



**The following project is being run through the IFJ Africa Regional Office during 2009**

**Title : Building Viable Journalists' Unions In Sub- Saharan Africa**

**Date: 2008**

**Background**

The media in Africa can still be described as being in a turbulent development stage. Despite the significant improvement in journalism on the continent in providing an African perspective on the news, the environment in which media professionals operate continues to be dire. Most African governments continue to apply legislation designed to muzzle the press. African journalists are often victims to arbitrary arrest and detention, beatings, torture, arson attacks, imprisonment, and murder. Despite the growing number of unions and journalists' associations in the continent, most of them lack the strength and resources necessary to take on the legal challenges they are confronted with, most especially by the state authorities. The launch of the Federation of African Journalists in Nairobi in November 2008 is expected to mark a turning point in the fortunes of the journalists unions and their members. It's launch is also a significant achievement of the recent union building programmes supported by the LO-TCO. The current programme seeks to build on this process and enable the unions to better defend their interest, the rights and the welfare of their members.

**Objectives:**

- i) Increase the profile of journalists' trade unions, enhance their bargaining and organising capacities, and strengthen professional solidarity in sub-Saharan Africa.
- ii) Promote quality journalism in sub-Saharan Africa through strong and professional trade unions defending journalists' professional rights and standards.

**Activities:**

The core activity for the Sub-Saharan region is centred on the training of journalists and union leaders in trade union development, collective bargaining and leadership skills. These training programmes are often carried out on a regional basis, while some countries are identified for targeted training issues, related to trade union development.

**Partners:**

The project is implemented in collaboration with the national unions through the regional affiliates, namely, West Africa Journalists' Association (WAJA), Southern Africa Journalists' Association (SAJA), East Africa Journalists' Association (EAJA), the Union des Syndicats des Professionnels de la Presse d'Afrique Centrale (UYSPAC) and now the Federation of African Journalists.

**Expected Results:**



- i) 72 journalists and union leaders trained in bargaining and leadership skills across the continent (WAJA 24, EAJA 12, SAJA 24 and USYPAC 12).
- ii) Publication of a Status of Journalists Report focusing on working conditions, gender, ethics and press freedom.

**Budget:** €159 000

**Donors:** LOTCO