

Press Release

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For immediate release

WAN-IFRA LAUNCHES WOMEN IN NEWS IN EGYPT, JORDAN, LEBANON AND PALESTINE.



WAN-IFRA, based in Paris, Frankfurt, Germany, with offices in Singapore, Mexico and India, is the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers. A multi-stakeholders organisation, it represents more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites, more than 80 associations and affiliates, 300 technology suppliers, and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries.

Its core mission is to defend and promote press freedom, quality journalism and editorial integrity, and help independent news publishing companies to succeed in their transformation process, increase their business, and perform their crucial role in open societies.

WAN-IFRA provides the industry with critical business news and strategic market insights, individual support to innovation and business development, networking platforms for executives from around the world, advocacy campaigns for press freedom and global media policy affairs.

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The Women in News (WIN) initiative, WAN-IFRA's highly regarded editorial leadership programme for women working in media, formally expanded to MENA last week. Journalists and editors from Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt gathered in Alexandria for a week-long newsroom leadership and media management workshop series.

WIN is in its sixth year but this is the first time it has brought together women from the MENA region.

The goal of the project, organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), and supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is to help women media professionals, who are under-represented in top management positions, to excel in their careers.

"We are excited about the possibilities of encouraging more women leaders in the newsroom", said Alison Meston, director of capacity building for Women in News. "Women in the newsroom must be part of the journey towards building sustainable media business models, a vital ingredient for press freedom and our ability to do our jobs as journalists."

Participants, who underwent a comprehensive application process to join the programme, heard from Fatemah Farag, founder and director of Welad Elbalad Media Services LTD. Farag is also a member of the steering committee for Women in News, advising on advocacy initiatives throughout the region and globally. Ms Farag said: "This is a much needed programme in the region. Those of us in the news media industry must find ways of ensuring we promote women in the newsroom and in doing so, ensure our female audiences are also represented in our storytelling."

WIN MENA has partnered with the Media Development Centre from Birziet University, Palestine, frayintermedia and the Swedalex Centre in Alexandria to deliver a media management programme that includes topics such as change management, newsroom leadership, HR and financial management. Participants also receive training on reducing gender bias in the news, as well as social impact reporting.

In addition to workshops, participants benefit from one-on-one coaching to create 3-to-5 year Career Roadmaps, and themselves become mentors to future leaders within their communities, all while taking part in national networking events. In future years, participants will engage in media exchanges and regional networking events.

Ms Nibal Thawatebeh, director of the Media Development Centre expressed her commitment to the programme: "For us, partnering with Women in News is a great opportunity. Sometimes we feel under siege in Palestine, but to know that we can train

women from around the region with issues similar to our news media environment makes us stronger.”

Ms Javeria R Kabani, speaking on behalf of the Swedish-Egyptian Dialogue Centre, SwedAlex, said: “As a Swedish dialogue platform in the MENA region, one of our main target groups is women. We believe that dialogue is both about strengthening change makers as well as building and supporting positive partnerships and networks such as the WAN-IFRA network.”

The Women in News: Gender and Media Freedom Strategy is a four-year initiative that will run until June 2019. In addition to capacity building, WIN also engages the media industry at the regional and global level to sensitize and promote change from within. It combines WAN-IFRA’s global experience in running advocacy and development initiatives in support of media freedom and democracy with the first-hand knowledge of the impact gender-based programmes can have on media and society.

For more on Women in News and WAN-IFRA’s gender and media freedom activities, contact Melanie Walker: melanie.walker@wan-ifra.org

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About WAN-IFRA

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