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[screeninstitutebeirut.org](http://screeninstitutebeirut.org)

# WHO WE ARE

**The Screen Institute Beirut (SIB)**, an NGO, Lebanese non-profit association based in Beirut, was created in 2009 to support and strengthen creative documentary filmmaking in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with the aim of promoting freedom of expression and furthering film's role socially and culturally thereby contributing to the progress of those communities and to further regional and inter-cultural understanding.

# WHAT WE DO

SIB has prioritized documentary film as the vehicle for these overall goals due to the effectiveness of independent documentaries to tell meaningful stories.

Documentaries serve to tell the stories and reflections of personal lives and societal conditions that are rarely found in public and private mass media. Documentaries have the potential to communicate directly with people and communities who may not read or have ready access to independent political analyses and whose main source of information often comes from statecontrolled news services.

As a genre, documentary film speaks a language of its own - it is neither journalism nor fiction but rather a genre whereby social and political criticism are more likely to find a space due to the artistic form of such films.

This is particularly important in societies with restricted media freedoms.

SIB offers professional expertise throughout the various stages of production and distribution process. SIB's permanent facility in Beirut is equipped with modern editing suites and operates on a 7/24 basis. SIB offers specialized documentary film courses acknowledging the need for training and education as young people in the MENA region have had limited access to professional training.

Every year, SIB hosts a series of short courses that deals with documentary storytelling methods and structuring the material in the editing process.

The courses are geared to individual needs and will typically run over two weeks with 12-10 participants.

SIB has so far held 7 courses and 15 mentoring events each consisting of several sessions aimed at the key members behind a specific project. Filmmakers from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia and Morocco have benefitted from the course activities.

# WHO BENEFITS

More than **240 filmmakers** have been or are involved in key roles in the productions (director, producer, cinematographer, editor) and many more in assisting roles.

It is remarkable that of those involved in key roles %43 were women and %57 men.

To date, the fund has received applications from over 13 Arab countries, with over 500 applications in response to 15 calls for production and development funding.

Each application represents two to five filmmakers in various capacities of specialization.

## WHAT IS THE OUTCOME?

More than **80 projects** have been funded and are in various stages of production; by the beginning of 2016, 39 films are in distribution.

SIB supported projects have been accepted to film festivals and markets in the Arab region, Europe, Far East, Latin America, the United States and Canada; many have been screened publicly in cinemas while distribution on DVD and internet sites as YouTube and Vimeo have made the films available to larger groups of individuals and communities.

Film festivals and film/TV markets play an important role in securing wide exposure, as this is where television networks and distributors acquire films



# HOW WE WERE **FINANCED** UP TILL NOW

**The Screen Institute** has benefitted from the support of International Media Support (IMS), a Danish independent organization that receives its operating budget from DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Additional support has come from SIDA and NORAD, the Swedish and Norwegian Development Agencies.

# THE SITUATION TODAY

Due to radical changes in the Danish Government's development policy, IMS has suffered severe budget reductions and is now unable to secure the Screen Institute's production grant program.

A basic grant has been made available that will cover the basic operating costs needed to assist the completion of ongoing productions.

But it will not be possible to offer any new grants or continue a much needed course activity.

# WHAT IS AT STAKE AND WHAT MAY BE GAINED

The diverse range of films testifies of the need for telling stories of people's lives, thoughts and endeavors that contribute to self-understanding and identity and communicate across cultures and borders.

Every time a film is being produced young filmmakers take the next steps up their carrier ladder and add to the human resource base of their countries.

All that we stand to lose. SIB has been offering approx. 16 production grants between 10,000\$ and 20,000\$ yearly making up between 200,000\$ and 275,000\$ each year – a total of 1,200,000\$ from 2010 to 2015.

The demand for grants is constantly increasing across the region and a realistic assessment of actual production costs suggests that an average increase of the size of grants to between 20,000\$ and 30,000\$ would benefit the feasibility, production and completion of the projects.

The Screen Institute is therefore looking for grant support in the order of 300,000\$ to 400,000\$ p.a. As the overhead costs of the Institute are covered by the Danish agency, IMS, new grant money will go directly to production grants and educational activities. The Screen Institute has no income from its activities.

Potential revenues are extremely scarce and all exploitation rights belong to directors and producers.

The survival of SIB's grant program is therefore entirely dependent on contributions from donors.

**THANKS**