

fome symposium 2024 - documentation

Input: Results of the ground-breaking survey of fome members

Dr. Christoph Spurk, fome

Media Assistance: Mind the Gap!

A critical review of common practices and strategies

30th September – 1st October 2024, Erich-Brost-Institute for International Journalism, Dortmund, Germany

Hosted and organised by:



Results Survey

fome symposium 2024

Media Assistance: Mind the Gap!

A critical review of common practices and strategies

Dortmund, Germany

C. Spurk, 30 September 2024

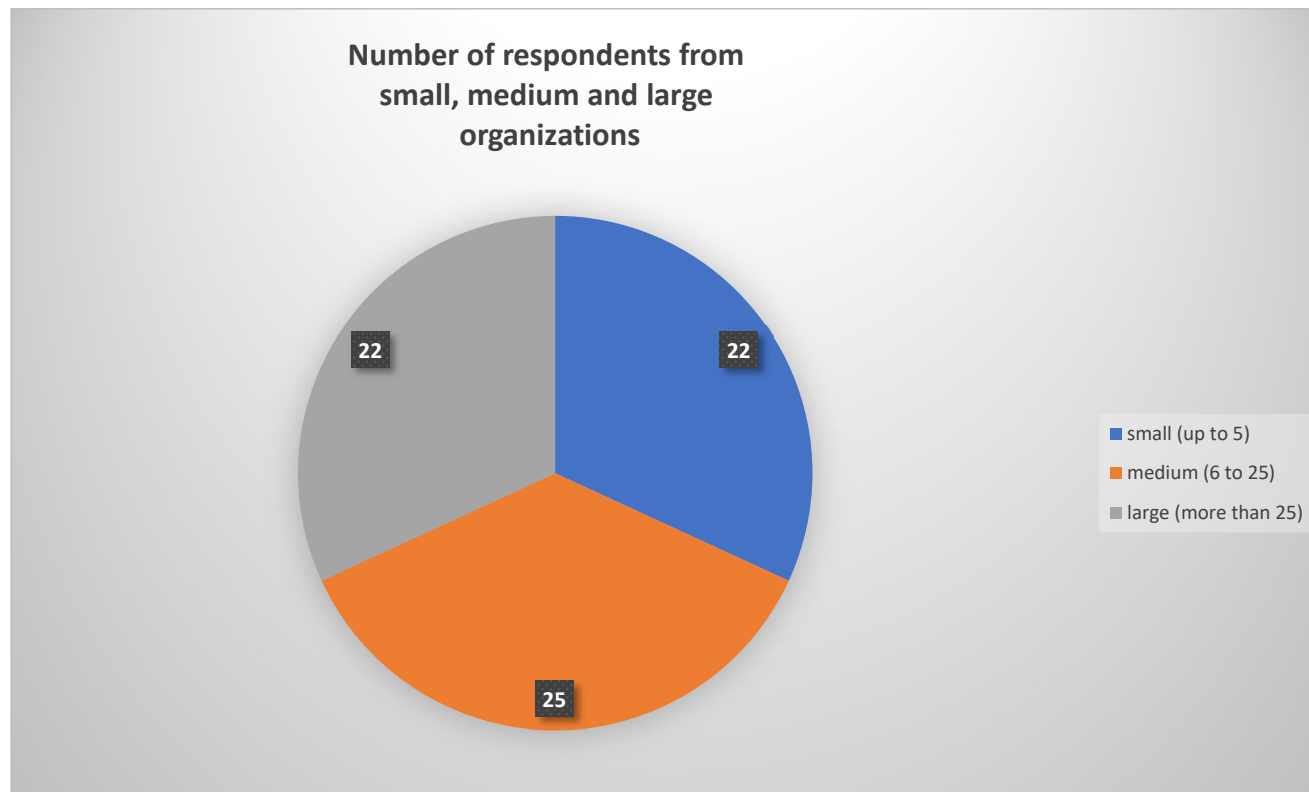
Survey



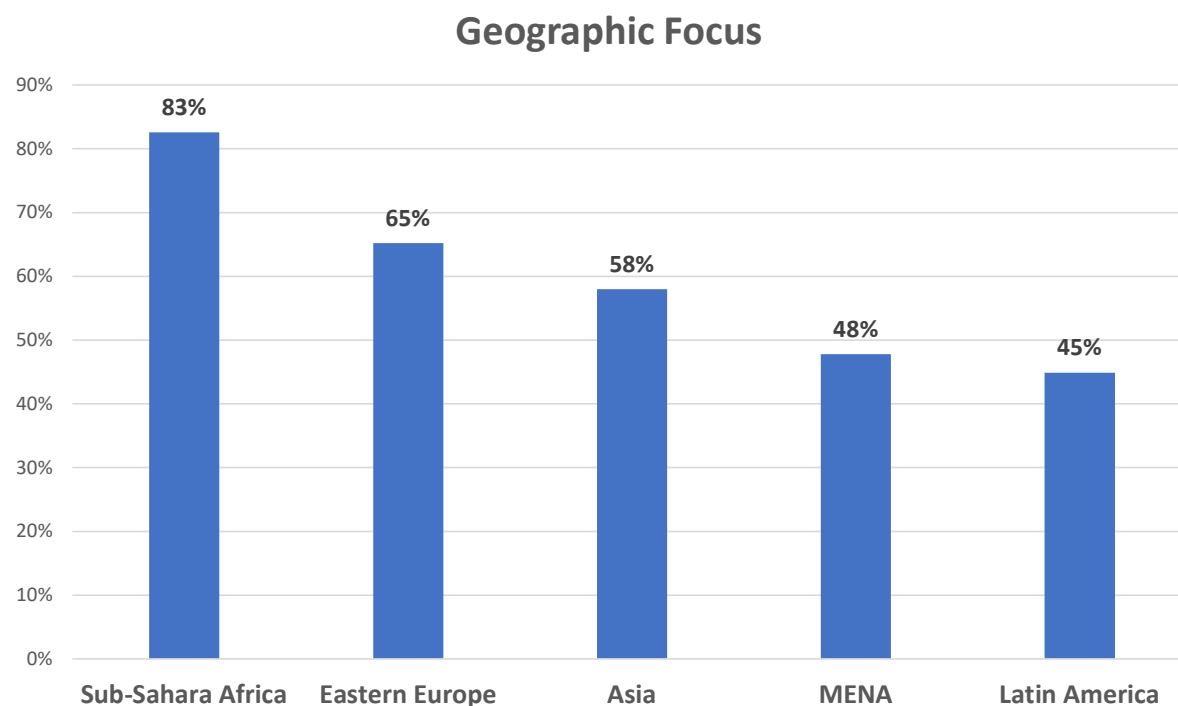
- Time – May/June 2024
- Participants –
 - Managers, desk officers from fome organisations (and some local partners)
 - Suggested by fome organizations (individual link to online survey)
 - *Response Rate: 54% (69 out of 127)*
- Design
 - Statements as opinions (agree or disagree – 5 scale)
 - Statements on occurrences (always, often, rarely – 5 scale)
 - Open questions: strengths and weaknesses

Sample

- 69 Respondents
- Balanced between small, medium and large organisations



Geographic Focus

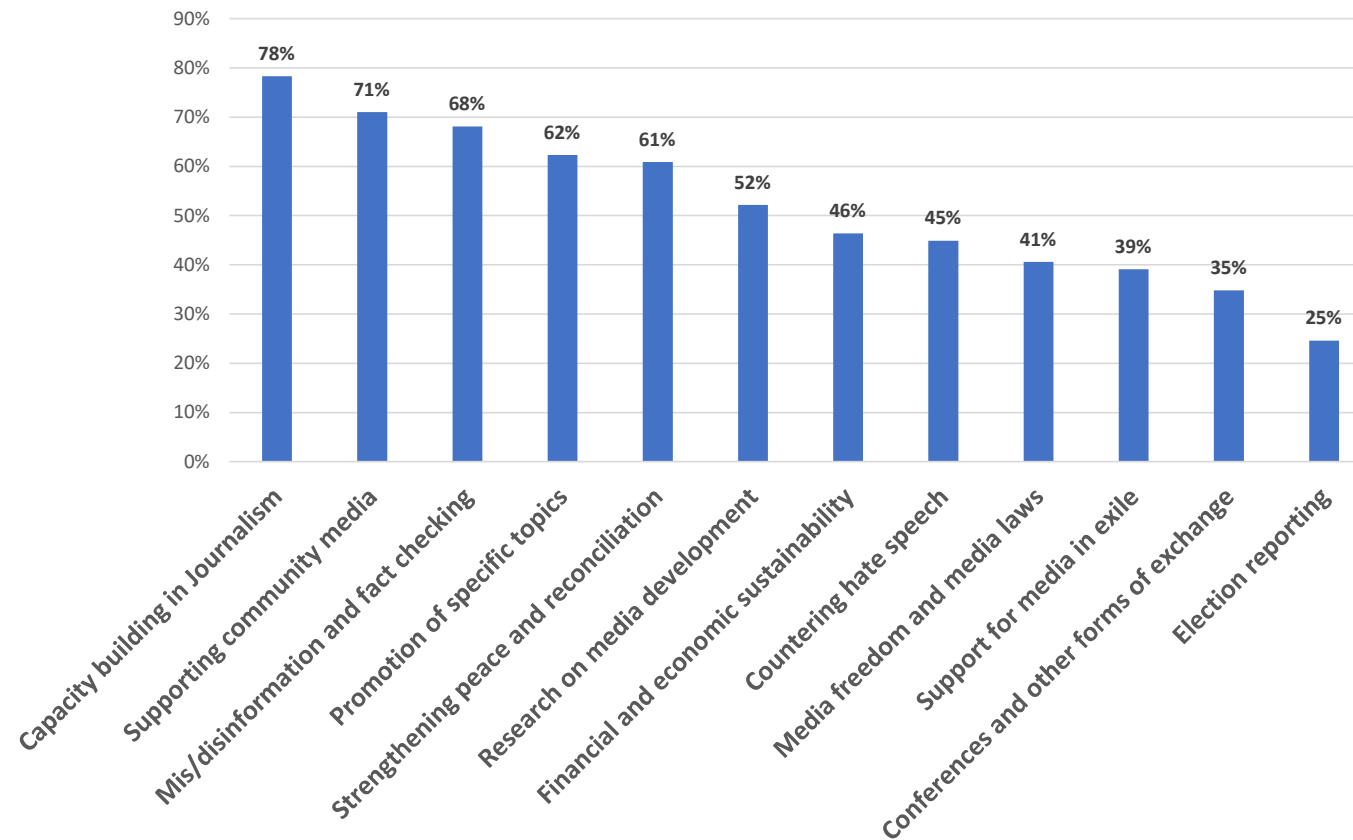


Organisations cover
three regions - on
average

Survey - Topics



Topics in media assistance



Respondents mention six topics – on average

fome_

FIRST GENERAL INSIGHTS

General insights

fome_

Most pressing weaknesses	Mentions
Short term orientation of projects and funding	9
Funding is too low or not flexible	8
Lack of sustainability of media	8
Donor agenda dominates, local perspectives neglected	7
Anti-democratic government in country	7
Impact measurement, no evidence on achieving impact	6
Duplication, lack of coordination	3
Focus on training instead of funding survival	3
Shifting priorities by donors	2

General Insights



Additional weaknesses	Mentions
Funding too low / short term /specific funding missing	12
Authoritative politics, security issues	5
Issues with impact measurement	5
Lack of financial sustainability	5
Lack of learning	4
Donor interests before local priorities	4
Misinformation/Disinformation	3
Lack of quality/motivation of staff	3
Bureaucratic application	2
Innovation missing	2

General Insights



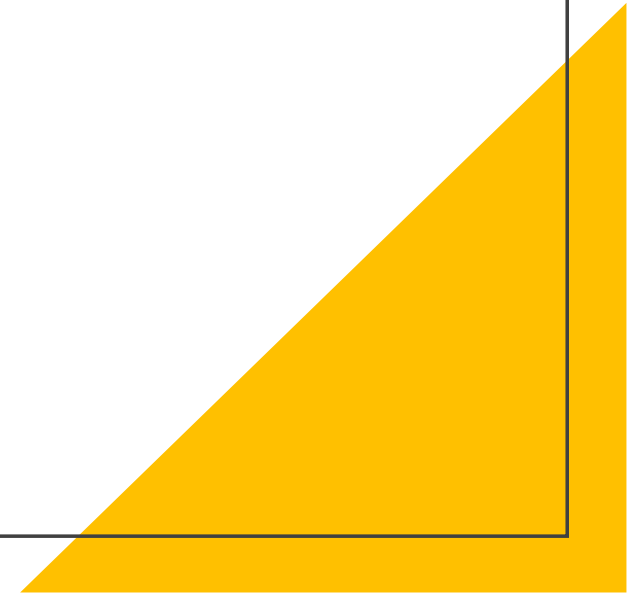
Strengths	Mentions
Having potential Impact (also on other sectors)	12
Bonding within sector/Networking /Coordination	9
Belief in freedom of information / addressing global challenges - support to independent media	9
Local partners are driving	4
Creativity and Innovation	4
Sustainability in Focus	3

fome_

NORMATIVITY

Western model or engaged model?

Project Practice is aligned to	
Western liberal journalism model	69%
Engaged journalism model	43%



Divide within the industry

- Some combine the two models (**red**)
- Some strictly separate (**green**)

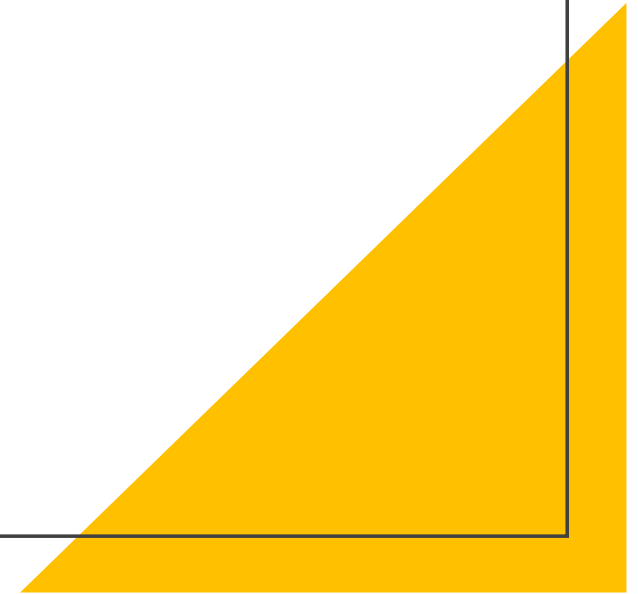
		Engaged Model	
Western Model		Frequently	Not frequently
	Frequently	14 (24%)	26 (44%)
	Not frequently	12 (20%)	7

What kind of engagement?

	Number of mentions
Women rights, LGBT+, GBV	13
Environment protection, climate change	7
Civic participation, accountability, freedom of speech	7
Human rights	4
Others	1 each

Normativity

- **The concept of independent media no longer works for selection of local partners – 46% “strongly agree” or “agree”**



fome_

OWNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Survey on Local Ownership



- **Local partners essentially determine which problems to be addressed** – 70% of respondents agree
- only 15% say it happens often that local partners do not formulate their “true” needs
- **However, 35% say that priorities of donors and local partners often differ. Additional 47% say it happens sometimes.**
- **48% say that often partners invent artificial activities that fit into funding**

Survey on Local Ownership



- **Topics prioritised by donors in journalism support are not the most relevant topics for our local partners – 30% say that happens often.**
- **We discuss regularly with donors our project priorities -48% say that happens always or often.**
- **Digital and innovative projects focus on technology, NOT benefits to users. – 33% say that happens always of often**

Survey on Participation



- **Donors show little willingness to follow priorities of local partners regarding objectives – 30% say that happens often.**
 - Local staff and advisors observe this more often than staff in Germany
- **Media assistance organisations in Germany think that they often discuss the mode of cooperation critically with their local partners – 79% confirm**
 - Again, staff in Germany (management) is much more optimistic on that than local staff

fome_

COORDINATION

Survey on Coordination



- **Coordination is lacking** - 74% of respondents confirm („strongly agree“ or „agree“)
- **Coordination should prevent duplication** – 90% of respondents confirm
- **Coordination should be strictly information exchange**, - 31% confirm
- **What more than info exchange?**

What more?

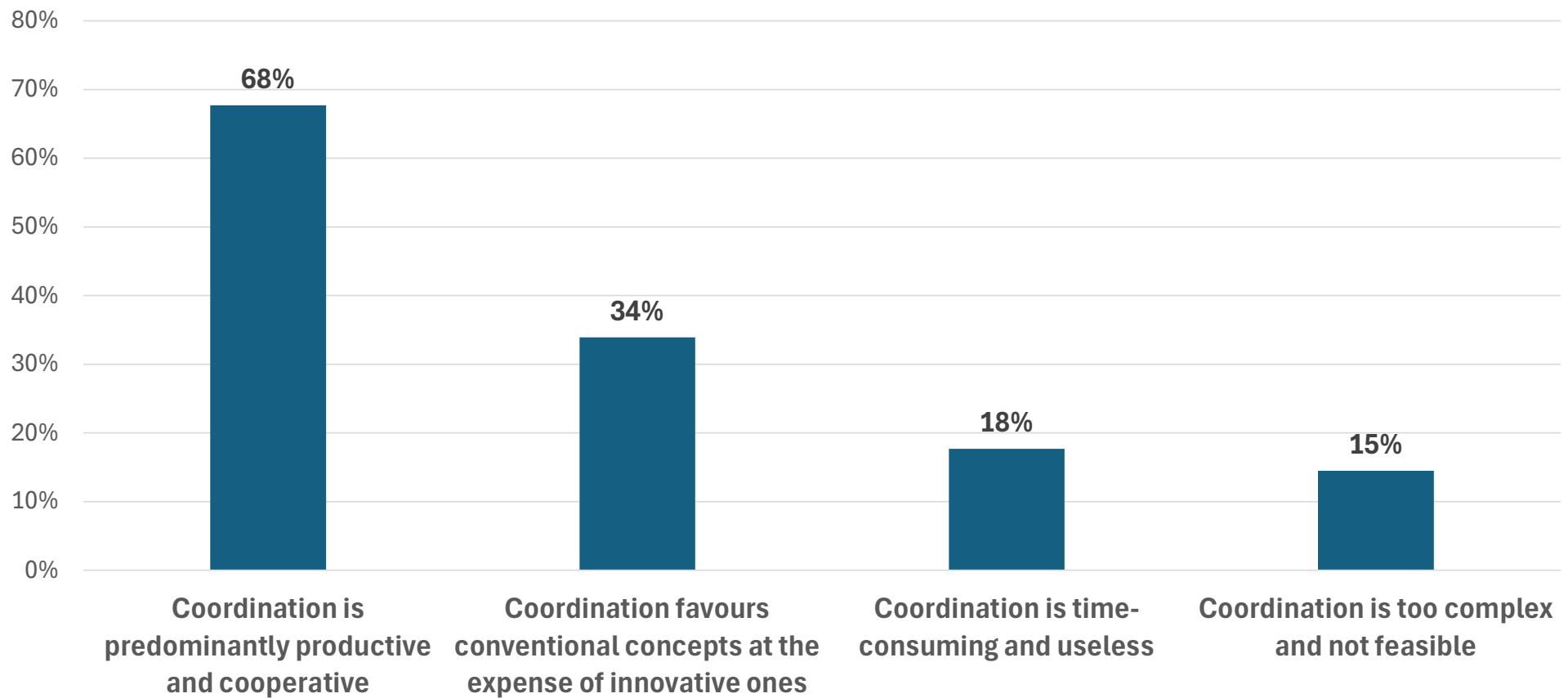
fome_

Additional roles of coordination	Mentions
Learning and Sharing; Joint Research	18
Advocacy and Networking	13
Collaboration (in projects or part of it)	12
Ensuring Safety of Journalists	2
Working on Co-funding	2
Avoid overloading local partners	1

Opinions on coordination



Pro and contra coordination



IMPACT MEASUREMENT

THE MEASUREMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT/PROGRAMME
(Beyond Outputs = OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS)

fome Survey – Evidence on Impact



- **Monitoring whether activities are conducted as planned –**
 - **94%** say that happens „always“ or „often“.
- **Planning outcomes and impacts according to theory of change**
 - **87%** say that happens „always“ or „often“.
- Little doubt by some people:
- *“The theory of change is rarely formalised (or else it is not really a theory of change as such) ...without questioning the causal links and what may be interfering. ... In short, unfortunately, it is often a formal exercise that has little to do with the reality on the ground.”*

fome Survey – Evidence on Impact



- **We know little about whether our projects achieve the intended outcomes and impact – over 90% decline this statement**
 - This is in contrast to many studies and opinions of experts
- **We would like to analyse outcomes and impacts scientifically, but costs are too high – 66% “strongly agree” or “agree”**
- **Data collection methods might not meet scientific standards but are sufficient to assess outcomes and impacts – 55% agreement**
- **We are aware that we cannot fulfil some high expectations of donors – 61% agreement**