The Jordan Media Institute announced the launch of the thesis track, in addition to the Journalism and Digital Media Diploma Program and the Media Research and Survey Unit during the Institute’s Annual Reception, which was held on June 22nd 2014, and was attended by Princess Rym Ali, JMI’s founder, and a number of ambassadors, ministers, local and media figures.

Dr. Bassim Tweissi, JMI’s Dean, said that the thesis track of the Master’s program in Journalism and New Media focuses on academic research, and also qualifies the graduate as a professional journalist. He added that the program’s duration for this track is four semesters, and as of the beginning of the academic year 2014/2015, incoming students will be able to choose between the two tracks; the comprehensive exam track and the thesis track.

A video was displayed during the reception which contained testimonials from JMI students revolving around their unique experience at the Institute, and the opportunity they were given to apply their gained skills in a professional setting.

“JMI is so special because it gives the student the chance to learn different skills such as filming, producing and editing, and I believe it’s rare to find that in any media outlet or educational entity”, said student Omar Fatafta.

Student Maysa Al Ahmad thanked JMI for providing scholarships saying “the scholarship was a great incentive or even the main reason for me being here, and without it I wouldn’t have been able to pursue my Master’s in journalism and media”.

JMI offers many opportunities for students to network and interact with Arab and international media, as well as with regional and international media organizations that employ the most modern methodologies and techniques in the field of journalism. Students are given the opportunity to travel outside Jordan to visit international media organizations, such as the Norwegian Institute of Journalism, University of Salzburg in Austria, Coventry University in the United Kingdom and the American University in Beirut.
UNESCO Celebrates World Press Freedom Day 2014 at JMI

JMI joined the world in celebrating on Sunday 4 May 2014 the World Press Freedom Day. The UNESCO Amman office held a full day event to celebrate World Press Freedom Day under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Rym Ali, and in partnership with UN Women, Jordan Media Institute, Arab Women Media Center, and Imdad Media Center. As part of the event hosted by JMI, two consultations were held to gather insights and recommendations from representatives of civil society institutions, media stakeholders and professionals, to feed into the global Post 2015 Development Agenda dialogues and the Beijing+20 national review and advocacy initiative, with special focus on Women and the Media.

“In a society where information is plethoric, journalists need to make sure that their work remains relevant, and that means they need to acquire new sets of skills, they need to be constantly learning and training. When it comes to journalism and journalism education, the stakes are just too high, because the future of a healthy and democratic society depends largely on the state of its media”, said Princess Rym Ali in a recorded speech.

“On this World Press Freedom Day, we call on all States, societies and individuals to actively defend freedom of expression and press freedom as fundamental rights and as critical contributions to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the post-2015 development agenda” Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, stated on this occasion.

During the celebration, the Institute revealed the main results of the study “Covering Women and Gender Issues through Media for 2014”, which was conducted in cooperation with The Embassy of the Netherlands in Amman. The study included monitoring women issues in printed press and electronic websites throughout the year, and identified the major topics that were covered in this area.

JMI Students Conclude their Academic Trip to Norway

JMI’s fifth intake students returned from their academic trip to Norway after a busy week of field visits to a number of Norwegian media, press and official institutions. The 23 Master’s students were hosted by the Norwegian Institute of Journalism in Fredrikstad. This visit came in cooperation with the Embassy of Norway in Amman.

The students’ field visits included the Nobel Peace Centre, main media outlets such as newspapers and radio stations, the Norwegian Institute of Journalism as well as the Norwegian parliament in Oslo where they were introduced to the Norwegian Constitution, that is considered as the supreme legal document in Norway.

This trip gave JMI students the opportunity to exchange experiences and expertise with distinguished experts and lecturers in Norway, adding an important cultural value to their knowledge and education in their quest to become world class professional Journalists.

It is noteworthy that many reports were produced by the students during their visit to Norway, and were published on their website: www.jmijournalists.com. The website is a platform where the students’ media productions are posted on a regular basis.

Through its annual activities and networking programmes, JMI offers its students the opportunity to explore various experiences in the fields of media and politics in different countries.
JMI signed three memoranda of understanding, on June 2nd, 2014, with Al Watan Newspaper, Brighton Center for IT Consultancy and Training and the International Institute for Planning and Administrative Development in the UAE.

The memoranda are aimed at building partnerships and facilitating expertise exchange in the fields of journalism and media training. The MoU were signed by Dr. AbdulRahman Shamiri, General Manager and Chief Editor of Al Watan Newspaper and Dr. Bassim Tweissi, JMI’s Dean. HRH Princess Rym Ali attended the signing ceremony.

Dr. Tweissi said the partnerships will boost chances to create new projects, highlighting the role of JMI in supporting the media sector through training and capacity-building programmes, in addition to research and consultancy services.

Dr. Shamiri stressed on the importance of building professional alliances between the mentioned organizations and the Institute to serve their common goals and contribute in spreading awareness on the importance of independent media.

The MoU include exchange visits involving experts, journalists and trainers with the aim of providing training and consultancy services in the field of journalism and digital media. They also include promoting JMI’s Master’s Programme in Journalism and New Media, a practical programme that focuses on digital media.
JMI Holds Photojournalism Course for Master’s Students

JMI organized a training course in photojournalism for its Master’s students, in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute for Journalism. The course aimed at equipping the students with professional photojournalism skills. The training was held between the 2nd and the 4th of June 2014, and was conducted by Tom Egil Jensen, an award-winning Norwegian press photographer.

The training discussed several topics including an introduction to photojournalism and its principles, skills of dealing with the camera, the image and the event, photography mistakes and how to avoid them, the optimal use of natural light, how to adjust camera settings manually and how to create a pictured story.

The students joined trainer Jensen on a field trip to Al-Baqa’a and Al-Wihdat refugee camps, where they were trained on capturing different scenes and topics related to life in the camps and women’s role there, in order to be used in creating pictured stories. “A photo is considered one of the most important elements of a story, besides the elements of sound and motion, as it adds power and influence to the story or event. In addition, the technological revolution gave the journalist the opportunity to publish these stories through new means and tools”, said Jensen.

JMI Organizes a Lecture on Short Documentaries

JMI hosted Dr. David Melbye, an American professor specialized in cinematic arts, on June 1st 2014, who delivered a lecture titled “Mastering Short Documentaries” for the Institute’s Master’s students.

Dr. Melbye gave an introduction to documentary filmmaking and its types, explaining the basic differences between feature films and documentaries.

“The secret of producing a successful documentary that attracts the viewer until the end, is to provide the recipient with bits of information throughout the film with an enjoyable and masterfully built narrative,” he said.

Dr. Melbye added that a filmmaker needs to define a clear objective and a general structure for the documentary prior to starting work in the field, in addition to defining the targeted audience. He also stressed that good preparation helps keeping the objective of the documentary or news report on the right track.

At the end of the lecture, a number of short documentaries were displayed to illustrate the best use of equipment, lighting systems, staging and appearance.

It is noteworthy that the Institute hosts thought leaders and decision-makers from around the world in the guest lectures series program, to share and discuss with JMI students their perspectives on a diversity of topics.
A training workshop titled “Advanced Skills in Dealing with the Media” was conducted on Sunday June 1st 2014 at JMI. It included 16 doctors who work in the project "Promoting Family Planning" in the private sector.

The workshop aimed at empowering the participants with advanced skills in dealing with the media, training them on professional appearance to gain the audience’s trust and support, in addition to developing their communication skills.

The workshop included several topics that focused on the art of dealing with the press and journalists during interviews on television, radio, in printed press and on electronic websites. It also discussed the ethics of dealing with the media and how to control voice tones.

The participants were impressed by the professional and advanced methods used to present the training material, including the exercises and the practical applications which were applied in the Institute’s world class facilities, such as JMI’s television and radio studios. This had a significant impact on the trainees’ practical performance.

In the framework of the joint cooperation between JM and the Palestine Cellular Communications Company “Jawwal”, two workshops were organized at JMI for Jawwal employees on “Creative Writing” and “Media Spokesman” between the 9th and 12th of June 2014.

The workshop hosted 18 participants from Jawwal, and discussed several topics including the skills of dealing with the media and the art of creative writing.

The two workshops aimed at empowering the participants with the skills and tools required for conducting promotional campaigns, and how to deal with different forms of media, including visual, audio and written, in addition to developing their image through media outlets and how to avoid expected mistakes.

Thabit Ghanayem, Brand Strategy and Marketing Communications Department Manager at Jawwal, said that the two workshops were very useful for the employees as well as the company. “This is not our first experience with JMI. There was a former collaboration two years ago, and dealing with such a professional and highly reputable institution in Jordan is a great benefit for us”, he added.

“JMI is interested in developing the capacities of institutions in the Arab world, especially in the field of media and communication, and this falls within the vision of the Jordan Media Institute”, said Dean Bassim Tweissi.
JMI Organizes Four Workshops under the Project “Public Dialogue on Human Rights Issues”

JMI organized the second and the third training workshops under the title “An Introduction to Strategic Communication and Media Relations” in cooperation with the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ). The workshops, which were held during the months of May and June 2014, came as part of the project “Expanding Public Dialogue on Human Rights Issues through Media”, which was launched by the Canadian organization “Journalists for Human Rights” (JHR) in partnership with JMI and local partners.

In addition, the fourth training workshop titled “Covering Human Rights Issues Using Data Journalism” was organized at JMI during the period 21-24 June 2014. The workshop was implemented in cooperation with Community Media Network (CMN), and under the same project. It targeted 13 journalists from printed press and electronic websites. The four workshops have so far trained 63 journalists and students on this new type of journalism, and developed their skills in creating stories on human rights issues based the collected data.

In view of the importance of promoting data journalism, especially in relation to human rights issues, a specialized training workshop for mentors was conducted during the 13th and 15th of May 2014 in cooperation with the Global News in Canada. The workshop, which included 7 journalists and editors, aimed at equipping the participants with data journalism’s advanced tools and techniques, so as to enable them to mentor other journalists who will be producing data stories on human rights issues.

Data journalism is a type of journalism that studies a set of available data, and analyzes it to create new stories. It is also known as precision journalism for its reliance on clear, specific and mainly official data.

On the other hand, the “Strategic Communication and Media Relations” workshops targeted participants from local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that deal with human rights issues.

The workshops introduced a program called “Al Maydan”, which was developed within the project to activate citizens’ participation in reporting human rights issues. The program, which is an electronic database, includes a website for information, smart phones and an SMS application.

It is noteworthy that the project aims to expand citizen and state dialogue on human rights issues through strengthened media in the MENA region. It also includes a follow-up and supervision plan for CSOs trainees at their institutions to set up a media plan that suits the needs of each institution in order to enhance its communication with the media. This is in addition to a follow up plan for “Data Journalism” trainees to prepare news reports on human rights issues.

Alumni Testimonials

Alaa Al Shamma is currently Russia Today’s Correspondent from Jordan. He interned at Al Arabiya TV upon graduation where he produced 11 TV reports within one month.

“The Jordan Media Institute is a qualitative addition to how Journalism is taught in Jordan and the Middle East. What distinguishes the Institute the most is the high professionalism of its faculty members. With all due honesty, attending the Jordan Media Institute changed my life’s path from an ordinary journalist to professional one which brought about the opportunity of joining one of the important international TV news entities.”
In the context of their academic trip to Norway, the Jordan Media Institute’s students toured several press agencies in Oslo and Fredrikstad, and learned about the role of media in democratic development. During their visit to Fredrikstad city, the students gave rise to a discussion in the Norwegian press about the burden the Syrian refugee crisis has placed on Jordan. This discussion and others were reported in the city’s most read daily newspaper, “Fredrikstad Blad”.

The discussions the students raised during their visit that were reported in the press revolved around two topics. The first was mainly about the refusal of the Norwegian government to host 250 Syrian refugees, and the demonstrations that rose up across the country around two months ago denouncing the hosting of refugees. “Norway, the third richest country in the world, refused to host 250 refugees, whereas Jordan, a poor country with limited resources, is currently hosting more than a million refugees”, said student Omar Fatafta comparing between the two situations.

Commenting on the same topic, the Head of the Norwegian Institute of Journalism, Frode Rekve, said “the refusal of the Norwegian government and people to host refugees is rooted in their concern that taking any refugees in would change the country’s demographic structure. This is an unjustified proposition; however, and all pro-democratic countries who support human rights should be at the forefront in hosting and supporting refugees, especially in humanitarian cases such as the one in Syria”, added Rekve.

This specific topic was brought up during a visit the students made to a photo exhibition by the American photographer Andrea Bruce, where a number of photographs were displayed documenting the war in many Syrian cities.

The second topic that was discussed during the visit and commanded media attention was regarding the nature of the issues and reports covered in the Norwegian press in Fredrikstad. Student Mamdouh Abu Al Ghanam was curious to know the type of topics addressed, noting that Norway is one of the countries with low levels of financial and administrative corruption as well as low degrees of criminality.

The local Norwegian press commented on the issue by saying that “the press and the will of the people form the first authority in the country, and they are both responsible for monitoring and evaluating government performance. We always strive to report on positive and successful models in most topics that are covered in the Norwegian press.”