

FFR'S CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



November 2018

Background

Frontline Freelance Register is a representative body and self-help group for freelance journalists. There are a number of organisations that provide resources for conflict freelancers but none have the mandate to represent or speak on behalf of freelance journalists. FFR is the only organisation that has the endorsement from its members to advocate on their behalf for change in the way the news media industry works with freelance journalists.

Created by a group of freelance journalists and the Frontline Club in 2013, FFR's core objective is to promote the welfare and enhance the safety and security of freelance journalists who take physical risks in their work.

Since its foundation, FFR has been lobbying for increased care and concern for freelancers in the industry, especially in light of their increasingly integral role. FFR rejects the often-repeated accusation that freelancers are reckless inexperienced journalists with iPhones, and our membership back this up. Freelancers are professionals who increasingly bear the brunt of news-gathering in the most dangerous places.

The Aim of Campaigning

FFR has had a measure of success in its lobbying work including its integral role in establishing the ACOS Alliance (A Culture of Safety) which is an unprecedented coalition of news organisations, freelance journalist associations and press freedom NGOs working together to champion safe and responsible journalistic practices. The ACOS principles, which organisations of the coalition sign-on, are based on FFR's code of conduct.

However, most of FFR's lobbying and advocacy work has been conducted behind the scenes and as a result, its purpose has not been clear to its members, other freelancers or the general public.

Therefore, one of the central aims of FFR's campaign is to raise its profile and increase the understanding and the work and purpose of the organisation.

The other aim of FFR's public campaign is to bring to the fore the critical role freelancers play in the newsgathering industry. The campaign will draw attention to the exploitative work and safety practices prevalent in the news industry. The circumstances and concerns of freelancers will be canvassed from an extensive survey of FFR's membership and other freelance journalists.

A raised public profile as a result of the campaign will further a third aim of the campaign which is to establish FFR as the leading organisation with the mandate to speak on behalf of freelance journalists who assume risk in their work.

This raised profile will not only leverage FFR's advocacy work within the industry, it will also assist in a greater understanding of FFR's work to its current members.

Furthermore increased visibility will augment FFR's membership and thereby strengthens its credibility and mandate.

FFR's campaigns to effect change for the better treatment of freelance journalists will be inclusive of all journalists, whether local or international:

The campaign will raise awareness on 2 issues:

- (1) The indispensable contribution freelance journalists make to newsgathering and their role in bringing under or difficult to report on issues to the public attention.
- (2) The welfare and safety challenges experienced by freelance journalists.

Objectives

The objectives FFR's campaign sets to achieve are:

- More freelance journalists have access to resources to keep themselves safe: training, equipment, information, insurance etc (quantitative)
- More freelance journalists have resources to be aware of and to implement their employment rights (quantitative)
- FFR has input on industry standards and policy in relation to employment, welfare and safety issues affecting freelance journalists (qualitative)

Activities

1 Survey + Report

FFR regularly canvases its members and other freelancers to collect data and information on their work and safety practices and the concerns they have. FFR's survey provides the evidence base to carry out its advocacy and campaign work and confirms its position as the leading organisation with knowledge on the issues concerning freelance journalists who assume risk in their work.

The last survey conducted in 2016 identified a number of issues that concerned freelance journalists, remuneration and timeliness of pay being by far the biggest concern. In particular, being paid poorly, and then being

paid late, without adequate expenses for work in dangerous environments, or at a similar rate as work in safer places, were the most pressing issues.

The results of FFRs next survey and recommendations thereof will be set out in a comprehensive report. The issues highlighted in the report will inform FFR's campaign and advocacy priorities and activities.

To maximise the attention and coverage of the report, there will be a public launch and event to highlight the priorities revealed by the survey.

To disseminate the results of the survey contained in the report further, FFR will produce articles and multimedia content around themes and issues that are revealed by the survey.

2 Campaigning

FFR's campaign will be its public-facing work. It will focus on raising awareness of the vital role of freelancers contributing to the newsgathering industry. It will also highlight some of the priorities from the results of the survey.

FFR will consult and solicit input from its members in designing engaging campaigns and involving members to write and talk on the issues raised during the survey.

FFR will aim to place its campaign content in industry news publications as well as utilise social media and its own online platforms (website) to spread

awareness among the general public. FFR will also use its presence in journalism festivals, industry conferences and panels to highlight its campaign priorities and to meet with industry figures and other freelance journalists.

3 Advocacy

In parallel to a public campaign, FFR will raise awareness of the issues the survey will reveal directly to the industry. It will seek to work with the industry for solutions to the issues highlighted in the survey.

FFR will utilise coordination platforms such as the ACOS Alliance to bring members of the media industry to the table to discuss and find solutions on issues affecting freelancers (see for example the minimum standards safety training initiative).

FFR will form strategic partnerships with organisations that can support its objectives, such as the Rory Peck Trust, the Foley Foundation, the Committee to Protect Journalists, etc. to have a greater impact and reach on its work.