



SPEAKING UP

Journalists For Human Rights' Gender Impact Report
Strategies And Case Studies Of Success In the DRC, South Sudan and Syria

FOREWORD

It's 11am in Juba, at a gathering of women journalists – the first such workshop exclusively for women to be held in South Sudan.

Anna Nimiriano is the editor of the *Juba Monitor*, South Sudan's most influential newspaper. Prominent women's activist Irene Ayaa stands next to Anna to share a story of what can happen when women journalists work together. "It was the midst of the return to conflict in July 2016," says Ayaa. "The city had been shelled. Reports circulated of 300 dead in Juba, and others fleeing to Uganda, Kenya. But not Anna Nimiriano."

As bullets flew across Juba, Anna and Irene marched off to Juba's notorious Blue House prison. They went to demand the release of sector eminence and editor/publisher of the *Juba Monitor*, Alfred Taban. Taban was in jail for an editorial calling for a rethink of leadership in South Sudan. He'd been put in jail without his diabetes medication. At the very minimum, the women wanted to make sure he had his meds. They ended up petitioning – successfully – for his release.

Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) is Canada's leading media development organization. It has been working in South Sudan for the past two years with Canadian government support. JHR, which I run, has been fortunate to work with female journalists of Anna and Irene's calibre. This has put considerable firepower behind JHR's gender strategy in the world's newest country.

JHR's gender strategy is simple: mentor women, like Anna, into positions of leadership in media. Work with these women to help them own their leadership role. Thus empowered, these women work together to tackle difficult issues, such as Alfred's jailing. They also depo-

liticize coverage in favour of putting so-called women's concerns – stories about health, education, child welfare and the environment – high up the agenda. Putting a spotlight on women's issues helps prioritize solutions. The result is often both good for communities, and good for the outlet's business.

JHR started prioritizing women's voices and concerns twelve years ago, in Ghana. One JHR-mentored story in Ghana's Northern Region spotlighted an incident where a husband, enraged by his wife's decision to work, cut off her hands. The story sparked a Ghana-wide collection of funds to support the woman and enable her to continue to work.

In Sierra Leone, JHR worked with that country's version of Oprah Winfrey, Aissata Kamara. Kamara focused a series of radio shows on how the war was over for men, but not for women, documenting how traumatized soldiers returned to their villages and took out their anger on their wives and families. Horrified by the impact of these soldiers' actions on families, local councils responded by committing to enforce Sierra Leone's 2007 law outlawing domestic violence.

In Liberia, three journalists, Oniel Bestman, Saye Mes-sah, Mondeyesco Tulorgbo and JHR-trainer Bonnie Allen traveled to the Firestone Rubber Plantation to investigate the case of Caroline Tokpah, a 13-year old girl who died after being allegedly raped by a neighbor. The parents had reported the case to police ten months earlier, to no avail. The media exposure and intervention by NGOs helped to push the case forward. In June 2012, Caroline's rapist was tried, convicted, and sentenced to 17 years in prison.

And in Liberia, stories by women helped to ensure rape

victims in Gbanga, a rural county, saw justice.

This Gender Impact Report drills down on JHR’s gender impact in three target countries: South Sudan, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

South Sudan represents JHR’s most comprehensive work on gender yet – and the results are spectacular. Since Nimiriano took over the Juba Monitor, she’s increased the number of so-called “women’s” stories by 25 percent. The paper has seen an equivalent increase in new advertising revenue from sponsors who want to reach a female audience.

Under Nimiriano’s watch, first as managing editor and then as editor-in-chief, reporters worked with JHR trainer Carolyn Thompson to cover one battalion of the SPLA’s use of rape as a weapon of war. The government responded by arresting the soldiers named and putting them on trial.

Last year, the Canadian government launched a Feminist International Assistance Policy. The policy is designed to ensure women’s voices and concerns are prioritized in all aspects of Canadian international assistance. It was unveiled to much acclaim last summer -- and to delight at JHR, where it confirms a major plank of JHR’s programming.

Today, on International Women’s Day, JHR is celebrating its twelve-year track-record of success in gender strategy by launching our Gender Impact Report. The stories of impact in it, such as those cited above, surface and articulate the value of prioritizing gender in media development.

All this, simply by putting women in the driver’s seat.

~ Rachel Pulfer Executive Director, Journalists for Human Rights

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INTRODUCTION

GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

Gender equality: *“the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.”*¹

Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) believes that gender equality is imperative to achieving its organizational objective that everyone in the world is aware of their rights. Gender equality is not solely a women’s issue but concerns and should fully engage men as a basic human rights issue.

JHR’s programming works around the world, training journalists to objectively and effectively report on human rights issues. JHR’s programs empower women with professional journalism skills and put them into positions of leadership in newsrooms. This ensures JHR addresses persistent societal and sector wide gaps based on gender based stereotypes, and helps prioritize women’s issues on news line-ups and public agendas.

This report will highlight JHR’s gender equality strategy and framework, included in all program development, organizational planning, programmatic tools, results and outcomes. JHR commits to reviewing the strategy continuously based on regularly tracked successes and lessons learned.

1. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

MEDIA, GENDER & INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In media sectors worldwide, gender impacts capacity and access to opportunity and information. Women far too often have different access to media and information than men which profoundly impacts how they live their lives. News media, no matter the format, remains as one of the primary sources of information and ideas for the global populace. It has enormous power and offers the potential to either perpetuate or erase existing gender inequalities, barriers and stereotypes.

Who is making the news

Worldwide, female journalists are radically underrepresented compared to their male counterparts. 37% of newspaper, television and radio stories were reported by women.² This directly affects what information circulates and whose voices are heard, especially on women's rights. The often proportionately small number of women who enter the media sector are frequently expected to cover the 'soft issues,' focusing on lifestyle or health, and are deterred from covering politics or hard news. Even further, female journalists frequently site gender pay gaps, threats or cases of sexual harassment and assault from male colleagues or news sources and difficulties balancing work and societal expectations of their role in family life.

Notably, men are also often stereotyped. Male-dominated newsrooms can silence men wanting to stand up to gender-based violence or sexual harassment.

Gender based disparities are even more notable in leadership positions in newsrooms. Globally, women occupy 27% of top management positions in media companies.³ News companies have often been slow to or simply have not enacted policies that would make newsrooms safe and welcoming to female journalists. The lack of policies continues and reinforces male dominance in the industry and excludes female perspectives.

Media Content

The sector-wide proportional invisibility of women relative to men directly impacts media content produced. Scholars have found that as a result of differences in how men and women are socialized in society, gender affects both what stories journalists go after and pitch, and what angle a journalist takes when reporting. Female journalists are more likely to include sources who were ethnic minorities or women in their coverage, compared to men.⁴

2. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/global/gmmp_global_report_en.pdf

3. *ibid.*

4. S. Rodgers and E. Thornson, 'A Socialization Perspective on Male and Female Reporting', *Journal of Communication*, Volume 53, Issue 4, Dec 2003, p658-675. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2003.tb02916.x/abstract>

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

JHR's gender policy is embedded in international and national law and policy. JHR's work directly supports and strengthens these human rights policies and frameworks through a media multiplier effect. By working with journalists, the effects of JHR's programming also reaches their audiences and amplifies impact and audience reach.

This is most clear when we hear those women speak out about issues that matter to them, whether as a journalist or as an interviewee in a report. They talk about the destructive impact of [early marriages in the DRC](#), they dare to report on mass rape assaults by government soldiers in South Sudan, they overcome their own hesitations and do [a radio show on the cost of dowries](#), receiving massive positive response from the public. These women address crucial issues to a wide audience while engaging and encouraging men, authorities and the wider public to see and do things differently.

JHR's gender equality strategy is embedded in:

- The **Convention Against Discrimination of Women** (CEDAW, 1979). CEDAW is the international legal basis for women's rights and is ratified by 185 countries. CEDAW has paid particular attention to gender based violence against women and women in (post) conflict areas in its recommendations as well as to the direct impact climate change has on women, especially in developing countries.
- **UN Security Council resolution 1325**. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. Resolution

1325 has extensive follow up resolutions and calls for UN member states to have a National Action Plan (NAP 1325). Security Council resolution 1325 and its follow up resolutions are important to JHR as we work with journalists in conflict and post conflict zones.

Canada directly pledges support to resolution 1325, stating in the national action plan: *"to support women's full participation in peace and security efforts, to prevent, address and fight impunity for conflict-related sexual violence and to consolidate women's and girls' empowerment and advance gender equality, including in the world's most dangerous and complex conflicts."*⁵

- The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). SDG 5 states that 'Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.' Canada's Feminist Assistance Policy is based on the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5.
- **Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy**. The Feminist International Assistance Policy, launched in 2017, emphasises the country's commitment to its Feminist Foreign Policy, which requires engaging men and boys, alongside women and girls, as agents and beneficiaries of change in peace and gender equality. The policy seeks to "reduce extreme poverty and build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world. The policy recognizes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal."⁶

5. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/16A6vf-82CbsSZTy2HND-heFgDNb77wgA50zn6x5qLul/edit>, page 2, March 6, 2018

6. http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng, 'Message from the Minister of International Development and LA Francophonie, March 6, 2018

JHR'S GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

JHR implements all programming through its comprehensive Gender Equality Strategy (GES).

All of JHR programs are gender equality targeted through prioritizing women beneficiaries and the rights of women and girls. They also aim to fully integrate gender equality whenever it's possible.

JHR realizes human rights for all cannot be accomplished without addressing gender based inequality and discrimination, social and power structures, stigmas and existing policies and practices.

Specific challenges confronting female journalists include limited access to employment opportunities, radically limited access to and adequate training for leadership roles and pay equity, difficulty getting “women’s issues” into news broadcasts or editorial schedules, stereotyping and ineffective-if any-accountability and protection procedures when it comes to endemic sexual harassment.

JHR has mainstreamed specific gender-based approaches and interventions to meet identified challenges throughout its programming to define the GES. These include:

1. The engagement of women led and women focused organizations in all local contexts to identify and analyze challenges facing the full and equal engagement of women and girls in the media and public life.
2. Ensuring and prioritizing the participation of, at minimum, equal engagement of female beneficiaries in program activities. JHR recognizes that access to training and “opportunities are not equal to men and women in many target countries. As such, in certain

cases, specific activities will target women directly to accomplish equal access to opportunities for capacity building.

3. Enabling media to effectively produce gender inclusive media content and to fairly represent all voices in their reporting, through building the capacity women and men journalists on gender sensitive reporting.
4. Building capacity for media managers and journalists in leadership positions to institutionalize gender sensitive policies in newsrooms that fosters an organizational culture that equally respects the rights, views and opinions of all the women and men directly and indirectly involved.
5. Ensuring JHR’s own communication about programming is gender balanced and sensitive, using appropriate language and images while avoiding stereotypes.
6. Fosters robust feedback loops between male and female stakeholders in the media industry to ensure continued learning and systems of support are created.
7. Enhancing coordination between women in media and their allies within civil society and government bodies to advance their demands and increase the efficiency of addressing their needs.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Gender Impact of the JDH/JHR Program

Despite the fact that the majority of Congolese households owe their survival to women, the work done by women is often pushed in the background or just completely ignored in the DRC, whether they live in the larger cities or in small villages. Unfortunately, the work of female journalists is ignored almost as much. Even though women are the majority of registered students in journalism and communication at the national level, they are seldom to be found in higher level media positions. As a result, they are less influential and lack decision making power within their profession. In addition, there is a strong imbalance in coverage of issues concerning women, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Female journalists also have very limited participation in data and information production. To counter this situation, female (and male) trainees of the JHR/JDH programs in the DRC integrate human rights based journalism in their daily work. This creates a stronger understanding of the role of journalists as ‘agents of change’ and ensures that gender perspectives are taken into account in their work. The female (and male) members of the ‘JDH’ network are constantly in search of redress for victims of human rights abuses.

JHR/JDH in the DRC has placed gender issues at the heart of its work through:

Strengthening the capacity of female journalists in human rights journalism:

- Between January 2016 and December 2017, JDH has trained 100 journalists of which 44 are women in Kinshasa, Kwilu and Kwango
- Between January 2016 and December 2017, JDH trained 80 students, of whom 38 were women.
- Of the total of 117 graduates of the Ecole Technique de Bukavu, Sud-Kivu, 42 are women (35.9%).

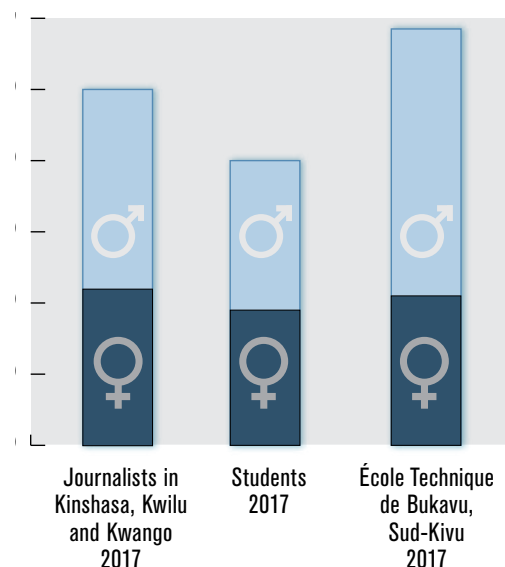
Giving voice to more Congolese women:

- Between January 2016 and December 2017, JDH supported 120 reports by journalism and communication students. Over 50% of those interviewed in these reports are women.
- During the same period JDH supported the production of 5 mini-documentaries. Over 48% of interviewees were women.

Facilitate stronger coverage of gender issues:

- Of the 120 reports realized between January 2016 and December 2017, 52 focused on themes related to gender issues such as forced early marriages, sexual violence, participation in elections and women and economics.
- Of a total of 25 radio shows (during the same period), 28% covered the participation of women in the elections.

Proportion of Women Trained by JHR



Claudine Kitumaini
interviewing a farmer



Give more visibility to the work of female journalists:

- Since the launch of the ‘Prix JDH/RDC in 2010, 9 women have won the award (of a total of 15 awards). The award contributes to better visibility and stronger reputation for female journalists in general and for the winners in particular.

Create equal opportunities within media businesses and media organisations:

- The impact of the training and mentoring goes beyond the improvement of the quality and quantity of journalistic content with regard to gender. Once trained, female journalists have more chances to cover subjects that are regarded as more serious relating to the economy or politics. These women increasingly succeed in overcoming the obstacles that stops them from being in influential and decision making positions within the media profession.
- The empowerment of female journalists also has impact on their access to leadership in media organisations. One example is the Club National des Journalistes des Droits Humains, CNJDH, currently led by Miphy Buata, a female journalist who works for the Agence Congolaise de Presse (ACP).

Claudine Kitumaini

The training I received from the ETJ empowered me and made me more autonomous. Claudine Kitumaini, spent 6 months at the Ecole Technique de Journalisme in Bukavu to become a journalist, which teaches JHR’s curriculum of human rights reporting. Now Claudine works at ‘Le Souverain Libre’, a local newspaper in Bukavu, South Kivu in the east of the DRC. She is proud to have learned essential concepts and ideas to be able to do human rights reporting. Claudine is a passionate journalist has no regrets about her choice of profession, even she works in a zone riddled by multiple conflicts. Journalism has given Claudine a direction to follow in her life.

‘Before I registered for the ETJ I did not work. I was totally dependent on others. I did not know how to pay school costs for my kids. Now, because I earn my own money I am independent and I can provide for myself and my family. The multiple training opportunities and mentoring I received through JDH has also made it possible to be empowered in my day to day work. I am more comfortable when I address certain subjects such as human rights and governance.’

In the three years she has been working as a journalist, Claudine has made several reports including several about the conditions of transport along the Bulavu- Walungu road in South Kivu. “Before I wrote the reports five people would have to share one seat in the minibus, now much has changed and people can travel more easily.”

Currently, three female journalists work at ‘Le Souverain Libre’ newspaper, of a total of 14 journalists. Despite the fact they are a minority, it is Claudine who most often hosts the participatory press reviews, an activity at ‘Le Souverain Libre’ to critically debate articles and aim to enlarge their audience. This is a job that has long been reserved for the male journalists. It is also often Claudine who goes on investigative and other reporting missions in the more dangerous areas of the conflict zones.

JHR Award Opened Doors for Michou Kere Kere

Michou Zaïna Kere Kere, Congolese journalist for the private channel 'Numérica Télévision' in Kinshasa, won the JHR/DRC Award in 2015. Michou Zaïna Kere Kere succeeded in tackling sensitive human rights issues in her country in a documentary on forced child marriages in Kinshasa.

The documentary highlighted the drastic consequences that child marriages have on the education of young women in the DRC. Applying JHR trainings and guidance, she included the voices of all the parties concerned in her documentary.

The documentary gained global appreciation, especially among prestigious human rights organizations that also cover issues related to reproductive health, such as the United Nations Population fund (UNFPA). UNFPA decided to buy the film, and the film been used to raise awareness on child marriage in the DCR.

The JHR Award served as a much needed encouragement to Kere Kere who stated: *"after winning the JHR prize, my work started to have a voice. It gained recognition both politically and socially, and even in my own community. This prize allowed me to go further with my career goals and it helped me open so many closed doors I never thought I would be able to open"*.

Since the JHR/DRC Award Kere Kere has also won the African Climate Change and Environmental Reporting (ACCER) Awards in Addis Ababa, and was interviewed by USAID. She is currently producing a documentary in collaboration with Internews and was interviewed by USAID for her participation in World Press Freedom Day. For Michou Zaïna Kere Kere, winning the JHR Award meant she was able to go further in her profession and assert her talent and qualifications as a woman in a male-dominated society.



Michou Kere Kere

SOUTH SUDAN: STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH MEDIA

In February 2016, JHR started the project “Strengthening Media in South Sudan” focused on public accountability on human rights issues. The project is based on JHR’s experience working in South Sudan since 2013 as a response to the needs of key players to development and the peace process, while armed conflict was, and is, rife.

Women and girls in the world’s newest country have consistently been marginalized and deprived of their right to effectively participate in public life. Instead, South Sudan endures an excessively politicized peace process, ongoing violence and a culture of impunity of gross human rights abuses perpetrated by leaders on citizens. The result: consistent neglect of long-term development in South Sudan such as the reduction of poverty, health, economic and environmental well-being and human development outcomes of its citizens. Supporting women in leadership positions in the media is part the projects’ strategy to strengthen development and contribute to the peace process.

Working with media outlets, media organizations, civil society organizations, international organizations, and government representatives the project has enhanced the role of these key players through:

Capacity Building:

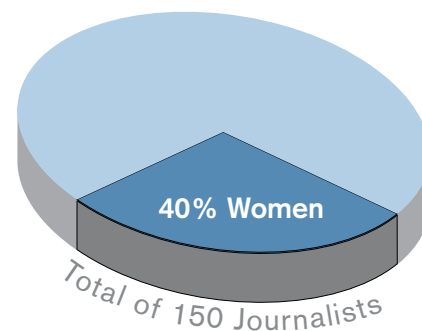
- Training and mentoring over 150 journalists, editors and media managers on covering the issues of human rights especially the rights of women and girls. It has focused on improving the knowledge and the skills of media professionals regarding gender sensitive reporting and improving newsrooms support to gender inclusion.

- Training and mentoring 45 civil society organizations on collaborating with media and improving their skills on structuring media communication strategies.
- Training government 40 representatives on communicating with media and on human rights issues in order to build bridges between the government, civil society and media to better understand the role of each sector in public life.

Networking:

- Involving 25 media managers in periodic meetings to exchange experiences and to provide support to each other in facing challenges from within and outside the sector which also forms the project implementation and progress.
- Networking South Sudanese media and civil society with their regional peers in order to learn from other similar experiences on how to advance their role and support the engagement of women on all levels to play their significant role.

Journalists Trained by Gender



Within the above gender inclusion is central. The project focus is on:

- ❑ Prioritizing targeting women within media, civil society and the government in order to address gender based discrimination in accessing opportunities.
- ❑ Building the capacity of more than 100 media professionals on gender sensitive reporting and improving the workplace.
- ❑ Prioritizing women and girls' rights in media coverage by more than 50% gender stories on human rights issues.
- ❑ Including gender inclusion in business development models for media outlets by training 25 managers.
- ❑ Prioritizing women led and women focused organizations in civil society sector to participate in the project activities and to benefit from its interventions.

Education:

- ❑ Developing a human rights course for the university of Juba in order to institutionalize the process of academic human rights training for more than 100 journalism and media students.
- ❑ Mentoring the productions of 200 stories on human rights especially the rights of women and girls that reach almost two million South Sudanese people to better inform them on these issues.
- ❑ Engaging thousands of the public with stakeholders through open forums (live and on-air) on the issues of human rights and to strengthen direct questioning as a major part of accountability.

Investigative Reporting Helps Girls Back to School in South Sudan

Juba Monitor reporter and JHR trainee Jale Richard started an investigation into disappeared grants for school girls. His effort to raise concerns about the distribution of a cash transfer designed to keep girls in school in Juba, South Sudan resulted in direct policy change – months after the first story broke.

When Jale Richard first interviewed the two school representatives who claimed funds were missing, he was skeptical of the story. He was concerned it could be an attempt to use the media to gain funds. With the help of his JHR trainer, he chose to contact the Stromme Foundation in order to get their side of the story. Jale reported on the incident, including the perspective of both sides, in a front page news story “School girls miss education grant” about 40 young girls who missed the delivery of a cash transfer aimed at reducing drop-outs in a country where only about 15 percent of women can read.

However, Jale Richards did not stop his investigation here. He kept asking the organizations involved how they resolved issues and did follow up interviews. Jale Richard’s story – and his persistence – helped contribute to policy discussions and changes in the organizations that he reported on. He was eventually able to report on how policies had changed in response to concerns raised in the media – new rules were being implemented to ensure next year no girls would be left without the cash transfer of which they were eligible.



Jale Richards (left) working on his story

Anna Namiriano — Editor of the Juba Monitor

In 2000, Anna started writing short columns for the *Khartoum Monitor*, a daily English newspaper, where veteran journalist Alfred Taban was the Editor-in-Chief. Anna was inspired by Alfred's column 'Let Us Speak Up' which highlighted many issues affecting civil society. She was impressed by his bold words and the way he called out authority figures. But it was the work of another columnist that really sparked a fire in Anna.

One day, an editorial in another newspaper described women who used different colored sodas as make-up on their faces and arms.

The words offended Anna. She knew she had to respond on behalf of women. It was the first big story Anna wrote for the *Khartoum Monitor*. And it was also the first time she knew women's issues would always be an important topic to write about in her career.

In 2011 the *Juba Monitor* was launched. As the newspaper's distribution continued to rise, so did Anna's position. In 2016, she was appointed Associate Editor of the paper, which made her second in command. In the meantime Anna also participated in JHR training and mentorship for media managers and editors for better

business management and to support human rights in the newsroom, specifically the rights of women and girls to give women a voice in media outlets. Last year veteran journalist Alfred Taban decided to resign and he knew the choice to replace him was obvious. Anna became *The Juba Monitor's* Editor-in-Chief in 2017.

Still, her rise in rank was met with criticism, mainly from men, including at her own paper. In South Sudan, many people consider journalism

not as a profession for women, families do not encourage their daughters or wives to join the field. Work hours are long, women are often the target of sexual assault and intimidation both at work and in the field. It is rare to have a woman in a decision-making position such as the Editor-in-Chief of a national newspaper. Anna's career can be seen as an eye opener to other media houses in the country in appointing women to key positions. It has given hope to many young female journalists to know they can also reach the same level one day.



SYRIA: COUNTERING THE IMPACT OF WAR ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

In Syria and the Syrian diaspora, women face unique gender-based challenges. Statistically, the country ranks 142 of 144 on the World Economic Forum's 2016 Gender Gap Index. The refugee crisis has exacerbated incidents of violence against women, including a significant increase in marriages of the girl child and corollary drop in girls going to school. The Syrian Female Journalists Network (a JHR partner) reported that although women represent 35% of the workforce in print media and more than 50% in audio-visual media, only 38% of senior positions are held by women and only 4% of leadership positions. Only 20% of independent Syrian media cover women's issues. In the past four years, only 200 media pieces have been produced on women or women's issues out of thousands of stories.

According to the 2016 report *Reporting on Gender-Based Violence in the Syria Crisis* released by the United Nations Population Fund, the majority of Syrian media coverage has continued to perpetuate stereotypes, suppressing the voice and status of women and girls. The need to put these concerns in headlines and ensures they receive the attention they deserve through professional media coverage is acute.

In January 2017, JHR began a 2 year long pilot project, funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), targeting independent Syrian media outlets in the Syrian diaspora. The goal is to build the capacity and ensure the sustainability of these outlets, in order to foster greater awareness of and public dialogue on governance and human rights issues affecting Syrians, and advance democratic narratives within Syria. It is doing this through training Syrian journalists, helping Syrian media managers build sustainable business plans, and creating opportunities for public dialogue on human rights, gender equality and democracy by:

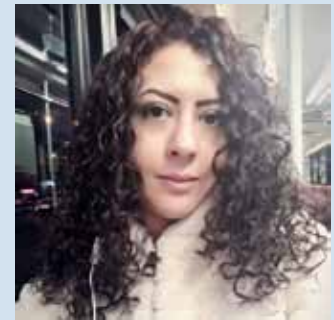
- **Build the capacity of 60 journalists, 30 editors and managers** to produce in-depth, compelling media content based on data driven journalism, balanced

reporting, use of infographics and social media.

- **Build the capacity of 4 media outlets to sustain themselves independently** through providing mentorship on strategic and business planning.

Nisreen Anabli Covers Sensitive Health Issues Faced by Syrian Women

"Working with JHR has given me the freedom to cover humanitarian and rights-based issues that I've always wanted to cover. I am able to cover issues professionally in a manner that is not restricted by the traditional institutional frameworks. These frameworks cover issues, especially relating to women's realities, from a very narrow perspective.



JHR has enabled me to cover taboo issues in Middle Eastern media, especially Syrian media, such as women's health issues. The notable lack of feminine hygiene products in refugee camps and siege areas in Syria is badly affecting women's health. No media so far dared to cover this, as they are seen as "minor" problems comparing to what is going on in the country.

I've also put a spotlight on the importance of family planning and safe abortion; even organizations that are supposed to pay attention to these issues often avoid addressing this publicly and do not attempt to raise awareness about them.

One of the hardest issues to address is how underage girls are forced into sex trafficking and underage marriage. Some of these issues I was able to cover, but for many I still need support to face traditional concepts within media outlets, civil society and public society.

- ❑ **Create a network of 40 Syrian journalists working inside and outside of Syria**, in order to ensure that outlets working in different geographic territories can share resources, collaborate on tough stories and give outlets access to territories they cannot usually work in freely.
- ❑ **Include thousands of stakeholders, including government and opposition, through online and on-air forums, held periodically.** Such inclusion is intended to catalyze engagement from both

government and opposition, and generate credibility in the eyes of the audience.

- ❑ Circulate over **100 human rights stories** throughout independent syrian media to normalize the narratives of human rights and gender equality amongst Syrians.
- ❑ Facilitate Syrian journalists **access to international media** especially Canadian media to syndicate human rights stories.

Reem Haleb Started Radio Station Nasaem Souria

I have established *Nasaem Souria* radio station in 2012 to give the Syrian people a voice. We are broadcasting from Gaziantep in Turkey to hundreds of thousands of Syrians in Syria, Turkey and the region. As a young female journalist who started her career at the age of 20 I have faced many challenges and attempts to restrict my progress; my age, patriarchal society and lack of support from international organizations to keep the work going. I had to face the first two challenges but still I needed a team and support to address the third.

JHR is one of the few organizations that focuses on professionalizing media content that is humanitarian and rights-based, with a direct impact on the public that is living those stories. Syria has never known this kind of journalism even after the establishment of independent media. However, now we are able to start and promote this journalism that tackles discrimination and champions humanity.

In 2017, we worked with JHR on strategic planning and the develop-

ment of business model and the possibilities to develop and to address obstacles. We have been able to start our own production company broadcasting commercials for private businesses on our radio when project funding stopped. This gives us greater sustainability and independence. JHR training has helped us practically to deal with the new situation.

After facing ISIS that targeted our journalists and broadcasting towers, we had to face the international controlled funding that is often accompanied with political agendas. Nevertheless, we did not stop. With JHR's support, in a professional and balanced way, a mutual target of promoting human rights is fostered. Producing human rights content that is not

politicized strengthens the basis of promoting a new culture, in a time of war and conflict. JHR's programs in other countries inspire to be able to do the same for a new Syrian media that will tackle hate speech, promote peace narratives and move towards a new space for all.



Reem Haleb, left

Thank you to the funders of the programs described in the Gender Impact Report



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