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## **Letter from the founder**

Ten years ago the idea of an independent radio station in Jordan whether on the internet or on the FM waves was nothing more than a dream. When Amman mayor Nedal Hadid and UNESCO director Martin Hadlow clicked the mouse to announce the launch of the Arab world's first internet radio station, AmmanNet.net, we had no idea where we will be ten years later. Our pioneering efforts online has produced results in Jordan that are unmatched in nearby Arab countries. Tens of news websites have sprouted up offering Jordanian, Arab and international surfers up to date and courageous news and commentary from Jordan. It is true that some of the sites have abused this privilege, but we are confident that for the majority of Jordanians the news web sites offer quick and credible news and opinions.

Our usage of the Net to broadcast radio programming was given a boost when a Palestinian radio station agreed to rebroadcast some of our programs that they downloaded from the internet. With no physical boundaries between Palestine and Jordan, these broadcasts were heard in Amman thus allowing our internet broadcasting to de facto break up the Jordan government's monopoly over the airwaves.

Within a couple of years of our going on line, His Majesty the King issued a temporary law allowing the creation of an audio visual commission, which in turn made it possible for terrestrial broadcasting. We applied for and received a ten year FM license in 2005 and have been broadcasting news, alternative music and specialized programming since then.

Our challenges with our internet and radio broadcasts are huge. We often find ourselves alone in covering certain sensitive news. More often we see that our efforts are setting the agenda for all other news organizations.

We have focused a lot of our work on empowering different segments of society, from high school students to college age youths, from farming women to labor activists and the handicapped. We have encouraged volunteers to use our media operations as a platform to reflect on their own issues and as a way to have a voice in a crowded media field.

On the news level we have worked hard on providing high quality news around the clock. We have dug deep into certain issues using investigative journalism tools as well as focusing on human rights violations. Al-Balad radio staff has gained experience and trainings and have attempted to adhere to our professional code of ethics. Whenever we have made mistakes or veered from our own code, our news managers have been courageous enough to admit these mistakes in public and endeavor to work on setting mechanism to ensure that these mistakes are not repeated. Al-Balad radio, our community radio station in Amman, has become a model community radio providing training services and networking opportunities for local, regional and international groups. Internationally, we were the local sponsors of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters AMARC which held its global meeting AMARC9 in Amman. Locally we have been a driving force behind the establishment of a Jordanian Federation of Community radio stations that include Voice of Karak, New Maan radio, Yarmouk FM and Farah Al-Nas radio.

Our training efforts have helped journalists and community radio activists from most surrounding Arab countries. From Tunis to Iraqi Kurdistan and from Syria to Saudi

Arabia we have hosted workshops in areas such as crime of war coverage, humanizing the news, community radio training. We have held regional workshops looking for ways to advance the presence of female experts in media's coverage.

Al-Balad radio's efforts weren't without problems. The speaker of the Jordanian parliament stopped our unique (for the region) live radio broadcasts of the parliament, governors in various districts have banned us from holding public events and debates and the mayor of Amman continues to prohibit us from broadcasting live the capital's monthly council meeting. We have survived legal law suits while some remain unresolved. Our efforts to establish radio stations in Zarqa and in the Jordan Valley were rejected by the government without any explanation, and our efforts to reform Jordan's Audio Visual law which adds extra fees to stations that broadcast news and politics have yet to produce results despite continuous promises from government officials.

A listeners' club has been established and in its latest elections nearly 300 listeners attended the general assembly. We succeeded in broadcasting live the last two world cups. We had to use the services of a sports play-by-play broadcaster from Ramallah when lawyers from Al-Jazzera sports barred our usage of audio broadcasts of their pay-per-view tv coverage.

While we have enjoyed a successful FM radio presence we have not forgotten that our beginnings were online. We have introduced video blogging to our site with impressive results. We organized trainings and gave video cameras to tens of Jordanians who were asked to record, edit and upload the results of their filming.

Our original website AmmanNet has given birth to four additional sites Balad.fm, eyeonmediajo.net, shababjo.net and communitymedianetwork.org.

The governance structure of our organization has changed in the past ten years. When we first started we had no choice but to register as a commercial company and then add an advisory board to ensure that we are committed to a public service agenda. Four years ago we succeeded in registering as not-for-profit and have turned all our operations and programs into our new NGO entitled Community Media Network.

In Palestine we have opened another not-for-profit media branch under the name PenMedia which focuses on producing television programs for pre-school children in Palestine. PenMedia has now applied for a separate license from the Palestinian National Authority. It will have its own board and governance structure.

Financially we have succeeded in diversifying our sources of income. No one donor has contributions more than a third of our overall budget. We have slowly been successful in increasing local contributions and income. Corporate social responsibility has started to produce fruits for us in Jordan and our local marketing and sales department is set to reach the highest target since our operation of JD50,000 a year.

Over the past ten years hundreds of Jordanians and Arabs have been part of the operation that began as a dream of using the internet to produce quality courageous media content. We are proud of where we are today and look forward to another decade of contributing to our society. When we, Ammannet.net was launched we used the logo "the Voice of the Community." When Al-Balad radio began broadcasting on 92.4 fm frequency in Amman we said that we are '*radio al-nas wal balad*' the radio of the people and the country. Our goal has and will continue to be the service of the people of Jordan and beyond.

## **About Al-Balad Radio/AmmanNet**

In the fall of 2000, using the opportunities that the internet provided, award winning Arab journalist Daoud Kuttab launched the Arab world's first internet radio. With funding from the Open Society Institute and UNESCO, the Director of UNESCO's Amman office, Martin Hadlow and Nidal Al-Hadid, mayor of Amman, launched on November 15th, 2000 the new web-based station. AmmanNet began its first year under the patronage of UNESCO and the Greater Amman Municipality. AmmanNet began producing audio reports, news bulletins and a variety of programming all of which were posted on the Net. Rebroadcasts of the programs (especially from nearby Palestinian stations) were pursued so as to create a terrestrial home for all the audio content that was being posted on the internet. Large sectors of Jordanian society would thus have the opportunity to hear and follow radio programming created in their own country but being broadcast with the help of the internet.

AmmanNet (the Voice of the Community) as its sub heading stated has in reality become the voice of the community. It began broadcasting terrestrially on 92.4 FM in the Amman metropolitan area in the summer of 2005. According to the license, the content included general programming excluding politics and news. But in September of the same year, it became the first independent radio station to broadcast news.

## **Community Media Network**

Early in January 2008, the name of AmmanNet radio was changed to Al-Balad radio; AmmanNet.net remained as a news website. The radio and the site are managed by the Community Media Network (CMN), which is a not-for profit organization, registered in March 19th, 2007 under number (156) with the goal to manage media and cultural projects throughout the Kingdom. CMN has a Board of Directors that supervises the radio and website. The current members of the board are Elias Farkouh, chairman, Rana Sabbagh, Salam Madanat and Mahmoud Zawawi, members. CMN has a branch in Palestine, registered under the name of PenMedia that produces the Palestinian Sesame Street program.

## **Key Staff of CMN**

General Manager: Daoud Kuttab, [dkuttab@ammannet.net](mailto:dkuttab@ammannet.net)

Project and Development Manager: Sawsan Zaydeh, [sawsan@ammannet.net](mailto:sawsan@ammannet.net)

Radio Manager: Mohammad Abu Arqoub, [arqoub@ammannet.net](mailto:arqoub@ammannet.net)

Financial/Administrative Manager: Areej Hammad, [areej@ammannet.net](mailto:areej@ammannet.net)

AmmanNet Website Manager: Mohammad Ersan, [ersan@ammannet.net](mailto:ersan@ammannet.net)

Sesame Project Manager: Layla Sayegh, [layla@penmedia.ps](mailto:layla@penmedia.ps)

## **Community Radio**

Community radios are a successful means of stimulating the development of communication between citizens and the community with the aim to raise the level of cooperation within the same society. They rely on the principle of voluntary work, public service and focus on the area of concern in the local community. Although the Arab world lacks community radios, they had attracted the attention of the social and community development activists. We dedicate our website and airwaves to fill this need.

Al-Balad radio provides a panorama of programs starting with the review of the daily press to the morning show "tallet subuh", sports review, the musical program "Fi Al-bal Ughniya" (song in mind), "street talk", "haqi" (legal awareness), "school radio", "youth on FM", "techno life", "sawa mniqdar" (young people achievements), "eye on the media" and the economic program "made in Jordan".

## **AmmanNet # 1 News Website in Jordan**

Our internet coverage [www.ammannet.net](http://www.ammannet.net) has made us a leading source of information and interactivity with Jordanians in and outside the country and has raised our standing as the leading Jordanian visited web site according to the international standings. A research sponsored by the Washington-based IREX showed that AmmanNet website came as the # 1 local news website in Jordan in 2008.

## **Employees**

About twenty-five staff members are working as journalists, administrators, technicians and project-managers in addition to dozens of volunteers. The radio opened its website ([www.ammannet.net](http://www.ammannet.net)) to its employees to establish their own blogs.

## **Listeners' Club**

A group of listeners took the initiative and founded in 2006 the Club of Listeners in cooperation with the radio administration. The club has an administrative body headed by Mohammad Abu Safiya and meets periodically and supports the radio station.

## **Summary of "Al-Balad Radio" Programs**

### ***News***

Al-Balad radio broadcasts detailed local news bulletins at one thirty and five thirty pm, to monitor the latest local news reports and live interviews in addition to providing local news flashes every half hour throughout the day.

### ***Tallet Subuh (a morning visit)***

A morning all-purpose program that discusses issues of concern to the general public through daily field interviews, live interviews, and call-ins. The program includes a reading of the most important news in the local press and a review of a number of important articles.

***Annashra Arriadia (Sport News)***

A morning sports program that includes a presentation of the latest local, Arab and international sports news.

***Ain al E'lam (Eye on the Media)***

A critical look at the media scene in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Palestine; the program, which is broadcast and distributed to local editors, attempts to critique the level of adherence of journalists to media ethics and guidelines.

***Parliament Program***

It discusses the most important issues of the parliament by tackling different views and hosting analysts and observers.

***Haqi (my right)***

A legal awareness program servicing the public and giving free advice to the queries of the citizens.

***Nas Wa Nas (People and People)***

It discusses social issues within the Jordanian society with a documentary report on the discussed case.

***Techno Hayat (Techno life)***

A science program specialized in the technology, environment and health sectors and hosts specialists in the field of information technology.

***Ommal Al-Balad (Workers in the country)***

It discusses issues concerning workers in the country, raising awareness and explaining labor laws and legislation related to labor issues and labor rights.

***Malaeb Urdoniya (Jordanian Sport-Fields)***

A program that highlights the most important sports news issues in the Kingdom through a network of correspondents of the Jordan News Network.

***B Raihat Al-Qahwa (With the smell of the Coffee)***

It is a cultural program that hosts authors and researchers to talk about their latest books and research.

***Fi Al-Bal Ughniya (Song in mind)***

A program interested in alternative Jordanian and Arabic songs in addition to broadcasting what is happening in the musical forums on the internet.

### ***Kuluna Zay Ba'dh (We all are alike)***

It deals with issues for people with special needs.

### ***Eza'a Madrasya (School radio)***

High school students trained at "Al-Balad radio" present radio reports about their lives, schools and aspirations. The program includes student diaries and discussions of issues of special interest to them. The programs are produced and presented by students themselves. They decide topics, order of broadcast and run the entire two hour program. Our job is only to empower them and help them do what they want to do.

### ***B Rewaya Thaniya (An Alternative Narration)***

A youth program sheds light on relationships and trust between members of the community or family.

### ***Bint Balad (Town Girl)***

A program aimed at discussing the most important girls' issues in a bold way.

### ***Huwa Hizbee (Political Parties)***

A program focusing on political parties and legislation through hosting representatives of political parties.

### ***Al-Muasher (Market Index)***

A program discussing economic issues related to the current domestic economic situation; it focuses on the daily monitoring of the Jordanian economy, such as stocks exchange, metal and energy prices.

### ***Bingo***

An educational program for children.

### ***Rayheen Mushwar (Going for a walk)***

A program dealing with famous musicians and international music with its different varieties and characteristics.

### ***Sa'a Iraqiya (Iraqi Hour)***

It deals with the Iraqi community in Jordan.

### ***Ramadan Programs***

Al-Balad radio creates a grid of variety of programs for every Ramadan with contests and concerts; the most popular one was, the "hidden mic"; the program creates a comical situation with an owner of a company or an ordinary citizen without knowing that what he says is recorded by a hidden microphone.

### *Annashra Shababiya* (Youth Bulletin)

This program is a daily bulletin for the youth who are interested in following up the educational and professional issues of the Jordanian youth. The bulletin is presented by a group of young college students who wish to learn media work.

### *Refugees*

This program reports on the Palestinian camps in Jordan through stories, polls and news reports on human rights issues and public services problems.

### *Citizens were successfully helped by Al-Balad radio*

Over the course of several years, the program “Tallet Sabah” was successfully able to accomplish many objectives concerning citizens’ request that involve pending cases by allowing the voices of citizens to reach government officials, in order to find concluding solutions. Among these cases were:

1. **The case of Gaza’s citizens residing in Jordan**, who were granted the right to practice the pharmaceutical career and to join the membership of the union after they were previously deprived from joining it; this was done by following the case of a female pharmacy graduate.
2. **The case of a girl living in Zarka** who was unable to attend school but was able to return to her school after officials were contacted in the Ministry of Education in Zarka.
3. **The case of the beneficiaries of the National Aid Fund** where some were cut-off from their salaries but was solved upon contacting the fund’s administrators.
4. **The case of poor services in some areas of the capital** such as the worn-out infrastructure, lack of lighting, and shortage of water and electricity. The Amman municipality workers were regularly in contact with Al-Balad radio to solve these cases expeditiously.

### **Activities and Achievements: 2000-2010**

From the news perspective you can hear, every hour, headline news and twice a day, the full newscasts (at the half hours). We focus almost entirely on local news in an independent and balanced manner. The 30-minute full newscasts at 1:30 and 5:30 pm provide listeners with in-depth look at the most important local issues. Live interviews with experts and officials are supported by feature reports and the latest reaction of the Jordanian street on the most important events of the day.

Our live broadcasts cover the most important topics of interest to Jordanians; from the session of the Jordanian parliament we are the first independent radio in the Arab world to broadcast live and unedited gavel-to-gavel coverage to the most important football games. We provide play-by-play of matches of Jordan’s national team as well the games of the leading clubs. Our live coverage also includes important social, artistic and cultural issues as well as live shows during holidays like Eid al Adha, Eid al Fitr, Christmas and New Year.

Al-Balad radio has also become a leading training center with journalists from Jordan and others from Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Palestine and Lebanon coming to participate in workshops about online broadcasting.

In September 2004, Al-Balad radio carried out a workshop for journalists from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine. The results were fantastic. A web site was created specifically for the project and the participants were able in the short time to write, record, edit and upload their own reports. Part of the recommendations of the participants was that this kind of workshop be repeated because of the huge hunger for the tools that can make online reporting easier especially in countries that have restrictive media laws. Jordanian government spokeswoman Asma Khader and UNESCO officials in Amman attended the graduation of the workshop and were impressed with the results calling for more workshops that enable Arab journalists to use the Net for online reporting both in text and audio.

### **Contributing in the launch of the Jordanian Community Radio Association**

With the active participation of Al-Balad radio, the Jordanian community radios association was launched under the chairmanship of Basem Tweisi, general director of New Ma'an radio station, at Al-Balad headquarter in October 2009. The association includes five Jordanian community radio stations: Yarmouk FM, New Ma'an radio, Karak radio, Farah Annas radio and Al-Balad radio.

### **Establishing the Jordanian News Network (JNN)**

The Jordanian News Network emerged from the belief that community radios should compete for community services; its relationship with other radios should be collaborative. It relies on the existence of a body that contains community radios and works to strengthen their presence and provide them with various services, even at the level of press and broadcast training. It gives the greatest attention to the most important governorates and to those with many problems and focus on rural and remote areas.

The syndicate's members agreed to new network services through an agreement with the German International radio Deutsche Welle starting January 1, 2010.

### **Voice of Al-Aghwar**

The idea of this project was initiated during the ninth global conference of AMARC, held in Amman in 2006 organized by Al-Balad radio (previously AmmanNet). Based on advice from Jordanian civil society activists, a number of AMARC delegates visited the Jordan valley, conducted a workshop and helped train Jordanian women. They also helped raise the needed funds to start a small radio station. After the Jordanian government refused to license the community radio in the Jordan Valley, two women who joined the training started to produce Al-Aghwar Voice program and broadcast it on Al-Balad radio and then it was rebroadcast on Bethlehem 2000 radio station and Al-Qamar radio from Jericho (which can be heard in the Jordan Valley area).

### **Human Rights Documentaries**

A series of human rights radio programs prepared by a group of skilled journalists dealing with many legal issues concerning the lives of the citizens in the capital Amman and the governorates of the Kingdom such as the rehabilitation centers, women's issues, disabled persons, teenagers, shelter, children, poverty, education, water, food and health issues.

It also monitors the violations against citizens by helping connect between the victims and the civil society officials and representatives.

### **“Kharej Alsirb” (Outside the flock) Project**

This is a radio program specializing in dealing with cases involving young Jordanian women. The 24 episodes were centered on the freedoms of Jordanian women, such as tackling for the first time issues considered social taboos for many years. Field reports were conducted and dealt with gender discrimination at work.

### **East Amman Youth Project**

Al-Balad radio launched with the collaboration of the Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development, Ruwwad, one of Aramex institutions, in November 2010, a radio program for the youth of East Amman. This program is aimed at discussing a series of issues relevant to the youth such as citizenship and youth in the media.

The university students, representing "Musaab Khorma grant" took an intensive three months training course on the production of radio programs.

### **KARAMA Human Rights Film Festival**

The first Human Rights Film Festival, was held in Amman from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2010.

The festival aims to raise awareness and create debate on critical worldwide human rights issues. Through numerous film and documentary screenings, public talks and discussions, and other cultural activities, the festival aims to bring to light issues of human rights and human dignity to as wide an audience as possible, targeting the general public, school and university students, and community centers around the country.

Karama is organized in collaboration between the **Community Media Network** and **Al Ma3mal 612**, and in partnership with the National Centre for Human Rights.

For more info: [www.karamafestival.org](http://www.karamafestival.org)

### **2006 World Cup on Al-Balad Radio**

The 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany had been awaited for by millions of people throughout the world. In Jordan, the games drew big attraction with two Arab countries (Tunisia and Saudi Arabia) as well as favorite countries to Arab soccer fans like Brazil, Germany, Italy and France.

Al-Balad radio, the Arab world's first internet radio station and winner of the Gold Medal Award as well as the leading FM radio station in the capital Amman, decided to buy the radio rights and broadcast the entire world cup live on its radio station along with a series of programs and updated world cup news broadcasts. The absence of any terrestrial TV station carrying the games forced Jordanians to search satellite frequencies to find the games. When they finally found a Turkish and a Swedish broadcast, many put their TV on mute and for their audio play in Arabic, they turned on Al-Balad radio, thus boosting our radio audience.

Sports fans in Amman have been following their favorite teams on Al-Balad radio ever since our station has dedicated a daily 15 minute sports program as well and a weekly courageous radio program Manal and Sports dialogue. Al-Balad radio's recent FM broadcasts (since September 2005) have also included live broadcasts of the major local teams as well as the major matches of Jordan's national team.

### **Voice of the World Cup 2010 on Al-Balad Radio**

During the period from June 6<sup>th</sup> until July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Al-balad radio presented a special and exceptional coverage for the "South Africa World Cup 2010" through live transmission and comments through its program the "Voice of the World Cup", in order to provide radio coverage to the largest possible segment of listeners and to those who cannot afford to watch the games on TV.

The program was widely received among the Jordanian public who interacted with it through phone calls, sharing their expectations and winning prizes; the broadcast included analysis concerning of coaches, players, media and critics involved in the World Cup.

### **Community Media Network Websites**

The idea of splitting the AmmanNet website came from the fact that it reached enough maturity to be divided into separate and self sufficient sites holding its own independent identity. These news sites are:

1. **AmmanNet Website... the first Jordanian electronic site:** [www.ammannet.net](http://www.ammannet.net): AmmanNet website was created in the year 2000 which put us on the façade of information resources and the media interaction with Jordanians in and outside the country. A survey of the Jordanian public carried out by the Washington based Ngo, IREX, revealed that this website is the first among media sites in Jordan in 2008.
  - *AmmanNet website launched video blogs in the world of electronic media:* Scores of video blogs were launched by the "bloggers on Air" program supported by IREX, dealing with social issues like health, traffic, environment and others. Participants were trained on the basics skills of media work and were provided with digital cameras to record events by the video to be published later on their private blog page.
  - *A blog on the city of Amman won a contest on video blogs:* AmmanNet website with collaboration of IREX organized a contest on video blogs. A blog on the city of Amman won first prize.
2. **English AmmanNet Website** [www.en.ammannet.net](http://www.en.ammannet.net): This site started to be uploaded daily on the internet in February 2010 as a translated page of the Arabic AmmanNet website.
3. **Al-Balad radio Website** [www.balad.fm](http://www.balad.fm): This website is considered the link between the radio and listeners outside Amman.
4. **Youth website** [www.shababjo.net](http://www.shababjo.net): This website deals with different youth issues in news context and it covers the news in the form of field reports

prepared by volunteering youth of both sexes who come from different governorates and reflects different backgrounds.

5. **Eye on Media Website** [www.eyeonmediajo.net](http://www.eyeonmediajo.net): This site is a multimedia watchdog Website that contains a radio program and, discusses media issues in Jordan, such as media freedom and control, skills and standards of journalism and ethics of the profession and the laws of the economy, media market and its role and its impact on society.

In this website, there is a report that monitors the content of traditional media and talks about radio, television, newspapers and the internet. It presents the variety of views of media, editors, reporters and writers and the views of citizens and the "public" new media activists such as bloggers and online social networks.

The site offers the latest news on media in Jordan, in addition to a section on media opinion that displays all the views of columnists and bloggers in media issues.

This site created a section entitled "Portrait" for prominent media personalities with a controversial impact on the media scene of Jordan, and another section to encourage the good media production and praise good business owners as well as a section for the best news report in a week.

The site provides a free service to media organizations to advertise their job vacancies under a section called "Jobs" that contains CVs for job seekers.

6. **Community Media Network Website:**[www.communitymedianetwork.org](http://www.communitymedianetwork.org): This site provides a general definition about the network, its objectives, services, its various projects and about the Board of Trustees.

7. **Parliament Website** [www.parliamentjo.net](http://www.parliamentjo.net): Broadcasting the parliament sessions directly on air and without any censorship is an important step in maintaining the right of the citizens to have access to information. Al-Balad radio was the first in broadcasting the parliament sessions on air for more than a year, from 2005 to 2006. The live broadcast was stopped by the speaker because of a negative remark against the parliament from a listener.

The radio broadcast was restarted thanks to an initiative by the Parliament to broadcast the sessions on the internet. Al-Balad radio was able to pick up the internet signal and broadcast it on the air, giving the Jordanian public the chance to hear what their elected representatives had to say.

### ***Research by CMN on Parliament Activities***

Community Media Network conducted an informal research about the Parliament's performance during the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the 15th parliament and its result was published on AmmanNet website. The research was carried out manually and it covered the presence of the MPs and their interventions. The news of the research gained extensive coverage by local newspapers and BBC radio.

### **Al-Balad Radio knowledge transfer**

Based on the request of many to benefit from the experience of AmmanNet, we organized a series of workshops on online broadcasting. The workshops included practical journalistic and online training as well as basic radio training and visits to AmmanNet and contributions by AmmanNet director and staff. Each of the trainees left AmmanNet with an open source software that would allow them to set up their own internet radio.

Young journalists from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia as well as Yemen and the GCC countries participated in different workshops. To support the GCC and Yemen candidates, we organized a separate project aimed at setting up nine online radio stations and helping candidates from these countries develop the content and upload it while we provided them with initial technical support.

Other workshops organized by Al-Balad radio included the following:

- A workshop on human interest reporting for journalists from Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait.
- A workshop on covering Crimes of War with journalists from Palestine, Lebanon Jordan and Iraq.

### **Community projects initiated by Al-Balad radio**

- \* Created, in cooperation with UNESCO, five freedom of expression PSAs which were broadcast on most Arab TV stations.
- \* Organized the Amman leg of two televised town hall meetings for the program Chat the Planet.
- \* Organized a youth video exchange and video conference between Amman and San Francisco High school students which was broadcast on Link TV.
- \* Established a local transcription service for the weekly press conference of the Spokeswoman of the Jordanian government.
- \* Organized three election debates in 2003 in Amman dealing with local political and social issues, and a debate by women candidates.
- \* Set up, at the request of UNESCO, a web site dealing with the Iraqi constitution and welcoming open dialogue online about the various drafts.
- \* Participated in the 16 day campaign for women's rights in December 2006

### **Al-Balad radio in support of independent Arab media**

The Washington-based IREX Institute won a three year competitive grant aimed at improving media in the Arab world. AmmanNet's portion of the grant includes coordinating a yearly fellowship to the US for mid-career journalists and supervising the distribution of ten grants to Arab documentary makers totally \$150,000 annually. On the first of October 2006, twelve journalists from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia traveled to Chicago's North Western University for four weeks class based courses to be followed by six weeks of internship in a major US media outlet. Also 5 journalists from Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon have been chosen to receive grants to produce documentary films on controversial Arab social issues.

### **AmmanNet wins Gold Medal from Pan Arab Media Awards**

AmmanNet, the Arab world's first internet radio station, won the gold medal at the 2006 Pan Arab Media Awards. The ceremony, in its second year was held at the Hayat Regency Hotel in Amman, Thursday April 28. The first award ceremony was held in Dubai.

The Beirut registered Award is supported by the Arab League. The award aims to “promote the innovative spirit of web designers to meet professional and international standards, to promote intellectual and production opportunities.”

Daoud Kuttab, founder of Al-Balad radio, hailed the prize as a recognition by the Arab world that the Net can be a strategic instrument to bypass traditional roadblocks to independent media in general and independent radio in particular.

### **Al-Balad Radio Training Courses**

Community Media Network organized a number of training courses on local and Arabic levels such as:

- *Election debates* were conducted in Amman, Karak, Irbid and Zarka during October 2010. The Youth News also conducted their own four debates with candidates to discuss the issues of the youth. An additional four debates were done at radio Al-Balad among various district candidates of Amman.
- *Training Kurd journalists* working in a community radio called Deng, meaning “The voice”. This took place from October 9<sup>th</sup> until October 21<sup>st</sup> 2010
- *Emerging Journalists-Boot camp* aimed at training young men and women to master their media skills with the collaboration of AWAN news corporation from February until August 2010.
- *Roundtable discussion with Samir Kassir Foundation* was conducted on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 with the presence of Jordanian journalists and publishers. The discussion dealt with both the media and cultural freedoms as well as working on raising the level of these freedoms.
- *Workshop on Religious Media Diversity and Pluralism* was conducted on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010, which was the first of its kind in the Middle East. Around 30 journalists attended the workshop from various Arab countries.
- *AMARC MENA conference* was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2010 to launch a new initiative aiming at including the Arab radios into the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)
- *Rehabilitation of the Jordan Valley journalism team* to help them shed light on events taking place in this part of the country. The training began in 2006 on several stages, ending in February 2010 with a session titled “Citizen Journalist”.
- *Youth News* was conducted on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, aimed at training young men and women to write media news and prepare news bulletins.
- *Training a team of local correspondents* from Jordan governorates to work with the Jordan News Network to provide community radios with field reports. This was done early 2008.
- *Training community radios to cover parliament and municipality elections* was conducted in 2007 via two sessions.
- *Establishment of an online Arab women activist's directory* by the year 2007. This was a result of a workshop that took place in Amman, Jordan from December 12 – 14, 2006 dealing with media and gender advocacy funded by

WAAC. Various female journalists and representatives of media organizations from several Arab countries were present

- *Al-Khaleej Net course* specialized in radio production and skills for establishing radios on the internet during 2006.
- *Training course for Iraqi journalists* aimed at enabling Iraqi journalists to improve their skills during 2006.
- *Rehabilitation of Voice of the South radio journalism team* (New Ma'an radio): This was funded by the British Council in 2006.

## **Our News in the Media**

**The court of Appeal acquitted Al-Balad radio** of the charge of abuse of the House of Representatives charged by the Audiovisual Commission. This verdict was a victory for the freedom of press in Jordan assuring that the judiciary is the main media protector.

**A blog on the city of Amman won a contest on video blogs:** AmmanNet website with the collaboration of IREX organized a contest on video blogs. A blog on the city of Amman, presented by Maisam Saleh won the first prize. She was invited to participate at the bloggers conference in Amsterdam.

**Al-Balad radio staff awarded best investigative report:** HRH Princess Basma honored journalist Hadeel Albis for earning the award of best investigative report entitled "**Al-Baqaa . . . between rapid growth and cruel living conditions**" during the local journalism competition.

## **Share' Simsim-PENmedia**

Community Media Network established a branch in Palestine called PENmedia specialized in producing TV programs for children. A branch in Ramallah was opened. Our branch signed a contract to produce 52 TV episodes for the Palestinian Share' Simsim program.

The project has achieved tangible success, prompting Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad to inaugurate the studios along with the Minister of Education, Lamees Al-Alami, and Gary Knill, CEO of Sesame. The visit was publicized by newspapers around the world such as New York Times, Washington Post, BBC TV Arabic, CNN and Reuters, as well as Al-Quds and Al-Ayyam newspapers.

## **Citizen Journalism with Al-Balad Radio: Car FM and Listeners' Club**

The program "Car FM" focuses on the public drivers and has received a large fan of citizens through broadcasting weekly and boldly issues concerning public transportation and through its presence with the drivers in the transportation parking lot, and with citizens in the streets; this program brought many advertisers seeking professional programs, such as the "Toyota" company, the official sponsor of the program, which sought to promote traffic awareness to public and private drivers through the "car FM" program.

## **Cooperation Agreement between the "Yarmouk University" and Al-Balad Radio in November 2008**

A joint cooperation agreement was signed between Yarmouk University and Al-Balad radio in order to train a number of students from the faculty of Mass Communication on radio broadcasting skills as well as training radio Yarmouk FM personnel on the radio mechanism.