WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

CFI pays tribute to journalists in the field and supports media organisations that are striving to provide information about Covid-19

The global health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic rapidly struck all world nations. The protection provided to citizens against this pandemic is highlighting discrepancies in how different regions have acted, especially in terms of healthcare but also with regard to access to information. The pandemic is becoming a pretext for undermining fundamental rights and the free circulation of information in many countries that CFI provides support to. CFI, the French agency that supports the media in developing countries, is trying to deliver a rapid and targeted response, in particular in Africa, the Arab world and the Levant.

Since early March, CFI has mobilised its teams and reorganised its projects so it can tackle this health crisis. The first measures have been operational since the 13th of April.

In Africa, CFI is taking swift action by providing support to its partners so they can produce health information.

The MédiaSahel initiative, supported by AFD, has received one million euros in support which will ensure that young citizens in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger as well as Senegal, Mauritania and Chad benefit from reliable health information which is adapted to how they use the media. For example, CFI has asked Damien Glez, a press cartoonist, to produce 20 animated videos that will spread prevention messages as effectively as possible. These videos have been translated into 13 local languages and are now being disseminated by dozens of media outlets.

More than eighty special programmes focussing on health will be produced and broadcast by around a hundred radio partners in the Sahel region. Radio France Internationale is going to broadcast twenty videos to raise awareness and dispel false information about coronavirus during its Priorité Santé programme.

The agency is thus participating in the fight against and the breakdown of false information linked to the pandemic and is making the population aware of the right behaviour to adopt (prevention tips, measures that should be taken, etc.).

In the Arab world and the Levant, the QARIB project, cofinanced by AFD, aims to bring citizens and the media closer together. This project will support the production of content related to the pandemic and its impact by Jordanian, Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi media (articles, reports, computer graphics, videos, podcasts, fight against fake news).

In Lebanon, CFI is supporting Lebanese media associations Yom Kom and Labneh & facts to produce content linked to the crisis. Training for journalists and assistance to produce content for Syrian refugees and populations affected by the Syrian crisis will also be provided in the weeks to come, again in Lebanon and also in Jordan.

From May onwards, the agency will organise online conferences in Arabic for many journalists in the Arab world that will address the Covid-19 crisis and its coverage in the media.

Marc Fonbaustier, Chairman and Managing Director of CFI: “Information plays a crucial role in raising awareness of the health risk and enabling individuals to adopt, as far as possible, the right behaviour to reduce the spread of the virus and to protect themselves and others from it. It is essential in this period of crisis, which makes the spread of false information all the more prevalent due to social networks, to make it easier for journalists to network with one another and encourage the sharing of verified information from reputable sources.”
About CFI

A subsidiary of the France Médias Monde group, CFI, the French media development agency, actively promotes the development of the media in Africa, the Arab world and South-East Asia. Each year, CFI conducts around 30 projects which come under three major programmes: Media and Governance, Media and Business, and Media and Development. www.cfi.fr

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