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March 2022

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Survey

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IMS Partnership Survey

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## Executive summary

The survey was sent to 166 partners and 77 responded, which equals a respondent rate of 46 percent. This rate of response was considerably lower, when compared to the 2019 survey, where the rate of response was 87 percent. The profile of the respondents corresponds to the geographic regions where IMS is present and the general profile of the partners, and despite the low response rate, the sample remains representative.

Reasons for the low respondent rate could be that the survey was conducted during the summer holiday. Also partners in Myanmar and Afghanistan were under extreme pressure and few of them have probably responded to the survey. Due to the low rate of response, the analysis and conclusions must be taken with some caution. Conclusions should be viewed as preliminary signs of patterns or trends that will need to be tested and confirmed when the survey has been conducted again in 2022.

## Positive findings

### Partnership and cooperation

At a general level the partners have been very satisfied with the IMS partnership, with an average rating on 4.53 out of 5.



The comments further support the appreciation by the partners of the partnership with IMS.

- *We are so proud of our IMS-partnership because the organisation treats us as a true and equal partner rather than just a grantee. This is what makes IMS partnership special and appreciative.*
- *IMS has allowed us to continue our creative work, network and remain relevant in our sector.*

### Capacity Development on content is effectful and strongly appreciated by partners

The majority of partners work mainly within content production and public interest media. Capacity development on content was found most effective compared to other types of capacity development, and 74 percent of respondents reported that capacity development had big positive or very big positive effect. None of the partners found it to have had a limited effect or no effect at all. The survey showed that 72 percent of respondents found that their content had improved as a result of the capacity development.

### Climate and environmental issues

Respondents took a strong interest in the climate and environmental issues section of the survey, with 70 percent of all respondents answering. One quote clearly illustrates the interest and priority of the issue from the partners: “*Remember that even in a situation of Covid-19, climate change remains at the top of the most urgent issues.*” Support for content production related to climate and environmental issues was mentioned by most respondents as a priority.

## Gender

Gender is coming out strongly across the survey. 65% of the respondents are cooperating with women's organisations. Of the partners saw growth in their audience, this was especially true among women and youth. Ninety-three percent of all respondents either reported having a gender strategy, or that they were in the process of developing such a strategy. Furthermore, 73 percent of respondents who reported having a gender strategy or being in a process of developing one had implemented 50 percent of their gender strategy. Gender distribution within partner organisations is also fairly equal, with a number of partners having strong representation of women on boards and management. Ninety-four percent of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that IMS in words and actions is committed to non-discrimination and anti-harassment. No respondents disagreed with the statement.

## Localisation

Various dimensions of localisation were addressed in the survey such as the recognition and use of the capacity of partners; partners full engagement in project design and planning; the treatment of partners as equal partners and the engagement of partners in international network and fora.

Ninety percent of partners agreed, or strongly agreed, that IMS treats partners as an equal partner rather than a grantee or sub-contractor. The overwhelming majority of partners also feel involved in the design and the implementation of programmes. A large majority also feel that the kind of capacity development being offered, matches their needs, and build on the existing capacities of the partners. Also, partners expressed satisfaction with the inclusion in international networks and fora.

## Areas of concern

A number of partners have reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with IMS' financial and administrative procedures, where 16 percent of the partners find that support/financial support arrives too late. Several partners have stated that signed contracts and funding arrive late. Quotes from partners illustrate this:

- *We have not received any financial support from IMS yet, and we are very, very upset about this situation (June/mid year)*
- *The highest priority of my institution is to send the amount agreed upon in the signed contract, given that the institution has covered the expenses of the last period from its treasury, and this delay and difficult procedures destroys the institution's finances.*

Four of the partners who were critical about the slow speed of funding dispersals, are receiving between 75-100 percent of their funding from IMS. So, the late arrival of critical funding can negatively impact programme implementation and, ultimately, the ability of the programme to deliver results.

## Areas of attention

An area of attention is to increase the respondent rate. The goal is to increase the response rate to more than 70 percent. IMS has therefore developed several key actions to realise this

goal. In the future, IMS will send its annual survey out in February/March. IMS will also engage the Programme Managers early and ensure follow-up with partners sooner, and it will make sure the survey is available in both French and Arabic. Finally, it will also make sure that the findings from the 2021 survey are shared with the partners to show that IMS is transparent and intends to act on its findings.

## 1.0 Background

IMS annual partnership survey has been tailor-made to the needs and profile of IMS, and it draws on several well-known international standard surveys such as the Keystone Partnership Survey<sup>1</sup>, and the Danida partnerships survey.

The IMS Partnership Survey will provide feedback and documentation on:

- Partnership relations
- Partner satisfaction with capacity development
- The effect/results of capacity development
- Input on priorities and emerging issues from partners

The survey is divided into five sections:

1. Type and profile of partners
2. Partnership and cooperation
3. Capacity development
4. Gender, diversity and inclusion
5. Media business management, strategy development and media viability

The IMS Partnership Survey also addresses localisation in relation to equal partnership, local needs and ownership. The survey also entails a more open section to capture emerging issues, which will vary from year to year. In the 2020 survey, the focus was on environmental and climate issues.

The survey was conducted from 15<sup>th</sup> June to the end of July, and it was sent to 166 partners, who responded anonymously. The main focal point for the cooperation with IMS within the partner organisation was asked to fill out the survey. If needed and time allowed, the respondents were asked to gather information from colleagues within their organisation. The profile of the individual respondent is 57 percent men, 43 percent women. The categories *non-binary* and *prefer not to say* wasn't used. Twenty five percent were between 25-34 years, 63 percent of respondents were between 35-54 years and 12 percent were over 54 years.

## 2.0 IMS partners – who are they? And what do they do?

Most of the IMS partners participating in this survey are public content producers, and that includes 30 partners who describe themselves as journalism/media outlets and six partners organisations, who identify themselves as documentary film producers (see graphic below).

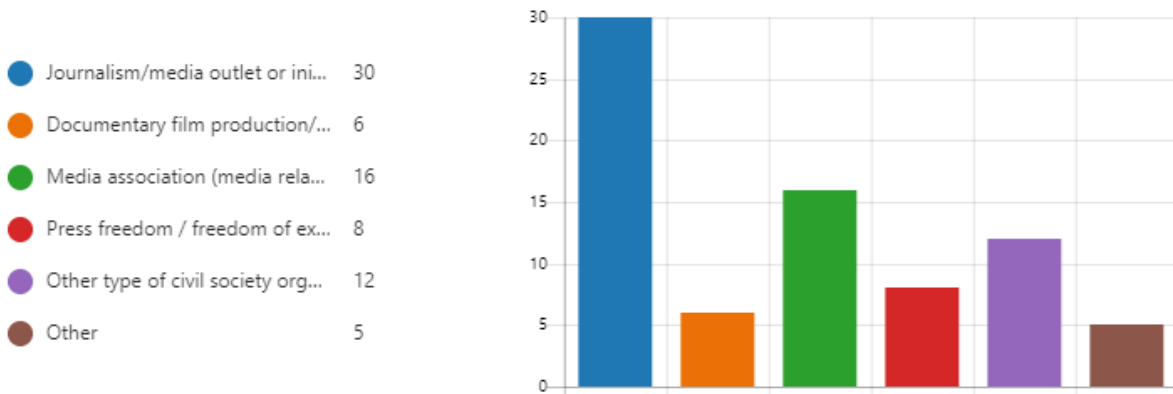
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<sup>1</sup> [Working Well With Others – Keystone Accountability](#)

## How would you define your organisation?

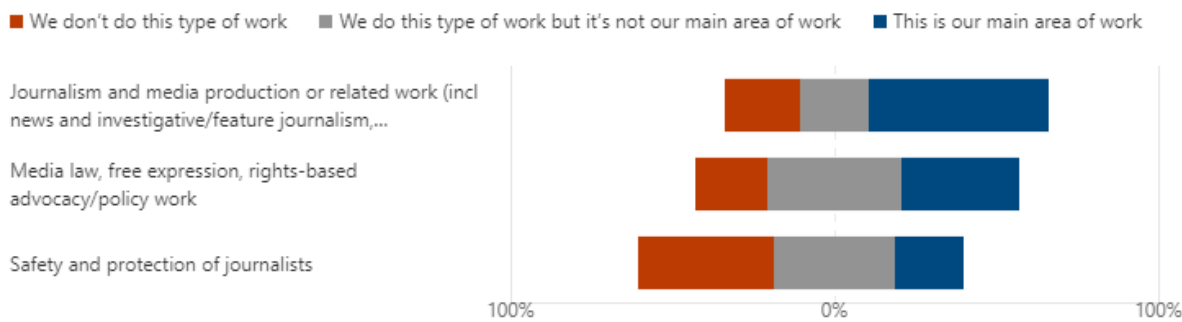
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[Insights](#)



## Which of the following types of work do your organisation do?

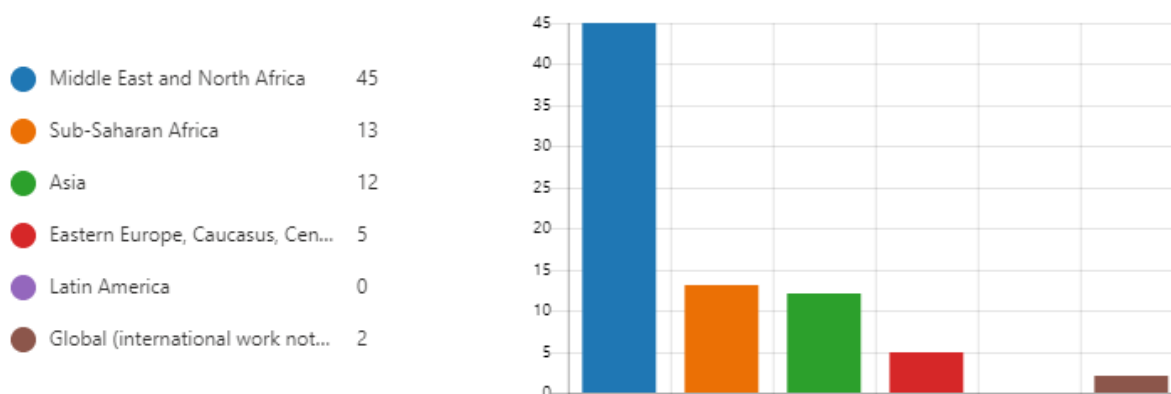
[More Details](#)



Journalism and media production is the main area of focus for more than half of our partners. A little less than 25 percent are not involved in journalism or media production. A total of 78 percent of partners see media law, freedom of expression and rights-based advocacy as either their main area of work or as a smaller part of what they do. And only 22 percent of respondents state that they are not doing media law, freedom of expression and advocacy work. Safety is the area where the smallest percentage of partners (20 percent) see as their main area of work. Almost half of the partners, who state that they don't do safety are journalism outlets or media content producers. However, most partners operating in fragile contexts and areas with shrinking space must be considering safety, but the answers could indicate that they don't see it as a separate activity/intervention area.

## Where does the majority of your organisation's work take place?

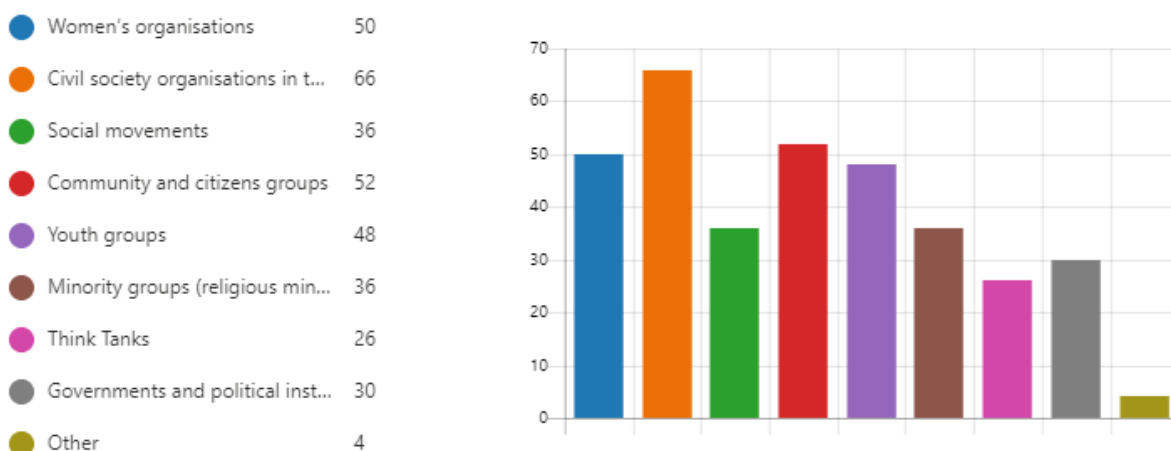
[More Details](#)



The largest number of respondents have the majority of their work taking place in the MENA region (45 partners). Most partners are based in the region, where their work take place. However, seven partners are based in Europe, but the majority of their work is taking place in the MENA region or globally.

## What type of local and national organisations and groups does your organisation cooperate with? (multiple answers possible)

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The IMS strategy 2020-2023 has a strong focus on cooperation and building coalitions with civil society organisations. The figure above shows a high level of cooperation with a wide range of organisations and groups.

The type of organisations that most partners are cooperating with are civil society organisations in the field of freedom of expression and broader human rights; community and citizens groups; women's organisations and youth groups. IMS has a strong focus on gender, so it is worth noting that 50 out of the 77 respondents, are cooperating with women's organisations.

Approximately, what was the total annual budget in USD of your organisation in 2020?

[More Details](#)

● Less than \$50,000	6
● \$50,000 - \$100,000	15
● \$100,000 - \$200,000	19
● \$200,000 - \$500,000	18
● Over \$500,000	19



How much of your organisation's total income in 2020 would you estimate came from IMS?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● 0-25%	49
● 25-50%	16
● 50-75%	5
● 75-100%	7



The graphics above show that the typical IMS partner has a budget above 200,000 USD (purple and red sections in the first graph), and a relatively small part of their funding (0-25 percent) comes from IMS (blue section in the graph below). For the 37 partners with an annual income over 200,000 USD the funding from IMS of up to 25 percent will be substantial.

For how long has your organisation worked with IMS (both contractually and non-contractually)?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● 1-3 years	30
● 3-5 years	15
● 5-7 years	15
● More	17



30 of the partners surveyed have been cooperating with IMS between 1- 3 years. The new partners that IMS has engaged with are distributed across many regions and represent different types of organisations, corresponding to the general sample. Twenty percent of partners have been working with IMS for more than seven years. The majority of these long-term partners receive less than 25 percent of their funding from IMS and should not be seen as being over-reliant on IMS support.



### 3.0 Partnership and cooperation

Organisations are generally very happy with their partnership, giving IMS an average rating on satisfaction of 4.53 out of 5.



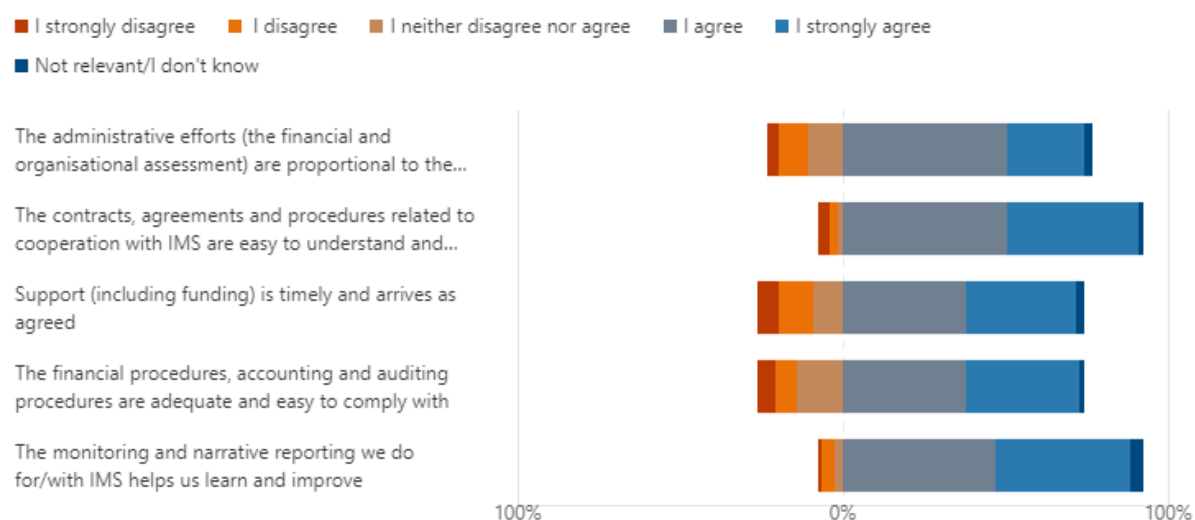
The comments further support the appreciation by the partners of their partnership with IMS.

- *We are so proud of our IMS-partnership because the organisation treats us as a true and equal partner rather than just a grantee. This is what makes IMS partnership special and appreciative.*
- *IMS has allowed us to continue our creative work, network and remain relevant in our sector.*

#### 3.1 contractual, administrative and financial procedures

1. The statements in this section cover the contractual, administrative, and financial procedures and financial and narrative reporting

[More Details](#)



In general, the graphical data above shows that most of the respondents are satisfied with IMS’ contractual, administrative, reporting and financial procedures. However, in three statements partners have expressed some dissatisfaction. The three statements, where partners strongly disagreed or disagreed, are:

- The administrative efforts (financial and organisational assessment) are proportional to the funds received.
- Support (including funding) is timely and arrives as agreed.
- The financial procedures, accounting and auditing procedures are adequate and easy to comply with.

Sixteen percent of the survey participants expressed dissatisfaction over the late disbursement of funds.

- *We have not received any financial support from IMS yet, and we are very, very upset about this situation (June/mid year)*
- *The highest priority of my institution is to send the amount agreed upon in the signed contract, given that the institution has covered the expenses of the last period from its treasury, and this delay and difficult procedures destroys the institution's finances.*

A total of 27 percent of the partners expressed criticism on one or more of the three topics listed above. These partners are from various regions. However, MENA partners represent 58 percent of the total number of respondents, but 66 percent of the total number of partners who have expressed their dissatisfaction with IMS administrative and financial procedures. For larger organisations who receive most of their funding from IMS, the problem was especially acute. For these partners, funds that arrive late can undermine their ability to retain staff, maintain their operation and deliver results. The timely disbursal of funds is a prerequisite for a healthy partnership relation.

In the survey, 32 out of 77 partners gave detailed feedback on communication, administrative, reporting and financial procedures. Sixteen of those responses were positive, 14 were negative and two were neutral.

Positive examples include:

- *High communication and committed.*
- *The IMS team is helpful and easy to contact, and they work with partners very well.*
- *The communication with IMS is based on relevant professional principles and mutual understanding.*
- *We appreciated IMS staff were prompt in email and they advise us in reporting period because we were not experienced with this kind of reporting. So, they were patient with us.*
- *Our relationship with IMS is long and fruitful and has produced many successful events and achieved several goals.*
- *We highly appreciate our partnership with IMS, they support us continually to develop our work environment and enhance our visibility and digital work online and offline.*

Examples of negative feedback:

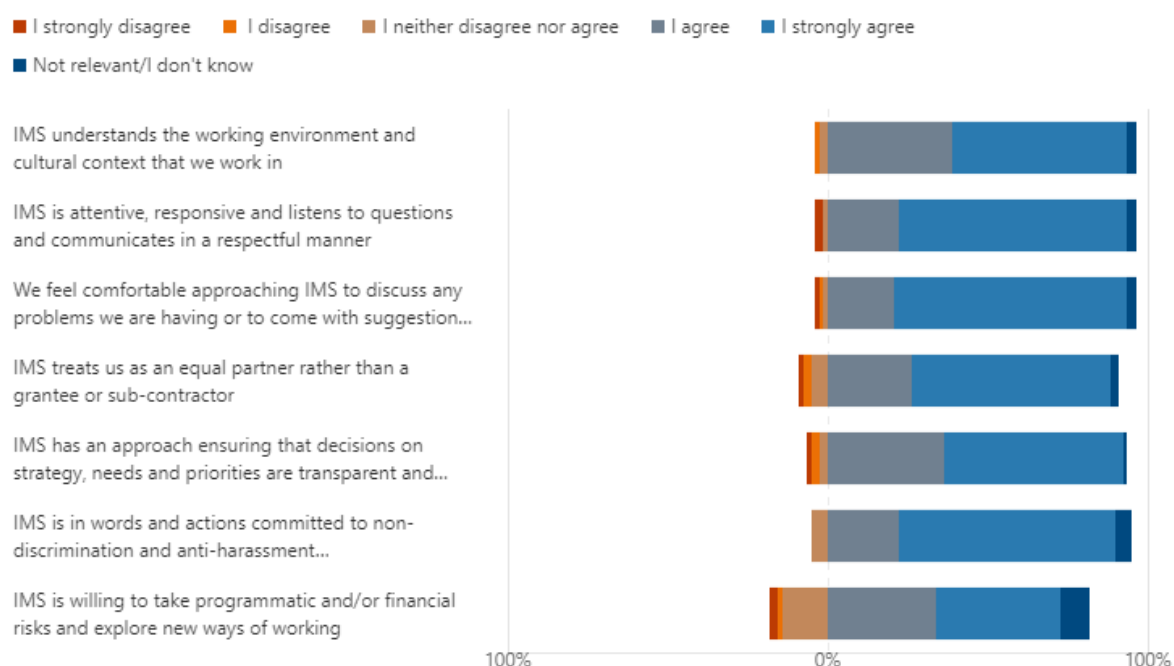
- *My main problem is that contracts are prepared in the middle of the year, and there's always a risk a cash flow shortage because of that.*
- *The delay of contracts impact our work very badly.*
- *Also in general it feels like IMS is getting more bureaucratic with time. There is an issue with the significant delay of the first instalment in the year.*
- *A lot of the back and forth on the paperwork can be handled by better automation, or by a move to collaborative tools such as Google Workplace. As an organisation that promotes the transformation of media, IMS too needs to move forward on this front to reduce the amount of work for all parties.*

Several negative comments were related to the size of the funding.

### 3.2 Communication, understanding of context and responsiveness

. The statements in this section cover the partnership approach of IMS, our communication, IMS' understanding of the context you work in and how responsive and inclusive, you think IMS is

[More Details](#)



The survey responses were generally very positive related to communication and responsiveness, indicating that partners feel IMS understand the context in which they work, that IMS communicates in a respectful manner and that the partnership is equal. A small number of partners have expressed criticism on the communication, and IMS' understanding and responsiveness. The partners that have been critical were often the partners who have been critical of IMS administrative and financial procedures. This could be because the administrative burdens and delays in financial and funding dispersals have overshadowed those partners' perspective on the relationship

Of the comments in the open text box, two were on the IMS values and partnership approach:

- *IMS is an excellent "partner" and not just a funder. However, the experience does differ depending on who the program manager is - some program managers are excellent, invested, problem-solvers, have built trust and always work to find ways to make the relationship less demanding from IMS' side and more of a value addition. However, IMS doesn't seem to have clear values and approaches set for*

*all of their staff members so the experience significantly changes based on the person.*

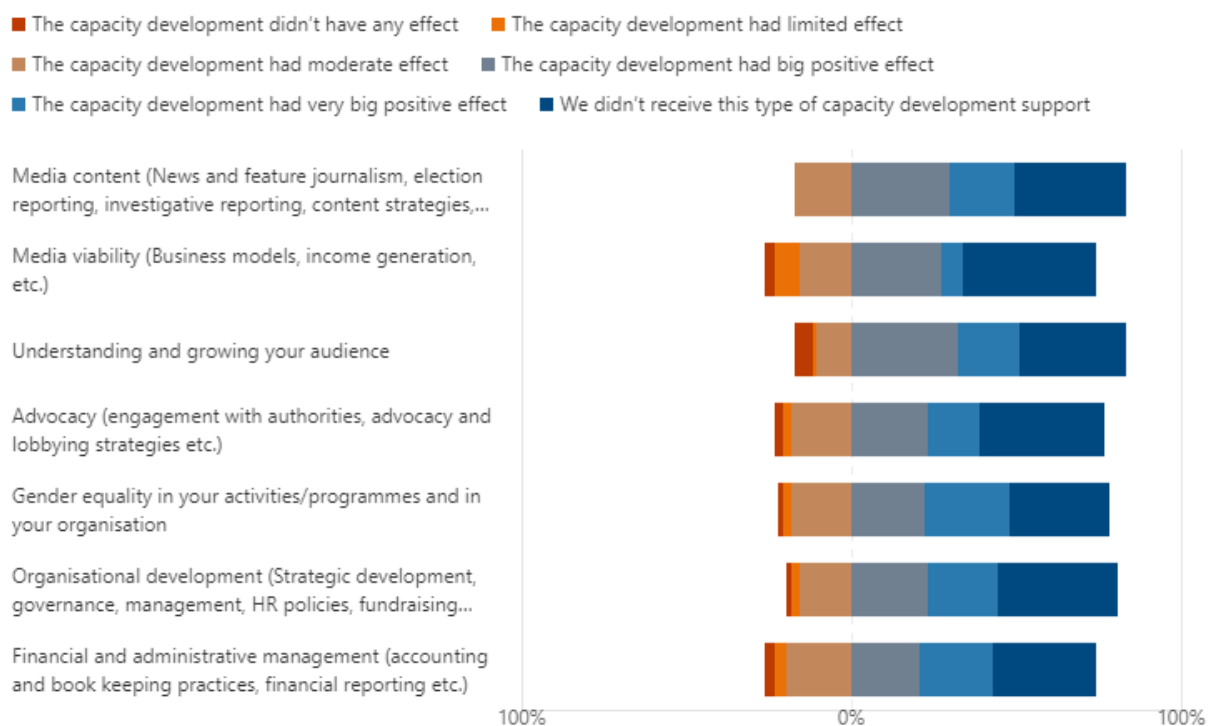
- *IMS need to be in contact with all partners in the country, to help all the partners understand the work of other.*

## 4.0 Capacity development

### 4.1 Effect and themes

1. How would you rate the effect of the support for capacity development provided through the partnership with IMS?

[More Details](#)



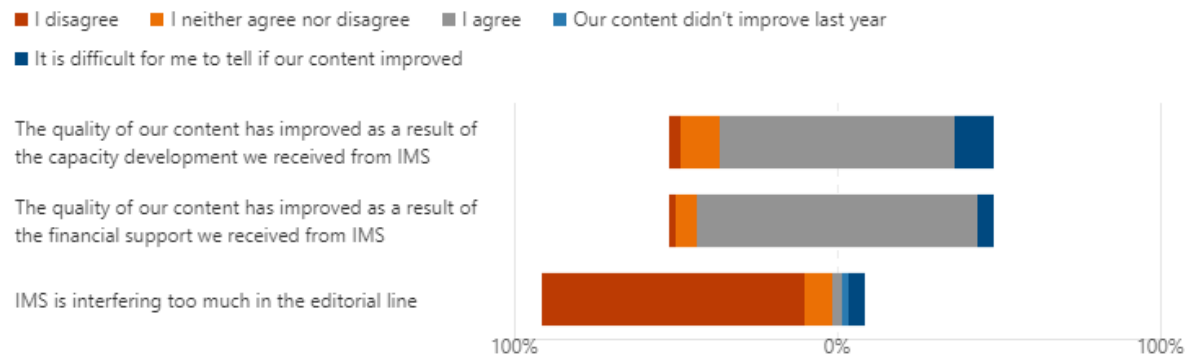
Capacity development has broadly been viewed by partners as having a positive effect on their organisations. This was especially true related to capacity development for the creation of media content. None of the partners found capacity development on media content to have had limited effect, or no effect at all. Audience development has also been seen by partners as effective. Capacity development in advocacy and finance was where the fewest number of partners (just above 60 percent) saw positive results from IMS capacity development efforts.

Many partners are working in fragile states and in markets, where an organisation’s financial viability is difficult to maintain. Seen in this perspective, it’s positive that 72 percent of all respondents found the capacity development in the area of business viability to have had a big or very big effect. Fifteen percent of all partners have reported seeing little to no effect of capacity development in the area of business viability.

Partners receiving a smaller part of their funding from IMS (0-25 percent) reported seeing less effect in the area of capacity development when compared to other partners who took the survey.<sup>2</sup>

i. How would you rate your agreement with the following statements related to the quality of the content that your media organisation produce?

[More Details](#)

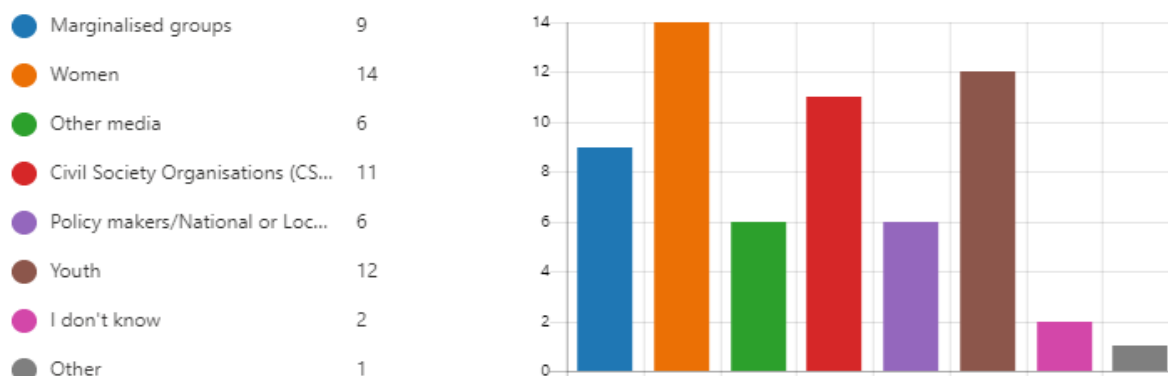


Seventy two percent of surveyed partners found that their content improved as a result of IMS capacity development. Ninety six percent found that their content had improved as a result of IMS financial support. A large majority of partners (87 percent) found that IMS had not interfered too much in the editorial line. Only two respondents found that IMS interfered too much as it relates to editorial content. This question was offered in order to test and understand if the funding relationship with IMS had interfered with the editorial independency of partners. The positive responses on the capacity development on media content, the high number of partners who found that their content has improved as well as the high number of partners, who didnt find that IMS is interfering too much in the editorial line points to that the capacity development, sparring and support on content is highly appreciated by the partners and found to be relevant and effective.

<sup>2</sup> Capacity development on safety was by mistake not included.

i. To your knowledge, did you reach new or expand your audiences in one or more of the following groups during last year? (Multiple answers possible)

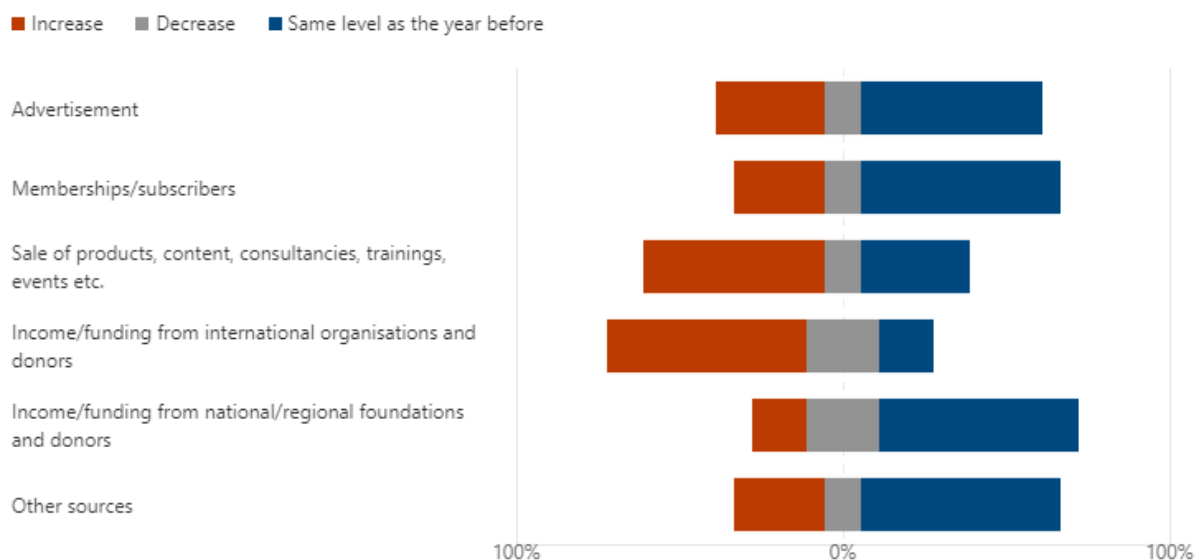
[More Details](#)



While many media organisation have some difficulty reaching out to youth and women, the survey has shown that IMS partners are reaching both of those demographic groups.<sup>3</sup>

i. Did you see an increase or a decrease in your income in the last financial year?

[More Details](#)



Eighteen partners have received support to develop their skills within media business management, which includes strategy development (management foundation/management fundamentals) and media viability, and only these 18 partners responded to this section in the survey. Because of the limited number of respondents, it's impossible to draw a clear conclusion. But this could be emerging trends, which we will investigate further in the next annual survey. For most partner respondents, the majority of their income came from international organisations and donors. A smaller percentage of their income came from other sources, such as advertising, members or subscribers, from the sale of products, the sale of content, from consulting, from training sessions, other events, and regional foundations and

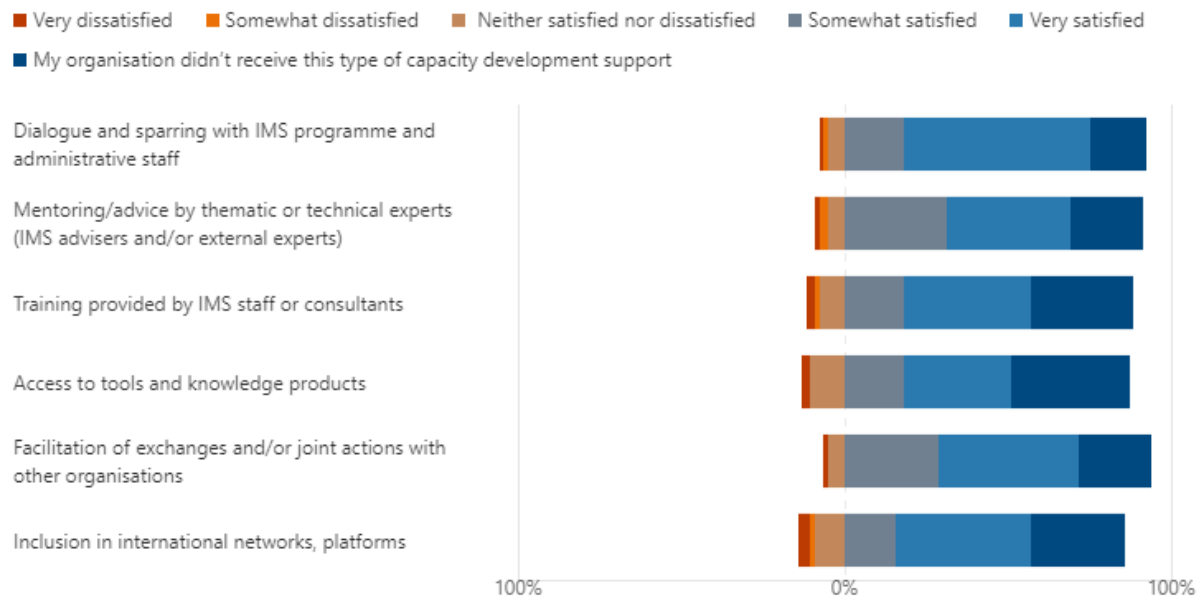
<sup>3</sup> Only 18 partners answered this section, where 17 saw a growth in their audience.

donors. Partners witnessed income growth related to product and content sale, consultancies, trainings and from staging events. This points to the potential for partners to diversify income and funding sources, even in challenging markets.

## 4.2 Capacity development – approach and design

. How satisfied were you with the approach of IMS to capacity development on the below listed activities?

[More Details](#)

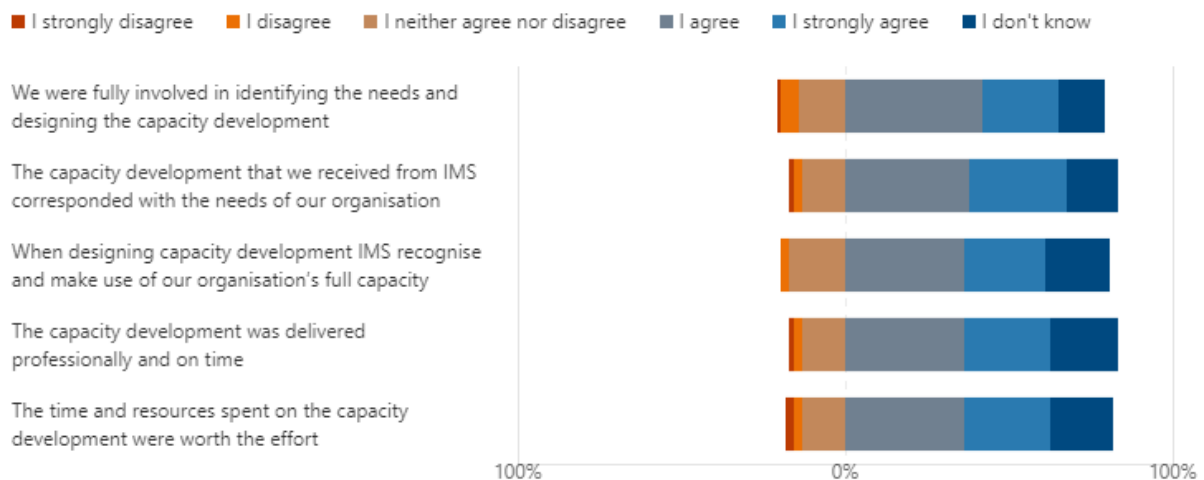


The questions in this section were asked in order to gain insight into the delivery of our capacity development. Proximity with the partners has been key to IMS’ approach to partnerships and the primary avenue of engagement is through IMS’ Programme Managers (PMs). However, 16 percent of the partners have answered that they have not received capacity development through “dialogue and sparring with IMS programme and administrative staff.” The 16 percent of partners answering that they have not received capacity development through dialogue and sparring with IMS programme and administrative staff comments came from various departments and type of partners.

The highest rate of partner satisfaction has to do with the IMS supporting exchange and/or joint actions with other organisations. Here 90 percent of partners who received this support were satisfied or somewhat satisfied. Access to tools and knowledge products is the area with the lowest number of partners responding to have received this support (63 percent), of these partners 79% were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the access to tools and knowledge products.

i. How would you rate the design and implementation of the support for capacity development?

[More Details](#)



An important aspect of localisation is understanding of partners’ needs and existing capacities and that partners are involved in the design of the capacity development support. More than 75 percent of IMS’ partners feel that they have been involved in the design and implementation of their programmes and that the capacity development being offered has corresponded to their needs and their capacities. But six percent of the partners expressed dissatisfaction with their level of involvement, especially in designing capacity development support and when it had to do with identifying their needs.

Most partners found that the time and resources they spent on capacity development was worth the effort/value for money.

53 out of the 77 respondents took the opportunity to provide comments in the open textbox on “what capacity development they would choice, if they could freely choose.” Understanding audience, media viability and organisational development were the topics mentioned by most respondents. In addition, the following topics are mentioned:

- *Holding workshops online*
- *Organisational development, strategic planning etc.*
- *Financial management capacity building including support to buy licenses for financial management software*
- *Organisational and HR*
- *Report Writing, Proposal Development and Project Designing*
- *Donor out-reach and networking*

Specific comments on capacity development needs related to media content were:

- *Skill Enhancement Training/Workshop for Content Production Technical Team, Exchange Programs between Partner Organisation (peer-to-peer exchange)*
- *Data management system assistance*
- *Data journalism, data storytelling and visualization assistance*



On advocacy and creating alliances the following was mentioned:

- *Capacity to engage local media and nonprofit organisations*
- *Opportunities for individual journalists to attend international conferences, including workshops, festivals and career development programs*

## 5.0 Gender

1. Does your organisation have a gender equality strategy or an equivalent document or other processes/procedures that outlines your work to ensure gender equality in your organisation?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	44
● No	6
● We are in a process of develo...	27

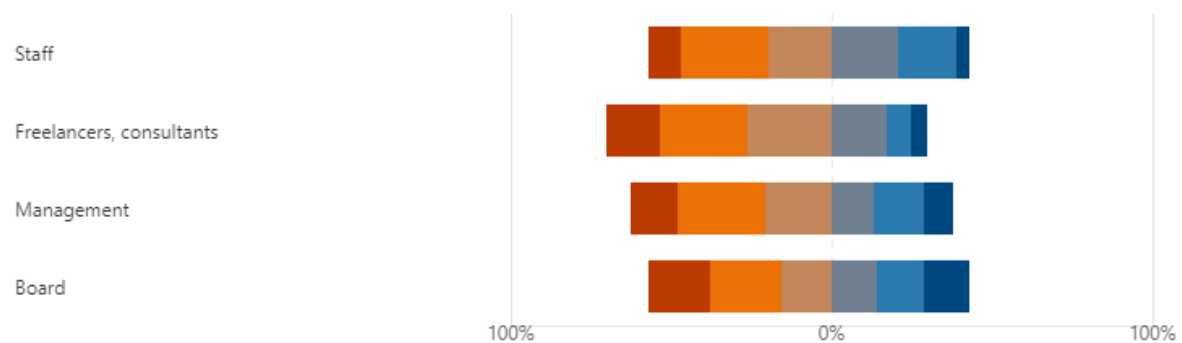


Ninety-three percent of respondents have a gender strategy or are in the process of developing one. Some 70 percent have reached the halfway point in the implementation of their gender strategies. Partners with a gender strategy are mainly from larger organisations. Indeed, 15 of the 44 partners with a gender strategy has an annual budget on more than 500.000 USD, where the total number of all partners having a budget on more than 500.000 USD is 19.

2. How is the gender distribution in your organisation?

[More Details](#)

■ Less than 20% women   ■ Between 20 and 50% women   ■ 50-50% balance   ■ Between 50 and 70% women  
 ■ More than 70% women   ■ This category is not relevant to my organisation



The boards of 11 partners are more than 70 percent women, and a total of 34 partners have a 50-50 balance or more than 50 percent women in their boards. The boards of 32 partners have less than 50 percent women, where 15 partners have less than 20 percent women in their board and. 11 out of the 77 surveyed partners don't have a board.

The management of 12 partners are more than 70 percent women, and a total of 38 partners have a 50-50 balance or more than 50 percent women in their management. The management

of 32 have less than 50 percent women, where 11 partners have less than 20 percent women in their management. For 7 partners the category management wasn't relevant.

There is a strong correlation between organisations with strong representation of women in their boards, also having a high representation of women in management. Indeed, seven out of the 11 partners who have more than 70 percent women on their boards also have more than 70 percent within management. The gender distribution of within partner organisations is fairly equal across all categories, however still with a rather large percentages of partners having relatively few women on their boards (15 partners, or 22 percent) and in their management (11 partners, or 15 percent). When comparing the answers on gender related questions with the gender category of the respondent, no significant bias can be identified.

Twentysix out of the 77 respondents commented on the open question on capacity development. Most comments were positive and supportive especially when it came to continuing the strong focus on gender. Here are several of their comments:

- *Thanks to IMS, we were able to put in place a strategy for gender equality within our organisation.*
- *More capacity development support on gender transformation*

## 6.0 Partners priorities and emerging issues

70 out of the 77 partners answered on the open question on what their top priority/most important theme were at the moment. Not one issue stands out as *the* key priority across the 70 partners, who answered this section. The disruption that Covid19 has caused could be the reason why not one issue stands out as priority for the partners. A partner put it this way, stating that their priority was *“figuring out emerging trends for the industry post Covid, and our place in that.”*

In the 2019 partnership survey the main priority of the partners was media viability. In 2021, safety was seen as an almost equally important theme. Linked to Covid19, digitalisation is mentioned by some partners as a priority.

In addition to Covid19 and how this has influenced the media sector, two other priority topics were named by several partners. One was media viability/sustainability, which was mentioned by 16 partners and the other was safety, which was mentioned by 13 partners. Safety was linked to Covid19 by one partner, who wrote that *“at the moment safety of journalists especially in community radios in COVID -19 presence is a main priority.”* Online safety and hate speech were also mentioned by partners as safety-related priorities.

### 6.1 Environmental and climate issues

Of the 77 partner participants, 54 replied to questions on climate and environment issues. Most answered that they viewed climate change as a key priority and were interested in further developing their work in that area. One quote clearly illustrates this: *“remember that even in a situation of Covid-19, climate change remains at the top of the most urgent issues.”*

Across the partners, the need for financial support for content production on climate change was mentioned. Also, capacity development, links and contacts to experts and visits to organisations working on climate issues was mentioned by many partners. The following suggestions and needs were put forward by the partners:

- **Connecting partners to climate experts**
- **Constructive journalism:** *“Talk about climate in a manner where people don’t feel disempowered to do something about it. Content production of ground level stories of impact and positive initiations.”*
- **Investigative journalism:** Climate-related issues having to do with pollution and access to water.
- **Focus on local media and vulnerable groups most effected by climate change:** *“Rather than focusing on the policy level, reaching out to the common people and knowing the impact of environment & climate change from that level.”*
- **Content production and training:** *“Data driven stories and data visualization, ensuring access to trusted information and data about climate/environmental issues.”*
- **Collaboration:** Work with climate activists and civil society organisations.
- **Documentary films:** Create and use documentary films as a tool to raise awareness on climate issues. Create a film fund and organise film screenings followed by debates.

#### **Develop environmental strategies at organisational level:**

- Drive media companies toward adopting Environmental, Social and Governance issues as part of their strategic evolution.
- Use of solar and clean energy for running office buildings.

Human rights, gender and inequality were stressed by partners as a way to frame the discussion of environmental and climate issues. Increasing focus on the demographic groups who are among the most vulnerable to climate change.

## **7.0 Next steps and follow-up**

To strengthened M&E, accountability and learning IMS will carry out the partnership survey annually. The findings from the survey will be used for learning and to improve approaches, tools and procedures of how we engage in partnerships, the capacity development and our administrative and financial procedures. Also, the findings from the survey constitute an important element in our reporting to our back donors as well as for the IMS annual report. Going forward the survey will be shared with all partners in March/April. Findings will be shared with all partners, to ensure transparency and accountability.