Ukraine

It's a question as old as the hills and one that's especially relevant to the media sector: who watches the watchmen? After all, if the media is to play the role of societal watchdog and hold those in power to account, then the media itself must be ethical, transparent and accountable.

IMS views media regulation as a fundamental tool for democratic development – and self-regulation is often the most effective way to ensure both media accountability and minimal state interference in the sector.

Self-regulation entails the creation of regulatory mechanisms that are designed to improve media standards but are, crucially, independent from government control. Self-regulation mechanisms include ethics codes, press councils and public editors.

By ensuring the sector's independence from government control, self-regulation prevents censorship and other restrictions on media freedom. At the same time, by requiring media to adhere to certain standards of behaviour and professional responsibility, it lays the groundwork for ethical journalism that serves the public interest.

Perhaps more than any other country in recent years, Ukraine understands all too well the need to balance these requirements. Both the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's full-scale invasion have meant that accurate reporting and ethical journalism matter more than ever. Indeed, in such contexts, inaccurate information – whether as a result of bad reporting or deliberately fake news – can be a matter of life and death. In this light, then, self-regulation isn't just about protecting the interests of the media: it's about protecting the interests of its audience.

As the following pages show, examples of the media's shift towards self-regulation abound in Ukraine today, from the launch of an "ethics hotline" providing advice on how to cover the war to the publication of a guidebook for journalists working under martial law. Much of this work was carried out by one of IMS' partners in Ukraine, the Commission on Journalistic Ethics.

To effectuate changes in the media landscape, IMS has been engaging in the *ITP 295 Media Development in a Democratic Framework – EASTERN EUROPE* programme. The 15-week capacity-building programme targets 25 participants annually – individuals and representatives of

organisations that can promote standards and self-regulation of the media sector in their respective countries. As political, technological and economic changes continue to strain media freedom around the world, their efforts to contribute to national reform and change have only acquired new urgency.

Tanzanian bloggers sign online ethics code

TANZANIA – IMS helped implement a code of conduct for bloggers and YouTubers in Tanzania.

More than 50 bloggers agreed to adhere to the new code, which was developed by the Union of Tanzanian Press Clubs as part of wider efforts to promote ethical journalism online.

A surge of young people creating online content has driven regulatory concerns about their professionalism and ethics.

Few of Tanzania's online content creators are journalists or have much experience or education in the field.

With limited understanding of media standards and ethics, some bloggers and online television platforms have been fined or banned by regulators because of their conduct.

The hope is that the new code of conduct will reduce these incidents and help foster self-regulation among online journalists.



PHOTO: JAMES WAKIBIA/SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

Public awareness campaign and ethical code give self-regulation a boost

MOLDOVA – A campaign to inform citizens about the ethical obligations of journalists – and the importance of media self-regulation – was launched in Moldova.

The campaign included material about both traditional and social media at the national and regional level, cartoons promoting journalistic ethics and videos explaining why accurate reporting is both the media's social responsibility and a public right.

The campaign has helped to improve public understanding of the importance of journalistic self-regulation in a democratic society to protect the right to information. Additionally, it explained how to file a complaint about journalism that fails to meet professional standards.

It has also helped make the Moldovan Press Council better known among the public as a national journalistic self-regulatory structure.

IMS funding enabled campaign activities, including the implementation of promotional materials and meetings between Press Council members and the public.

Separately, 105 graduates of Moldovan journalism schools agreed to promote quality journalism and adhere to a code of ethics throughout their

careers. In June, students at the State University of Moldova, the Free International University and Chisinau School of Journalism signed the code of conduct and agreed to promote “ethical and inclusive” narratives as an antidote to Russian disinformation.

IMS helped organise the signing of the Journalist's Code of Ethics for graduates of the institutions, continuing a tradition that began in 2019.

According to the World Press Freedom Index, Moldova climbed from 89th place in 2021 to 40th in 2022.

Improved self-regulatory system

KENYA – Several prominent media associations appointed retired journalists to act as part-time ombudspersons in a bid to boost the credibility of the country's media sector.

The Digital Broadcasters Association (DBA), the Bloggers Associations of Kenya (BAKE) and the Association of Community Media Organisations nominated the veterans to help improve self-regulation of the media. The journalists were trained in the role of public editor to support professional development in Kenya's media sector.

To increase public trust in the sector, they were also given training in how to handle complaints. Once all these developments are fully implemented, members of the public will be able to make complaints against more than 200 media outlets that are too small to have a public editor.

Ethics hotline helps journalists working under martial law

UKRAINE – Journalists made a surge of inquiries to an ethics hotline that the Commission on Journalistic Ethics (CJE) established following Russia's invasion of the country in February.

From April to June – when IMS provided the CJE with support – at least 100 journalists across Ukraine contacted the hotline seeking advice on journalistic ethics, how to cope with stress and exhaustion and how to cover rape, violence and other atrocities with respect to victims' privacy.

Journalists can contact the hotline through a Google form or by phone.

Its launch has purportedly made reporting in Ukraine more accurate, while journalists have become more aware of the work of the CJE and its code of ethics.

Separately, several media organisations – including the CJE – produced the guidebook *Self-regulation of Ukrainian media during martial law* in Ukraine.

The book includes professional and practical advice on how to adhere to ethical standards while reporting on the war, as well as guidance on press complaints. It is now being used not only by journalists working under martial law but by journalism teachers and their students.

Climate and environ

Media can play an important role in shaping the discourse around climate change. IMS' partners are rising to the occasion.

By Henrik Grunnet
& Emilie Helene Holm

Henrik Grunnet, Senior Media Adviser, and
Emilie Helene Holm, Programme Coordinator

The environmental threat of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss is referred to by the UN as the triple planetary crisis. Many of the countries IMS' partners work in are those that are hardest hit and most vulnerable to climate change, leading to conflicts regarding land rights, emigration and famine. These effects will particularly impact marginalised, poor and indigenous communities.

As the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has highlighted, the media can play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and bearing witness to this defining crisis. IMS' partners are rising to the occasion by providing public interest content for the people and communities most affected by climate change, loss and damage and environmental exploitation.

IMS works to help partners build up capacity in reporting on environmental crimes and greenwashing as well as reporting at local and regional levels on the consequences of climate change.

IMS' partners' reporting has successfully inspired action leading to a water system being repaired in Georgia, radio listeners learning how to protect forests in Somalia and pollution from a foundry being investigated in Burkina Faso. Their public interest

journalism serves local communities, sharing solutions-oriented reporting and reliable information on topics that might be politicised or require long-term planning instead of seeking short-term benefits.

With natural disasters occurring more often because of climate change, local media must be trained to cover every stage of the crisis response. After the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015, IMS developed the journalistic concept of *post-disaster accountability journalism*, which can be applied to coverage of climate-related disasters. The concept, which has since been initiated in Indonesia, Mozambique and the Philippines, promotes journalism aimed at increasing the accountability and transparency of recovery and reconstruction efforts.

IMS is working to connect international actors leading this field with our media partners. IMS has boosted our work with additional funds, allowing us to lead workshops to train journalists in environmental investigations and cultivate cross-border and cross-continental investigations. So far, nearly 100 journalists have signed up for the workshop and more than ten cross-border investigations have been initiated through the IMS facilitated MediaBridge.



Environmental journalism



PHOTO: SCOTT PETERSON / GETTY IMAGES



Radio programmes lead to behaviour change

SOMALIA – Content-sharing radio programmes produced collaboratively by members of the Somali Media Association (SOMA), an IMS partner, have helped promote environmental awareness and protection. The programmes air weekly on approximately 30 radio stations in the SOMA network across Somalia.

A broadcast about the relationship between cutting down trees and repeated droughts inspired Farah Abdi, living in Guriel in central Somalia, to plant three trees on the side of the road to benefit people and to save the area from erosion. He also shared this information with friends and asked them to do the same.

Another listener, Mohamed Abukar, living in Wanlaweyne in Lower Shabelle, said that the radio broadcast led him to change his work from cutting down trees to make charcoal to farming.

IMS supported SOMA with editorial and strategic advice and core support to establish the content-sharing programme.

Following the workshops, CENOZO journalists in Burkina Faso began producing investigative pieces on the consequences of climate change. One article looked at the effect of pollution from a foundry in the Kossodo industrial zone. Residents were made aware of the threats to their health during the investigation. After it was published on CENOZO's website in December and in the bi-monthly "Le Reporter", residents contacted the Ministry of Commerce to complain about pollution from the foundry. They reported that industrial leaders consequently organised community activities with local residents to discuss the difficulties in the area.

A separate investigation into charcoal production in the newspaper SIDWAYA in December led local authorities to react to the investigation: a former deputy applauded the journalists for having the courage to investigate a taboo subject and bought 10 issues of the newspaper to distribute to local leaders. The president of the special delegation of Batié raised the subject during an inauguration ceremony of their municipal team.

practices and act when someone got sick.

Farhiya Kusow Abdi said hearing the radio information "made me improve the hygiene at home and for my children, as well as the food we cook for the family. We started boiling our drinking water."

As well as directly helping listeners by providing information, Radio Ergo indirectly helped them by raising their voices so that their needs and challenges could be met by aid and development responders during the drought.

Awil Ali Warsame, who lives in the 18 May IDP camp in Togdher, said:

"When I came here as an IDP, Ergo felt like our close ally...We believe Ergo played a big role in fighting for the assistance we got: the [cash aid] cards we were given, the wells that were dug, the houses and the toilets built in the camp all came from the effort of Radio Ergo in raising our voices."

CENOZO takes on climate issues

BURKINA FASO – The climate and environment are new topics for most trained journalists in the Sahel region, but IMS partner CENOZO (Cellule Norbert Zongo pour le journalisme d'investigation en Afrique de l'Ouest) has taken steps to bring the topics into their investigations and is now seeing their first results.

In 2022, with support from IMS, CENOZO organised three workshops on mapping environmental problems, investigating actions conducive to climate change and using online tools related to climate-data. Sixty-four investigative journalists from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, including 24 women, were trained.

Radio Ergo shares life-saving information

SOMALIA – Daily broadcasts from Radio Ergo focus on issues affecting people's lives and livelihoods, including during health emergencies. Radio Ergo produces weekly thematic, informative and advisory programmes on farming, livestock, health and other topics. Radio Ergo also shares audience feedback recorded on a call-in platform with aid and development responders to influence their planning and actions.

When a deadly cholera outbreak spread in the southern city of Kismayo, Jubaland, in November, Radio Ergo reached out to the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster to ask what information could be aired to keep people informed. Scripts on awareness-raising, prevention and treatment were agreed with experts and recorded by Radio Ergo's editorial team, then aired repeatedly over several weeks. People who heard the broadcasts said the information helped them change hygiene

Local authorities repair water system because of investigative journalism

GEORGIA – An investigation by iFact led to the repair of a water system in the village of Koreti, Georgia. Villages in the Imereti region, including Koreti, are losing access to water because of outdated Soviet infrastructure. iFact held a community meeting with residents and interviewed a city hall representative about the lack of access to water. Publishing the investigation spurred local government to take action, ultimately resulting in restoring the village's access to water.

iFact is a media outlet that aims to develop investigative journalism in Georgia. It works closely with the local population in the Imereti region to engage and involve the public in the work of the media and the local government through access to information, increasing transparency and encouraging good governance.

IMS supports iFact in business viability and audience engagement, including community meetings.

Ten years of resisting autocracy

By Johan Wogensen Bach

Programme Manager,
Middle East and North Africa

In the tumultuous decade following the Arab spring, a new independent media environment has proved to be one of the few bulwarks against total authoritarianism, state-controlled public discourse and a complete lack of political accountability in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Arab spring uprisings in 2011 rocked political power in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and ushered in a decade of seismic change. This created a window of opportunity for young journalists to create media outlets that could provide the region with independent journalism and accountability that did not exist before. Since then, a vibrant independent media environment has established itself as the only platform regionwide for independent and professional journalism and an alternative to well-funded state-controlled, media propaganda and disinformation.

Despite the positive change initiated by the Arab spring, the major fallout of the decade runs from complete state erosion in Syria and Yemen to concentrated repressive authoritarian power in most other countries in the region. In 2022, democratic backsliding in Tunisia marks the almost complete

backtrack from the democratic progress motivated by the Arab spring, and the Middle East and North Africa continues to be the world's most dangerous region for journalists to work in. States are increasingly dominating the public debate by controlling media, enhancing the proliferation of disinformation and using digital tools to suppress freedom of expression.

It is now more crucial than ever to remember that there still exist strong human rights organisations and independent media outlets that promote democratic values through trustworthy and compelling public interest content: the skills to deliver quality investigative reporting have never been higher, and outlets have consistently uncovered political corruption and delivered change and impact throughout the region. Independent media outlets have created a unique space for women, LGBTQIA+ people

and other marginalised groups in content and the public debate by having them represented in editorial rooms and leader positions to a degree that is unheard of in Arab mainstream media. By mentoring young journalists on working in adherence with journalistic standards, independent media function as incubators for a sustainable culture of good journalism in the region, benefiting the Arab media ecosystems and the communities they serve for years to come.

The significance of independent media in the last 10 years was made possible by tailored advisory support coupled with strategic long-term financial core funding that allowed media to invest in new forms of content and organisational development. In 2022, independent media outlets in the MENA region continued their commitment to providing democratic change and accountability in a volatile political environment.

Podcasting mentorship for students in Lebanon

LEBANON – Journalism students at the American University of Beirut (AUB) were mentored by Sowt, one of the region's leading independent podcast production companies.

Sowt was launched in Amman in 2016 and became a podcast platform the following year, producing and distributing high-quality audio programmes in Arabic.

In 2022, its team held a mentorship session for seven students participating in an AUB/IMS journalist programme, as well as a two-hour podcast-production class for the programme's participants.

Following the session, the students produced four podcast episodes with guidance from Sowt. They included two episodes about Syrian refugees, one about the participation of women in Iraq's parliament and an episode about a Palestinian man who fathered a child by smuggling semen to his wife while he was detained in an Israeli prison.

The journalism programme, which IMS designed, has 13 modules for basic journalistic capacity-building used with partners in closed countries, including Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Sowt is the first external partner to be involved in the programme, which IMS coorganised with AUB in Lebanon.

Due to its success, the programme is now being translated and reworked into English (from its original Arabic) in partnership with IMS' new adviser, Awan. From there it will be translated into the Myanmar language and context, along with an extra four modules focusing on safety for journalists working in closed countries.

Joint investigation alleges US military base abuse

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA – IMS' partner ARIJ (Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism) carried out a cross-border TV and digital investigation into the alleged abuse of migrant workers at US military bases in the Middle East, in collaboration with NBC News, the Washington Post and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

An IMS partner since 2006, ARIJ is dedicated to supporting the ecosystem of investigative journalism across the Arab world by empowerment, networking and innovation to support communities of investigative journalists and factcheckers – in addition to protecting whistleblowers through the only and first pan-Arab whistleblower platform iARIJ.

The investigation spoke to more than 40 current and former employees of private contractors that supply US military bases with staff and gathered testimony that migrant workers appeared to have been subjected to abusive labour practices, including trafficking.



PHOTO: HASAN MRAD/DEFODI IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

ARIJ also set up a consortium of Arabic independent publishing platforms to publish the story, in Arabic, in parallel, in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen.

After its initial coverage, the investigation was widely reported around the world. It was also named one of the most important investigations in the Middle East in 2022 by the Global Investigative Journalism Network. The investigation won second place in online investigative reporting for digital partnership in the National Headliner awards, as well the Society of Professional Journalists' Deadline Club award for best business investigation in 2022.

Boost for inclusive journalism in Jordan

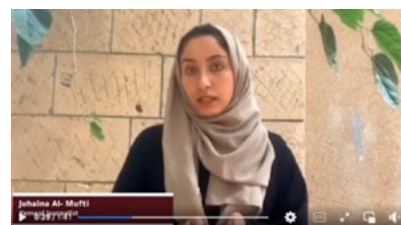
JORDAN – Media in Jordan produced more inclusive and ethical content, including stories produced by women and young journalists from small villages and communities in Jordan, and content intended for audiences in rural communities.

While the country's capital, Amman, is the focus of many Jordanian media organisations, there remains a need for local audiences in other regions to have their voices heard.

Four IMS partners in Jordan – including community media outlets – helped increase the amount of inclusive content published in 2022.

For example, both students and young volunteers contributed to Roya TV's weekly show, "Akhbar Al Dar", providing coverage from smaller Jordanian cities such as Zarqa, Ma'an, Kerak and Irbid on topics focusing on their communities, such as, debates, activities in their villages, women's startups, and economic and social stories.

Yemeni Archive expands open-source investigative skills



YEMEN – IMS partner Yemeni Archive created partnerships with two civil society organisations that will teach them skills in open-source investigations using digital data.

The two organisations are Musaala, a youth-led NGO based in Marib, and the Abductees Mothers Association, a group of relatives of people abducted or forcibly disappeared in Yemen.

Yemeni Archive wants to help the groups create secure archives, gather evidence and use open-source investigative techniques. It also hopes to collaborate on media and advocacy work.

Yemeni Archive is a project of Mnemonic, a non-profit organisation dedicated to preserving, memorialising and adding value to publicly available information related to human rights violations.

Yemeni Archive's focus is on rights violations and other crimes committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen for use in advocacy, justice and accountability.

Yemeni Archive has observed low expertise in evidence-gathering when working with local CSOs. Its collaborations will build stronger local capacity and cement its Yemeni presence.

Collaborative report sheds new light on Beirut port explosion

LEBANON – A report on the explosion at the Port of Beirut in 2020 shed new light on the incident and increased public pressure on the Lebanese government to take action.

The report was published by Forensic Architecture, a London-based research agency investigating human rights violations, and the Febrayer Network, a Berlin-based network of independent Arab media organisations – and an IMS partner.

Forensic Architecture and the network established the F/FA investigative lab, which uses Forensic Architecture's "methodologies and techniques for monitoring and documenting human rights violations in pursuit of accountability in the Arab world."

Published in 2022, F/FA's report exposed systemic issues that led to the explosion, contributing to the public's understanding of the incident. The report provided valuable evidence for ongoing legal cases and investigations into the incident, holding the Lebanese government to account. The investigation of the port explosion was one of three carried out by Forensic Architecture as part of a broader project consisting of three investigations. The first was carried out in 2020 and preceded the launch of the F/FA unit.

Investigative stories are essential in seeking

institutional and policy reforms that could promote transparency, prevent corruption and change how government institutions perceive and address systemic issues in future. These investigations often rely on cross-border collaborations and networking to provide access to sources and uncover evidence.

The Febrayer Network has had a significant role in the F/FA investigative lab. First, it provides access to a vast network of local organisations, human rights activists and communities in the Arab region. This is crucial for F/FA's work because it allows it to identify and investigate cases of human rights abuses, gather evidence and support victims and their families.

Second, it provides F/FA with the local knowledge and expertise necessary to conduct investigations in the region. In particular, the network's members have a deep understanding of the cultural, social and political dynamics of the region and can provide F/FA with critical insights and information that are not easily accessible to outsiders. This helps F/FA to conduct its investigations more effectively and efficiently.

Third, the network plays a key role in advocating for the findings and recommendations of F/FA's investigations. This work is critical to ensuring that the findings of the investigations

are widely disseminated and acted upon by relevant authorities and organisations.

"For Febrayer, this collaboration is at the core of our journalistic and knowledge production practice," says Yasmeen Daher, co-director of the Febrayer Network. "We continuously search for new methods to unearth truths and expose the wider public to different narratives. The tools that 3D modeling and architectural simulation offer help us reveal necessary information."

"Overall, the Febrayer network's role in F/FA is critical to its success," says Mamoun Alkawa, regional programme coordinator in IMS' MENA department. "The network provides F/FA with the necessary support, resources and local organisations that enable the unit to conduct its investigations more effectively and make a meaningful impact on human rights and social justice in the Arab region."

The F/FA investigation also demonstrated the power of collaboration between organisations and across borders, and the importance of using technology and innovation in investigative work. "By supporting the Febrayer Network, IMS is not only investing in local organisations but also recognising the importance of collaboration, knowledge sharing and collective action in creating lasting change," says Alkawa.



MENA partners join cross-border Ericsson probe

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA – Two IMS partners, Daraj in Lebanon and Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) in Jordan, were part of the global team of investigative reporters, editors and factcheckers that published the so-called Ericsson List – a report revealing that Swedish telecom equipment company Ericsson had made tens of millions of dollars in suspicious payments in Iraq.

The report was published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and shared with 30 global media partners, including Amman-based ARIJ and Beirut-based Daraj.

The investigation was based on an internal Ericsson review that was leaked to ICIJ, which subsequently collaborated with more than 110 journalists in 22 countries. According to ICIJ, the report "documents a pattern of bribery and corruption so widespread, and company oversight so weak, that millions of dollars in Ericsson payments simply couldn't be accounted for."

Ericsson's share price fell more than 14 per cent in March after the US Department of Justice said the company had made insufficient disclosures about its conduct in Iraq before entering a deferred prosecution agreement in 2019.

JAWJAB mainstreams LGBTQIA+ narratives

MOROCCO – JAWJAB is a Moroccan independent media outlet that has produced award-winning shows around gender equality and LGBTQIA+ issues since 2016, many of which reach several hundred thousand people on social media. In 2022, JAWJAB produced, with the support of IMS, #BlaMika, a short film about menstruation, which surpassed 1 million views on Facebook and Instagram in a country where such issues are considered taboo. Through this kind of interaction with "mainstream" Moroccan society, JAWJAB delivers public interest content by women and about women, ultimately strengthening the voices of women in Morocco.

Media is vitally important in challenging and dismantling gender inequalities and other discriminatory narratives. JAWJAB does not stand alone but builds on years of efforts to provide gender-progressive content and include women by independent media throughout the region. IMS partners such as Khateera, via the show Smi'touha Menni, reach millions in the region with their videos that challenge discrimination and harassment. They have contributed significantly to furthering the voices of not only women but also the LGBTQIA+ community, and have pushed the boundaries of debate and reportage in the Middle East and North Africa.

Strengthening documentary production in Eastern Europe

By Rasmus Steen

Head of Documentary Film

During times of rapid political and societal changes, documentary filmmaking plays a vital role in documenting historic events and organising visual material into compelling stories that can help make sense of the chaos and disruptions. It feels needless to say that Ukraine in particular – but Eastern Europe and former Soviet countries in general – is experiencing massive political upheaval and a strong, bottom-up will around national identity and self-determination. At the same time, Russian disinformation has caught states and publics in a

confusing fight over facts and narratives. This is why there is no better time to bolster the region's documentary film industries.

In 2022, IMS took an active role in fortifying the infrastructure of Eastern Europe's documentary film industries by providing funding for six documentaries and offering support to film festivals, associations and networks, as well as organising training sessions and workshops. Throughout our engagement in Eastern Europe, we have consistently prioritised the inclusion of youth, women and marginalised groups who are often inadequately represented in mainstream media. Drawing from our experiences supporting documentary filmmakers in the Middle East and North Africa,

we recognise the importance of ensuring that crucial perspectives are not forgotten but rather documented and shared with a wider audience during times of war, crises and political transitions.

IMS has been working with documentary film for over 15 years. The genre, distinguished by its long format, serves as a platform where social, political and cultural criticisms find space and new voices and views are promoted. We have a steadfast belief in the genre's ability to use intimate and compelling visual storytelling, often focusing on personal experiences and micro-environments, to tell grander societal stories, uncover criminal acts and hold those in power to account.

Docudays

UKRAINE – The special edition of the 19th International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival Docudays was held in Kyiv, Ukraine, in November. The festival, titled "The State of Emergency", focused on showcasing Ukrainian documentary films that address issues related to human rights and the current crisis. Through the power of documentary film, important conversations were sparked which contributed to strengthening the cohesion of the Ukrainian people and their ability to process the radical changes happening in their country.

The festival opened with film screenings and debates in Kyiv, which were subsequently shown in 17 other regions of Ukraine. In total, 18,327 people attended the festival events, demonstrating a widespread interest in human rights and the importance of documentary films in raising awareness about critical issues.

The films screened at the festival covered a wide range of topics, including social justice, political upheaval, environmental concerns and the impact of war on civilians.

A House Made of Splinters

UKRAINE – The Danish-Ukrainian co-production *A House Made of Splinters* was nominated for an Oscar at the 95th Academy Awards. The documentary presents the stories of children living in an orphanage in eastern Ukraine, placed there in a time of war due to violence or alcohol abuse in their homes. The war is a constant eerie backdrop throughout the entire film. The film debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2022.

Ukraine has been on the top of the global agenda since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, but Russian forces had been occupying parts of eastern Ukraine since 2014. The film's director, Simon Lereng Wilmont, started working on *A House Made of Splinters* in 2020. IMS provided seed funding in the very early stages of production, at a time when the war was largely overlooked by the international community but still had grave consequences for Ukrainians living in the areas occupied by Russia. *A House Made of Splinters* is the fourth IMS-funded film to be nominated for an Oscar.

Launch of Documentary Association Georgia

GEORGIA – In late 2022, a new organisation – Documentary Association Georgia (DOCA) – was launched in Tbilisi, Georgia. DOCA is a membership-based organisation focused on contributing to the development of a sustainable and healthy environment in the documentary film industry in



The official poster for the film *A House Made of Splinters*.

Georgia. The launch of DOCA marks a significant step forward for the Georgian documentary film industry. The organisation's focus on diversity and inclusion, makes it an important advocate for the interests of the community. As DOCA continues to grow, it has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the growth and development of Georgia's documentary film industry. IMS is supporting DOCA in its inception phase by providing guidance and support to the founders of DOCA who are all active filmmakers but lack experience when it comes to defining a clear strategy and developing actionable plans to ensure the organisation's long-term success.

“...documentary filmmaking plays a vital role in documenting historic events and organising visual material into compelling stories.”

Keeping media operational during wartime

While emergency preparedness is an ongoing part of IMS' safety work, each response must be adapted to the specific context. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, IMS has focused on keeping the Ukrainian media sector alive and strengthening responses to hostile propaganda and disinformation.

By Gulnara Akhundova
Regional Director, Eastern Europe
and Global Response

Recent events – the war in Ukraine, crises in Afghanistan and Myanmar – have forced us to rethink our approach to media development in crisis.

First, no matter the crisis, to maximise the impact of funds earmarked for it, one needs a strategy. A strategy across the board. A strategy based on an understanding of the challenges that the media sector faces, as well as a commitment to coordinating with and complementing other stakeholder efforts. A strategy that looks beyond the here and now.

Second, emergency needs are no longer limited to safety equipment, relocation and cash injections for newsrooms. Reliable

information saves lives and our task is to prevent it from drowning in the ocean of disinformation, propaganda and online disruption. Dominant tech platforms are one of the key stakeholders in any crisis.

Third, adherence to diversity, inclusivity and editorial ethics is as important in a crisis as it is during peacetime.

Crisis responses require a cool head, space to plan, iterate and reflect, and the assumption that things can go wrong at any time, so there should always be a plan B (and C).

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, IMS' approach was to emphasise quality content, safety and the fight against disinformation. We have prioritised support for public interest media to ensure that the Ukrainian people have access to and can consume reliable information; updates on air strikes and shelters

are life-saving information that local media is best placed to provide.

IMS' support for media during a crisis takes different forms. It means providing high quality personal protective equipment (PPE) to journalists – including in smaller sizes often needed by women – and relocating entire operations, as happened with public service broadcaster Suspilne in 2022. It means helping to cover salaries and operational costs. It also means facilitating a sustained dialogue with dominant tech companies about the impact of disinformation, including gendered disinformation.

In Ukraine, we coordinated our response through local hubs. A regional association representing hundreds of local media outlets will know which ones to prioritise and what each needs to stay afloat. Through our rapid response mechanism, we have supported 67 media outlets in Ukraine, from mainstream national organisations to small regional and local ones.

It also built on and linked to broader media development work; IMS had partners and a presence in Ukraine when Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Our short-term flexibility has helped them sustain their activities, even if their scope has changed, and remains crucial to their long-term sustainability.

It has now become evident these media organisations have an important role in the postwar reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine, and to keep the country on its steady path towards a stable democracy.

PHOTO: SCOTT PETERSEN / GETTY IMAGES



Ukrainian journalists interview an officer of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU).

Agreeing on standards for PPE

UKRAINE – A surge in demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) for journalists in Ukraine, as well as concerns about quality and sizing, prompted a Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) sub-group to get together and agree on a set of common standards. It also addressed a lack of coordination related to the distribution of PPE to journalists in Ukraine.

IMS and partners had identified a shortage of PPE fitting smaller – often women’s – body frames and noted an influx of substandard PPE. IMS took a leadership role in the GFMD sub-group on safety and PPE, with the IMS safety expert providing input needed for international NGOs to ensure delivery of high-quality PPE in a variety of sizes.

Ill-fitting or low-quality equipment may jeopardise the lives of journalists. However, with input from partners, IMS was able to bring this challenge to an international media forum, resulting in a targeted distribution of PPE for all genders in a timely and coordinated manner.

Reporting on sexual harassment in the army during wartime

UKRAINE – Sexual harassment in armies is a sensitive topic; in times of war, perhaps even more so. Wary of discrediting the Ukrainian Armed Forces and providing fuel for Russian propaganda, most media tend to focus on other topics when reporting on the army. Not Babel. Finding harassment in the Ukrainian army ever relevant – and building on information from earlier projects where they had been supported in producing stories on the role of women in the war in Ukraine – media outlet Babel wanted to spotlight the sensitive topic. With financial support from IMS, Babel changed their regular way of reporting and instead opted for a format in which they give advice to those who face harassment. Doing so allowed Babel to point out that no one should be silent while protecting against misuse of information. The report included a detailed explanation of what harassment is like and discussed the relevance of available tools.

Relocation of Suspilne to continue daily broadcasting

UKRAINE – As with many other Ukrainian media outlets and journalists, public broadcaster Suspilne was directly targeted and their work obstructed by the war. In March, air raids rendered their Kyiv headquarters insecure. Suspilne temporarily relocated their operation to Lviv, enabling them to continue daily broadcasting to millions of Ukrainians. The move required new and specialised broadcasting equipment, which was procured by IMS. IMS also ensured safe transportation of the equipment. A total of 126 Suspilne staff were relocated to ensure the continued broadcasting. The company operating Suspilne, Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine, is the largest independent media company in the country, with a total of 4,000 employees and a branch in every region.

Shelter from the storm

A media hub that provides journalists with a safe space to work opened in Lviv, Ukraine.

For years, the Lviv Media Forum (LMF) was best known for its annual conference, which attracted hundreds of media professionals from across Central and Eastern Europe to Lviv, a city in western Ukraine, to swap stories, share experiences and develop ideas. Founded as an NGO in 2013, the LMF dubs itself “an ecosystem of people, organisations and projects” that seeks to promote the best global media practices in Ukraine. One of its goals has been to build and sustain a community of journalists.

So when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, forcing dozens of journalists and media workers to flee the country’s eastern region, the LMF rallied to protect members of the community it had worked so hard to build. Having initially found space for fleeing journalists in a renovated factory in Lviv, LMF took over the third floor of the building in August, with support from partners including IMS, and officially launched the Lviv Media Hub – a safe co-working space for journalists and media workers covering the war.

Located a 15-minute walk from the city centre, the hub provides everything that journalists on a deadline might need, including hot coffee, reliable internet and plenty of desks. In fact, the hub has space

for up to 45 people, as well as an office for LMF’s team. “It started as a place for the Lviv Media Forum team and those fleeing the eastern region,” says Oleksandra Kisel, LMF’s head of communications. “The hub is now a place where we and other journalists can work.”

To that end, the hub has private rooms for meetings or interviews, a large co-working space and an audio-visual kit for events. It’s a social space, too, with a kitchen and an event space. In fact, the hub has a busy social calendar, from film screenings and talks to meet-ups and exhibitions. In the first few months after the invasion, the hub offered courses on first aid, digital security and monetising content on YouTube. As LMF notes on its website, recalling its annual festival: “In times of war, we try to recreate the same atmosphere in the hub.”

Meanwhile, for many foreign journalists arriving in Ukraine to cover the war, often after crossing the border from Poland, the hub provides opportunities to make contacts and gather information. “You can stay here to work for one or two days to understand where you are and see what is happening,” says Kisel.

The hub’s unique value also became apparent in late 2022, when Lviv experienced blackouts amid Russian attacks

on critical infrastructure. “Sometimes the light was on for only four hours a day and in this moment the hub was really helpful,” says Kisel. “People needed a place to work, make calls and drink coffee without worrying about whether their computer was fully charged.”

In fact, the hub is particularly proud of its ability to keep journalists plugged in. “If you took all the power banks, electricity generators and laptop chargers we provided last year, you could power a Tesla enough to drive it all the way from Lviv to the Donbas Arena, in eastern Ukraine, ten times,” says Kisel.

In addition, the hub has rooms for rent in nearby apartments for those requiring overnight accommodation. The space has been zoned and outfitted to provide shelter to journalists in the event of another wave of relocations. Moreover, the State Emergency Service checked the building, which is known as Kivsh, and deemed it

“The hub is not just about walls, it’s about community.”

PHOTO: OLENA DOLEZHUK



PHOTO: OLENA DOLEZHUK



Events at the Lviv Media Hub in Lviv, Ukraine, including a visit from the US Embassy in Ukraine (top) and an event for YouTubers (bottom).

safe. That means journalists can continue to work there during an air raid, though the building has three bomb shelters within a couple of minutes' walk, if the threat of shelling increases.

The hub is a safe space in another respect, too: it offers members access to psychosocial support. "We work with a group of psychologists who can do online calls with journalists and editors who need help," Kisel explains. As of April 2023, the hub has provided 156 hours of psychological support. In a similar vein, the hub is cautious about

whom it lets in. Those wishing to use the space are required to fill out a Google form explaining who they are, what they do and why they need to use the hub. Applicants are banned if they have cooperated or are cooperating with pro-Russian forces, spread "Russian toxic narratives" or "violate ethical standards".

It's an understandable admissions policy – and consistent with the LMF's goal of supporting Ukraine's media. After all, as its website puts it: "The hub is not just about walls, it's about community."

Safety of journalists

“Without the ability to protect journalists, our ability to remain informed and contribute to decision-making is severely hampered,” said UN Secretary General António Guterres in 2019.

“Without journalists who are able to do their jobs in safety, we face the prospect of a world of confusion and disinformation.”

By **Rune Friberg Lyme**
Senior Strategic and Programme Adviser

The safety of media workers is a precondition for reliable media to operate and serve its vital role in society.

Building safe environments for media workers of all genders to thrive in and report on matters of public interest requires a comprehensive approach. Preventive, protective measures are needed to reduce safety threats and tackle impunity.

IMS considers national safety mechanisms (NSMs) that are aligned with the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity to be the most effective tool for building lasting, enabling media environments.

IMS defines NSMs as multi-stakeholder collaborations organised within a national context that work to improve the safety of journalists. NSMs necessarily encompass a multitude of measures with the collaborative and active engagement and leadership of key national and local stakeholders. Each NSM must be tailored to its context.

This has ranged from building informal coalitions in the Philippines to passing legislation in Pakistan. In some countries, it's not possible to take a national approach to safety, though it is possible to build a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder mechanism at a regional level. What's most important is engaging stakeholders and getting the buy-in needed to protect journalists. This requires being adaptable, acknowledging what is effective in a particular context and a willingness to reflect on what has not been successful.

NSMs are part of IMS' efforts to have a proactive approach to safety. This involves taking a long-term view of an environment through providing safety equipment and evaluating the digital safety of journalists and media outlets, among other strategies. The physical safety of individuals is foremost in everyone's minds during an emergency, but media development and safety must focus on making sure that the entire media sector of a region or country is able to continue operating.

IMS takes an integrated approach to safety and media development: environments

must be safe for journalists to do their work, but journalists must also be viewed as professionals who need to be kept safe because of their work. Safety challenges span risks faced by individual journalists to the potential collapse of a country's independent media sector. We have already seen evidence of this worrying trend in Afghanistan and Myanmar. IMS recognises the humanitarian efforts to evacuate journalists in danger while concurrently striving to preserve an operational media landscape.

To promote the sustainability of media in a crisis, IMS tries to relocate journalists in danger to safer locations within the country in which they operate, when such locations exist. Those forced into exile often lose their ability to work as journalists and thus their livelihoods. Relocation within their own country potentially allows them to maintain their livelihoods and helps the independent media sector continue to serve the public interest in the country.

For media outlets to continue operating amid such emergencies requires building partners' capacity to operate in difficult conditions. For IMS' partners in Syria, this has involved assessments of physical premises, contingency planning and evacuation plans, but also business continuity plans in the event of evacuation.

Providing emergency assistance implies that there will always be a reactive element to safety work. But by taking a long-term, integrated view towards media safety, IMS aims not only to save individual lives but to ensure the sustainability of independent journalism after a crisis.



PHOTO: ALEX CHANISOR/IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

A plan of real value

The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UNPA) is the guiding framework for IMS' safety work and approach. Since its inception in 2012, it has been the backdrop for IMS' collaborations with local partners in Somalia, Pakistan and the Philippines and for establishing robust and functional national safety mechanisms, which is one of the key priorities for IMS in our work to improve the safety of journalists around the world.

The objective of the UNPA is to work towards a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide. It is the most comprehensive document available to outline the many aspects of the safety of journalists, and stresses the actions needed to improve the media safety environment and the responsibility of UN member states.

Perhaps most importantly, the UNPA recognises that the work to secure the safety of journalists and end impunity for crimes against journalists cannot exist in isolation. Collaboration is crucial to build on existing strengths, create synergies, avoid duplications and make it possible to provide context-sensitive solutions.

Many of the principles of the UNPA are standard parts of IMS' safety work: we work in coalitions with multi-disciplinary stakeholders, and we aim to view every aspect through a human-rights and gender-sensitive lens.

IMS has been involved at all levels of the UNPA and it will continue to permeate our work, as evidenced by our commitment to developing national safety mechanisms

that incorporate bringing tech stakeholders to the table, combatting disinformation and promoting gender equality.

The UNPA has proved to be an efficient tool for safeguarding press freedom, and IMS has taken the lead when it comes to implementation of national safety mechanisms. However, in too many cases, implementation has been disconnected from other efforts and has had a short-term focus. Consistent, coordinated and comprehensive implementation efforts are essential

for turning the framework into practice, and the UN, through its key programmes and focal points, is uniquely positioned to contribute to this.

IMS will continue to call for adequate resources and commitment from the UN and its supportive member states to ensure engagement a national level, push local governments, coordinate and lead efforts on the ground and call for long-term, systematic support.



PHOTO: BMEIA/BAURECHT/BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR EUROPÄISCHE UND INTERNATIONALE ANGELEGENHEITEN

Doubling down a decade in

In November, the media development community marked 10 years since the endorsement of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UNPA).

The high-level conference, Safety of Journalists: Protecting media to protect democracy, was held to recognise the anniversary in Vienna with a gathering of NGOs supportive of press freedom, media, relevant UN branches and state representatives. The conference was an illustration of how the global journalist safety support community has broadened and strengthened in the decade since the UNPA's endorsement, and significant for displaying that there are more stakeholders joining the conversation, more seats at the table reserved for a range of voices around focused topics and more time allocated for discussion.

Leading up to the conference, IMS shaped and contributed to several UNESCO-led consultations on the progress of the implementation of the UNPA, providing regional and thematic expertise grounded in our long-term commitment to the development of national journalist safety mechanisms. IMS also played leading roles in organising and participating in regional consultations in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and the thematic consultations on journalist safety in the digital age and on the safety of women journalists.

IMS' largest contribution to the widening and strengthening of the community of stakeholders supporting safety of journalists was leading the drafting of the Vienna Call for Action, a unanimously endorsed set

of recommendations around key thematic priority areas including:

- addressing gender-based attacks against journalists.
- strengthening support for monitoring attacks.
- bolstering national safety mechanisms.
- tackling impunity for crimes against journalists.
- addressing digital threats to journalists' safety.
- making the UNPA more effective.

In the decade since the launch of the UNPA, there has been an increase in the frequency and types of attacks faced by journalists and media workers. The rate of impunity also remains high, with the perpetrators of attacks going unpunished in nearly nine out of 10 cases. Combined with growing digital threats, increased risks to journalists' safety because of conflicts and crises and the ongoing issue of women and others in vulnerable contexts being disproportionately affected by threats, the UNPA is needed now more than ever. And since the safety of journalists community has grown more cohesive, in comparison to its relatively small and fragmented nature in 2012, the conditions for progress are improved.

In the lead up to the conference, IMS facilitated Safety of Journalists Coalition

member meetings to identify priorities, organised multi-stakeholder input, reconciled commentary and suggested edits, refined the language of the recommendations and presented the final product to high-level decision-makers.

The gathering in Vienna in November was a celebration of the progress that has been made, but it was also an occasion to double down on the commitment of all actors to implementing the UNPA. In addition to participating in the presentation of the Vienna Call for Action, IMS further facilitated numerous meetings between civil society actors, UN representatives and government officials to negotiate priorities and prepare attendees, engage with them during the events and follow up after.

Collaboration on the ground increases journalist safety

SOMALIA – In June, the Somali Mechanism for Safety of Journalists (SMSJ) members jointly launched an annual monitoring report, the first time that seven Somali media and journalist associations jointly developed and launched a report of this kind. This was a significant step towards more effective, coordinated advocacy work for the safety and protection of journalists and media freedom in Somalia.

"SMSJ has increased the collaboration among the journalist organisations and increased the confidence among the journalists," says Farah Omar Nur, the Chairman of SMSJ and Secretary General of Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ). "Previously we were divided, now we are united. We are united on one purpose: to defend press freedom and protect the journalists. Now, our voice is heard and is respected by the authorities."

Being able to collaborate, add resources and make unified demands gives the SMSJ a unique position of strength in the Somali media landscape. IMS continues to support SMSJ and is looking at how the mechanisms can be adapted for other countries.

National safety mechanisms — a consensus of accountability

To keep journalists safe, countries need locally anchored, multi-stakeholder coalitions to make safety a priority.

By Adnan Rehmat
Consultant, Pakistan

It is unacceptable that any journalist anywhere is targeted for doing their work, but the contexts where journalists are at the greatest risk are where the media is the most isolated. Media organisations cannot be solely responsible for keeping journalists safe — we need to rally and mobilise different stakeholders so that they become invested in the safety of journalists. National safety mechanisms are the formal expression of that consensus.

National safety mechanisms are locally anchored, multi-stakeholder coalitions that can include but are not limited to government representatives, media organisations, civil society actors, academics and police forces. The different actors are part of the shared vision of what minimum steps need to be taken to keep journalists safe, and they

are also recipients of the benefits accrued from that collaboration, which reach beyond the media sector.

IMS has helped to create a mechanism in Pakistan in which all participants agree to be held accountable for journalists' safety. The national safety mechanism has resulted in legislation, a manifestation of how successful this advocacy has been, because the consensus it created has a legal framework to support it. Pakistan has our parliament saying they'll be responsible for reducing impunity for crimes against journalists. The UN can be proud of this because we've used their global template, the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, for the legal framework.

Other IMS programme countries have taken different approaches to national safety mechanisms: the Philippines has identified the Presidential Task Force on Media Security, which works in agreement with

the government. While they don't have a legislative framework, they are bringing together actors from broad sectors for crucial dialogues that result in positive actions.

Nepal has a key actor identified in their national human rights institution, which is responsible for tracking and reporting on the country's progress.

Pakistan is at a stage where we have created a system that we are now starting to test in the expectations of changing behaviours and outcomes that will hopefully reduce impunity.

Actors like IMS are in a position to distil lessons from individual countries and create something more effective with that knowledge. We can influence the global agenda of safety of journalists, emphasising what needs to be done and showcasing what has been successful in different countries. But, as with all aspects of journalists' safety, it is not just one actor's responsibility, it takes a village.

New report and peer-to-peer Asia regional learning workshop on national human rights institutions

ASIA – IMS has published new research in the Defending Journalism series, “National human rights institutions and journalist safety: Bridging civil society and government”, to promote media freedom in Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines.

The report explores the role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in the four countries, tracks progress on national safety mechanisms for journalists and examines how NHRI engagement in supporting those safety mechanisms can contribute to upholding their mandate of promoting human rights for all.

In November, the IMS Global Safety and Asia Regional Programmes coorganised a peer-to-peer learning workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal, between human rights commissioners, CSOs and media stakeholders from Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Indonesia. The meetings explored avenues for anchoring journalist safety mechanisms in NHRIs.

At the workshop, Pakistan's National Commission for Human Rights was inspired by set-ups in the Philippines and Nepal, particularly for establishing a stronger complaints mechanism and grass roots-level response teams.

A focus on Nepal's National Human Rights Commission – spurred on by IMS in support of UNESCO efforts to mark ten years of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity – pushed the Commission to appoint new members to the Direction Committee of the journalist safety mechanism it has formed. The members have been recommended by the journalist association and CSOs.

IMS believes this is how peer-to-peer learning can inspire small steps forward, even though the level of action in support of the safety of journalists varies between the NHRIs in the four countries.

IMS programme managers were closely involved in briefing the human rights commissioners at the country level ahead of the workshop and throughout, establishing closer ties that have laid the foundation for tailored follow-up.

Journalist safety mechanism operationalised

NEPAL – The three tiers of the response system in Nepal's national journalist and human rights defender safety mechanism can be activated following the appointment of the Direction Committee's membership. With the membership appointed, teams can be mobilised to respond to incidents at the provincial level throughout the country. This includes the mid-tier taskforce, which will undertake the day-to-day operations of the mechanism.

The lowest tier of the mechanism will consist of a team of 300 volunteers trained in human rights investigations and the code of conduct of the mechanism. These rapid response teams will work under a taskforce's coordination and respond to local incidents.

The Direction Committee is the top-tier, policy-level body of the mechanism, now led by the Commissioner of Nepal's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and has named representation from the Government of Nepal, the Nepalese Federation of Journalists, the Nepal Bar Association and Nepal Police.

IMS Asia department programme staff and partner representatives from Afghanistan, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka pose for a group photo at the end of the Islamabad Journalist Safety Forum in Pakistan in December 2022.

PHOTO: NASIM KHAN/FREEDOM NETWORK



Enforcing national and provincial laws for journalists' safety



PAKISTAN – Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif promised that his government would enforce the special national law on the safety of journalists passed by the Pakistani parliament in 2021. The pledge was made at an event organised in Islamabad by IMS partner Freedom Network and the IMS-supported Pakistan Journalists' Safety Coalition (PJSC) to mark the 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UNPA).

Enforcing the law is expected to result in a national safety commission being established to monitor and fast-track investigations and prosecutions of crimes against journalists. Enforcement of the law has been dormant since a change of government in the spring of 2022, and the prime minister's pledge allows IMS and Freedom Network to regain lost momentum in efforts to deliver justice to journalists, as outlined by the UNPA.

Over 160 journalists have been killed because of their work in Pakistan since 2000. The country has a dismal track record of combatting impunity; the killers of only two journalists have been convicted and sentenced.

One of the most dangerous places in Pakistan for journalists is the Sindh province. Progress was made there in July 2021, with assistance of IMS and Freedom Network, with the Sindh Protection of Journalists and Other Media Practitioners Act, enacted for the provincial jurisdiction separately from the national law. In 2022, a 14-member special commission mandated under the law was announced by the government, paving the way to implement the law and combat impunity for crimes against journalists.

The commission is empowered to take notice of threats or attacks against local journalists, order inquiries, monitor investigations and make recommendations to the government to hold perpetrators to account. On 3 May 2023, the Sindh Commission agreed to work with Freedom Network and IMS to build systems necessary to deliver on its mandate.

IMS, Freedom Network and PJSC were instrumental in advocating first for the enactment of the law – the first in Asia to legislate on the safety

of journalists – and then for its implementation through advocacy meetings, preparing drafts of the law and helping develop rules for the commission.

Military, Commission on Human Rights and journalists participate in learning meeting



THE PHILIPPINES – Military officers, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), journalists and human rights defenders (HRDs) participated in a learning exchange organised and supported by IMS.

The learning exchange, which took place in Pampanga, Central Luzon, allowed participants to have frank discussions about their roles and issues between them regarding democracy, press freedom and human rights. It was also intended to foster better understanding of journalists' safety and build knowledge among stakeholders.

During the learning exchange, the general who heads the Armed Forces of the Philippines Center for Law and Armed Conflict reiterated his proposal to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Journalists Safety Advisory Group, which represents the media and HRDs in joint activities such as training workshops and regular dialogues.

Progress on safety of journalists through Presidential Task Force on Media Security

THE PHILIPPINES – The Presidential Task Force on Media Security operationalised several initiatives throughout 2022, including citing and adopting the Philippine Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists framework in their "Handbook on Personal Security Measures for Media Practitioners".

Integrating the principles of freedom of expression and media freedom from the National Plan of Action suggests that authorities acknowledge the plan and are open to further dialogue on how to safeguard journalists and media workers.

This was evidenced by certain dialogues and sessions attended by the military, police and the Presidential Task Force in October. Based on these meetings and exchanges, a section of the military proposed signing a memorandum of understanding with the the Plan of Action's advisory group to engage in joint training sessions on human rights and journalist safety. The dialogues are multi-sector endorsements for the Plan of Action and an opportunity for regular, joint initiatives on issues affecting the media and HRDs. This is especially important in an environment where journalists and HRDs are continuously attacked through means such as "red tagging", in which individuals or organisations are accused of being communist and subsequently barred.

IMS and the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) – the secretariat of the Journalists Safety Advisory Group – initiated the dialogues and actively sought the participation of the military, police and the Task Force.

The Presidential Task Force showed further commitment to the Plan of Action by organising a meeting in August between journalists, HRDs and 100 Philippine National Police (PNP) Media Security Vanguard, in partnership with the PNP Public Information Office Chief, to discuss the Philippine Plan of Action and a way forward for the partnership between the Task Force and the PNP Media Security Vanguard.

At the meeting, the PNP declared they will proceed with the assumption that every attack on a journalist is work-related. This declaration is significant as it will automatically trigger a special investigation of such an attack. It is an important step in engaging police and other authorities in the safety of journalists in a constructive way.

It is also significant that so many members of the police force participated. IMS and AIJC were in dialogue with the Presidential Task Force to organise the meeting, engaged with the police to ensure participation, and reached out to journalists and HRDs about attending the meeting.

The Safety Fund

The DJ Safety Fund supports journalists who are victimised as a direct result of their journalistic work. The support is made possible through donations made by members of the Danish Union of Journalists (DJ) and is used in cases where a journalist needs immediate protection as a result of a direct threat. Funds may cover urgent relocation, basic needs and legal or medical assistance.

All cases are carefully vetted, and support is coordinated with other members of the Journalists in Distress (JID) Network, a group of 23 international organisations assisting journalists and media workers whose lives or careers are threatened because of their work.

Between May 2022 and April 2023, help was provided to individuals and institutions in a total of 12 different countries.



UKRAINE

The DJ Safety Fund has assisted several Ukrainian newsrooms and individuals in 2022. Journalist Serhii C. needed to recover from the impact of many months of monitoring international media coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which he relayed in a newsletter. He felt burned out and depressed after creating translations and reviews of the front pages of leading newspapers from more than 60 countries around the world. Serhii C. received DKK 9,000 to pay for art therapy and to move to a safer place. He says: "Getting some help was in itself very important and positive for me. I got my faith in life back – and simply started to smile again. Little by little, I began being able to connect with my loved ones again."

The DJ Safety Fund has a mandate to support individual media professionals, but also to help an entire newsroom if needed. To help outlets struggling with power cuts following damage to Ukrainian power infrastructure, Lviv Media Forum received support to acquire generators and power kits for media outlets and individuals.

SYRIA/TURKEY

A total of 78 individual media workers received help following an earthquake that devastated areas in Southern Turkey and Northern Syria in February. Funds helped to replace damaged equipment and assisted journalists in rebuilding homes and workplaces.

Countries where journalists received assistance

Afghanistan
Angola
Iraq

Kenya
Kyrgyzstan
Maghreb country

Mexico
Niger
Russia

Somalia
Syria
Ukraine

Fighting repressive laws

By working with allies who challenge restrictive media legislation with tenacity, patience and creativity, IMS helps fight illiberal laws and policies in even the most challenging contexts.

By Colette Simonne Wahlqvist
Global Safety Adviser

As democratic backsliding continued in 2022, limiting opportunities to work with formal institutions, IMS continued to adjust its interventions accordingly. Indeed, with fewer countries in a state of positive political transition, classic policy reforms cannot be the only solution to effectuate change. For IMS, this means focusing our strategic work to harness the power of coalition building and advocacy coordination.

Our interventions are built from context-informed strategy around calls voiced by civil society; we recognise that a comprehensive awareness of the social, economic and political interests of local communities is integral for lasting and well-designed reform. IMS continuously works at the grassroots level to identify what freedom of expression and access to information really mean to the average citizen to build consensus around the need for action. Holding this common understanding is essential before engaging in political fora.

Fighting repressive laws is not for the faint hearted – it requires tenacity, patience, creativity and diplomacy when tensions are often high and set within a shrinking civil space. In these tough times, we seek

the individual actors and political figures who can respectively push back and serve as allies.

In 2022, these allies included the Media Law Forum in Sri Lanka, which provides pro bono legal support for media workers; the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee, which helped re-establish parts of a comprehensive legal framework safeguarding journalists; and the Cambodian Center for Human Rights, which successfully intervened to stop the government from establishing a “national digital gateway” that media and civil society groups said would lead to increased surveillance, media harassment and restrictions on freedom of expression.

As geopolitical tensions increase hand-in-hand with the reign of autocratic leaders, proactive engagement with government is not always an option for IMS and its partners. We must play the long game in many contexts, keep close track of small wins and capitalise on reforms only at the right moments.

One certainty around our advocacy is that change is never linear. However, when we bring together key national stakeholders and arm them with a range of best practice approaches, it is possible to fight repressive laws and policies in even the most challenging contexts.

Civil society groups make legislative gains in Cambodia

CAMBODIA – Cambodia suspended plans to establish a national digital gateway (NIG) that would manage all internet traffic into and out of the country.

The U-turn came in February after civil society organisations, tech companies and media raised concerns that the NIG would lead to increased surveillance, media harassment and restrictions on freedom of expression. They also said the NIG would give the government more power to control internet activity and either block or disconnect an individual user's internet connection.

IMS supported its partners, the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) and the Cambodia Center for Independent Media (CCIM), who called on the government to scrap the planned legislation.

CCHR and CCIM were also part of a coalition of civil society organisations in Cambodia that called for more access to information in 2022.

The coalition submitted a petition urging the prime minister and the Ministry of Information to send a long-delayed law on access to information to Cambodia's National Assembly for approval.

The law, which has been in draft form for over a decade, is intended to give Cambodian citizens access to government records, documents and information. The hope is that it will increase public participation, transparency, good governance and press freedom.

CCHR conducted legal analysis of the law and helped raise public awareness of it. It also met foreign diplomats to raise concerns about the scope of the law and released an annual report outlining the state of freedom of expression, press

PHOTO: MARCUS YAM / LOS ANGELES TIMES



freedom and access to information in Cambodia.

While freedom of expression and media freedom are protected under both Cambodian and international law, the situation is deteriorating, with the government continuing to silence independent media and dissenting voices. Reporters Without Borders currently ranks Cambodia 147 out of 180 countries for press freedom, and in 2022, Freedom House rated Cambodia as “not free” with a global freedom score of 24 out of 100.

Upholding press freedom during economic crisis

SRI LANKA – IMS partner Media Law Forum (MLF), which provides pro bono legal support for media workers and human rights defenders in Sri Lanka, successfully intervened in almost 80 percent of the cases it handled.

MLF usually takes on around 50 cases a year, but as the government cracked down on dissent and protests against corruption and impunity that triggered an unprecedented economic crisis, making arbitrary arrests, MLF was approached to co-intervene and took on about 250 such cases. MLF had a positive outcome in 198 cases and secured bail or release from detention in over 80 percent of them.

MLF’s work came as Sri Lanka was gripped by an unprecedented economic crisis which resulted in fuel and gas queues as well as a shortage of essential food items. Its work proved to be crucial in upholding freedoms of expression and assembly in the South Asian country. Its interventions also sent a clear signal to both the government and civil society that legal assistance would be available for those exercising democratic dissent.

Advocacy efforts re-establish support mechanisms

AFGHANISTAN – Following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2021, IMS partner the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) helped re-establish parts of a comprehensive legal framework safeguarding journalists that had been approved by the Afghan parliament two weeks before the coup.

The framework had included a policy on sexual harassment, which was to have been implemented by Afghan media organisations before the takeover.

After the coup, the Taliban imposed new restrictions on the media, particularly on women media workers and at the provincial level. At the same time, the development of Afghanistan’s media sector and national legal institutions stalled.

Working in collaboration with the Afghan Federation of Journalists and Media, AJSC managed to establish a framework based on the previous national regulatory system, with adjustments for Sharia law and the Taliban’s new media guidelines.

The hope is that the re-establishment of support mechanisms within this fragile new operational context will ensure access to information and the safety of Afghanistan’s remaining media.

According to Amnesty International, “restrictions on women’s rights, freedom of the media and freedom of expression increased exponentially” while “institutions designed to support human rights were severely limited or shut down completely”.

The Taliban has also carried out extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture and unlawful detention of perceived opponents.

Coordinated input on media law reform

TANZANIA – Having struggled to speak with one voice, the Tanzanian media sector ramped up its advocacy work and submitted recommendations to the government on the reform of the country’s media law.

The advocacy was led by the Coalition on the Right to Information (CoRI), a long-standing advocacy group comprising media associations and civil society organisations.

Its members include three IMS partners: the Media Council of Tanzania, the Tanzanian Media Women Association and the Media Institute of Southern Africa.

As a result of their work, CoRI got four new members in 2022, revitalising a coalition that has long faced pushback from state actors and struggled to coordinate its advocacy activities.

IMS’ media partners led the process of engaging the government over its reform of Tanzania’s Media Services Act, meeting with the Minister of Information in March. When the minister expressed concerns that he was receiving too many recommendations from across civil society, CoRI galvanised its approach and launched a taskforce to speak with one voice. It also issued a statement on World Press Freedom Day calling on the government to speed up the reforms.

The media sector’s coordinated advocacy is likely to give it increased leverage in the reform process.

Court in Pakistan strikes down controversial law curtailing press freedom

PAKISTAN – A high court in Islamabad struck down a presidential ordinance that extended the scope of online defamation in Pakistan and increased the prison term for the offence.

It also ruled that section 20 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016, which criminalised defamation, was unconstitutional.

The ruling has been viewed as a major win for press freedom and freedom of expression in Pakistan.

It came on the back of two research reports published in 2021 by IMS media partners in Pakistan: the Institute for Research, Advocacy and Development (IRADA) and Freedom Network.

The reports had argued that the offence of “online defamation” was being used to intimidate journalists into self-censorship and prevent independent public interest journalism.

IRADA was also a signatory of a civil society campaign to repeal the controversial ordinance and remove the criminal defamation clause from the act.

Building bridges

IMS and our partners work towards creating conditions that encourage rather than inhibit public interest journalism. In addition to trying to make journalism safer, our efforts range from making individual media environments more inclusive and equal to facilitating alliances and coalitions to engaging with the ever-evolving tech sector.

These are vital, cross-cutting aspects of IMS' work, regardless of changing circumstances in our programme countries. IMS' strategy on gender has provided a successful framework to push for women's inclusion at all levels of media, creating opportunities for women to tell their own stories and challenge outmoded narratives, thereby spanning the gender divide.

As illustrated by our safety work, building bridges across different sectors helps strengthen media's role in society. IMS has used our position to broker dialogue between public interest media and technology companies, support data-driven research and journalism that challenges disinformation and hate speech and find creative ways to make good journalism more visible and accessible online.



PHOTO: YASSINE MAHQOUB/NUPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Facing down the fakes



IMS works with our partners to combat disinformation at all levels, from supporting factchecking websites to working with civil society organisations to raise awareness to engaging dominant tech companies in how to stop the spread of disinformation.

Weekend Study
NEW YORK



PHOTO CREDIT: JOSEFIEL RIVERAS/SPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

Improved skills and content drives fight against disinformation

SAHEL – IMS’ content partners are improving their output in a bid to combat disinformation.

Media outlets, bloggers and filmmakers in the Sahel are increasingly producing higher-quality professional content and reaching larger audiences. IMS’ online partners in the region significantly improved their journalistic skills in 2022, from the production of factchecked public interest journalism across new formats to the dissemination of content online and via social media.

As a result, the popularity of their websites and digital platforms has soared, allowing them to reach millions more people and attract thousands of new followers on social media.

The increase comes as disinformation continues to affect the region.

While professional media still have a small online presence in the Sahel, social media “influencers” are increasingly able to spread unethical content, including hate speech and disinformation. At the same time, the Sahel is a proven target for foreign geopolitical actors.

Boosting sources of verified public interest information and journalism in a landscape flooded with disinformation and propaganda is essential to prevent further decline in democracy, human rights and public trust in state bodies.

As well as providing its online media partners with core support, strategic input and training in topics such as mobile journalism, digital security and online journalism, IMS facilitated many meetings in 2022 as its partners networked and sought to build a coalition around digital rights and obligations.

Civil society drives fight against disinformation

MOLDOVA – A network of seven civil society organisations agreed to contribute to a new national strategy for training people in media and information literacy (MIL), as the state looks to play a more active role in combatting disinformation in Moldova.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia’s war in Ukraine and the energy crisis, the government has described disinformation as a “danger” and agreed to make MIL a priority at the state level.

MIL empowers citizens to think critically about information and their use of media and digital tools.

To combat disinformation and propaganda more effectively, civil society organisations in Moldova are trying to coordinate their activities and have a greater impact.

Dominant tech firms join talks on war and disinformation

UKRAINE – Representatives of Ukraine’s government, media and broader civil society held online talks about war and disinformation with tech giants Google, Meta, Microsoft and Twitter.

The first meeting took place on 3 March 2022, just days after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Five more online meetings were held in March, April, August and November.

Facilitated by IMS and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Tech for Democracy initiative, the talks seek to enhance and strengthen collaboration to support free and independent journalism between relevant stakeholders.

The focus to date has been on ways to best deal with disinformation, deliver proactive solutions to protect high-quality journalism and ensure tracking and impact assessment among relevant stakeholders, and thus keep channels of fact-based journalism alive and attract new audiences.

It was the first time since 2014 that dialogue had taken place between Ukrainian stakeholders and representatives of dominant tech companies. The talks allowed the former to address the latter directly about the challenges posed by social media platforms.

In particular, the talks helped representatives of the dominant tech companies better understand the negative impact of social media and the need to update their algorithms so that Ukrainian society can speak more freely and debunk Russian narratives and disinformation.

IMS took the lead in bringing together stakeholders to discuss ways to counter disinformation on social media – such as the creation of a “trustlist” of media outlets, media experts and media development organisations in Ukraine.

This was initially done in dialogue with Denmark’s foreign ministry and “tech ambassador”. They invited representatives of the dominant tech companies, while IMS hosted and facilitated the talks and invited the relevant representatives of the Ukrainian government and civil society.

“Had this dialogue happened eight years ago, there would have been no war today,” said one of IMS’s media partners after the first meeting.

Further demonstrating the added value and leverage that IMS provides, it helped set up a coalition of media and civil society organisations in Ukraine that can speak with one voice in any discussions with dominant tech firms such as Facebook.

“Had this dialogue happened eight years ago, there would have been no war today.”

Challenging old practices with a feminist approach

From the launch of gender desks to the publication of important stories about women's rights, IMS' gender strategy has borne fruit – though the road ahead remains long and steep.

By **Simbiso Marimbe**
Programme Manager, Zimbabwe

The facts are damning. Women make up 52 percent of Africa's population but only 22 percent of those seen or heard in television, radio and newspaper reports – a figure that hasn't changed since 1995. Similarly, women make up only 23 percent of the ownership and management roles at African media organisations.

It's through this lens that IMS's gender strategy in Africa should be seen. As ever with Africa, though, each region or country is best understood within its own context. Indeed, levels of awareness of concepts such as gender equality vary across the continent.

In that light, IMS eschews a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing its organisational gender strategy in Africa. Instead, individual country programmes tailor their approaches to the contexts in which they operate.

Broadly speaking, though, IMS takes a holistic approach to implementing its gender strategy. As well as mainstreaming gender in its partners' external activities,

from editorial output and content production to organisational sustainability and advocacy, IMS seeks to capacitate its partners' own gender mainstreaming, encouraging them to assess their internal gender balance and policies.

In 2022, we saw important results in country programmes around the world, from small steps forward for women media workers in Afghanistan to establishing a list of women media experts in Eastern Europe to tackling gender stereotypes in Sri Lanka. In Africa, we have seen, the creation of gender desks in media houses in Tanzania and the publication of major stories concerning women's rights in Zimbabwe.

But the road ahead remains long and steep. Too many media owners, managers and editors see gender-related stories as less of a priority than stories about, say, civil war, climate change or economic crisis. Nobody denies the urgency of these issues. Yet in every case, women are at the heart of the matter. The challenge remains, then, to change organisational mindsets and persuade male-dominated newsrooms to view each story they cover through a gender lens and to better understand the impact each issue has on women.

Zimbabwe provides a case in point in 2023. Voters go to the polls in a general election and women candidates are braced for both on- and offline violence. Zimbabwe's media, which enjoys supportive constitutional provisions and national gender equality infrastructure, now has a major opportunity to demonstrate political will to fulfil its public interest role and cover this serious threat to the country's democracy.

“In every story, from climate change to civil war, women are at the heart of the matter.”



Participatory journalism supports peace and security

COLOMBIA – A participatory journalism project in Colombia has allowed women activists (known as women social leaders in Colombia) to tell their stories of peacebuilding, helping change the way women leaders are represented in the media.

El Espectador's Colombia+20 project, in partnership with the Colombian Women's Initiative for Peace Alliance (IMP), worked with women activists to create *Women, we write the [hi]story*. It is an example of how media have helped implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which states that women's equal participation is necessary to build, maintain and promote peace and security.

The project follows up on the implementation of the peace agreement between the government and FARC guerrillas, as well as telling post-conflict stories and changing the narrative imposed during decades of armed conflict.

Journalists from Colombia+20 conducted the participatory journalism exercise with women social leaders from different regions of Colombia. Journalists selected and trained the women activists, most of whom were not writers and had never been published before. The activists then decided on the topics and formats and produced the stories with the support of the journalists.

Fifteen women have participated in the project thus far – including Afro-descendent, indigenous and LGBTQIA+ women, as well as those coming from remote, conflict-affected regions – jointly

producing texts, audio-visual products and podcasts with the Colombia+20 editorial staff.

The project was funded by IMS and used a methodology designed by IMS and El Espectador.

Increased amount of content created by women

JORDAN – Fourteen articles by women freelancers were published on 7iber's platform with support from IMS gender funds made available through the Jordan programme.

Pieces focused on arts, culture, literature, gender issues and politics. In "My Journey Towards Living with a Quarter Stomach", new writer Bara'a Farouk recounted her experience with gastric bypass surgery, why she decided to have the operation and what this choice has meant to her.

7iber observed that there was an audience for writing by women on their personal experiences and topics of general interest to them. 7iber saw a 25.38 percent increase in women users between July and December 2022 – when the 14 articles were published – compared to the same period in 2021.

IMS has funding dedicated to attracting women writers from different walks of life and academic backgrounds to build a new community of women writers who have the ideas but no prior experience working with the media. 7iber, a strategic partner of IMS, receives core funding from IMS.

Award-winning network of Women Investigative Journalists

EASTERN EUROPE – Networks for women doing investigative reporting are quite common in many regions. They offer opportunities for journalists to exchange experiences and support each other. However, at the onset of IMS' work within the New Democracy Fund, it became evident that such a network did not exist in Eastern Europe. IMS then launched a feasibility study to identify relevant needs and stakeholders. As a result, the first-of-its-kind network in the region was launched, led by IMS' Ukrainian partner Regional Press Development Institute (RPDI).

The Women In Journalism Network (WIJN) has successfully created a platform for women to share knowledge and produce gender-sensitive cross-border investigations. Cross-border investigations are known to be demanding and expensive, but still WIJN has managed to produce seven investigations. And bag awards too. In 2022, the WIJN received the prestigious award "Suitcase 2022" from UNHCR, granted in appreciation of high-quality thematic media coverage on refugees, displaced and stateless persons, and the journalistic award from the organisation People in Need in Armenia, which honours journalists doing high quality public interest work.

Re-establishment of women media workers' advocacy group



AFGHANISTAN – The Afghan Safety Committee (AJSC)'s gender advocacy activities faced significant decline in Afghanistan following the Taliban's takeover. However, in August 2022, AJSC re-established the Afghan women media workers' advocacy group. AJSC – an IMS partner – and the advocacy group decided to continue identifying relevant activities to support the role of women media workers – despite the restrictions and pressures on women journalists and media workers.

Despite the challenge and outright risk, new members joined the advocacy group, which was initiated in Kabul and expanded to the provinces. The advocacy group currently operates in the provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Badakhshan and Faryab, and carries out advocacy activities for the rights and unimpeded continuation of the activities of women journalists and media workers in these provinces.

The advocacy group, which consists of more

than 30 women journalists and media workers, holds regular meetings with media owners and managers, the de facto authorities, UN Women and other stakeholders advocating for their rights and addressing the needs of women media workers. As a result of these advocacy meetings, women journalists and media workers' presence in the media has increased and they have been allowed to participate in some capacity building and training programmes, and more acceptance has been fostered on the part of the de facto authorities for the continuation of the work of women journalists and media workers.

After the Taliban announced restrictions on women's dress, travel and movement in public spaces, the advocacy group met with the Ministry of Information and Culture, which agreed to issue press cards that would allow women to conduct their work as journalists without a male chaperone in certain provinces.

Women Expert Database

In 2022, the Women Expert Database was launched and put to good use by journalists conducting cross-border investigations. With an interface in five languages (English, Armenian, Georgian, Moldavian, Ukrainian), the database is public, but designed specifically for journalists and experts. The database aims at diversifying sources featured in media and will allow investigative journalists to reach women experts from different countries. It is a unique tool developed by Ukrainian IT specialists for journalists from all over the world,

with a special emphasis on Eastern Partnership Countries, who are searching for information from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia. Prior research and funding for the database was provided by IMS.

Enabling safer media work environments for women and men



JORDAN AND YEMEN – In collaboration with WAN-IFRA Women in News, IMS developed a training workshop to build and advance the organisational and safeguarding capacities of IMS' partners in Jordan and Yemen towards safeguarding newsrooms and combatting harassment in media workspaces.

In Jordan, seven participants from five IMS partner organisations attended a two-day online training in May. Separately, six Yemeni media partners participated in a two-day workshop in December in collaboration with WAN-IFRA/WiN. It was the first time such issues had been systematically addressed among media partners in



PHOTO: MAXYM MARISENKO/UNRPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

a knowledge exchange forum.

The Yemen programme commissioned a gender analysis of the media sector in 2022 by consultant Aida al-Kaisy which described the patriarchal attitudes and often violent negative gender stereotypes, practices and attitudes that are prevalent in social media spheres and infiltrate physical media spaces in Yemen. In many areas of Yemen, women's work with international and media organisations is stigmatised and, in some cases, banned. One of the study's conclusions is that in a context riddled with security challenges and gendered risks for women journalists, there are pockets of hope emerging within locally-grown initiatives, civil society and media, revealing possibilities for wider impact and influence on social norms. One of the study's recommendations was to support the development of organisational policies and procedures in media houses to deal with harassment and online abuse and establish a workplace culture where women and men feel safe to speak about their experiences. These should be viewed alongside ongoing capacity building programmes to support professional and ethical journalism as well as programmes to support more gender inclusive and sensitive reporting.

The workshops are an important step towards ensuring that partners are equipped with effective workplace policies and procedures in place on anti-harassment. It is anticipated that during 2023 the partners will operationalise these procedures, taking a tangible step towards enabling safer workplaces with accessible channels to mitigate and handle any safeguarding or harassment cases that arise.

Collaboration with Women Journalists Association of Pakistan



PAKISTAN – As part of its “gender action plan,” the IMS Pakistan programme included gender-specific agenda items for discussion in media support alliance meetings. In one such meeting of the IMS-supported journalists’ safety alliance, IMS partners were introduced to the Women Journalists Association of Pakistan (WJAP) and discussed the safety and financial risks facing freelance women reporters.

The discussion led to IMS partner DigiMAP, an alliance of independent public interest journalism startups, agreeing to partner with WJAP to promote greater visibility for and perspectives of women in content produced by its digital media member platforms. DigiMAP and WJAP signed

a memorandum of understanding (MoU), aided by Freedom Network and IRADA – also IMS partners – to collaborate with freelance women journalists on capacity building and public interest content initiatives.

Women journalists in Pakistan face many sociocultural, professional and economic barriers. They are a major casualty of an ongoing meltdown of the media economy, losing jobs and opportunities to stay in the news cycle. IMS’ partners previously had limited interaction with women journalists regarding content production support. The MoU led to IMS partners providing capacity-building training to 42 women reporter members of WJAP, including freelancers, resulting in the production of 30 content pieces providing women’s perspectives. DigiMAP agreed to continue providing space to showcase stories by WJA women journalist members, ensuring that diverse and plural gender perspectives in digital journalism in Pakistan remain in play.

Skit series fights prejudices against women and reshapes digital consumption



SRI LANKA – IMS’ strategic partner HariTV created a series of short skits highlighting prejudices against women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. The 10 episodes supported by IMS were watched over 6.9 million times. The finale, in which women called for access to opportunities and the right to live harassment-free online and offline, helped reshape digital trends in Sri Lanka both because of the new format and because it was the first time that three-minute skits carried messages that were equally or more effective than television dramas. The series addressed certain oppressive attitudes that reinforce restrictions on women, girls and marginalised groups.

HariTV was best known for long-form content such as interviews, and skit series were previously only seen on television. The short-form series has paved the way for other digital media partners to pursue skits benefitting marginalised groups and helped them to amplify their support and counter patriarchal prejudices. It’s also shown the potential that productions led by women can achieve.

IMS and HariTV collaborated in conceptualising the initiative and followed up with teams of script writers, actors and production teams. IMS also mentored HariTV and the production teams in how to make more nuanced, gender-sensitive content.

Women’s media association inspires action on gender issues across sectors

TANZANIA – One of Tanzania’s largest media organisations launched a gender desk just months after participating in a workshop on capacity building workshop on gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment policies in newsrooms with IMS partner the Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA).

In March, the Sahara Media Group, which is based in Mwanza and comprises three media outlets, established a new role which will hear cases of sexual harassment and gender-based violence, advise victims and guide the outlets on the implementation of a gender policy. Sahara Media Group also reviewed and activated its own gender and sexual harassment policy.

The decision to establish a gender desk is seen as a significant step to ensure the effective implementation of gender equality policies and increase the safety of women journalists. TAMWA will continue to provide advice to Sahara Media Group to ensure that the now established gender desk is supported by management and used by journalists.

Between August 2021 and June 2022, TAMWA conducted five workshops with media managers, editors and owners. These focused on helping media houses to take practical steps to mainstream gender in their newsrooms.

Separately, Tanzania’s Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology (MinInfo) set up its own gender desk in May, appointing an official to serve as its focal point for gender-related issues.

The appointment came just four months after TAMWA published a gender audit in which it recommended that MinInfo create a gender desk. After publishing the audit, TAMWA highlighted its recommendations to policymakers and legislators, including through two high-level media stakeholders meetings that drew attention to challenges, such as sexual harassment, that women journalists in particular face.

TAMWA’s gender audit also called attention to the absence of a gender perspective in the country’s media laws, including the Media Services Act of 2016.

In response, MinInfo appointed TAMWA to a special role related to gender mainstreaming as part of its nomination to a taskforce charged with reviewing and amending the relevant legislation.

The appointments represents the first time that MinInfo has prioritised gender issues in this way. The gender focal point is expected to help the ministry understand the extent of sexual harassment and gendered violence in the media industry and take appropriate action.

As part of her role, the official on the gender desk will report to the MinInfo’s Director of Information Services, who is also the chief government spokesperson.

Zimbabwe's airwave feminism

CORAH broadcasts to rural audiences in communities across Zimbabwe, providing access to information, while its reporting helps expose local corruption that has otherwise been overlooked.



PHOTO: TIEZOZO MEDIA

“It was like a horror movie,” says Beauty Nyamusanguza, recalling how her niece lost her first baby at a maternity clinic south-east of Harare.

Her niece had arrived at the clinic after going into labour, only to discover that the midwives there wouldn’t deliver her baby unless she paid a \$10 bribe – a huge sum

for a poor Zimbabwean family. Unable to pay the midwives, Beauty’s niece lost her baby during delivery.

“All I could do was to scream while the nurses looked at me as if nothing had happened,” Beauty recalls.

This harrowing experience – and the corruption that caused it – was just one

of several scandals recently exposed by Community Radio Harare (CORAH).

A community radio station based in the Zimbabwean capital, CORAH was founded in 2006 with the aim of providing the link between residents of rural communities and stakeholders, including local leaders and politicians. Its mission is “to promote the free flow of information by giving the community of Harare and surrounding areas platforms for self-expression and access to information.”

The radio station has five employees and most of their story ideas come from citizen journalists located in 17 communities around Zimbabwe.

“We have a citizen journalist in each area and train them in content-generation skills and how to produce a video or podcast,” explains Pauline Chateuka, CORAH’s projects officer and assignments editor. “If there is a story, they inform us.”

Beyond radio waves

Because CORAH is still seeking a community broadcast license, its programmes are mainly distributed via social media, including YouTube, TikTok and Facebook, where it has around 100,000 followers and broadcasts live between 1pm and 4pm daily.

According to Chateuka, it also “Kombicasts” stories – putting programmes about corruption or substance abuse on USB drives

PHOTO: TIGZOZO MEDIA



Nonhlanhla Ngwenya, former programme coordinator and editor at CORAH, in 2022.

and giving them to drivers of public minibuses, or Kombis, to play instead of music. Stories are reported in Shona with English subtitles added to videos.

So-called WhatsApp-casting is another successful distribution model: as the name implies, CORAH shares its content with more than 40 WhatsApp groups.

SMS is another useful way to communicate with audiences, especially in parts of the country where access to the internet is unreliable or non-existent.

According to Chateuka, CORAH can reach around 110,000 people via SMS. “We send helpful messages, like the date of an election,” she says. “We want to promote access to information.”

CORAH’s “community live chats” have been another fruitful way of communicating with audiences. These are physical meetings designed to bring together community residents and leaders to discuss local issues such as road infrastructure or the council’s budget.

Community involvement

It was at one such meeting, in the Harare suburb of Epworth in late 2021, that a woman stood up and said that pregnant women were being forced to pay bribes at

council-run maternity clinics to deliver their babies – often with tragic consequences.

CORAH subsequently ran a story exposing the corruption and tagged the Minister of Health, among others, when the story was shared on Twitter. “As a result, the health ministry took over the clinics, which hadn’t been paying their staff,” Chateuka says.

Then, in 2022, CORAH broke a major story revealing that officials were demanding money or sex in exchange for access to water at boreholes in the community of Harare South-Hopley.

The corruption was revealed by women at a meeting that CORAH had organised to promote women’s participation in local governance and community development issues. The story was picked up by Zimbabwe’s national television broadcaster, while the First Lady of Zimbabwe later visited the borehole.

CORAH also revealed last year that staff at some clinics in Harare were demanding bribes to issue birth records and health cards to new parents – a barrier to acquiring a birth certificate.

Without a commercial broadcast license, CORAH cannot raise revenue through advertising – meaning the financial and logistical support it gets from IMS and partner

Fojo Media Institute is a lifeline. “Without resources, it’s hard to go and do live chats with community members,” Chateuka says. “You cannot be a community radio without engaging with your community structures.”

Moreover, Chateuka explains, it’s important that CORAH can engage with women at its community meetings. “Through the project we actually managed to train women into leadership roles in their communities,” she says. “It has also put CORAH on the map, and it is now even easier to go into communities.”

Residents of those communities welcome CORAH, too, and how it reveals corruption.

“The CORAH story helped us a lot because there was change in the attitude of the health workers and fear to ask for bribes,” says Peter Nyapetwa, the chairman of the residents’ development association in Epworth. “However, we still hear of cases of similar status from our community sources. It is critical that stories like this one be kept alive. The media is critical and very much a part of mending our communities.”

Stronger together

By facilitating the collaboration of stakeholders from across society, IMS is able to build bridges, expand debates and challenge potentially repressive laws and policies.

By Olga Gututui

National Adviser on Moldova

Cross-sector collaboration is often the key to successful media development. It typically entails the involvement of many sectors – from independent media and state institutions to civil society and donors – and aims to build bridges, open lines of communication and ensure an ongoing debate about the viability of proposed objectives.

Moldova provided a case in point in 2022. Disinformation continued to threaten the democratic order there following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with Telegram becoming a home for dozens of "fake news labs" for media controlled by pro-Moscow forces. In response, Moldova's government – which is committed to democratic reform and fighting corruption – drafted new regulations aimed at combatting disinformation on television and radio.

IMS responded by convening an expert working group comprising stakeholders from across the Moldovan media and civil society landscape. The working group's aim was to discuss how to protect the country from disinformation without infringing on democratic or media freedoms – and to scrutinise the parliamentary committee

reviewing the draft laws.

From Tunisia to Cambodia to the Philippines, disinformation has increasingly provided a basis for imposing punitive laws and restrictions on freedom of expression – including the sweeping "fake news" laws that came in under the pretext of protecting people from Covid-19 but have been used to control populations and restrict the media.

To avoid the imposition of similarly restrictive laws in Moldova, IMS has been working openly with state institutions to promote the reform of the country's media laws in line with European standards, while media and civil society contribute to the development and promotion of European standards of legislation and media activity, as well as to campaigns aimed at combatting disinformation. Moreover, together with donors and implementers, IMS tries to ensure synergy in all activities and combine efforts rather than duplicate them.

One of IMS' strengths in such circumstances is to be an effective facilitator, establishing and maintaining contact with partners, as well as with representatives of civil society and the state. For example, in 2022, it played this role in Tanzania, where it helped the country's press clubs engage in a series of dialogues with the police; in

Ukraine it facilitated roundtable discussions on combatting disinformation (see page 39), bringing representatives of the media, civil society and dominant tech platforms to the table with relevant government ministries.

In Moldova, meanwhile, the working group – which was re-established with IMS' support by the Chairwoman of the Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Education, Research, Youth, Sport and Mass-Media – has proved to be a highly efficient platform for debate and discussion about Moldovan media legislation. Similarly, in October, IMS organised a conference on disinformation with the Audiovisual Council and Independent Journalism Center and a follow-up is planned for June 2023.

One indication of the success of the cross-sector collaboration that IMS began to facilitate in 2022 was the media law on disinformation that eventually passed. After the working group highlighted concerns about regulating online disinformation to the chairperson of the committee, only the regulations pertaining to television and radio were ratified; those pertaining to online disinformation were abandoned. Thus, by ensuring an ongoing debate was held, with the right parties around the table, IMS helped to protect media freedom in Moldova.



Dialogue series drives drop in press violations in Tanzania



TANZANIA – An advocacy campaign by media groups helped to reduce the number of reported violations by the police against journalists in Tanzania.

According to the Media Council of Tanzania, 17 such violations were reported in 2022, compared to an average of 20 cases per year in the previous two years.

As well as the advocacy campaign, a series of dialogues between police and journalists is seen as having led to fewer press violations in 2022.

Facilitated by the Union of Tanzanian Press Clubs (UTPC), 28 meetings took place across seven regions in Tanzania.

The purpose of the dialogues was to resolve issues that typically bring the media into conflict with the police. Their relationship is poor and characterised by mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.

Besides establishing the concept, which has been used in Sierra Leone and elsewhere, IMS provided resources and technical assistance and acted as a sounding board for UTPC.

Multi-stakeholder dialogue limits disinformation law

MOLDOVA – IMS brought together stakeholders to discuss the threat of disinformation in Moldova.

Talks were held to discuss how to protect Moldova against Russian disinformation without restricting media freedom and democratic discourse.

In early 2022, IMS provided strategic advice and re-established an expert working group on media legislation. The group included media experts, civil society representatives and parliamentary committee members, among others.

The group's work took on greater urgency in February, when Russia invaded Ukraine. Following the invasion, the Moldovan government proposed a new law to combat disinformation on television, radio and online.

In response, the expert working group provided the parliamentary committee tasked with scrutinising the draft law with relevant input – including examples of experiences from other countries. The working group also sent its concerns about regulating online disinformation to the chairperson of the committee.

They included the stipulation that any intervention, modification or addition to the law should be in accordance with fundamental rights and freedoms, so that the right to free expression and democratic principles would remain unaffected.

Consequently, only those regulations that pertained to television and radio were ratified, while those pertaining to online disinformation were abandoned.

Community radio drives municipal transparency in Niger

NIGER – A municipality took steps to be more transparent following a broadcast by an IMS-supported community radio station.

In August, La Voix d'Hamdallahi broadcast a programme about taxes and municipal budgets, with a focus on local governance and accountability. As part of its new, interactive format, the programme invited listeners to call in and explain why they refused to pay taxes. Many argued that there was little or no transparency in the local administration's use of financial resources, in part because its sessions were not open to the public.

After the broadcast, the municipal administration in Hamdallahi agreed to make its decisions more transparent. It also invited residents to attend its quarterly council sessions, where it discusses the implementation of a municipal development plan, as well as its annual budget session.

The radio station received multiple requests for it to broadcast the programme. According to its director, there is a new dynamism to the interactions between the local administration and the community.

La Voix d'Hamdallahi has received support from IMS since May 2022 as part of the IMS Sahel programme's efforts to develop community radio stations and further inclusion and accountability.

An organisation in growth

In 2022, IMS strengthened the organisation after several years of growth. This included revising its partnership approach, creating cross-functional thematic hubs, developing leadership, strengthening governance and improving whistleblower structures.

Nexus and CHS

Nexus or HDP Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions, a concept increasingly referred to by international actors. An external review of IMS' work in Somalia found IMS' approach to media development to be highly relevant in a Nexus perspective as the media's role is amplified in contexts of fragility, conflict and crisis, as people are in need of trustworthy information.

In 2022, IMS also initiated a process to be verified against the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). The verification is done through a self-assessment within the framework of the CHS Alliance. The CHS self-assessment was finalised in the second quarter of 2023. A follow-up plan will outline opportunities to improve systems and mechanisms to further accountability towards partners and staff.

Whistleblower mechanism

IMS has long had a whistleblower mechanism, but it was not optimal. In May 2023, IMS outsourced the handling of whistleblower reports to an external law firm who provides a transparent platform. The first review of reports will be handled by an external legal assessor. Anonymity is protected while allowing IMS to respond more transparently. Ensuring the expertise is in place and reports can be handled confidentially also offers value for money for IMS.

There were three reports using the whistleblower mechanism in 2022; two were fake reports aimed at IMS partners. One report of misconduct by an IMS partner led to no evidence of wrongdoing; the final conclusion is pending. Two additional cases opened following internal concerns were effectively handled and closed.

Read about our whistleblower mechanism at: <https://www.mediasupport.org/about/accountability/>

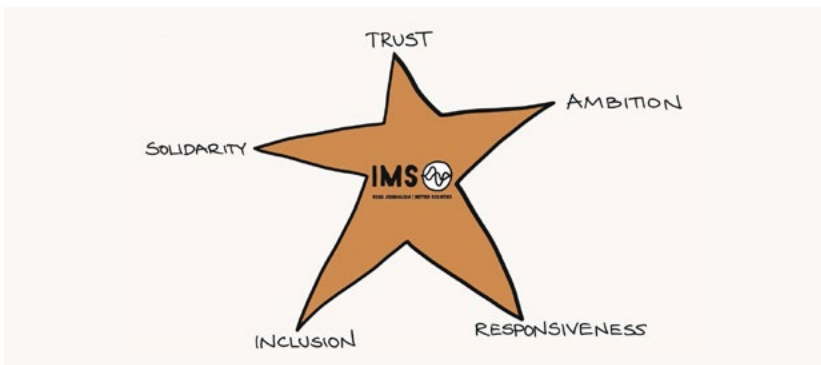
Cross-functional hubs

Following the creation of the Journalism hub in 2021, a Safety hub was formulated in 2022.

Hubs are an extension of IMS' strategy that align and amplify programme design and implementation. Hubs develop our outcomes areas while mainstreaming approaches to tech and gender.

Hubs will ensure that IMS continues to improve as a knowledge organisation; maintains a community of expert advisers to support strategic development of the outcome areas; and helps position IMS as an expert in these areas in the media development sector.

Updated IMS values



IMS is a values-driven organisation. Before gathering staff in Denmark in September, IMS management reviewed the values the organisation is based on, calling for input

from all staff. IMS staff then participated in workshops and training sessions while reflecting on how IMS' values should be described and realised.

Leadership development

Organisational growth and the increasing complexity of management responsibilities at IMS have required adjustments in leadership levels to enhance efficiency. At the same time, IMS management wished to create a common leadership foundation. In 2022, IMS revised its leadership principles, changed the leadership structure and embarked on a leadership development process in collaboration with the Danish CSO coalition Globalt Fokus to provide education for all staff with leadership responsibilities. This is a first step in the transformation of IMS' leadership and is part of IMS' efforts to be "fit for now" as well as "fit for the future".

IMS partnership support

Working in partnerships has been central to IMS’ approach from the outset. IMS surveys all partners every other year for feedback on partnership relations and to document the effect of the support provided. Here are some results collected in May 2022.

Gender

- 70 percent of the partners found the capacity development on gender equality related to their organisational development had a significant or very significant effect.
- 62 percent of the partners are cooperating with women’s organisations.

“The expertise on gender-related aspects has been particularly helpful in developing both the organisation’s internal gender policies and integrating a gender lens to all public products.”

Capacity development

- 81 percent of surveyed partners found that their content improved as a result of IMS capacity development.
- 84 percent of the partners feel that the capacity development received from IMS corresponded with their needs.

“Capacity development received from IMS was really huge and impressive especially in the basics of journalism and social media marketing.”

Media viability

While most partners report that the majority of their income comes from international organisations and donors,

- 35 percent of media partners saw income growth related to product and content sale, consultancies, training and from staging events.
- 24 percent saw growth in income from memberships or subscriptions.

Improving partnership relations and programme cycle management

Partners continue to be generally very satisfied with the IMS partnership, with an average rating on 4.47 out of 5.

“Given our experience with dozens of funding organisations, I can strongly assert that IMS comes at the top in terms of practicing a real partnership with its partners. This is both rare and precious, not to note how positively impactful having such a relationship on the quality of our work.”

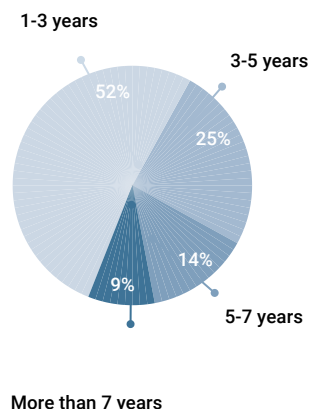
Negative comments were primarily about administrative and financial procedures, with one partner commenting: *“The financial procedures are very, very complex.”*

IMS is addressing these issues by implementing a trust-based approach. The approach aims to revitalise IMS’ historic foundation of trust-based relationships with partners in line with the localisation agenda and principles of value for money. Key parts of the approach entail linking partner capacity assessment in administrative areas to IMS’ control setup and obligation to support development of capacity in these areas.

IMS also launched programme cycle management training for more than 65 staff members. Along with developing the course, the IMS approach to media development is now being clarified and aligned across the organisation.

How long has your organisation worked with IMS?

(both contractually and non-contractually)



IMS quick facts

IMS continues to expand our diverse staff of dedicated, creative and highly motivated professionals based at our Copenhagen headquarters and around the world.



38

AVERAGE
STAFF AGE

-
- IMS LOCAL PRESENCE
 - STAFF MEMBER NATIONALITY

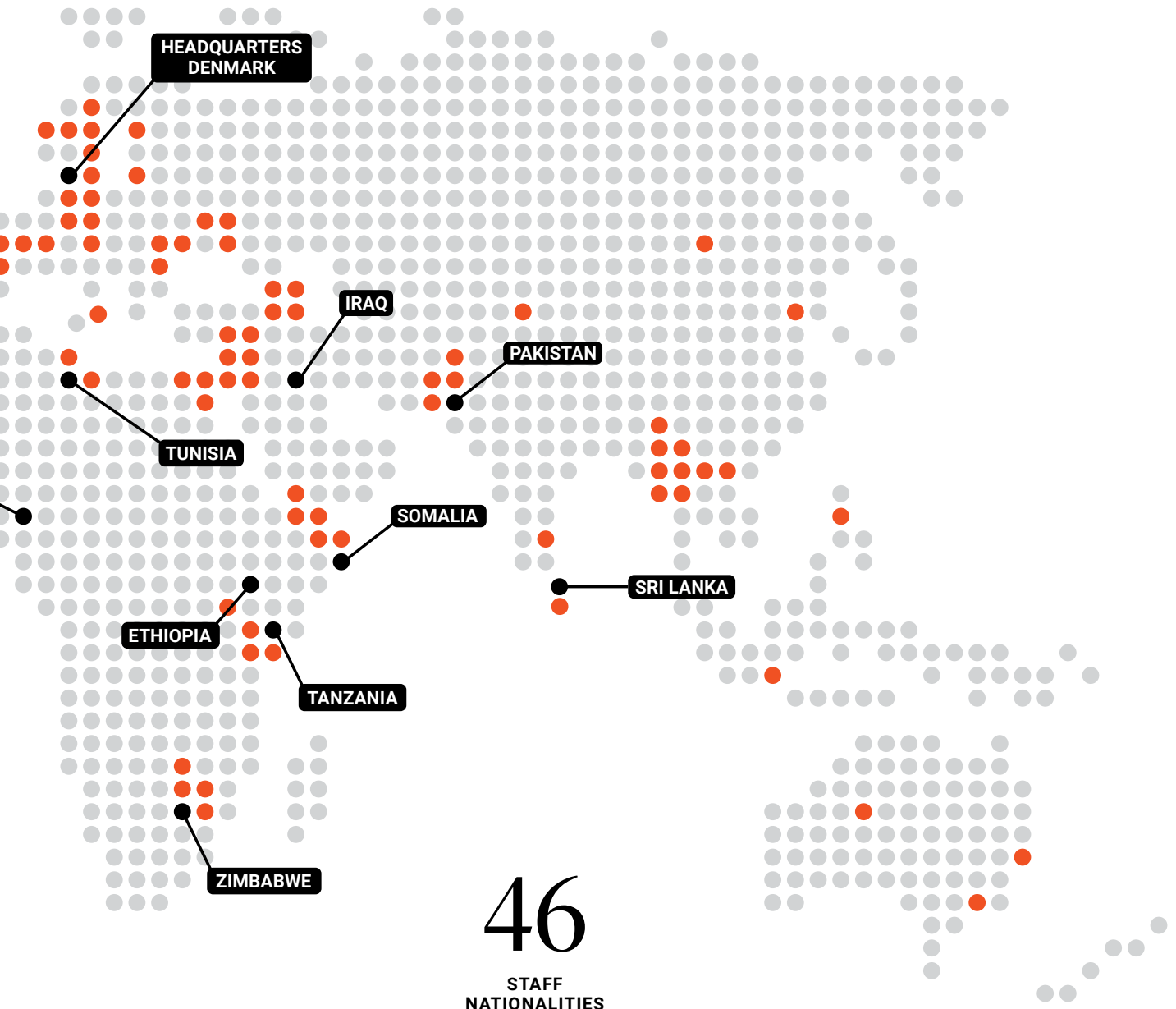
Dots are meant for broadly representational purposes within each country.

41

NEW STAFF MEMBERS
IN 2022

162

STAFF
MEMBERS



A major push on engagement in Denmark

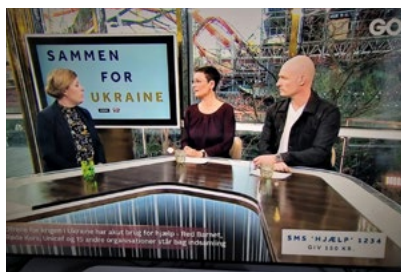
Part of IMS' strategy is to engage with the public – with a focus on Denmark – to build an understanding of the importance of good journalism and media freedom as a prerequisite for democracy and all other human rights. In 2022, this work was expanded to reach about 200,000 Danish school children.

Danish Democracy Festival



Every year, thousands of Danes, politicians, decision-makers and CSOs meet on the Danish island of Bornholm at Folkemødet, the Danish Democracy Festival. In 2022, IMS, UNESCO, the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy and the Danish Cultural Institute joined forces and planned the International Stage, opening it to global topics and talks in English. IMS participated in a number of engaging activities, from discussing misinformation and fake news to giving an insight into what measures could help to create the optimal internet and showing the CPH:DOX award-winning film, *A House Made of Splinters*. The over-arching topic, “Reviving democracy”, looked at how strong, professional media institutions can counter democratic backsliding.

Strong support for Ukraine



On 12 March, IMS participated, in collaboration with Danish national broadcaster DR, TV 2 and 17 other organisations, in a telethon raising money for Ukraine. Well-known Danish musicians performed as thousands of Danes watched live in Copenhagen and on TV and donated funds in support of Ukraine's cause. IMS received almost 4 million DKK, which enabled further support to provide the Ukrainian and global populations with needed information from media outlets inside the country. The Danish Union of Journalists and IMS members also provided extraordinary financial support for IMS' work strengthening Ukrainian media and factcheckers who are fighting an information war.

Nobel Peace Talks

After awarding the Nobel peace prize in 2021 to journalists Maria Ressa from the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov from Russia for their “efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace,” the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo followed up with a series of Nobel Peace Talks in 2022. IMS participated alongside the Norwegian Union of Journalists, with IMS gender adviser and Afghan journalist Wahida Faizi giving an account of the tremendous difficulties facing media and women in Afghanistan since the Taliban's takeover.

IMS and CPH:DOX in partnership



In 2022, IMS expanded its partnership with CPH:DOX, one of the biggest documentary film festivals in the world. IMS and CPH:DOX see documentary film as a medium that can create substantial awareness and, in some instances, lead to change. IMS connects its partners and documentary filmmakers with opportunities to exchange professional knowledge and experience related to documentary film production.

In 2022, IMS and CPH:DOX engaged the Danish and international public through debates, artist talks and masterclasses. The film *A House Made of Splinters* won the DOX Award.

Focusing on media literacy for thousands of children

PHOTO: Bjarne Bergius-Hermansen



In 2022, IMS won a call by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lead in one of the biggest Danish educational efforts focused on development and global issues. The project, which has been an annual tradition for 60 years, is called Børnenes U-landskalender – or the “Children’s Calendar” – and reaches up to 200,000 schoolchildren in Denmark. It includes a cardboard Advent calendar, the proceeds of which support a carefully selected project in the Global South.

In 2022, this project was in Tunisia, where IMS had developed a media literacy project in collaboration with Tunisian partner Al Khatt. The project aims to establish

youth- and children-centred media in eight areas of Tunisia where local communities have few or no media outlets to serve them.

In Denmark, schoolchildren explored Tunisia via educational material developed for 6–12 year olds and learned about the importance of reliable information and the role of good journalism. A website designed by IMS gave insight into the work of Tunisian youth reporters and introduced why freedom of expression is important in a democracy. Animated “explainers” set out to introduce concepts such as news deserts and the importance of checking facts. As part of the project, IMS engaged a Danish and a Tunisian filmmaker and

worked with Danish musician Isam B to produce a music video.

IMS produced a total of 34 videos which, by the end of the year, had been played 82,248 times on the Children’s Calendar website.

IMS visited 27 schools across Denmark to introduce the material and give personal accounts on the work of journalists. Almost 2,000 schoolchildren from grades 1–6 participated in the talks. The visits also generated media coverage and an opportunity for IMS to advocate for the need for good journalism and the importance of avoiding news deserts.

Online reach



Twitter
9,120 Followers



Newsletter
2,426 Subscribers



LinkedIn
7,010 Followers



Instagram
1,877 Followers



Facebook
33,865 Followers

“We were very enthusiastic about the material. Besides topics we have seen before on cultural differences and poverty, the new feature on freedom of expression and children’s rights to have their own voice was new and of importance.”

Camilla Storm, teacher

Financial overview 2022

Support from donors and the public makes it possible for IMS to react quickly to new and continuing crises. In 2022, IMS saw a 27 percent growth in funding, in part because

of the situations in Ukraine, Afghanistan and Myanmar as well as new funding for Eastern Europe. Our activity expenditures increased while the level of administrative

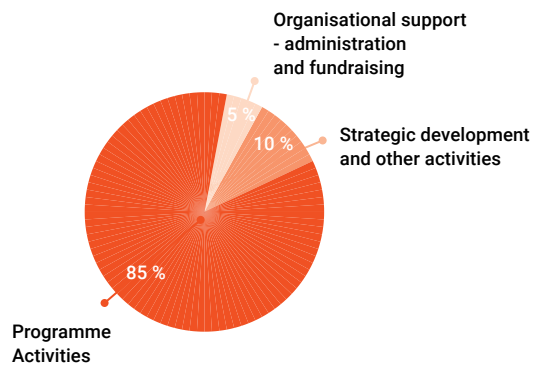
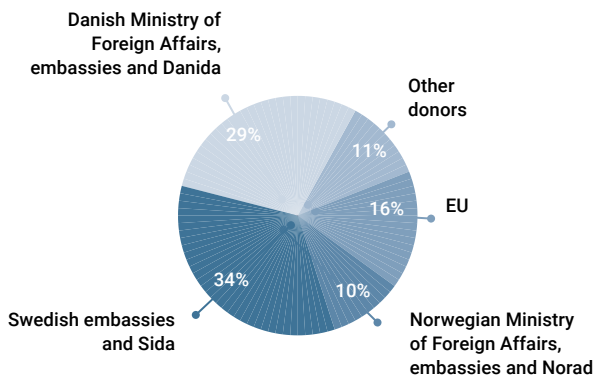
costs lowered. Continuous flexible core funding for strategic and operational development enables IMS to improve and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

Funding

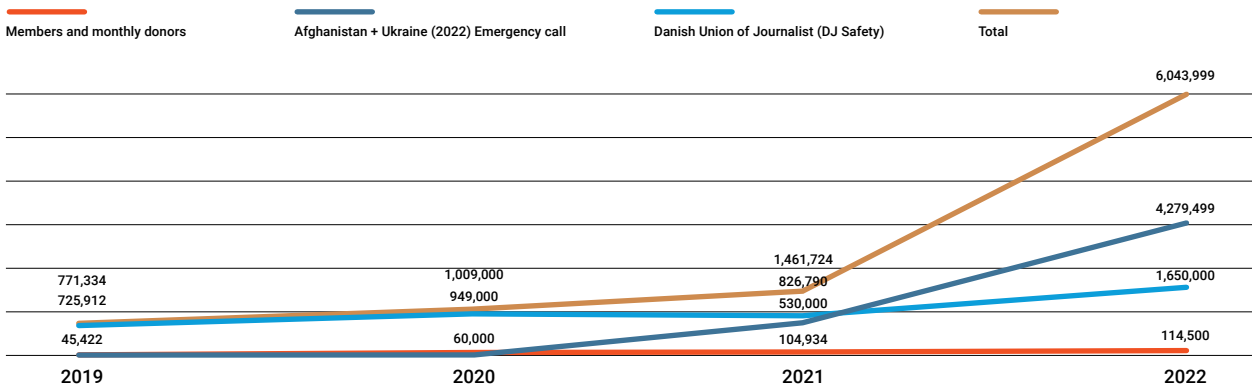
| | EUR | % |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Swedish embassies and Sida | 12,321,768 | 34% |
| Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danish embassies | 10,348,285 | 29% |
| Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and Norad | 3,733,763 | 10% |
| EU | 5,730,379 | 16% |
| Other donors | 3,809,276 | 11% |
| Total donor category | 35,943,472 | 100% |

Expenditures

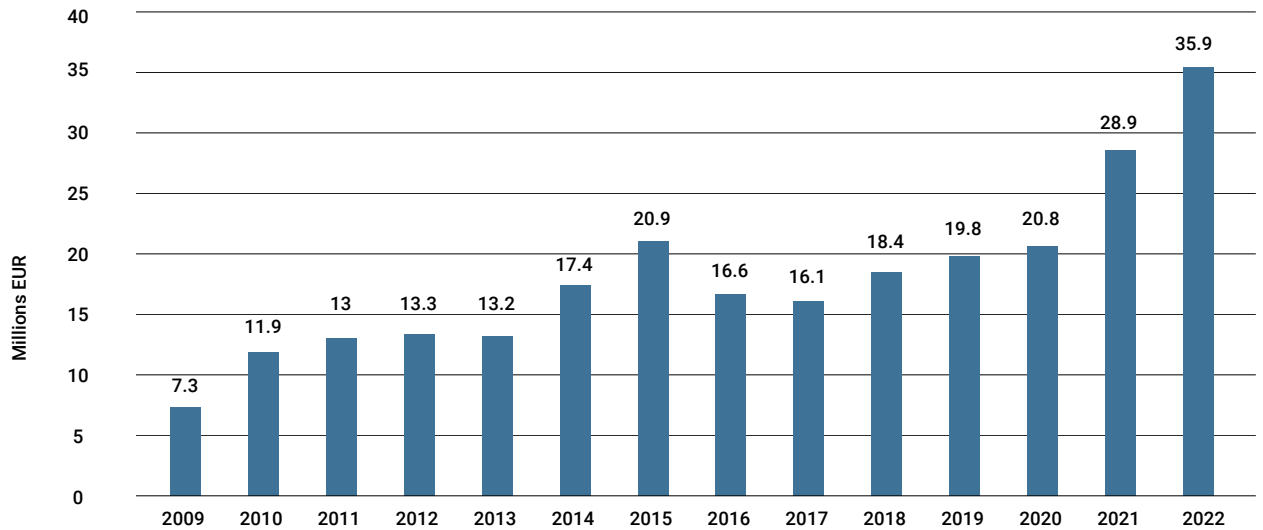
| | EUR | % |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Programme Activities | 30,702,947 | 85% |
| Strategic development and other activities | 3,565,627 | 10% |
| Organisational support - administration and fundraising | 1,674,898 | 5% |
| Total expenditures | 35,943,472 | 100% |



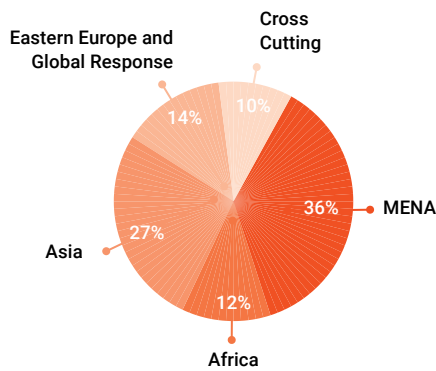
Donations from individuals



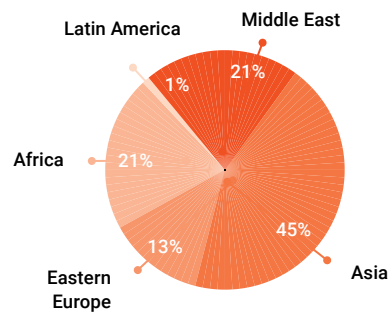
Turnover 2009–2022



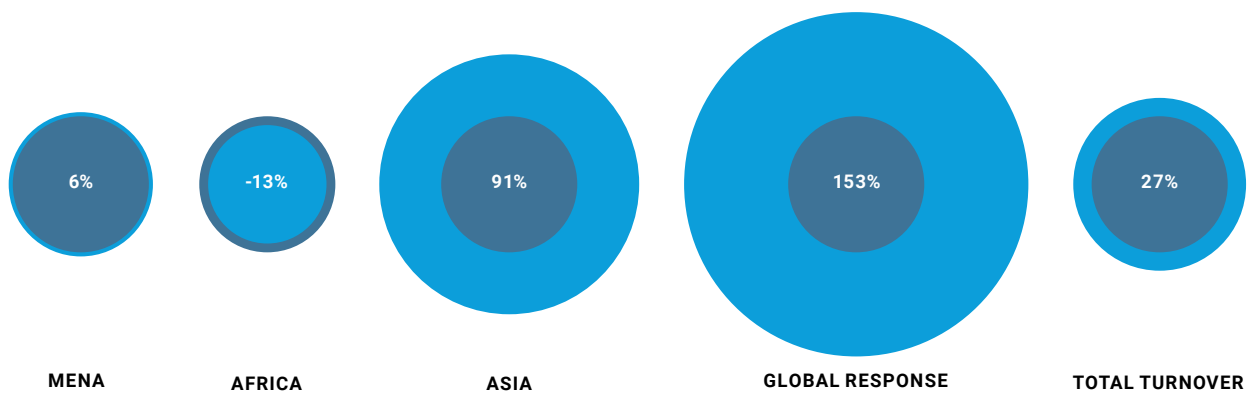
Regional expenditures



Rapid response expenditures



Regional growth 2021–2022



IMS Board 2022

The IMS board is the governing body of the organisation. It comprises representatives of the four founding organisations of IMS, as well as independent members. Leading up to 2022, IMS undertook a governance

review, evaluating board effectiveness, competencies, diversity and structure, among other things. Following the review, a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee was set up as part of the governance structure,

and a succession plan was set in motion to replace board members coming to the end of their mandate in 2023.

Andrew Puddephatt

Chairman of the Board, International Media Support,
UNITED KINGDOM

Ann-Magrit Austenå

Leadership development, Oslo Diocese,
CHURCH OF NORWAY

Tine Johansen

President, The Danish Union of Journalists,
DENMARK

Gene Kimmelman

Former President of Public Knowledge,
Georgetown University, UNITED STATES

Edetaen Ojo

Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda,
NIGERIA

Moukhtar Kocache

Independent adviser and consultant,
LEBANON/UNITED STATES

Jens Grund Pedersen

Vice Chancellor, Danish School of Media and Journalism,
DENMARK

Eva Grambye

Director of Strategy, Program and Learning, Danish Refugee Council,
DENMARK

Mads Brandstrup Nielsen

CEO, Association of Danish Media,
DENMARK

“Since the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, I have worked for a rapid response mechanism to fill the gap between media development and aid to media in conflict. This inspired the foundation of IMS, which I am proud to have been part of ever since. A committed staff and director have developed IMS into what it is today, an astonishing organisation with a much broader mission, and its vision to protect and work for good journalism is as important as ever.”

Lars Møller

IMS wishes to thank the members of the board, all of whom are volunteers. A special thanks to our board members who stepped down in 2022: Annika Palo, Jens Grund Pedersen and especially Lars Møller for his many years of service to the board.

Thank you to our donors

IMS' biggest institutional donors are:



In 2022, our work was also possible due to support from:

Danish Union
of Journalists

Norwegian Union
of Journalists

Ford Foundation

Google News Initiative

Swedish Postcode
Foundation

Dutch Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Swiss Foreign Ministry

Support independent media

Media workers around the world are under enormous strain – especially in conflict areas. By supporting them, you can help them report essential stories, gather important information and combat disinformation.

Your donation will help keep journalists safe and ensure that independent media can continue to operate under the most trying circumstances.

Support our work

International donations:
mediasupport.org/donate


Donations from within Denmark:
mobile pay: 98209
dk.mediasupport.org/stot/donation/

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mediasupport.org/newsletter

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Contact us with questions on how to support our work at info@mediasupport.org


*For more than 20 years,
IMS has focused our work
in countries experiencing
armed conflict, humanitarian
crisis or authoritarian rule to
support independent media
and defend press freedom.*

mediasupport.org

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