

Projects Division Report for Congress 2007

The Projects Division has been responsible for raising funds and implementing activities with IFJ affiliates in support of the Working Programme established at Congress. Project work has become increasingly important over the past decade with an average annual budget of just over 1.5 million Euro in the last congress period.

Participation in IFJ project work is one of the key services we provide for members and activities are carefully tailored to the needs of affiliates and to improving their capacity to defend journalists' interests.

At the Athens Congress a new project strategy was agreed that organised work around four focus areas: safety, globalisation, union building, relations with government and the defence of professional rights.

This strategy directly deals with strengthening journalists' unions, and all activities are designed to help unions recruit new members, raise their profile and increase their influence with policy makers and employers by helping them take up broader professional related issues.

Safety: much of the IFJ's core work in safety has been reinforced by the International News Safety Institute (INSI) established in 2003. Since then the IFJ and INSI have co-operated to implement a global safety programme through joint offices in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. INSI has delivered safety training to 660 journalists and the IFJ a further 100 journalists in conflict and high risk zones around the world since 2004. IFJ and INSI successfully lobbied for a UN Security Resolution on journalists in conflict zones. Most importantly INSI has facilitated a dialogue with major employers promoting health and safety, training and insurance policies for staff.

Meanwhile, the IFJ has continued to use project funds to support campaigns against impunity including Iraq (April 8th) Ukraine, (Georgy Gongadze investigation) and most recently for launching the international commission into impunity for journalists' killers in Russia following the assassination of Anna Politkovskaya.

Globalisation: with national media markets being opened up to foreign investments, the global media multinationals appear to have a presence almost anywhere. Despite this, their actual reach among employed journalists' – our members - remains relatively limited. As a result the IFJ has only developed a few projects that have dealt directly with the challenges of organising in multinationals. In South-east Europe a series of regional workshops created a network of activists in neighbouring countries working for the German WAZ group. In Latin America, a study of conditions in international news agencies was produced following disputes in Agence France Presse and the Spanish news agency EFE in 2005 where the IFJ intervened with unions in France, Spain, the US and Mexico.

Market liberalisation based upon a media business model that needs to satisfy shareholders with ever higher profits regardless of the impact on quality has spread rapidly. Dominant national media run by financial investors aim to eliminate competition (pluralism) cut costs (contracts) and reduce investment in quality in the

search of greater profits. The IFJ has organised a number of events on this issue in line with the quality campaign and is one of the co-founders of the Coalition for Media Freedom and Integrity launched 22 February with a declaration on Media and Democracy in Europe.

Strengthening Journalists' unions has been addressed in the majority of project activities. The LOTCO trade union development programme particularly has enabled the IFJ to continue union training programmes regionally and nationally. These concentrate building union leadership and skills capacity. Gender equality has been a major theme using gender issues as a recruiting tool. Major programmes have been developed in many parts of the world, the most significant of which was the India gender programme that has become a model for campaigns elsewhere.

Defence of professional rights /relations with government: in recent years there has been a resurgence of government readiness to interfere in media and, particularly, to target journalists to reveal sources of information. US journalists have been jailed for refusing to reveal sources, Dutch and German journalists have had their phones tapped and two Danish journalists were prosecuted for revealing that the government had been advised there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction prior to using the existence of WMD as the reason for joining the invasion of Iraq. Projects are being used to also examine government attacks on media and to campaign for improved legal protection for journalists and to end criminal prosecution for journalistic activity. On the eve of Congress the IFJ is publishing a report on jailed journalists throughout the Middle East. The Asia Pacific office also produces annual press freedom reports.

Projects Overview (see figures 1, 2 and 3)

The last congress period saw an expansion of project budgets from 4.8 million euros in 2001-04 to 5.3 million euros in 2004 – 07, reflecting a strengthening of projects work and regional offices. There has been a substantial shift in the regions with most funds flowing from Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa towards Asia, North Africa and the Middle East where project activities currently dominate.

Sub-Saharan Africa has seen its budget reduced from 1.8 to 0.6 million Euro as a result of the end of the Media for Democracy in Africa programmes. The current budget is largely covered by the Swedish LOTCO which supported the West Africa journalists' programme that is being expanded into the other regions in 2007. The programme is now exclusively implemented by the Africa regional office.

Latin America is similarly dependent on the LOTCO and its budget has remained at a steady half million Euro reflecting the relative lack of funds available for this region.

The expansion of the European Union and the end of conflict in the Balkans has brought changes in Europe. Project activities continue in the Former Soviet Union most notably in Ukraine and Belarus with potential for further work in Central Asia. The IFJ has also worked with the Russian Union of Journalists over the past two years on trade union and gender equality programmes.

Asia has enjoyed a considerable expansion in activities with significant European Union projects implemented in Indonesia and India. The Asia Pacific office has also

developed new programmes throughout the region including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, and Hong Kong, among others.

Finally, North Africa and the Middle East has seen a huge growth in activities as a result of a series of projects in Iraq funded by UNESCO, AFL-CIO Solidarity Center and the LO-TCO, and the regional programme with Arab affiliates and Iran funded by the Danish government through the International Media Support.

Donors (figure 4)

The European Commission and the LO-TCO have been the IFJ's two most significant donors in the past three years. There is less dependence now on the European Commission with a greater spread of donors.

The Swedish Trade Union centres, the LO-TCO remains the most significant supporter of IFJ projects particularly on the trade union programme. A recent change of power in the Swedish government led to a freeze in budgets for 2007 and 08 but we hope that it will not jeopardise the long term programme.

The US trade union centre, the AFL-CIO, has supported IFJ programmes in Iraq including safety, gender equality and journalists' rights. It also supported the globalisation study in Latin American news agencies through its Solidarity Center. In March the AFL-CIO awarded the IFJ their George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award, 2006.

International Media Support is a Danish NGO established to provide rapid media support to crisis zones. The Danish Union of Journalists sits on its board and it receives most of its money from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has provided rapid support to the IFJ's mission to Nepal following the Royal coup and for a number of the Iraq activities. It is a major donor of the IFJ's Arab World programme and Belarus.

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, a German political foundation connected to the Social Democrat Party, continues to provide invaluable support to IFJ regional meetings despite also suffering significant squeezes to their budgets.

The Open Society Institute provided important support in Ukraine and Russia and our co-operation has now expanded beyond Eastern Europe to Southern Africa. It has also supported several of the IFJ's Quality campaign activities.

Project Independence

With such a significant income from project activities it is of paramount importance that the IFJ can demonstrate complete independence from the donors that are funding the activities and that the development of project programmes are based on IFJ priorities and not those of donors.

For example the imbalance in the distribution of projects between regions reflects the relative availability of funds rather than different levels of priority given by the IFJ to different regions. The sudden growth of activities in the Middle East reflects both a rise in priorities for donors and for the IFJ in working in the region.

Questions are also raised about the ethics of accepting money from certain types of donors such as certain governments or private foundations. Individual unions have different policies and guidelines about acceptable forms of support or sponsorship. The debate within the executive committee has resulted in the *ethical funding policy* motion being put to congress. This motion calls on the Executive Committee to ensure that individuals, organisations, companies, foundations and governments which are providing funds for IFJ activities or are providing financial services are committed to labour standards, human rights, equal opportunities and improving workers' living standards and the environment.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Committee acts as a project review committee approving all projects and sources of funding.

Future Trends

Despite the continued growth of funds it is increasingly difficult for small or medium sized organisations such as the IFJ to cover the full costs of project salaries. While donors cover costs during the project implementation, they will not cover the costs of project development or the salaries of staff between project contracts. Donors also increasingly require a significant partner contribution. The European Commission has required a 20% contribution to all projects for some years. In 2005 the LO-TCO was forced to introduce a minimum 10% contribution that must be provided by the IFJ and not by another donor. These costs end up being covered through IFJ salaries.

At the same time the significance of the project work on the IFJ's global campaigning should not be underestimated. In 2005, for example, 208.000 € was spent from the IFJ's general budget on its working programme including 128.000 € allocated to the four regional offices. However, once salaries covered by projects were removed, the activities paid for through projects had an additional budget of just over one million euros. Without projects, funds for the working programme would shrink by 80%.

Meanwhile there is a growing trend towards a consolidation of the media development sector as donors seek to reduce the range of actors and greater efficiency in media development. A greater consolidation could cause problems for the IFJ to maintain the work in the long run.

Part of this trend is driven by groups such as the Global Forum of Media Development (GFMD) that is offering improvements in efficiency in exchange for greater access to funding. Specifically it is calling on governments to make the 'creation of independent media' a key objective of development aid strategies. It argues that free, independent and quality media are essential for effective and sustainable economic development, in particular the alleviation of poverty.

In order to justify the expansion of funds the GFMD is attempting to develop a more efficient mechanism for implementing media development, introducing common standards for assessing needs, delivering programmes and measuring the results.

The IFJ remains is closely involved in the GFMD process and follows other initiatives in order to ensure that professional and labour rights of journalists remain priorities on the media development agenda.

Fig 1: Project budgets for past four congress periods

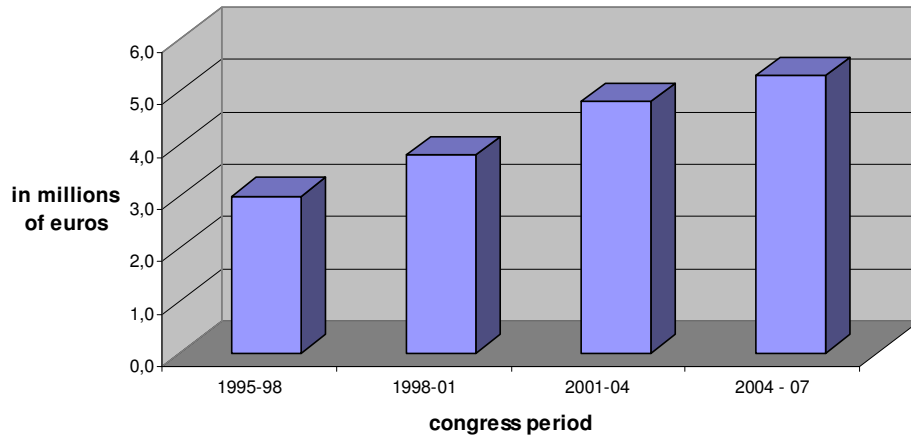


Fig 2a : Project funding distributed by region 1995 - 2007

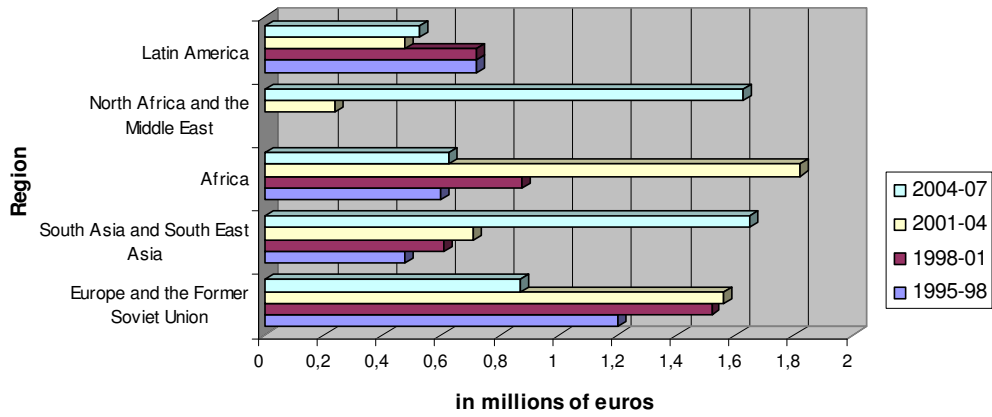


Fig 2b: Project funding distributed by region 2004-06

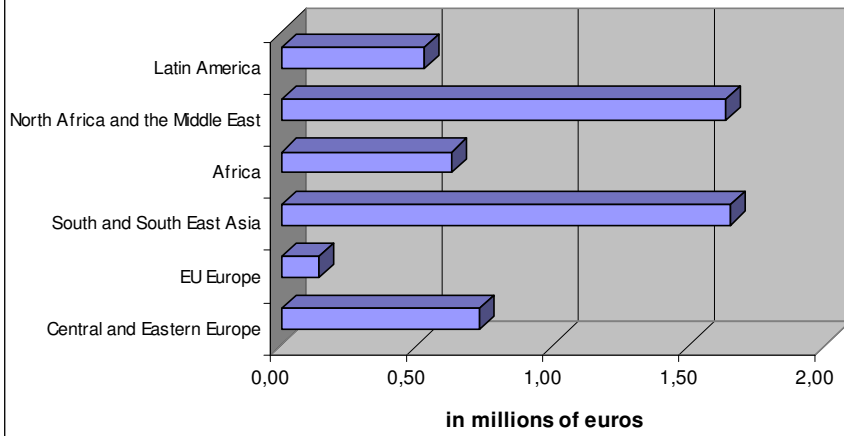


Fig 3: Secured funding for next congress period

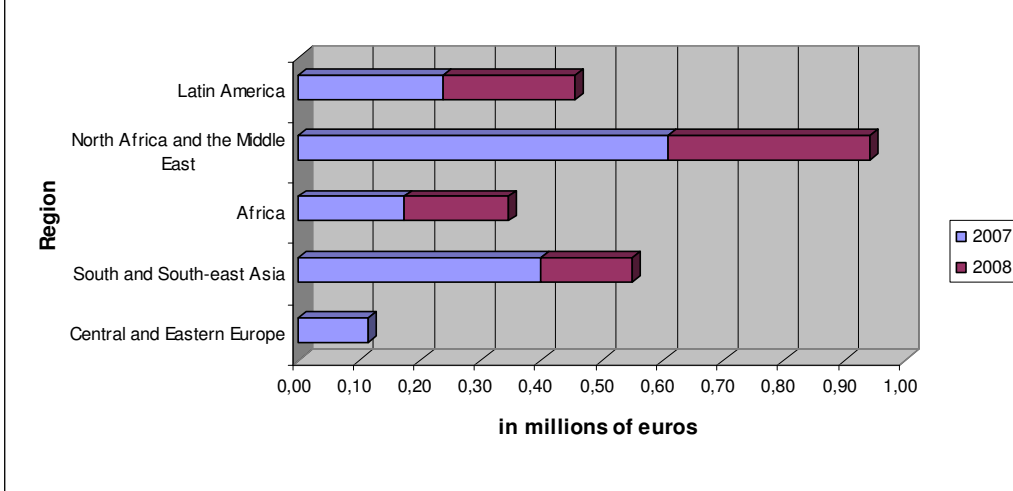


Fig 4: Sources of Funding 2004/2006

