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Independent Media Program in the West Bank and Gaza
Quarterly Report
April – June 2008

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Submitted by Pact on behalf of Internews Network, Inc.

Independent Media Program in the West Bank and Gaza
Quarterly Programmatic Report

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I. Executive Summary

During the seventh quarter of *Aswatona: Independent Media Program in the West Bank and Gaza*, Internews Network was asked to slow down its activities while waiting for the approval of the Year Two plan and its budget but continued with a few activities by accomplishing the following:

- Internews Network held a joint workshop with DAI's Bayan Project on "Access to Information" that covered how to find and use information from the government and courts as well as joint efforts between the media and NGOs. Six NGOs and nine journalists from both radio and television attended the workshop that was held April 6-7, 2008
- Internews Network ran an advanced course on "Getting the Story: Covering Press Conferences and Conducting Interviews for New" in Ramallah for the top journalists from the previous workshops from radio, television, print, and electronic news agencies. The workshop, held May 18-20 in Ramallah, was attended by eighteen journalists:
 - Ten from television stations
 - Six from radio stations
 - One from print media
 - One from the electronic media
- Internews Network held a one-day roundtable discussion with female journalists from the local broadcast media outlets on the challenges, obstacles and opportunities of being a journalist. The workshop was held 30 June 2008 for twenty-five young journalists from partner stations throughout the West Bank.
- Internews Network continued to work with the broadcast media association after their initial board meeting to discuss and outline joint activities for the association membership. It was agreed to hold a meeting with the membership and representatives of the Telecommunications, Information, and Commerce Ministries in cooperation with the Coalition and Ma'an Network in late July. *Aswatona* staff began with a meeting in the Telecommunications, Department of Audio-visual Media.
- Internews Network began implementing the return assessment of partner and potential partner stations. Six stations were visited in May and June:
 - Hebron: Al Nawras TV and Radio, Minbar al Horiya Radio, and Khalil Radio;
 - Nablus: Gama TV, Nablus TV, and Tariq al Mahaba Radio
- The total number of program productions funded by *Aswatona* was nineteen, and all, with the exception of two, have completed their productions but several still need the necessary reporting to close the production grants. The two remaining are Tariq al Mahaba with a contract that ends in July and Khalil Radio that will be cancelled.

- Mentoring on marketing for station owners. *Aswatona* staff has been assisting in marketing and sales strategies for the programs currently funded by the project, as well as assisting in those who have submitted proposals for the second round.

The deliverables for this period as outlined in the last report are below:

Activity	Activities of This Quarter	#s	Planned	Actual
1.1a	Joint Workshop with DAI BAYAN project on Access to Information	9 CSO reps 9 journalists	March	April 6-7
1.1b	Young Women in Local Media - roundtable	19 journalists		June 30
1.1b	Workshops on reporting specific issues/topics “Getting the Story: Covering Press Conferences and Conducting Interviews for News Advance Course in WB and Gaza	18 journalists (22 invited)	May	May 18-20 Gaza delayed
1.2b	6new grants/contracts/partners Follow up done with existing grants		May	Delayed pending final approval
2.1a	in-house radio human interest mini feature		May	Delayed
2.1b	in-house TV local events and human interest		April	Delayed
2.1d	workshop in ethics and standards		May	Delayed
2.1c	Specialized training: conflict reporting/safety		April	Delayed until October
2.1f	Internship in Egypt		May	cancelled
2.2a	local polling – stations and public	N/A	June	Delayed until July
2.2c	Media Management and Organizational structure		April	Delayed until July
2.2ci	Financial Planning and Marketing		May	delayed
2.2cii	Programming priorities		May	delayed
2.2d	Technical assessment update		April/May	May and June

2.2e	Media Management follow up Int'l consult		June	cancelled
2.3a	Association Dev – focus groups		April and June	Delayed until July
2.4a	Audio-visual media law workshop		May	Delayed
2.4b	AV media law regulatory issues workshop		June	Delayed
2.6a	Industry-wide Ethical standards combined w/March		May	Delayed

II. Background

The goal of *Aswatona: Independent Media Program in the West Bank and Gaza* is to enhance the role of local independent broadcast media in their local communities by strengthening reporting, enhancing business sustainability, and improving program production related to issues of local policies, good governance, civil society, and the aspects of democratic culture in the West Bank and Gaza.

The three main components are:

- 1) Strengthening the local media by creating self-sustaining business models, enhancing reporting and production capabilities, and skill-building on investigative and issue-specific journalism, and re-connecting the media outlets with their local communities by reporting on and working with local civil society organizations (CSOs) on field reporting.
- 2) Strengthening the knowledge base and awareness of the media and CSOs regarding each other's work, as well as strengthening the legal and regulatory sector that govern the media, and strengthening the networking and informal association of the media sector in order to professionalize the field.
- 3) Funding innovative program productions combined with training to build more cooperative, responsive and professional production capabilities, and implementing a small grants program focused on CSOs' communications and work with the media and community outreach to their.



Aswatona: Independent Media Program in the West Bank and Gaza runs from 24 October 2006 through 20 September 2008 with a sub-grant of \$3,884,026.

III. Key Results

Objective 1: Improved citizen awareness of and involvement in community-level democracy and governance issues.

In order to meet this objective, *Aswatona*'s local media partners have had to work on re-connecting with the communities through field reporting and local news as well as attracting and maintaining listeners and viewers with quality programming.

1.1a - Workshop on Media Access to Information

Working in cooperation, the **Aswatona** and **Bayan** projects organized a two-day workshop on "Access to Information" at the City Inn hotel in Ramallah, April 6th and 7th, 2008. The main topic of this joint activity was gaining access to and dissemination of information in public government records and the roles of both civil society and media.

The workshop, aimed at strengthening the capacity of media and civil society organizations in disseminating accurate, quality information and enhancing media coverage of the policy making process in the Palestinian territories, attracted nineteen participants from both the NGO and media sectors.

Bayan selected six CSO's to participate in the workshop (Shams, Ta'awon, Panorama, Civil Forum, Filistiniyat, and Hares), while Aswatona selected nine media outlets (Isis Radio, alSharq Radio and Television, Tariq alMahaba Radio, Ajyal Radio, Qalqilia Television, Wattan Television, alNour Television, alFajr alJadeed Television, and Nablus Television). Bayan contracted trainer Wafa Abdelrahman to direct the training, while Aswatona staff members co-directed.

The first day started by exploring the expectations of the participants and of course, all said that they expected to learn how to have better access to government information. The CSOs wanted to strengthen their cooperation and coordination with the media and have a better understanding about the media, while the journalists expected to have better cooperation with the CSOs. The session then moved to the concepts of freedom of access to information and why it is a right for every citizen as well as covering the basic principles to practice this right. The trainer also clarified the current legal environment in Palestine within these general principles. The participants interacted through their knowledge and assessment of the legal issues and laws and what is allowed or not allowed from legal point of view.



An exercise was given to the participants based on the PA Cabinet decision on payment clearance of utility bills for government documents and on how to deal with the PA decision on forcing the

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Palestinians to pay their debts to private and public companies. They were asked to deal with the following questions: On what legal bases it was issued? How to deal with it as media and as CSOs to expose all aspects of that decision? What is the public's right to know? The attendants received a list of the different governmental websites to assist them. This exercise opened the eyes of the participants to a better understanding for the need to research before writing a press release or a news item. Where to find the related laws, websites? Who to ask and why? The output of the four different groups of participants was displayed for critique by the participants, the trainer and Aswatona team members.

The open discussion that followed showed that the participants are not very well informed of the sources of information available and how to find them. They admitted that they conduct their work based on personal knowledge and relations. Before the day was through, they were given a case study to prepare; for the media, a story board and for the CSOs a press release. The case study was the recent decision by the President on giving the government or any party harmed by the strikes of the teachers or other public sector workers, the right to sue the strikers. Each group wrote a story or press release on this law-decision, to include the actual text of the decision, the possible basic laws that may be violated, or the laws the decision was based on, and the different parties' position on this decision. They were advised to use the advocacy diagram: **defining the problem, analyzing it, plan and design, implementation, monitor and evaluate, etc.**

The second day began with a general review of the first day's activities and materials. Then the review and critique of the assignment began. An open discussion followed the presentations by the participants and critique took place from both the legal and journalistic perspectives. The discussion was based on the concepts of the media responsibility, which is based on professionalism, independence, balance and objectivity, to inform the audience of the needed or related information and the CSOs' responsibility to disseminate complete and accurate information to their membership and public.

The second session focused on the use of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) approach as a tool to evaluate official policy and to submit alternatives: this approach was meant to measure the positive and negative aspects of the policy; who is harmed and who benefits, and how to ratify the policies even if the decision has already been implemented. Several examples were given by the participants and they were challenged to use the RIA to activate participation of different groups in changing the policies. A brief exercise was given on using the RIA on the government's decision to force the people pay their debts to the private and public companies.



The last two sessions were dedicated to the tools of dissemination of information (audio visuals, electronic agencies, print journalism, public meetings, workshops, conferences, billboards). The Aswatona team shared the results of the surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007 on the sources of information for the public. It was a surprise for the CSOs that the main avenue they use to publish their releases and positions, newspapers, are the primary source of information for only 10 percent of the public, while the TV and radio together make up

62 percent. They commented that they need to reconsider their outreach policy and to start depending more on the audio visual means.

This led to a discussion on the partnership between the media and the CSOs; what are the common points and interests, where they differ, and how to strengthen this relation and to make it sustainable. Several exercises were given on the writing of press releases by CSOs and news items and reports by the media people. All were displayed for critique by the group. In general, the CSOs' press releases showed that they are active in dealing with issues related to the public reaction more than assessments, and the journalists' critique led one participant to say, "we need new training on how to write the press release in a good way." The media people presented better stories on the problems they deal with such as the government's decision or the president's decision-laws and a one of the participants said that, "I didn't know how to get the information before but now I know where and how to get certain types of information and how important it is for the media to be accurate in getting the information."

In all, the participants were happy with the workshop and thought it was interesting, interactive and useful. They appreciated the approach in bringing together CSOs with journalists, as one participant summed up, "This training strengthened the relationship between the civil society organizations and the media."

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Notes from the participants and organizers:

- The topics were new and interesting for both media and CSO's
- It was a good opportunity to join the two sectors together first to know each of the other and second to establish better and solid partnership
- CSOs acknowledged the fact that their information on the media is limited and they think of it as print only. They acknowledged as well the importance of ASWATONA surveys on the sources of information for the Palestinians.
- Interaction was very clear, every minute was used
- For both media and CSOs, access of information is more clarified and how to reach the basic laws and different official websites and other sources
- Research is the name of the game for both sectors before giving judgments or depending on impressions rather than facts
- Both sectors exchanged details on how to cooperate in the future and how to get benefit of each other's activities and to develop production of spots or reports etc.
- The trainer, Wafa Abdelrahman, was very serious, and mastered the workshop's topics and for the media part of it she depended on Aswatona team.
- Participants got lists of governmental, CSOs and media websites as sources of information
- The subject of the training was excellent but the time was not enough
- The training was on a new topic with a new approach that includes the media and CSOs and strengthened the knowledge of each and how to better work together.

Training Agenda

	First session -8:30 10:00	Coffee Break 10:00- 10:15	Second session 10:15-12	Lunch -12:00 12:30	Third session 12:30-1:45	Coffee Break 1:45- 2:00	Fourth Session 2:00-3:15	
First day Sunday 6/04/08	- Opening & introduction - what is freedom to information - Why access to information - basic principles to access to information		- Enabling Legal environment (Internationally, locally) - Arab and International experiences - Palestinian draft law of access to information		- 2 case studies from Participants (success story and a failure story in obtaining information). - Analysis of the cases (why? Opportunities & obstacles)		- source of information (types, how to access each type, how to search, where to search. -Exercise to introduce Main websites and sources for research	Conclusion and Evaluation of First day
Second day Monday 7/04/08	Exercise: what to do with the accessed information? (strategies of information dissemination, tools and ethics)		- How to mobilize the media to publicize the accessed information - enhancing the relation between media and CSOs.		Exercise: how to write fact sheets, and how to convert them into news worthy?		Tools and methods for information dissemination on the grassroots level	Conclusion and evaluation of second day

1.1b – Open topic specific workshop: “Young Women in Local Media: Challenges, Obstacles, and Opportunities

The Agenda:



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Roundtable Discussion with Local Women Journalists *Monday 30 June 2008*

10:00-10:30 am

Welcome and Introduction

10:30-10:50 am	Why Journalism?
10:50-11:20 am	Sharing Experience: Making It Work Hadeel Wahdan, Bureau Chief, BBC Arabic, Ramallah
11:20-11:40 am	Discussion
11:40-12:50 pm	From the Field: Challenges and Obstacles
12:50-1:05 pm	Break
1:05-2:15 pm	Needs and Opportunities for Career Development
2:15-2:30 pm	Connecting and Recommending
2:30-3:00pm	Lunch



The one-day roundtable discussion was led by Benaz Batrawi of Media Net and was attended by nineteen young female journalists from the local media outlets. The first session was kicked off with a brief introduction of Aswatona, a description of the purpose and goal of the roundtable, and a brief self-introduction of the participants. It was explained that a good number of organizations and donors want to know about these young journalists and would like to have an idea of how they can be assisted. Therefore, Aswatona decided it was best just to ask them.

The first session was a discussion of why they had chosen journalism as a profession. The answers were honest, some simple, and a few were entertaining:

- Taghred Suwiti of radio Minbar AlHuriya in Hebron said that while she did not study journalism at the university she had a desire and love of the profession that pushed her to work in the field;
- Sura Aqel of Nablus TV said that she chose journalism because she loved challenges and liked to be in possession of information that she can tell people about;
- Hiba Lama of the Palestine News Network (PNN) said that she studied journalism in order to further her study of political science and then discovered that the people with the information have the power; and
- Hamsa Altayeh of AlFajr AlJadeed TV in Tulkarem stated that she examined the written press and decided to work in the audio-visual media because there was a big difference between the written and audio-visual. However, she said, her first chance came for the print



media through one of her university professors who encouraged her and she wanted to prove that the capacities of women are the same as men.

Most of them indicated that they still have many hopes for developing their profession, and still are searching about better places under the sun. Some of the journalists said that they faced opposition by their parents or extended family for choosing journalism field but they expressed their will to go on and be what they want to be.

The group was joined by Hadeel Wahdan, the Bureau Chief, Ramallah, of the newly launched BBC Arabic TV. Ms. Wahdan is a veteran journalist who graduated from Bir Zeit University with degrees in journalism and political science. She talked about starting her university study in the engineering college as an alternative to law, which was her father's choice. It took her a long time and lots of effort to convince her father to change to journalism. While studying, she started working with the BBC on a program called, "Youth on Air". Then, she worked with the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC), a local media center. She joined Associated Press (AP) news agency and worked for there for three years before joining AlArabiya satellite channel as a reporter. She left Al Arabiya in May to join the BBC.



Ms. Wahdan talked about her professional experience since she started working ten years ago. She talked about challenges she has faced, such as being a young woman among men in a field that is highly competitive and has secret professional wars. She explained that when she first started one of the main difficulties she faced was a social one, working for long hours everyday in the same place with men and sometimes she had to work late hours. This was not acceptable by her family and the society in general. Through covering certain sensitive issues like rape, sexual harassment, drugs, honor killings etc, she faced problems and even rejection by the society because she was a woman dealing with such issues. Ms. Wahdan also spoke about when approaching officials, most of them underestimated young journalists and after several interviews, some would sexually harass her. However, she stated that, in her opinion, this started to change after the 1987 Intifada, which provided an improvement in status when women started taking the lead.

Ms. Wahdan said that these personal challenges were in addition to the professional ones such as facing difficulties in assuring balance in reporting, especially during sensitive historical stages such as covering the internal conflict between Hamas and Fateh movements. She talked about preserving good, official and professional image when interviewing official resources, and keeping neutrality during news reporting.

Ms. Wahdan concluded the basics for successful female journalists are the strong charismatic character and the professional image. She advised that young journalists should not be in a hurry and it takes big effort to build a career or to be a star. She stated that the quality of work is the 'know how'. She advised them to choose relevant wording for each story, test their voices, and change it according to the subject. In a word, it is the research that is done for each story that brings the quality to shine.

The discussion that followed was lively and rich. In answering a question by a participant on the use of working in a local station, Ms. Wahdan replied that the local station is an excellent experience because it will be a success in the closer community, which counts more in the career and in the gender issue than satellite channels. She said that most of successful Palestinian journalists started in local outlets. When asked about the main characteristics of a successful woman journalist, Ms. Wahdan replied, “It is a strong personality, self- confidence, professionalism, working hard to have a special image as a journalist, concentrating on the content, and not to be hesitant or afraid of asking the right questions.”



The participants split up into groups to tackle two questions: what are the challenges they face and what do they believe they need to grow professionally as journalists. Each group then presented their work, which was followed by a plenary discussion after each. The overall results are below:

	Problems and Obstacles	Solutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration prefers males to females. - Audiences (public) respond to the males more than females. - Social barriers: the customs and traditions hinder women’s development - manager or department head imposes the questions and the woman journalist only conduct the interviews - Older women colleagues underestimate the new ones - deprived of rights in the work and has no protection - Underestimation of the administration of women’s capability in field work. - The wrong perception of the society of women's work in the media. - Men journalists are egoists - Parents oppose daughters wanting to study journalism - The Palestinian society, mainly Nablus is conservative. - Women with or without hijab are subjected to criticism - Salaries: men colleagues get 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having more media workshops - Follow-up and evaluation of these workshops - Providing stations with proper equipments - Providing scholarships for women journalists - Providing English language courses for women journalists. - Providing work insurance and getting press cards - Initiation of a women journalists’ forum to follow up problems, obstacles, and solutions. - Moral support by the station and the society - Providing more workshops in the local and international levels (internships) - Travel abroad and exchange experiences - Intensification of scholarships. - English language development, which is a prerequisite for scholarships - Training by skilled journalists (experts) - Knowing better the nature of work in foreign stations - Learning up to date technical skills. - Learn Hebrew language in addition to other foreign languages - Activation of the journalists association and getting credential press cards

<p>higher salaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unfair competition among staff - In covering breaking news and events, the admin prefer men - Women journalists are the target for rumors and gossips - Many women do not have the right to decide for themselves - Lack of appreciation of the women journalists by their colleagues. - Men do not accept to work under a woman - Women journalists are often subjected to sexual harassment. - In field work, males are more responsive than females to answer questions 	
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All participants said that the round table was very fruitful and useful. For them, it was first an opportunity to meet and to know each other. Second, it was also useful for exchanging ideas. They agreed that there needs to be follow up with similar or advanced meetings. Most of them think the agenda, the activities, the exercises, the discussion, and brain storming were all very practical and useful. They all requested and received the contact list of participants so that they could stay in touch and Ms. Hadeel Wahdan shared her contact information as well, offering to be a mentor for the young women journalists.

Attendance:

Name	Station	Position
May Mustafa	Wattan TV	News presenter
Rawan Abu SOUROR	Wattan TV	Reporter
Hala Tamimi	Wattan TV	Reporter
Diala Zarrer	Wattan TV	reporter
Salam Hindawe	Alsharq Radio	Presenter
Areen Arar	Amwaj Radio	Presenter
Maysoun Albana	Tariq Al-Mahaba Radio	Presenter
Eman Alshami	Gama TV	Reporter
Layaly alkilani	Gama TV	News Presenter
Sura Aqel	Nablus TV	Reporter
Nidaa Abu Alsibaa'	Nablus TV	News Editor
Hind Khalifa	Alnajah Radio	Program Presenter
Tharaa' Al-Qawasmi	Al-Rouah TV	Reporter
Enaas Abden	Radio Bethlehem 2000	Program Presenter
Maha Yousef	Radio Bethlehem 2000	Program Presenter

Erica Zeidan	Radio Mawal	Presenter
Hiba Lama	PNN	News Editor
Wissam Shower	AL-Khalil Radio	
Taqred Alswaty	Minbar Alhuriya Radio	Presenter
Qamar Abdelrahman	Minbar Alhuriya Radio	Presenter
Razan Odeah	Farah TV	Presenter
Reema Faraseni	Albalad Radio	Presenter
Abeer Hamad	Albalad Radio	Presenter
Fidaa' Hantash	Baladana TV	Editing/ Reporter
Hamsa Tayeh	Alfajer aljaded TV	Chief of Editors

Notes: The attendance rate was almost hundred percent of the invitees, which reflects interest in the topic and the interaction was very high, almost every participant shared ideas freely with the rest of the group. It was the first time, for women journalists working in local outlets to meet and to exchange ideas on their reality and future. It was noticeable that the young women journalists dream of becoming "stars" in regional satellite channels but that they showed a good degree of awareness of the problems and obstacles they are facing. The brain storming during the round table led to creative ideas, such as forming a women journalists forum and they believe that they need such meetings and more training for capacity building. They feel that they can face the social and work problems if supported by administration and women societies. During the open discussion, most of the participants said that they prefer to have a man boss rather than a woman.

Aswatona is following up with some of the requests for scholarships and language training with other organizations and funders.

1.1b – One topic specific workshop: “Advanced Course on Getting the Story: Covering Press Conferences and Interviews for News” in the West Bank

The Agenda:



Getting the Story: Advanced Course

May 18-20, 2008

- 9:00-9:15 Registration
- 9:15-9:30 Welcome, Overview, and Introduction of the trainers
- 9:30-10:45 Review of the previous workshop and reporting since then

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-11:45 Research in the Press
-search mechanisms and confiscation
-examples of topics that were sent to the trainees and assessment
-video present some previous reports

11:45-13:45 Assessment and review of the various reports

13:45-14:45 Lunch

14:45-16:00 Review the written and audio reports

Second day:

9:30-10:00 Opening and review

10:00-11:00 Terminology in the press and use examples and applications

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-11:45 Press conference on the upcoming economic conference in Bethlehem

11:45-12:15 Interview with an economic analyst on the conference

12:15-13:30 Assessment and analysis, review the results of the conference and interviews, and their findings story

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 Each group editing the final report (in writing) - including interviews, and what can be deduced from the press conference, and economic analyst's viewpoint, under the supervision of the trainer.

Note:

Participants are requested to edit interviews and press conferences registered and bring it the next day. Internews will provide photographers and editor (Monterrey) for television.

Third day:

9:30-11:00 Review of the previous day, review and evaluation of some or all articles that have been edited.

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-11:45	Forms of writing in the press groups each group working on writing a story, the story includes elements of all releases - examples and applications
11:45-12:15	Review of written reports and evaluation
12:15-13:00	Review and evaluation of audio reports
13:00-13:15	Review and assess reports of television
13:15-14:15	Lunch
14:15-16:00	Review and evaluation of the work performed - assessment of the workshop
Distribution of the certificates of completion 60 Hours of Training	
16:00	Departure

Throughout the previous three sessions in Nablus, Bethlehem, and Ramallah, the training focused on breaking the conventional reporting style that prevails in local media and tried to present a professional approach on covering press conferences and conducting interviews for news. It took great effort to reshape the old fashion approach in which the participants were doing their jobs and the first course contributed in shaking the old reporting mantra.

The advanced course included the top eighteen from the fifty that participated in the first course. They were asked to prepare for the training by bringing stories that they had done since the last time and to prepare three different current national affairs stories:

- 1) The Palestine investment conference;
- 2) The truce or *tahdeah* between Hamas and Israel; and,
- 3) The Peace negotiations and Fatah's Sixth General Conference

They were told to conduct research on each of the topics, interview experts, politicians, business people; anyone who was relevant to the stories.



In the opening session, the two trainers, Hisham Abdullah and Mohammad Sa'adi, reviewed the skills and theories presented in the last workshop and reviewed the prepared video, audio, and written stories by the trainees in the last month. The work of each was evaluated and critiqued on the quality, approach, and presentation of the stories. It seemed that the participants had managed to at least apply a portion of what they have learned in the course.

The following session dealt with the use of terms in reporting. It was wise to introduce the issue of terms that journalists use or repeat in their stories. For example, the use of the term *tahdeah* to describe the agreement reached between Hamas and Israel. Hamas first used it and it was picked up as the label for the agreement without any journalist questioning or defining what it meant, in its literal use and in its new diplomatic use. It was clear at the start of the course that participants were not aware of this issue. They are still introducing terms in their stories without paying attention to meanings and connotations these terms can have. Unfortunately, this issue was not given sufficient time in this workshop due to the fact that there were a number of other issues that had to be covered in a limited amount of time.

The trainers focused on eight main themes throughout the course:

- First and foremost, the background research for both the pre-interview and the pre-press conference to gather the necessary material to do their job in a more professional way, and to develop serious questions. This seemed to be a novel element and many said that before this course, they hadn't done that before.
- Second, was not to take anything from officials and interviewees for granted. There should also be a bit of the "suspicion radar" on all the time.
- Third, structuring and planning the questions for interviews and pressers. Good questions beget good quotes and good quotes beget good stories and good stories create larger audiences.
- Fourth, the key question after the interview is over is 'what is the story?' This was also something that was rarely experienced in their stations or newspapers.
- Fifth, is the importance of writing and structuring the story. Journalists must ask themselves why the story is important and why should people be interested in it?
- Sixth, is re-visiting the story, follow-up and 'combing' the story.
- Seventh, is reading other stories done by other media outlets, foreign or Arab, and comparing the versions with the reporter's version.
- Eighth, is creating trust with the community in their job as correspondents working in local media.



Due to the timing of the workshop, three days before the Palestine Investment Conference, the activities were focused on the preparation to cover that international event. A press conference was arranged for the participants with the Minister of Planning, Dr. Samir Abdullah, on the morning of the second day. As well, the participants made appointments in the afternoon to do interviews with those involved in arranging or those who would attend the

conference. It so happened that the workshop venue was also the hotel where a number of businessmen from Gaza were staying before moving to Bethlehem for the Investment Conference, so a number of interviews were done with them as well. They were told to come the next morning with the different interviews, the story idea, and the components that needed to be added.

The participants started writing and editing that night and came the next morning with stories for critique and review. The different stories were presented and critique and developed with further ideas by trainees and trainers alike. Each of the journalists had different interviews with different political analysts, economists, and people from the street about the conference issues and their expectations.

The rest of the morning and early afternoon sessions were spent adding the new suggested information and elements and all the components were edited together and all the stories were reviewed and discussed once again. On the second day, Internews Network managed to secure five spots for the local media to cover the investment conference. The organizers were expecting two hundred journalists mostly from the foreign news agencies. In the end, seven local outlets covered the actual conference and the others reached agreement to share footage taken by them to create their own stories.



At the close of the workshop, Internews Network presented certificates of completion to the trainees who attended the three-day advanced and the previous workshop and met the requirements of the training.



Aswatona Staff and Trainers Evaluation of the Participants:

Trainee	Station	Activity	Trainers eval.	Aswatona eval.
Gusson Sabri	Amwaj TV	First day only Good interaction in open discussion	Unsatisfactory. She had to leave!	Unsatisfactory, she did not attend the last two days, has to leave for urgent need!
Baker Wahidi	Noor TV	Very good interaction in open discussions and in preparation for questions and script writing for Press conference coverage	Good attendance, poor implementation, poor in writing	Eager to learn, needs more experience mainly in extracting the story
Nizar Habash	Wattan TV	Good interaction in discussions and pausing questions, and in research for Press conference coverage,	He showed tangible progress in story extraction, good implementation and practice of the course goals, relevant for the	Active and responsive, dare for initiatives, advanced learner, serious and fully committed.

		interviews, individual initiative	career	
Iman Elshami	Gama TV	Good in interaction, preparation for activities, eager to learn and to redo the task interaction	She showed good progress, ready to practice, good in grasping the ideas taught, fair in implementations	Eager to learn and not shy in asking for assistance when needed .ready to implement and some times too quick to do that. Good in team work.
Fakhri abu Alrob	Jenin Merkezi TV	Good interaction, although a little bit slow learner, sharp in criticism of others works, always ready to implement, with poor skills, needs a .lot of training	Ready to learn, although the implementation is not up to the expected.	Very eager to know, active in implementation and field work.
Jawad Turkey	Fajr Al Jadeed TV	Interactive, good in participation in the research and the preparations, technically good in applying, but not always according to the new ideas given in the course	Poor in grasping the ideas, although trying to implement what he gets	Sometimes heavy to abandon traditional approaches and the “over respectful” of the officials. Through more practice, which he is doing he can develop
Raed Omar	Qalqilia TV	Very interactive. Sharp in criticizing the example stories. good in asking questions and attempts to extract the story	Relative progress on the ideas taught in the course. Ready always to follow up. Good in shaping questions and in implementing new skills	Open-minded, active and ready to understand and implement new approaches.
Bilala Khamayseh	Farah TV	Fair interactive, good learner, good in shaping questions, and in writing skills	Showed some progress, good in grasping ideas, but in applying, not the same capacity.	Good in learning but needs a lot of field practice to unveil his abilities.
Thara Qawasmi	Rou’ah TV	Good in interaction, very sharp in asking questions and criticism. But not very strong in applying the ideas	Relative progress in grasping and applying ideas.	Sharp mind, needs to be given more opportunities for practice

		learnt.		
Hamzeh Qawasmi	Nawras TV	Very good in interaction, fair in asking questions, he is good in combining technical (editing for radio and TV) with journalistic skills.	Relatively good in learning ideas, good in practice.	Serious and committed, hard worker, team work spirit. Open-minded to new skills
Rami Zaqut	AlShabab radio	Good in interaction and always attempts to find good questions and to extract the story. active in fieldwork	Relatively good in digesting and implementing new ideas and concepts.	Serious, self-confident and ready to implement, although still needs more practice
Adham Mansreh	Tariq alMahaba radio	Very active in interaction, discussing and criticism. Open to modern approaches in journalism. Good practice	Very good, showed progress in the concepts and ideas given in the course.	Hard worker, open to criticism and very promising
Raed abu Baker	AlBalad radio	Relatively active, good in his continuous research attempts	Relative progress in grasping new ideas.	Hard worker, a little bit hesitant in applying new ideas
Shomou'Gharib	Isis radio	Very interactive, sharp in criticism and asking questions. Active in work	Showed good progress, ready to re-do the work based on criticism and notes by trainers	Very open to criticism and to apply new approaches and concepts. Hard worker and good in technical skills. Needs more practice in writing skills
Tagrid Sweiti	Manbar alHoriya radio	Relatively interactive, good in judgment of displayed productions. Active in implementation	Good progress even during the workshop itself.	Open to criticism, needs practice in writing skills
Fadi Ya'qub	PNN	Very interactive, very practical. Immediate responsive for	Good progress in implementing new ideas. Open to criticism	Good in practice, open-minded, very productive.

		criticism and applying of ideas		
Lama Qandil	AlHayat alJadida Newspaper	She only attended the last day, for other commitments. Good interaction in the third day which leaves no way to judge.	Interaction in the last day, could not measure progress	.

Trainees Evaluation of the Workshop:

- Most of the trainees described the workshop as excellent mainly in raising the levels and standards of the participants and especially in covering press conferences.
- More than 80 percent of them believe that the workshop was useful for their current work.
- They believe that the immediate practice of the new ideas and how to extract the story from press conferences and interviews was very helpful.
- Regarding the pre-research of the press conferences and the interviews, they believe that this is essential for a good story and should be done in their work.
- They believe that the workshop was up to their expectations, in both advancing their work skills and in refreshing their knowledge and information.
- Most of them pledged to adopt the new advanced ideas but they said that it was not only up to them it is the up also to the editors and owners of the stations, the electronic and the print where they work.
- Some of them said that they can and they are going to teach theses new standards and skills to their colleagues.
- All participants think the trainers were very qualified and serious and exerted the maximum effort.
- They asked for other workshops to focus on how to write humanitarian features, reporting, technical skills, and technical format of the report with the usage of audio and video special effects

Quotes and Notes:

- Nizar Habash (Wattan TV- Ramallah): it was another opportunity that Aswatona proved its real interest in raising the level of the local media. The workshop enlightened major elements in story extraction
- Shomou' Gharib (Isis radio-Bethlehem): It was very useful, deep, and practical workshop where I advanced my skills in covering press conferences and conducting interviews.
- Raed Omar (Qalqilia TV- Qalqilia): very good experience was open by Aswatona and the trainers to the local journalists who are eager to run independent media.
- Adham Manasreh (Tariq alMahaba radio – Nablus): such focused workshop where the needed equipments are provided, are better in three days than hundreds of theoretical workshops.
- Iman Shami (Gama TV- Nablus): as a reporter who covers community issues, the successive workshops by Aswatona provided me with the needed tools to better handle my work.
- Mohammad Sa'adi (Trainer): There are areas that the participants still need to work on such as determining what the story is, news judgement, analytical and research skills, try to explain to the reader why the story is important, what's the peg. Another focus could be on building the whole story; a well-structured story. May be a new course can tackle this aspect.
- Hisham Abdullah (Trainer): Points of progress were clear from most of the stories presented that participants are much better in finding better leads, finding the story. Reports on the Samir Abdallah press conference proved progress on three major things:
 - participants are asking better questions, raising angles
 - participants choosing proper quotes
 - participants are choosing better leads, although they often choose the same lead

1.2b - Grants program productions

The Aswatona project is currently implementing the third party evaluation that will entail station visits, staff surveys, and a questionnaire to be administered by telephone polling of audience. Part of the poll is to determine the degree of success of the small grants program in the perspective of the stations themselves. The feedback received will be taken into account during the next round of subgrants.

In terms of the small grants portion of the Aswatona project, the previous period can best be described as transitional, with the conclusion of the first round of subgrants, and the continuation of the proposal evaluation phase of the second round. With few exceptions, the stations have reported that the funding granted in the previous months has had a significant impact upon the relationships with their respective communities and led to a substantial increase in revenue generated through advertising and sponsorship.

An additional indicator of the success of the first round subgrants is reflected in the fact that all of the recipients of awards have submitted proposals to be considered for the second round. The proposals received reflect a wide variety of projects, from extensions of the first round productions to ideas for new programs.

That said, there were still many lessons learned from the challenges encountered throughout the first round of subgrants, from the development of proposals, to monitoring and evaluation, to the procurement and dispersal of equipment.

First Round Subgrant Successes and Challenges

Wattan TV (Subgrant B1561 WTV 00)

Project Status: Complete



Wattan TV has successfully completed its obligations outlined in the subgrant awarded in the first round. Through the subgrant the station was able to successfully raise over \$50,000 of revenue through sponsorship and advertising, all of which can be directly attributed to the five Aswatona-funded programs.

The station did note, however, that they experienced several challenges through the duration of the subgrant, including time constraints, an underdeveloped budget, and a need for more training specifically tailored to the funded productions. Despite these difficulties, Wattan TV has expressed its willingness to continue its cooperation with Internews Network.

Sada Network (Subgrant B1561 SN 00)

Project Status: Final Report Remaining



The Sada Network is currently in the final stage of completing the first round subgrant, with the last financial and narrative reports to be submitted by the end of June. The project can indeed be considered a success bearing in mind that the production of *Sada Filistene* continues. As of June 28th the network has successfully produced and aired 65 episodes, and has added two key stations, Amwaj TV of Ramallah, and Nour TV of Jericho, to further expand their West

Bank coverage. The equipment procured under the subgrant continues to play a large part in the increase of the quality of the production.

The organization itself continues to experience some administrative issue, namely, determining the role that the head office in Ramallah will play. While the office has developed substantially, and has recently hired a consultant to assist with marketing strategies, two stations, Al Fajr Al Jadeed and Gama TV, tend to provide a bulk of the revenue generated through advertising.

Al Rouah TV (Subgrant B1561 RTV 00)

Project Status: Final Report Remaining



Although the Bethlehem-based television station completed its two Aswatona-funded productions according to schedule, and has submitted the relevant reports,

the station has ceased producing the two shows due to an outstanding equipment issue.

The station has submitted an additional proposal for a second feature film, though thus far nothing has been received relating to the programs supported in the first round. Internews Network has since been active in helping Al Rouah TV explore its options to resolve the outstanding equipment issue.

FILM Project (Subgrant B1561 RTVJF)
Project Status: Additional Funding Provided

The film, *Forgotten Chords*, was completed in May, and has been highly reviewed by audiences since it was first broadcast by all members of Sada Network throughout the West Bank. The feature length film was a result of additional funding awarded to the participating stations in April. Upon completing the first 26-minute version of the film, thus fulfilling the obligations outlined in the subgrant, a second proposal was submitted asking for an additional \$5,000.00 to include additional footage and editing to lengthen the film to 52-minutes.

The crew reported a handful of obstacles through the filming, such as time constraints, internal communication problems, and the difficulty of ensuring that the project itself remained a training exercise for the staff of both Al Rouah and Al Fajr Al Jadeed.



Currently the director/trainer of the film, Rifaat Adi, is exploring the options of submitting the film into such international film festivals as Amsterdam, Beirut, and Dubai, as well as adding English subtitles to broaden its potential audience. Al Jazeera has also expressed interest in airing a shortened version of the film.

Baladna TV (Subgrant B1561 BTV 00)
Project Status: Final Report Remaining



Of the ten subgrants awarded in the first round of grants, Baladna TV was one of the timeliest in terms of the submission of its reports. Additionally, great improvement can be noticed between the initial and concluding episodes of season one of *Good Morning to Our Town*. Despite the conclusion of the award, the Qalqilya-based station continues to produce and air the show on a daily basis.

It is clear that Baladna TV continues to face difficulties indicative of having a young and inexperienced staff, though continued attendance at Aswatona trainings have made an impact. The station has submitted additional programming ideas and will be included as a member station of Sada Network.

Al Fajr Al Jadeed TV (Subgrant B1561 FJTV 00)

Project Status: Final Report Remaining



The Tulkarem-based television station has been one of the most successful of the first round subgrantees, in that its program *Tulkarem Today/This Week* has been immensely popular throughout the governorate. Moreover the station has attracted a wide variety of sponsorship and advertising. The station staff has developed its skills and level of professionalism, both of which are evident in the success of the daily program and Al Fajr Al Jadeed's role in the Joint Film Production.

Because of the tremendous improvements the station has made over the previous months, the Aswatona project is eager to continue its cooperation with the station.

Amwaj Radio (Subgrant B1561 ATVR 00)

Project Status: Final Wire Transfer Sent

Despite significant delays reflective of a substantial change in management and organizational structure, the station is back on track, with its two Aswatona-funded productions, *Kawthar & Abdelkader* and *Let's Swap* being well received by audiences.



The station was forced to temporarily suspend the airing of *Kawthar & Abdelkader* due to a major renovation of the station, but the program is currently being broadcast. *Let's Swap* is still being produced and aired several times each week. The Grants Manager went out in the field with the crew of Amwaj while they recorded the program and was impressed with their commitment and level of professionalism. The station has one remaining report to submit to Internews Network to fulfill its obligations as outlined in the award.

Khalil Radio (Subgrant B1561 KR 00)

Project Status: Suspended after two payments

Khalil Radio continually lagged behind subgrantee recipients in terms of productions and of reports submitted. While initial delays incurred were due to the timing of the holy month of Ramadan and the untimely delivery of the equipment, it now seems that the station is not fully committing itself to the agreement. Subsequently, after nine months the Aswatona project has decided to suspend the remaining two payments and utilize the funds in the second round of grant. Several discussions were held over previous months with reference to their inability to meet the guidelines of the subgrant and the possibility of suspending the contract if the station did not exhibit a greater commitment to the agreement. Ultimately, a discussion was held with station director, Amjad Shawar, in which the decision was explained to him.



Gama TV (Subgrant B1561 GTV 00)

Project Status: One outstanding document

The Nablus-based Gama TV has had mixed results with respect to its two Aswatona-funded programs, *City Talk* and *A Time for Women*. The first program, *City Talk*, has been extremely popular throughout the governorate and has earned the station considerable revenue through advertising. The second program has not been as successful, though the station is currently still in production.

The most prominent reason for the discrepancy in quality between the two programs is because of a substantial change in station staff. The station owners, however, have reassured Internews Network that the current staff is more qualified and professional and will be reflected in the quality of the remaining episodes of *A Time for Women*.

Tariq Al Mahabeh Radio (Subgrant B1561 TMR 00)

Project Status: Final Wire Transfer Sent



The Nablus-based radio station has continually submitted their financial and narrative reports, along with episodes of their two Aswatona-funded programs in a timely manner. The Program Manager, Alaa Badarna, noted that the station has benefited greatly from the small grant, seeing an increase in advertising revenue and audience. In addition, the equipment delivered as outlined in the contract has benefited the programs greatly.

As the subgrant nears completion, the station has stated its intention to submit a new proposal in the coming weeks.

To view or listen to the productions under the station names or additional information on the stations, visit: www.aswatona-internews.org

Second Round of Subgrants

The delay in the approval of the year two work plan has prevented the launching of the second round of grants, which has been a source of frustration for many of the current and potential partner stations. The new proposals have been adjusted, both financially and programmatically, to reflect the delays and cut in subgrant funding.

The financial issues have also had an impact on the equipment procurement outlined in the capacity building budgets of the subgrants. This has been such an issue that Internews Network has had to reevaluate the absolute necessity of the equipment within the contracts and prioritize the pieces that are essential and are directly relates to the productions themselves.

The Aswatona project has utilized the extra time afforded in the delays to continually follow up with the stations and reevaluate the stations' equipment capacity and strategies for developing the programs to be supported.

That said, a handful of lessons have been learned over the previous month that will be applied to the second round of subgrants. Firstly, the reporting process was rather tedious for both the Grants Manager and Senior Accountant. It was decided that reports will be submitted halfway through the duration of the award and at the conclusion. There will still be constant communication and regular field visits to the stations.

2.3 - Support of Development of Professional Broadcast Association



Aswatona plans to give more support to the coalition, such as organizing open workshops by hosting a workshop for the local Coalition on tasks, duties, rights and all issues related to the work of the Coalition in strengthening the media outlets, regulating the sector within the local laws, and the following the Coalition by-laws. As well, *Aswatona* is working with the Coalition to help them put together a business plan for the Coalition to ensure a strong professional association that will be able to sustain itself in the future.

The Coalition had a board meeting to discuss its next steps, when they discovered they had a problem with the license. They are licensed according to the law but the final signature has not yet been given for the paper to be issued. They called together a board meeting to discuss the next steps and alternatives. The story was published on the Ma'an News Website:

The Audio-visual coalition in Palestine, decided in the meeting of its board, in Ramallah, Tuesday the 24th of June, to launch officially. Participants discussed the meeting agenda, which included the announcement that the coalition was formed to support and develop the role of the local media and to push it forwards. The Coalition, as one of its tasks, is will have a supportive role to the existing and working media associations and not act as an alternative to them.

The board, decided as well, to start taking several steps to approach the local CSO's, private and official media associations, in addition to its work on studying the local media environment and the basic needs of the local media. It will also work on providing the basics of media work and to develop its professionalism.

The board decided to hold periodical meetings to discuss the future steps.

Attendants: board members Moad'mmar Orabi, Mahmoud Barham, Tareq Jbara, Jathi Nator, Khaled Maswadeh, Fawzi Da'ana, Fathi Nator, Ibrahim Masri.

At the conclusion of the board meeting, *Aswatona* was approached regarding setting up a meeting for the entire membership as well as with the Ministries in charge of regulating the media sector – Ministry of Information and Ministry of Telecommunication. It has recently been discovered that the Ministry of Commerce and Trade are now giving waivers for licensing fees

so they must be included as well. It was agreed that, after meeting with the ministries for updates, a date would be set according to their schedule most likely at the end of July.

IV. Planned and Actual Activities

The deliverables for this period as outlined in the last report are below:

Activity	Activities of This Quarter	#s	Planned	Actual
1.1a	Joint Workshop with DAI BAYAN project on Access to Information	9 CSO reps 9 journalists	March	April 6-7
1.1b	Young Women in Local Media - roundtable	19 journalists		June 30
1.1b	Workshops on reporting specific issues/topics “Getting the Story: Covering Press Conferences and Conducting Interviews for News Advance Course in WB and Gaza	18 journalists (22 invited)	May	May 18-20 Gaza delayed
1.2b	6new grants/contracts/partners Follow up done with existing grants		May	Delayed pending final approval
2.1a	in-house radio human interest mini feature		May	Delayed
2.1b	in-house TV local events and human interest		April	Delayed
2.1d	workshop in ethics and standards		May	Delayed
2.1c	Specialized training: conflict reporting/safety		April	Delayed until October
2.1f	Internship in Egypt		May	cancelled
2.2a	local polling – stations and public	N/A	June	Delayed until July
2.2c	Media Management and Organizational structure		April	Delayed until July
2.2ci	Financial Planning and Marketing		May	delayed
2.2cii	Programming priorities		May	delayed
2.2d	Technical assessment		April/May	May and

	update			June
2.2e	Media Management follow up Int'l consult		June	cancelled
2.3a	Association Dev – focus groups		April and June	Delayed until July
2.4a	Audio-visual media law workshop		May	Delayed
2.4b	AV media law regulatory issues workshop		June	Delayed
2.6a	Industry-wide Ethical standards combined w/March		May	Delayed

V. Activities Planned for Next Quarter

Activities Planned for Next Quarter

Timeline

1.1a) open workshops - media and community - on issues of democracy, governance, and the role of media	September
1.1b) open workshops on reporting on specific issues/topics	August
1.1ci radio - interviewing, story creation (r&d), production technique and formats	August/Sept
1.1c.ii television - interviewing, story creation (r&d), production technique and formats	August/Sept
1.2a) in-house training and mentoring w/technical assessment	July
2.1a) in-house training for radio in West Bank and Gaza on field work, covering local events, and human interest stories	September
2.1b) in-house training for TV in the West Bank on field work, covering local events, and human interest stories	September
2.1c) Specialized training in safety, interviewing, fieldwork	Prep work in August
2.1d) workshops in Journalism standards, ethics, program design, writing	September
2.1e) selection of programs/stories for production support	August
2.2a) local polling on programming	Delayed from June now August
2.2b) Development of business/management structure and marketing	July 20-22
2.3a) Focus groups with media owners/managers on the Media Environment to explore issues of law, ethics, standards, professionalism, and interactions with each other and with government	July and September
2.3b) Focus groups for licensing and other regulatory issues	July

VI. Success Stories and Recommendations

Despite the delays and work slow down, the staff has been able to maintain their moral. Moreover, Aswatona has managed to keep the good faith of our partners. The biggest success in this quarter was working with the journalists directly. They remain committed to learning new skills and to doing a better job professionally.

The fact that the Aswatona staff developed a training agenda that had real life and immediate applicability keeps the project's trainings cutting edge and differentiates it from the other trainings that are going on with other donors and organizations. Unlike other trainings, since this was part of a series, the Aswatona project gave certificates of achievement for the first time, thereby recognizing the journalists' commitment and effort and hopefully keeping them motivated to continue.