

The Myanmar Journalism Institute (MJl) was founded in May 2014 by 39 local media organisations and media houses; the Board of Directors was elected from among the founding members. The first ever diploma course for young working journalists started in July 2014. A few weeks later a second 10-month diploma course started in Mandalay. Each training course was designed to provide multi-media training – print, broadcast and online.

In May 2015 MJl was registered with the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development as a not-for-profit company under the Myanmar Companies Act. In October 2015 the MJl General Assembly elected a new Board of Directors.

MJl provides three types of training: a full time diploma course for new journalists, a part-time diploma course for working journalists and various short term client specific courses. The diploma courses are unique in Myanmar, only organized by MJl.

At present, technical and financial support is provided by DW Akademie Germany, IMS Denmark and FOJO Sweden. Additional in-kind support comes from the Myanmar Forever Group and UNESCO. In the start-up phase of MJl during 2014-2016 also support was provided by CFI from France and the French Embassy in Yangon.

MJl's main characteristics are:

- A locally run and transparent company, owned by a major part of the national media houses
- An independent media institute promoting professionalism and freedom of expression
- A capacity development institute addressing the short and longer term needs of the local media industry: state, private and ethnic media, as well as women journalists
- Effective working relationships with all local media organisations

What we do?

MJl provides a wide variety of training courses in Myanmar language. Each year we organise two long term diploma courses, one full-time and one part-time. The full-time course has modules on basic journalism, news writing, radio reporting, video reporting, photo and online journalism, ethics, feature writing, press law, governance and gender issues. It also includes a 10-week long internship at media companies. The part-time course is deepening various topics of the journalism profession. In addition to the diploma courses, we organise a series of thematic short courses. Our courses meet international standards and have already proven to fulfil the need of the Myanmar Media Houses to practice modern journalism. Selection of students is based on a variety of criteria including personal aptitude, ethnicity and gender balance. MJl has its own premises and training equipment to run its courses.

MJI proactively works towards including as many of Myanmar's ethnic groups as possible in the training activities. A scholarship scheme was introduced to cover the regular annual training fees and be able to accommodate participants from poorer areas. What also sets MJI aside is the separate extensive Training of Trainers programme for experienced journalists that has produced qualified national journalism trainers who run workshops and training for MJI, as well as running workshops in their local communities and media houses. MJI employs five full-time trainers and works with a pool of competent free-lance trainers. International trainers supplement the national trainers and function as on-the-job coaches for the diploma courses. International trainers are gradually phased out while the local training capacity is improving.

MJI's current output

Since July 2014, MJI has trained over 700 journalists in various cities and different communities all over the country; 50 of these have followed diploma courses of which many have been promoted within their organisations or have improved their position by moving to other companies. Besides the diploma courses, the thematic courses and workshops concern election reporting, journalism basics, radio reporting environmental reporting conflict sensitive journalism, community media and special 'master class' programmes (e.g. on climate change reporting). Most of these thematic courses also take place in conflict-affected areas.

Financing

The overall annual budget is around US \$500,000, and will gradually increase over the coming years. The full-time and part-time courses cost US\$ 100,000 and US\$ 65,000 respectively, considerably cheaper – and more relevant – than comparable courses offered abroad. Statutory audits are held annually.

Future directions

MJI's plan for the coming 2-3 years is to expand its funding base to other national and international partners and clients. Together with the existing partners and clients they will provide the opportunity to consolidate the set of curricula and to add new ones. MJI's efforts to professionalise the media sector is being shaped around a number of directions:

Seeking accreditation for the full-time and part-time diploma courses

Special focus on the large pool of un-trained journalists currently working in the sector; this will also involve a major effort to train trainers. Priority will be put on the ethnic and community media

Designing new curricula around TV News Broadcasting, radio journalism, digital media and community broadcasting (following the new broadcast law)

Expanding the training topics to current priorities such as business reporting, investigative journalism and environmental journalism

Organise regular events for senior editors, media managers and the media sector in general

Working towards becoming a regional centre for independent journalism

Why support MJI?

Supporting MJI will contribute to a sustainable organisation that promotes a pluriform, professional and independent media environment in Myanmar, not only in the cities, also in the rural and ethnic areas.

Support to MJI can take three main forms:

Become a partner. This is similar to the current partnerships we have with a number of international media organisations. Partners contribute temporarily – usually in the form of projects – to the core funding of MJI for instance by supporting the training of trainers, designing and piloting new curricula or part of the organisation's overhead costs. The need for this type of support will decrease as MJI's own resource generation will increase.

Become a donor. Donors are government or private organisations to support MJI's institutional development through financial or in-kind contributions.

Become a client. Clients are organisations that ask MJI to carry out a (training) programme; they use MJI's human resources, facilities and/or premises to implement their activities. These can be media houses, UN organisations, NGOs/Projects or Government Agencies.