Bruno Aïtche is the Director of Caritas Migrant Center, a center in Lebanon promoting and protecting the rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. Previously, he worked on several multi-country level initiatives in the Middle East building civic engagement initiatives and platforms for human rights defenders.

Yolba Fares is Manager at the Mawardi Center, which focuses on strengthening the ties between individuals and organizations in the Syrian media sphere. In order to work in synergy and to create, enhance and use the public space around them, the Mawardi Center aims to contribute to the efficacy of a Syrian media sector that will benefit the good of all.

Mohammed Ali Mansour is Presenter of the show Sura Syria (the Syrian Hour) on Toah al Has, a radio program that serves as a bridge between refugees, the community and political organizations. As a media specialist, he is also a teacher and trainer in producing radio and other media, and he has written and directed several films, mainly in Jordan.

Norbert Oudor Otemo is the Director of Good News Radio, in Rumbek in South Sudan. He has spearheaded the Youth and Women Radio Listener clubs. Recently, he has been elected as chairman of the newly launched Community Media Network for South Sudan (COMNETS) and the Radio for Peace Network (RFoP), and is in charge of twenty radio stations across South Sudan.

Tarek Atta is CEO and Founder of the Egypt Media Development Program (EMDP), and Publisher of the Egyptian media brands Mandopi (My Neighborhood) and Zahra Caravan. As an experienced journalist, editor, and media development professional, he has designed and implemented many capacity building programmes, including extensive work with UNESCO on media self-regulation and codes of ethics within Egyptian media.

Rula Aaziz is Co-Founder of the Syrian Female Journalist Network (SFJN), based in the Netherlands, which is focusing on the integration of a gender justice approach in local Syrian media, empowering Syrian female media professionals, and training local journalists. She started her career as a journalist in Syria, and later worked for Deutsche Welle and Radio Netherlands Worldwide.

Khadija Boujassoual is the Financial and Management Control Director at Zhti, a national television channel in Morocco, and is the President of the Committees Partner Point for the same channel. As such, she has also created the website Experte.m, the first digital platform for Moroccan experts, focusing on journalists and media professionals. Her work is mainly focused on diversity and gender balance in media.

Regina Salomons is the Anna Lindh Foundation’s Communication Manager. She develops communication and media actions across 42 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UM), including the Mediterranean Flagship Journalist award for reporting across cultures. In her previous careers, she worked for the United Nations. She has also worked as a journalist in Europe and South America, including reporting work in Brussels with the European Union Institutions.
UNESCO is the UN specialized agency with a mandate to defend the universal right to freedom of expression, instructed by its Constitution to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image. Following the 2011 uprisings in the Arab region, and with the support of the Governments of Finland and Sweden, UNESCO has supported the democratic transitions in the region through promoting freedom of expression, freedom of information, and independent and pluralistic media. The deterioration of the conflict and the human emergency situation in the region in the recent years exacerbates the salience of matters related to freedom of expression, access to information and safety of media professionals in the region. In line with its mandate, and as a response to emerging needs, UNESCO’s actions in this regard have resulted in greater awareness of freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, enhanced understanding of internet freedom, increased media and information literacy, and strengthened capacities of media institutions and professionals, as well as women and youth.

This seminar will provide a platform for discussion on the importance of freedom of expression for sustainable development, democratic governance and intercultural dialogue, particularly in post-conflict environments. Through an interactive discussion between various stakeholders from the region, international development partners and donors, beneficiaries including media and local partners, and UNESCO representatives, the event will highlight the impact of UNESCO’s projects funded by the Governments of Finland and Sweden with a focus on the Arab region. Members of the public will have the opportunity to learn more about the state of freedom of expression as well as engage with speakers and participate in debates on ongoing and emerging needs and priorities.

SEMINAR AGENDA
PUBLIC STREAMING AVAILABLE VIA UNESCO WEBSITE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4 2021 | FINLANDIA HALL

14:00 - 14:45
Opening with a film showcasing the tangible impact of activities carried out by UNESCO in the Arab region on matters of freedom of expression and safety of journalists with funding provided by the Governments of Finland and Sweden.

Opening remarks by:
- Gay Byrne, Director, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
- Kari Abulesa, Deputy Director General, Department for Africa and the Middle East, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Maija Ottosson, Assistant Director General and Head of Department for International Organizations and Policy Support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Maha Mammou, Senior Evaluation Expert - Participation and Gender, presents key findings of the external evaluation on the impact of the projects funded by Finland and Sweden

Mediator: Moria Hazar

14:45 - 15:30
Two panels will be organized on key matters of freedom of expression. The aim of these is to showcase work carried out by UNESCO and its partners in the Arab Region mainly in the projects funded by the Governments of Finland and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and highlight the impact through first-hand accounts of beneficiaries in an interactive and participatory manner.

15:00 - 17:30

Fostering a sustainable future for Arab media: plac ing youth and gender in the spotlight

VENUE: Finlandia Hall
FORMAT: 30 minutes of debate among panelists
30 minutes’ question and answer session with the public

16:00 - 17:00

BRUNO ATTIA, Director of Caritas Nigerien Centre Libercrois
YAHYA FARES, MA International Telecommunication, Media Center Manager
MOHAMMED ELKHAYAL, Presenter of "Sama" (the Syrian Hour) Radio Programme
NOBERT ODLAR OLIVIER, Director of Good News Radio, in Hambach, South Sudan

Mediator: Moria Hazar

PANELISTS:
TAWFIK ATIA, CEO and Founder of the Egypt Media Development Program (EMDP) and Publisher of Manjra
ZAMMA CARESE
BUKHARIN KASHU, Co-founder and Executive Director of the Syrian Female Journalist Network (SFJN)
KHALDA BAGHANOULI, Financial and Management Control Director and 2M TV, Morocco
ROBAGA SARAHWAR, Communication Manager, Anna Lindh Foundation

PANELISTS:
MAGDA ALI ABU VAHSLI, Director, Media Untied, Lebanon
NOSEL LALY, President of the Independent Broadcasting Company MARCA, Tunisia
JACQUELINE KATAN, Syrian human rights activist and sociopolitical activist, peace-activist, citizen journalist

Michael Croft, former UNESCO Representative and Head of Offices, Libya
Mohamed Adel, photographer, Egypt
Lina Chellal, Executive Director, Association Radio Ressources Paris
Amandar Hazar, Executive Director, Organization for the Support of Free Media in Syria (ASMS)

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