

Free Press Unlimited annual report 2019



**FREE
PRESS
UNLIMITED**

People deserve to know

PEOPLE DESERVE TO KNOW

Contents

3	Mission and vision	39	Financial information
6	Management report	40	Introduction
9	Our approach	41	Balance sheet
11	Our work	43	Statement of income and expense
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Policy & advocacy○ Safety for journalists○ Gender in the media	44	Cash flow statement
15	Programme highlights	45	Accounting principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No News is Bad News○ Russian-Language News Exchange○ Shifting realities in Syria○ Keeping it Real○ Pilot in Western Balkans○ Media empower societies	47	Notes to the balance sheet
18	Our work in four stories	48	Notes to the statement of income and expenses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 'Youth are not just the future, they are the present'○ Venezuelan journalists under legal fire○ In-depth environmental reporting in Nepal○ Summer school strengthens financial sustainability	56	Remuneration of the members of the Board of Directors
25	Our stakeholders	59	Specification and allocation of costs according to category
28	Organisation		
30	Staff		
32	Knowledge, quality and continuity		
35	Looking ahead		
37	Board of Supervisors' Report		

Mission and Vision

Our vision

Free Press Unlimited strongly believes that all people are entitled to have access to unbiased, reliable and relevant information. This enables them to assess their own living conditions, influence these and make the right decision.

This vision is captured in our slogan: **'People deserve to know.'**

Our mission

Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Information are vital for gathering and spreading reliable, unbiased information. The media play a crucial role in providing people with free and unrestricted access to information that can help them to make informed decisions and at the same time hold authorities accountable. Free Press Unlimited wants to make and keep objective news and information available to everyone, especially to people in countries where there is little or no press freedom.

Free Press Unlimited does this by supporting local media organisations and journalists. Our core values are expressed by the following keywords: Independent, Inspiring, Inventive, Dedicated and Tailored Approach.

Key figures 2019

Highlights

Total income

€17,704,666

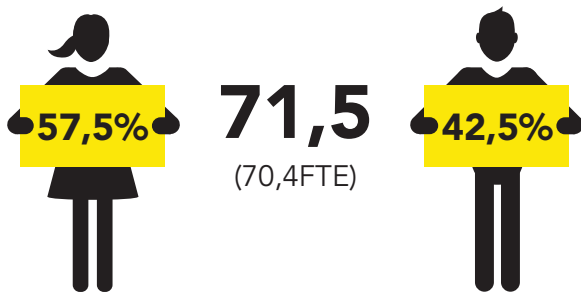
Spent on the organisation's objective

€16,578,556

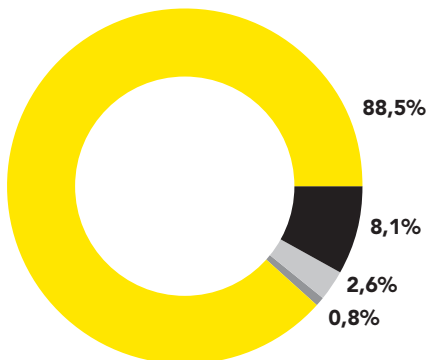
Acquisition, Management & Accounting

€897,165

Employees

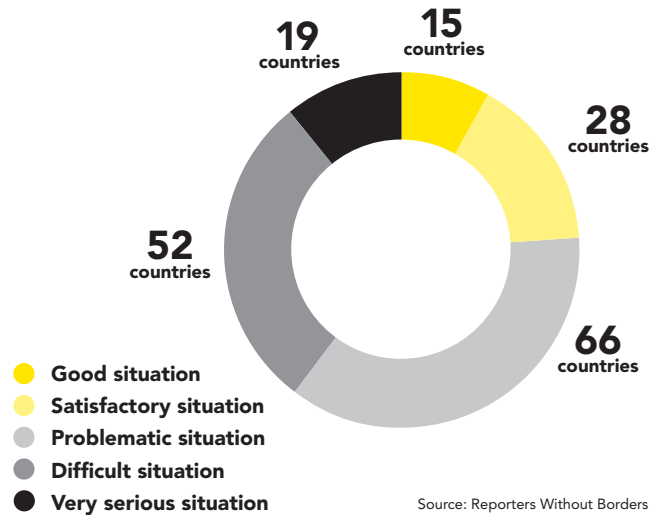


Our income



- Government subsidies €15,661,855
- Dutch Postcode lottery €1,438,014
- Other non-profit organisations €464,394
- Other €140,403

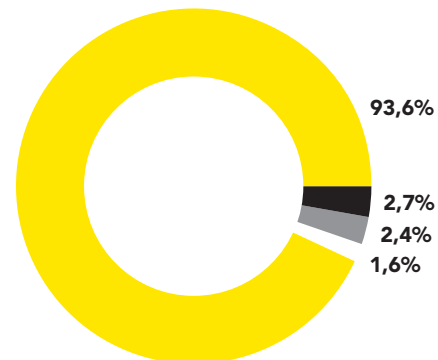
Press freedom monitor



Postcode Lottery Fund for journalists

- ✉ 51 applications
- 📄 2 in-depth investigative reports
- 📖 24 publications

Our expenses

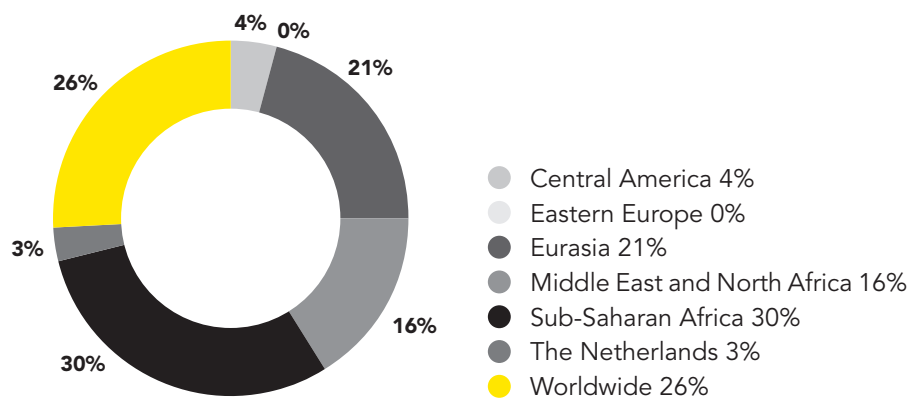


- Organisation's objective €16,578,556
- Acquisition costs funding €477,206
- Management & Accounting €419,959
- Financial gains and losses - €49,555
- Reserve €278,500

Countries



Geographic distribution of grants



Online reach

- Twitter**
10,900 followers
- Facebook**
19,153 likes
- LinkedIn**
2100 followers
- Instagram**
790 followers
- YouTube**
12,699 views
- Newsletter**
2,370 subscribers

Numbers



148 Projects



92 Partners



46 Countries



551 Friends

Management Report

“It’s important to see attacks on journalists not just as attacks on individuals, but as attacks on the public’s right to know.” David Kaye was very clear about the impact of the rapidly decreasing safety of journalists when he visited Free Press Unlimited’s office in July 2019. Kaye, UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, called on UN member states to hold governments that attack journalists accountable. Nonetheless, in 2019 journalists all around the world were being harassed, arrested, kidnapped or even murdered just for doing their job: providing people with information.

Impunity kills

Safety for journalists is a top priority for Free Press Unlimited and our new legal aid fund is one of 2019’s success stories. But in spite of many successes involving press freedom and human rights organisations, we have been unable to break the cycle of impunity for crimes against journalists. In more than 90% of all murders of journalists the killer goes free. As a result, commissioning a murder is now a serious option for organised crime, corrupt politicians, polluting companies and bribed officials who fear their crimes being revealed by investigative journalists. For this reason, we are extremely pleased to have the support of the Dutch Postcode Lottery for our ambitious project to bring this widespread violence and impunity to an end: A Safer World for the Truth (see page 12).

Violence against journalists is increasingly the ‘new normal’ in Europe – including the Netherlands – as well as further afield. We applaud initiatives like PersVeilig (‘SafePress’) in the Netherlands, and believe it is one

that should be implemented across Europe and around the world. In PersVeilig, police, public prosecutors, the journalists’ union and editors collaborate to counter violence (including digital violence) against journalists. The project launched in November 2019, with the number of incidents reported by journalists increasing by 85% in little more than a month; incidents that typically go unreported in countries like Iraq. For this reason, Free Press Unlimited hosted a visit by Iraqi officials so they could learn about ways to counter impunity for crimes against journalists.

Gender in the media

Free Press Unlimited actively fights gender inequality both in and through the media. In 2019 we integrated our current projects into one comprehensive programme, in order to increase our impact. Our expertise makes us specifically qualified to counter stereotypes in the media, given our huge network of media outlets and organisations. In the long term, this will help make a difference in the lives of many women. Partners like Tuwindi and Sahelien.com in Mali, Arta FM in Syria and Freedom Forum in Nepal delivered some great examples of how gender stereotypes can be effectively challenged.

We are also proud of the success of Media4Women, our global campaign to highlight the importance of gender equality in and through the media. Hundreds of people in 15 countries stood up for women in the media during this third edition, by marching in the streets, organising conferences and digital campaigns, and shared ‘shoutouts’ on social media (#M4W19).

Declining trust and press freedom

Press freedom has further declined in 2019, with over three-quarters of all countries scoring a problematic media climate or worse, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Worldwide, we saw an increasing number of strongmen who encourage attacks against the media, including a number of European leaders. Hungary, where the government is systematically dismantling media independence, dropped 14 places in RSF’s index; the country now finds itself listed at 87, directly behind Sierra Leone. At number 90 we find Serbia, which also made a steep fall of 14 places – a strong justification of our decision to become active in the Balkans again.

The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019, which surveyed 75,000 online news consumers in 38 countries,



found that trust in media is still declining, with news in social media least trusted of all – despite the massive number of users on these platforms. Disinformation continues to be a point of concern among 55% of the interviewees, as well as for some governments: the Netherlands, for instance, launched a public campaign to raise awareness of disinformation. In this country trust in most top brands has increased slightly, showing the need for engagement to protect quality media.

Brave (local) journalists

On the other hand, public trust in investigative journalism is increasing, as well as in transparent media outlets that are close to their audiences. Independent media outlets that help people to understand daily realities, conflicts and crises, and that hold duty-bearers to account in order to bring about positive changes in their societies: these are the kind of independent media outlets Free Press Unlimited promotes and supports. One example is the investigative journalists we trained to uncover the financial crimes that ravage developing countries' economies, as part of our project Money Trail, funded by the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

Other examples include the brave community radio stations in Bangladesh that, supported by our partner BNNRC, broadcast emergency news for 80 hours straight in November in order to keep people informed about

Cyclone Bulbul. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, their colleagues played a similar role in the fight against Ebola by debunking fake news about the causes of the virus and presenting life-saving practical information, supported by Free Press Unlimited partner CORACON.

Urgent call: invest in quality media

In February, our global meeting in Prague was a great learning opportunity for Free Press Unlimited and its partners. Ninety media professionals from 33 countries shared their knowledge and experiences along with the challenges they face. A key problem faced by almost all independent media is the issue of how to keep afloat in times of captured media markets and increased suppression of quality journalism. In their Prague Declaration, our partners sent out an urgent call to decision-makers and donors: invest in independent quality media! In 2019 Free Press Unlimited doubled its efforts to explore new ways for our media partners to achieve financial independence, and continued to emphasise the important role that the media play in democratic development and strong civil societies.

Besides the shrinking space for critical journalism, the sector is under economic siege as well. Governments that are eager to give tax incentives to big business nonetheless refuse to act decisively when it comes to financing the work of quality media, e.g. through

collecting and redistributing taxes from social media platforms. In the Netherlands alone, print media outlets lost more than two-thirds of their advertisement revenues, losing €500 million in ten years. Given these huge amounts, the meagre €5 million that the EU doles out to 28 member countries in response is not going to be enough to save society's watchdogs. Rather than relying on this, EU member states will need to structurally create more space for independent media to thrive.

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Successful programmes

Our three major programmes – No News Is Bad News, Russian-Language News Exchange (RLNE) and our Syria programme – continued to deliver impressive results. We welcomed six new partners in four countries (Niger, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Paraguay) in No News Is Bad News. RLNE again proved a textbook example of how innovation can help serve new audiences, reaching out to 90+ million people in 2019. And our partner Syrian Journalists Association (SJA) has been invited to participate in the ongoing UN-led peace talks in Geneva. SJA is the first media organisation to join these talks about Syria's future: a clear recognition of the value of independent media for civil society in this war-torn country.

Our long-term partner Radio Dabanga was more important than ever for Sudanese citizens, deprived of reliable sources of information in the midst of mass protests, brutal reactions by security forces, and a repressive media climate. Based in Amsterdam, Radio Dabanga remained the sole provider of independent news during internet lockdowns, reaching millions of listeners in Sudan each day. We are extremely pleased that, while we again had to pitch in financially the previous year, at the beginning of 2019 Dabanga was able to obtain new funding for the coming three years. Free Press Unlimited will continue to support Dabanga, along with South Sudanese radio-station-in-exile Tamazuj, on their road to total independence – and thereafter.

Proud and grateful

Free Press Unlimited continues to grow, at all levels. Besides an increase in the number of countries and partners, our staff expanded by 15 people to a total of 85 by the end of 2019. In 2019 we adapted our integrity policy, and presented it to our staff during Free Press Unlimited's learning days in June. We are proud to say that the policy quickly developed into a living document that is continuously being discussed in our organisation. Furthermore, it is part of every subgrant we award.

Financially, 2019 was a good year for Free Press Unlimited. Although it is quite difficult to find funding for support for media organisations, we managed to increase our income from €14.3 million to €17 million. Among our most loyal donors are the Dutch and Swedish governments and the Dutch Postcode Lottery, which funded projects that are essential to the survival of independent quality media, such as Viability for the Media, Ethical Journalism for Syrians, and A Safer World for the Truth.

We are grateful to and proud of these donors, of our loyal Friends and, last but not least, of our dedicated staff. It is their engagement, perseverance and professionalism that enables Free Press Unlimited and our partners to fight for the right of all people to unbiased, reliable and relevant information.



Ruth Kronenburg, Director of Operations
Leon Willems, Director Policy & Programmes

Our approach

Free Press Unlimited has defined a clear common goal for all its projects and activities: Media and journalists, as independent players in civil society, constitute a diverse and professional information landscape and function as catalysts for change.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are only able to advocate for inclusive, sustainable growth and development if they have access to information, independent media, and freedom of expression. Media's crucial role includes linking grassroots civil society concerns to national and global policy levels. Our work therefore also supports a stronger civil society and enabling more citizens to participate in reducing poverty and achieving more equitable societies. Conversely, media outlets need CSOs and citizens so they know what is going on. Which issues are important to their readers, listeners and viewers?

Making change happen

Free Press Unlimited's overall strategy consists of a range of activities that we develop in close consultation with our partners and local actors. Not only do they understand the local context better than we do, but their insights enable us to come up with the best strategy based on our expertise and experience.

How can we best contribute to achieving independent, professional local media that help to realise positive social change? In our Theory of Change, we concluded that it is crucial to achieve three intermediate outcomes:

1. Journalists must be able to do their work. This requires, among other things, proper legislation that guarantees their safety and the freedom of expression, but also the accessibility of information (including government information);
2. Both journalists and the media must be committed to the interests of the population; must act as a watchdog. It is therefore necessary for them to have the right contacts amongst other social players – such as media organisations or stakeholder

groups – and co-operate with these where appropriate. The media must reflect society's diversity;

3. Media professionals must be properly trained and educated, so they are able to deliver the quality to which their audience is entitled. Media must be able to be and remain financially independent of government or big money lenders.

All of our projects and activities contribute to one or more intermediate outcomes.

How we measure the effect of our work

Of course we want to know whether our work is making a difference; that's why we systematically monitor and evaluate all our projects. This helps us to learn valuable lessons about what does and doesn't work, and enables us to provide sound accountability to our supporters and donors. We use media-specific methods such as content monitoring and audience research to measure the effect of our work, as well as qualitative research methods like Outcome Harvesting and in-depth interviews to measure both planned and unplanned results. Our outcomes and story databases, regularly updated by our programme staff, offer a sound base for our plans (including annual plans), programme development, donor reports and evaluations.

The impact of our international advocacy

In 2019, we evaluated our international advocacy (2013-2018) to fight impunity. Did Free Press Unlimited succeed in achieving its main advocacy goal: to stimulate UN agencies and governments to investigate the killings of journalists? To assess this, we used a methodology inspired by Outcome Harvesting, and harvested 19 highly or very highly significant outcomes. We reviewed all related documentation and conducted six in-depth interviews with key actors.

Since 2013, Free Press Unlimited has actively advocated for press freedom with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO and civil society actors. Moreover, we effectively linked the fight against impunity to a human rights agenda. Collaboration between civil society organisations, and particularly between decision-makers at those organisations, mostly initiated by Free Press Unlimited, proved very effective. We also played a leading role in the CSO Safety Coalition and the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD).

Our joint efforts strengthened several global instruments to hold countries accountable for impunity of crimes against journalists. For example, the UNESCO Director-General's report on the issue has gained more influence among member states, and journalist safety and impunity are included more prominently in the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs). By 2018, more countries responded to the request for information for UNESCO's DG report and civil society contributed more actively to the report and the UPRs.

Relevance of media support

An intern carried out interesting small-scale research to find out if Free Press Unlimited had contributed to the increased relevance of online media outlets in Africa and Latin America. We made two assumptions: 1. Free Press Unlimited's training increased the quality of the outlets' content, and; 2. Our direct financial support (salaries, equipment) had also increased content quality. The combination of training and financial support might increase the relevance of the outlets over time. To test this hypothesis, we collected audience data – readers' and listeners' online responses to the content – on thirteen media outlets. After that we sent out a short questionnaire about the outlet's audience data and the relevance of Free Press Unlimited's support. We found that our basic financial support reduces (survival) stress among journalists, enabling them to focus on content quality and make better use of their newly-acquired skills. The audience data we collected also revealed that the majority of those who followed the outlets were men. Most outlets focus mainly on (male-dominated) politics, and even when they have a 'women's section', this section is generally of lower quality. Follow-up gender training by Free Press Unlimited could help outlets create more inclusive, higher-quality content and increase their female audience.

Innovation

Experiments to improve journalism are part and parcel of Free Press Unlimited's approach. In 2019 we enabled the summer school and coaching trajectories of our financial sustainability programme (see story on page 24). In another experiment, we tested whether a decentralised virtual newsroom could help autonomous journalists to collaborate better and learn from each other. In particular, we were curious as to whether decentralised and censorship-free working would enable the production of social-taboo-breaking stories on gender stereotypes.

We granted funds to partners in eight different countries so they could test this. In some countries, the partners needed to give journalists training on what 'breaking gender stereotypes' meant – which also led to changes in attitudes. Working in the virtual newsroom helped media outlets to publish stories that led to fierce discussions, e.g. among audiences in Syria and Georgia about child marriage and sex education. In Moldavia, a story on domestic violence in which the police did not act and the victim, a woman, ended up in hospital, led authorities to promise improvements. And in Nicaragua, stories involved women living in remote areas that would not normally be covered by the mostly urban-centred media.

Our work

Gender and safety are Free Press Unlimited's central themes and an integral part of everything we do, including our policy-influencing work. When media ignore the needs, interests and talents of half the world's population in both their content and their workplaces, they hamper people's access to unbiased and relevant information. The same goes for safety: if journalists are being attacked and harassed or even murdered, the media cannot provide their audiences with the independent and reliable news and stories that people need in order to survive and thrive.

Policy & advocacy

The international CSO Safety Coalition, established by Free Press Unlimited two years ago, undertook several missions in 2019. In Nicaragua, we supported exiled journalists to return to their country, and in Mexico we investigated whether the new president had lived up to his promise to fight impunity; unfortunately the answer was no. In Hungary, we found that the critical press was strategically silenced through deliberate manipulation of the media market.

Calls for safety and gender equality

The worrying European developments caused Free Press Unlimited to step up its efforts to defend press freedom in Europe. In September, Free Press Unlimited joined the platform that informs the Council of Europe of serious concerns involving media freedom and journalists' safety. Since November, we have had a dedicated staff member in Brussels to strengthen our influence on EU policies.

As part of the Global Conference for Media Freedom, held in London in July, Free Press Unlimited organised a panel discussion on legal innovation to investigate

and prosecute all murders of journalists. Together with 32 other press freedom organisations, we called on participating states to release imprisoned journalists immediately.

On International Women's Day, Free Press Unlimited and nine international media support organisations called on the media to address gender inequality, and more specifically the gender pay gap and intimidation of female journalists.

Advocacy at UN level

The good news is that our efforts to place journalists' safety high on the international agenda are increasingly successful. In 2019, the CSO Safety Coalition delivered input for the UN Secretary-General's biannual report on this subject, emphasising civil society actions to increase journalists' safety. As a result, the report mentioned several examples of joint advocacy and concrete initiatives, including actions by Free Press Unlimited and its partners.

In October, UNESCO invited us to conduct a peer review of its In-Focus Report on the Safety of Journalists – which we did – because of our involvement in member states' annual updates on this issue.

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Free Press Unlimited also co-hosted a side event at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, together with the GFMD, discussing the online space for women in media to challenge stereotypes and misrepresentation.

In early 2019, Free Press Unlimited, Deutsche Welle Akademie and the GFMD organised multi-stakeholder meetings in Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Serbia, and South Africa. CSOs and government officials discussed



public access to information (ATI) in their countries in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16.10). In June, we released a report comparing data on ATI policies in ten countries worldwide.

Safety for **journalists**

A real crime scene investigation was part of the legal safety training for Central American journalists and photographers, offered in July 2019 by our partner Fundación Latitudes and El Salvador’s public prosecutor’s school. Such training sessions are an integral part of Free Press Unlimited’s comprehensive Justice and Safety programme, which includes legal and emergency support, affordable insurance, and safety training. In 2019 we increasingly sought to engage the legal sector in our fight against impunity.

A Safer World for the Truth

In that light, we are very happy that the Dutch Postcode Lottery decided to support our ambitious project A Safer World for the Truth. The project aims to set up a People’s Tribunal to expose widespread crime against journalists. Together with partners Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), we will investigate why cold cases involving murdered journalists

have not been prosecuted, and encourage governments to bring criminal attackers to justice.

In 2019, thanks to our Legal Defense Fund, 195 journalists (both Dutch and non-Dutch) were able to afford a lawyer or pay for trial costs after being prosecuted by governments that tried to silence them (see page 20). The fund also engaged in eleven strategic litigation cases aiming to improve case law in the defence of journalists. And in Southern Africa, we supported the publication of a manual explaining how to mount legal challenges to internet shutdowns. Through Reporters Respond we provided emergency aid – including medical and psychological support – to 102 journalists in 24 countries, enabling them to continue with their work. In addition, we developed an online training platform to protect journalists from digital security risks.

Increased digital safety

As female journalists are increasingly being harassed online, Free Press Unlimited supports partners like Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) in Pakistan. DRF has built an online network of female journalists and digital experts who advise and support each other. To protect whistleblowers and enable them to leak sensitive information anonymously to the press, Free Press Unlimited set

up Puleaks several years ago. In 2019 we organised a digital safety training session for 25 journalists and investigators, teaching them how to use the platform while ensuring sound protection of sources.

Free Press Unlimited is a member of the ACOS alliance that launched the News Organisations Safety Self-Assessment, to help media identify and understand their security weaknesses and strengths. The new tool aims to stimulate decision-makers at media houses and outlets to establish robust safety practices and protocols that will increase their reporters' safety.

Gender in the media

Enayda Argueta knows why it is essential to change the media's perception of gender in order to change societal norms about women: "Journalists influence a society through their words and images." That's why, with financial support from Free Press Unlimited, Argueta's organisation Fundación Latitudes organised a gender fellowship for Central American photojournalists. Argueta's mentoring opened the eyes of male journalists like Danilo Ramirez, who reported on the violent and disrespectful treatment of pregnant women in Guatemalan hospitals.

Worldwide, only a quarter of the people you see, hear or read about in the media are women. And that's an average figure; in Mali, for instance, only 14% of all people appearing in the media are female. Free Press Unlimited partner Sahelien.com took concrete steps to change this, by training journalists to produce and share video portraits of women in male-dominated jobs. "I realised that I had prejudices before," journalist Sory Kondo admitted. But not any more: Kondo went on to produce the viral video about truck driver Niassondi Baté.

Global programme

Fellowships, including female leadership fellowships, are just one way Free Press Unlimited addresses the empowerment of women in the media. Gender media monitoring is another, alongside training female journalists, conducting research into gender equality in the workplace, and advocacy to keep gender equality high on the (international) agenda.

In 2019, we gave another boost to our active fight for gender equality in and through the media by developing a global Gender Equality in the Media programme. Building on our successful gender projects, we adopted an integrated approach: creating an enabling environment, facilitating the production of inclusive gender-sensitive content, and ensuring equal participation and decision-making.

Stand up for women

Six Malian media organisations were the proud winners of the Gender, Independence and Professionalism (GIP) label, developed by our partner Tuwindi. Before they were allowed to call themselves GIP-proof the organisations had to make significant changes, such as signing contracts with female employees – usually only men get contracts – and promoting women to leadership positions. Free Press Unlimited is proud of Tuwindi's initiatives to improve the gender balance in Malian media.

On 8 March 2019, Free Press Unlimited and its partners organised the third edition of Move4Women. In 15 countries, people stood up for women in the media and many more joined our online campaign by sharing 'shoutouts' on Facebook. Sixty Bangladeshi students and teachers joined others to march in the streets with our partner BNNRC, and in Indonesia Tempo presented students with a Move4Women Award for their reporting on sexual harassment at a university.





Programme highlights

We highlight some of the programmes through which Free Press Unlimited and its partners worked relentlessly in 2019, to enable media and journalists to provide their audiences with unbiased, reliable and relevant information. Four stories illustrate how this translates into media development on the ground.

No News Is Bad News

Free Press Unlimited's international advocacy activities described above are part of No News Is Bad News (NNIBN), one of our largest programmes. NNIBN is a five-year strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which, together with the European Journalism Centre, we support 59 media partners in 21 countries to achieve our three intermediate goals. Among them are Tuwindi and Sahelien (see above), NEFEJ (see story 3, page 22), Kunafoni (see story 4, page 24) and Digital Rights Foundation (see page 12). Through NNIBN we aim to achieve all three intermediate outcomes as described under 'Our approach': to improve the environment for independent media, strengthen their position as watchdog, and improve their professionalism and financial sustainability.

Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), for instance, contributed to the first intermediate outcome through its work on freedom of expression and journalists' safety. In 2019 PPF provided input for a critical 'shadow report' of the government's Voluntary National Review (VNR); in such VNRs, countries present their progress in achieving the SDGs. Free Press Unlimited has supported PPF for years through training, fellowships and coalition-building on public access to information (SDG 16.10). We connected this long-term partner to Pakistan UNESCO, enabling PPF to specifically contribute to the state of affairs concerning SDG 16.10.

In Guatemala our partner, digital news platform Nómada, used its investigative journalism capacities to hold politicians to account. Nómada's journalists produced revealing portraits of candidates in presidential, congressional and municipal elections, including the interests they represented. Staying close to its audiences,

Nómada reported on the elections from specific communities, including by covering the voting process for the transgender community. The organisation also launched a platform to fact-check the reliability of the public discourse.

A good example of increased legitimacy for professional and ethical journalism can be found in Mali, where the third edition of the Mali Media Awards (MaMA) shone a spotlight on Mali's best reporters. The Malian media industry joined the event en masse (250 attendees versus 70 planned) and shared MaMA19 online. An unexpected outcome, achieved thanks to Tuwindi's advocacy, was the active support of the Malian government. On its social media, the Ministry of Communication highlighted #MAMA19 as a "moment of celebration of excellence in journalism, and a reminder of the necessity of press freedom and freedom of speech in Mali."

Russian-Language News Exchange

Russian-Language News Exchange (RLNE) is a platform managed by Free Press Unlimited. It unites independent media from more than ten countries in Eastern Europe. In 2019 RLNE supported the production and distribution of more than 500 stories for a cross-border audience of more than 90 million. Together with Prague Media School, the platform prepared 20 training sessions and online courses for more than 100 journalists and other media professionals from Eastern Europe and beyond. In 2019 RLNE mainly worked on experimenting with new formats, delivery approaches and tools. For example, four partners from Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova published an animated explainer of the destructive influence that our consumption habits have on the environment and on sustainable fashion as a solution. Thanks to its format, the story travelled well through various regional social media.

Another example is a project on bullying in schools that became RLNE's top audience booster in June 2019, with more than 660,000 views. It covered the problem across Eastern Europe and was produced by a joint team of South Caucasus, Belarusian and Moldovan media and supported by Ukrainian and other regional media. A special animation for social media explains how to recognise bullying and help a child, and will continue to be relevant in years to come. Another experimental format was a quiz game in the form of an Instagram story, produced for Ukrainian Hromadske TV. All these new formats enabled stories of regional importance to travel beyond one country's borders.



Shifting realities in Syria

For the past seven years, Free Press Unlimited, Syrian media organisations and (mostly exiled) journalists have built an ever-more-professional media sector. We strengthened the capacities of media outlets, helped them build their constituencies, and established or strengthened essential institutions such as the Ethical Charter – which safeguards key ethical principles – and the Syrian Journalists Association (SJA). In April 2019, our Syrian media partners discussed the results of our 2018 audience research. This type of research turned out to be key in the constantly-shifting Syrian context, with some areas still fully dominated by fighting and others in which the military aspects of the conflict had declined. In the latter areas, people needed media that shed light on the causes of – and solutions for – appalling economic conditions, such as Enab Baladi’s reporting on fraud-sensitive reconstruction rules. But in besieged Northeast Syria, citizens cried out to radio station Arta FM to continue broadcasting their reliable news about the Turkish invasion.

Sadly, most media organisations operating in exile realise that the seemingly never-ending war means that they might never be able to return to their country. How can they live with that fact and survive as independent media? Based on an external evaluation (April 2019) Free Press Unlimited decided to continue creating a strong

media infrastructure (Ethical Charter and SJA), connect media organisations to international networks, and provide tailored training. The institution of the Ethical Charter developed very slowly in 2019 but the SJA made significant professional progress, delivering essential services to its members. SJA was invited to the Geneva peace talks, and met with European media in Paris in June to discuss how to improve reporting on Syria.

Free Press Unlimited provided training to Syrian media organisations on subjects including data visualisation, investigative journalism, gender-sensitive reporting, and financial management. To ensure a lasting effect, all training sessions were followed up with individual coaching. The co-production fund we launched in 2018, with the aim of encouraging co-operation between Syrian media and civil society, once again resulted in nine quality media productions on issues such as female White Helmets and the role of media in hate speech. In 2019 we continued to support the Fora, important online spaces where independent media engage in debates on ethical issues such as media accountability.

Keeping it Real

Young people spend hours every day on social media, and to a large extent that’s where their worldview is being formed. In Keeping it Real, Free Press Unlimited and local researchers investigated how and when

13-year-olds in Mexico, South Africa and the Netherlands distinguish reliable from unreliable information. The idea is that if we understand how this works, we will be better able to develop digital media literacy tools.

To gain genuine and useful insights, we started our research with an open mind and as few assumptions as possible. In Mexico and South Africa we selected three different groups of 12 to 15 young people each, from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. In the Netherlands we used just one reference group. Within these groups, we gathered data in three different ways: 1. a questionnaire focusing on the participants' media literacy; 2. observations and interviews while the young people scrolled through Facebook, and; 3. focus groups and individual discussions.

Free Press Unlimited and local researchers investigated how and when 13-year-olds in three countries distinguish reliable from unreliable information. If we understand how this works, we will be better able to develop digital media literacy tools.

Although the number of participants was too small to obtain scientific results, these results were nonetheless valuable as a basis for follow-up research. For instance, many of the less critical young people were either very self-confident or very insecure. The digital behaviour of well-off youth turned out to be fairly similar in all three countries, while lower-income groups shared fewer (data-intensive, expensive) videos. Despite these differences, participants in all groups commented on or interacted with posts about environmental problems such as climate change or plastic pollution.

In October and November we organised hackathons in Mexico and South Africa in order to share the outcomes with local experts and develop initial tools, apps, modules, etc. that could enhance digital media literacy among these young people.

Pilot in Western Balkans

In 2019, Free Press Unlimited returned to the Western Balkans with the pilot project Media Incubator for the Western Balkans. We provided tailored mentoring to small media organisations in Serbia, to increase their audience engagement with innovative approaches. The preliminary results of the pilot were above expectations: all media managed to meaningfully engage with their audiences, attract new readers, and in some cases even secure income from marketing. In addition, we partnered with the Novi Sad School of Journalism to offer 15 young journalists from across Serbia an intense five-day Media Lab in data journalism, debunking fake news and mobile journalism.

In Kosovo, a survey of 400 young people and interviews with seven focus groups provided input for a video campaign that will be launched in 2020. And in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we contributed to the strengthening of a network of female journalists and to local research on their safety. In addition to this pilot, through our Legal Defense Fund we funded legal support to journalists in 70 cases across the Western Balkans.

Media empower societies

Building on the links we established in 2018, between media outlets in Eastern Europe and Central America that experimented with innovative business models and media productions, we developed a new project in 2019: Viable Media for Empowered Societies (VIMES). If independent media that truly act as watchdogs in their societies, they must be well-connected to civil society and meet their information needs. On the other hand, civil society should stand up for quality media in societies where these are under threat.

For these reasons, VIMES supports eight media outlets in Armenia, Belarus, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Moldova, and Ukraine, to exchange and upgrade their experiences in developing appealing content and engaging with their audiences. For example, a Central American partner transformed longer news articles into Instagram news bulletins, while another set up a Conversation Lab to engage its audience in more controversial societal topics. An Eastern European newspaper demonstrated how to obtain more subscribers by signing contracts with (carefully selected) foreign companies. Since the launch of VIMES in November, cross-border publications have taken off in both regions; the next step will be transatlantic co-operation.

Our work in **four stories**

1.

'Youth are not just the future, they are the present'

In Tunisian society, young people barely have a say in public debate. TV programme Lokhrine gives them a voice on national television and social media. During a media camp supported by Free Press Unlimited, more than 25 young people learned to produce professional video reports for the programme, about the issues that matter in their lives.

Wejden Ben Hamida doesn't like Tunisian national media at all. "Their programmes come across as fake. They don't represent us. They deliver an image of a Tunisia that is super-rich," the 17-year-old citizen reporter says. "We're not like that. We have problems, like poverty. But while Tunisia might not be rich financially, it is rich in ideas and skills. I want to show that in the programmes I will make one day."

Media camp for young reporters

Wejden is among the youngsters who have travelled to El Kef, a town in northwest Tunisia, to participate in the media camp. Throughout the week, she and her peers rehearse every step of the TV production cycle. The hotel hosting the media camp has become a hive of activity. Upstairs in the classroom, lively discussions on journalism ethics take place. The teenagers huddle together in group work sessions to nail down their angle and prepare interview questions. Small groups take their camera gear to film on the streets of El Kef.

After the camp, the youngsters used their new skills to create 59-second video reports. These will be combined in a weekly television programme called *Lokhrine*, to be broadcast on national channel El Wataniya 2 from late 2020 onwards. The videos will also be shared on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, where many young people in Tunisia get their news and information.

'The others'

Lokhrine means 'The others' in Arabic. In a country where young people are barely visible in the media, the show is a venue for fresh perspectives. "We keep telling the youth that they are the future. This is a big mistake,



because they are the present,” says Hazar Abidi. Abidi is the editor-in-chief of Jaridaty, a network of young citizen journalists mostly aged from 15 to 18, supported by Free Press Unlimited.

Jaridaty was created in the wake of the 2011 Tunisian revolution. Newly-gained democratic rights and freedoms increased the opportunities for Tunisians, including young people far from the capital, to have their voices heard. In youth clubs throughout the country, the teenagers are already making local radio shows. With *Lokhrine*, they’re able to reach new audiences on TV and social media. “I hope that the programme will help people, including the youths themselves, to understand that being a teenager doesn’t make you less relevant,” Abidi says.

Dive into taboo topics

Oumayma Ben Fguira, for example, wants to be a journalist to address taboos in Tunisian society. “Some people just try to ignore any subjects that are related

to sex, like rape, sexuality and gender discrimination. I want to dive into those topics,” the 22-year-old student says. Jan-Willem Bult, youth media expert at Free Press Unlimited, is coaching participants during the media camp. He says: “I want to enable them to be their 17-year-old selves and think about creative storytelling formats that break the mould, rather than emulate what’s on Tunisian national television today.”

During the camp, Wejden interviews a young local rapper at his house. She asks the questions while her two teammates make sure the video and audio are just right. Wejden is happy about the new skills she’ll be taking home. Smiling, she says: “I learned how to shoot, how to choose the right location and how to be self-confident.”

Partner since: 2018

Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Contribution: €300,000



2.

Venezuelan journalists under legal fire

Journalists in Venezuela are fighting an uphill battle against state censorship. The risks they face include threats, beatings and incarceration. Through our local partner Redes Ayuda, Free Press Unlimited helps journalists facing legal emergencies. Jesús Medina received financial aid during his 16 months in prison.

Jesús Medina was taken on 29 August 2018. He was at a metro station in the Venezuelan capital Caracas when armed men appeared. They pointed their guns at Medina's head and grabbed him by the throat before bundling him into a car and driving him away. He would be held for 16 months on charges including criminal association and inciting hate. Medina is one of the journalists who has borne the brunt of Venezuela's deepening political, economic and humanitarian crisis, which caused millions to flee the country. Meanwhile, the Venezuelan regime stifles dissent by silencing independent voices.

Isolation and torture

Medina works for *Dólar Today*, a news website critical of the Venezuelan government. After his capture, he was incarcerated in Venezuela's Ramo Verde military prison. For three months, he was kept in isolation, taken out twice a day to go to the bathroom. It nearly drove him mad. "There were moments when I banged my head against the wall. I would scream at the guards," he said. Eventually Medina was moved to a normal cell where he could interact with other inmates, but the inhumane treatment continued. "They tortured my fellow inmates in front of me; gave them electric shocks and attacked them. It was physical torture for them, and psychological torture for me," he recalled.



Throughout his incarceration, Medina received financial help from Redes Ayuda. The Venezuelan organisation runs a legal and emergency assistance programme, funded through Free Press Unlimited's Legal Defense Fund (LDF) and its emergency fund Reporters Respond (RR), with additional support from the Committee to Protect Journalists. In 2019, Redes Ayuda financially assisted six Venezuelan journalists with support from Free Press Unlimited, including assistance with legal costs, temporary relocation and medical support. Globally, 102 journalists and media workers received aid in 2019 from RR and 195 from LDF, both directly and through local partnerships such as Redes Ayuda.

Freed, but not free

Redes Ayuda was founded by Melanio Escobar. "It's a really dangerous time for journalists in Venezuela. They get death threats, they're followed and monitored by the



security forces, they get incarcerated. We were able to help a lot of people with this fund," he says. For Medina, the financial support offered some relief from the horrible conditions he faced: "My girlfriend used the money to buy food and bring it to me. It helped a lot; I was malnourished."

After a preliminary hearing was postponed eight times, a judge ordered Medina to be tried in May 2019. Following international media attention for his case, he was suddenly released on 6 January 2020. Despite this, Medina is still not free. He is not allowed to leave the country and must appear before the courts every eight days. He doesn't feel safe. "I receive a lot of death threats via social media. It scares me when people approach me on the street, because I think they're going to put me back in prison." But Medina remains committed to his mission: "Not informing is a crime, that's my message. Journalists must keep informing."

Continue broadcasting

Free Press Unlimited also funded the distribution of 200 powerbanks to journalists – powerbanks that could be charged in a car. In 2019 Venezuela was hit by a series of nationwide blackouts that left the country without power for ten days in March alone. Escobar: "We didn't have any source of electricity to keep our equipment working, keep filming and keep taking photos of what was happening in the hospitals, the prisons and communities. Not even cell phones were working. Thanks to the powerbanks we could continue broadcasting."

Partner since: 2018

Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Budget LDF & RR 2019: €400,000

3.

In-depth environmental reporting in Nepal

Nepal is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Free Press Unlimited supports partner organisation NEFEJ in its mission to provide the citizens of Nepal with reliable information about environmental issues. In 2019, the organisation's research exposed flaws in an important report on the environmental impact of a planned airport. Based on this evidence, citizens managed to put the construction on hold.

High-quality information about climate change is crucial in Nepal. The country's economy is heavily reliant on natural resources, and many people's livelihoods depend on ecotourism, a sector vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In-depth environmental reporting can help the government and communities to make well-informed decisions on environmental issues. But many media outlets struggle to access all the facts, or they lack expertise.

The Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap. With support from Free Press Unlimited, the organisation trains journalists to build expertise on environmental issues. In 2019, 21 journalists were given three days of training on climate change reporting, after which nine journalists working for radio, television and print media conducted in-depth research into complex environmental issues.

An airport in a biodiversity heaven?

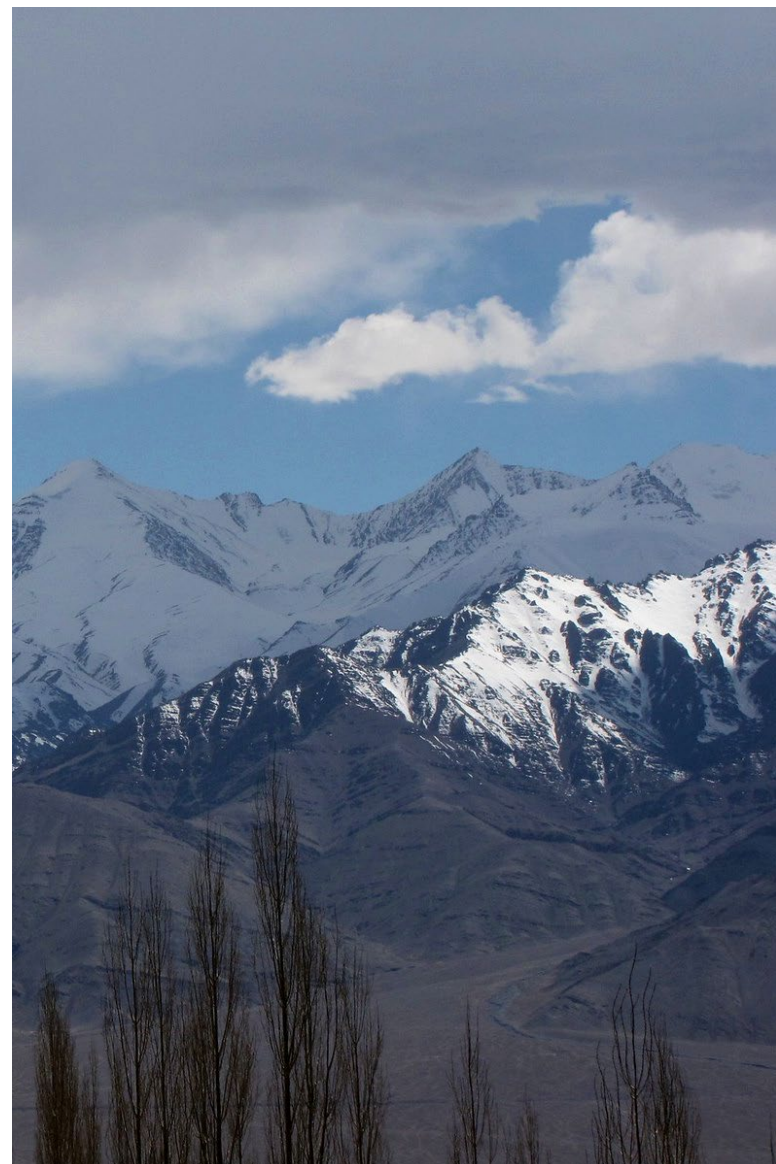
One of these studies researched the actual environmental impact of a new airport. To accommodate the 9.2

million people who are expected to fly to Nepal by 2030, the Nepalese government decided to build a second international airport. Proposed location: Nijgadh rainforest, a biodiversity heaven. Although a mandatory governmental Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed and approved, its credibility was questioned. How much will nature really suffer? NEFEJ wanted to get to the bottom of it, and decided to investigate the EIA.

"It's very important to do in-depth research in the case of big projects like these, that have a huge social, economic and environmental impact," Rajaram Gautam, NEFEJ's research team leader, says. His team's first step was to acquire the original EIA report. Guatam: "This was really challenging. Only after we used our constitutional right to information did the government give us access to the EIA."

Damning conclusions

In its quest to tell the whole story, NEFEJ was supported by Batu Krishna Uprety. Uprety is the retired head of the



Nepalese Ministry of Environment's EIA department, and had spent over two decades institutionalising the EIA process in Nepal. He exposed serious faults in the government-approved report: "The EIA did not study the possibility of an alternative site. Furthermore, the report was not publicly accessible for the imposed 30 days."

Gautam and his team spoke with all stakeholders involved, from environmentalists to prospective airport staff. Their research pointed out that the EIA had ignored significant issues related to forest cover, potable water resources, the danger of flooding in downstream areas, and environmental pollution. Gautam's team and Uprety reached a damning conclusion: "This report cannot technically be called an EIA report."

Facts support protest

NEFEJ handed over the critical report to the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation during a public event. Its findings were picked up by various national media outlets and published on NEFEJ's own online

news portal, hakahakionline.com. The report helped to galvanise the demands of Nepalis who protested against the airport plans and demanded better protection of the country's environmental resources.

Eventually a petition was filed at the Supreme Court, which issued an interim order to put all construction activities on hold; an achievement made possible by the hard work of a dedicated team of investigative journalists, determined to expose the truth. Uprety: "The information from the NEFEJ report has been instrumental in raising awareness and provided the input and facts for those who stood up to save the Nijgadh forest."

Partner since: 1997

Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Project contribution: €15,000



4.

Summer school strengthens financial sustainability

Independent media are vital to democracy, and ensuring the sustainability of their revenue sources is therefore in the public interest. In 2019 Free Press Unlimited launched a programme that challenges partners to innovate their business models, so that ultimately they can focus on what matters most: informing the public.

Paywalls, sponsored content, crowdfunding... these are just some of the numerous possible sources of income that media organisations can tap into in the internet era. But as many in the media industry have discovered, finding a business model that can pay for quality journalism in the long term is a challenge that calls for continuous experimentation and adaptation.

"Many of our partners start their media organisations for idealistic reasons. To them, thinking about their outlet as a business is a big step," says Evaline Schot, who leads Free Press Unlimited's media viability programme. "This programme aims to strengthen their organisational and financial foundations – an important step in making these independent media more resilient."

One-on-one coaching

The programme launched in August 2019 with a summer school. Partners from Honduras, Pakistan and Mali travelled to the Netherlands to exchange ideas and collaborate on business model development during a week of workshops and training sessions. Togola Hawa Séméga joined the summer school on behalf of Kunafoni.com, an online outlet that broadcasts rap news bulletins to involve Malian youth in current affairs. Séméga praises the added value of the sessions: "Sharing experiences with the other participants already allowed us to better structure our organisation."



After their return, participating partner organisations received one-on-one coaching sessions from Evaline Schot and business model innovation expert Rutger Schuurman. The aim: to develop business strategies tailored to their audiences and contexts – and to engrain innovation and adaptation into the organisations' mindsets and makeups.

Viable business model

Séméga is happy with the initial results of the programme. Kunafoni's team has a new organisational structure for better results, the editors have started taking topic suggestions from their audience, and the team successfully pitched its rap news bulletin to a Malian TV station. "We've already changed our marketing strategy. Now we're offering our services to customers based on their needs," says Séméga.

She stresses the importance of the programme's long-term impact: "Free Press Unlimited has supported us with an annual grant for almost five years now. Knowing that this funding is temporary, it was essential for us to learn new techniques and skills that will allow us to set up a viable business model." Schot, too, already sees progress among the participants. "The media organisations have started checking their ideas with their audiences. This gives them new insights as well as a relationship with the audience that they can build on," she says.

In 2020, Free Press Unlimited will include new elements in the financial viability programme. New tools will be added, including video training modules. Coaches will be able to draw from a resource library that is currently in the making. And by offering our programme in Spanish, French and English, we will enable more partner organisations to develop business models that help them survive and thrive.

Project since: 2019

Donor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Contribution: €42,000

Our stakeholders

Our partners

Our partners are our main source of inspiration, and we are proud to support them in their mission to give a voice to those who are unheard, and provide people with fair and balanced information. 2019 saw a significant increase in the number of local media partners Free Press Unlimited works with, from 66 to 92. We found new partners in countries ranging from Niger and Ethiopia to Nicaragua and Myanmar; in total, our partners are active in 44 countries (2018: 31). These numbers include our WADADA partners and countries, which were not counted in 2018.

Ninety media and journalism experts from 33 countries travelled to Prague, Czech Republic, for our quadrennial partner meeting. Two issues dominated the discussions: shrinking civic space, and the lack of inclusivity in the media.

We all meet once every four years to exchange experiences, evaluate programmes, and set out future strategies. In 2019, 90 media and journalism experts from 33 countries – ranging from Syria and Bangladesh to Burundi and Paraguay – all travelled to Prague, Czech Republic. Two issues dominated the discussions: shrinking civic space, and the lack of inclusivity in the media. In the 'Prague Declaration' the participants mutually identified two major opportunities for change:

- Building media coalitions in order to counter shrinking civic space and allow citizens to speak out;
- Supporting better audience understanding in order to promote diversity and inclusion, and counter (young) people's susceptibility to radical content and fake news.

Together we called on governments, donors and the media industry to invest in these opportunities, to ensure the future of independent quality media.

Are partners satisfied with their partnership with Free Press Unlimited? We asked them this question in our sixth annual Partner Satisfaction Survey. Overall, we scored a positive 3.63 on a scale of -5 to 5 (2018: 3.58). Just as in previous years, our partners were most appreciative of the open relationship and communication they have with Free Press Unlimited. Our partners gave us a higher rating on our monitoring and evaluation support, which scored lowest in 2018. They see the most room for improvement in our capacity development and training support, although this was rated higher than in 2018. Partners perceived a high level of autonomy in developing proposals and setting strategic goals, but recommended that we do more to stimulate collaboration between partners and involve them in strategy development.

Our donors

Some donors don't need a call like the one our partners made in Prague; they are already very much aware of the vital role that media play in enhancing open, democratic and inclusive societies. Free Press Unlimited is grateful for these donors' support of our projects and programmes. One of our most loyal funding partners is the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is not only our strategic partner in No News Is Bad News, but also enables us to implement innovative projects such as VIMES (see page 17). Dutch embassies provided much-appreciated support for our work in Serbia, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In addition, we are increasingly obtaining funding from the European Commission, for instance for our programme on citizen action against impunity in Mali.

In 2019, Free Press Unlimited harvested the results of its dedicated relationship-building efforts with large donors. We received more frequent requests to develop proposals (rather than responding to competitive calls) and obtained more direct awards, for example for our application Ethical Journalism for Sustainable Peace in Syria. Moreover, Free Press Unlimited has become part of interesting consortia such as the EU-funded ACTED, which will support community radio stations in the Central African Republic. We are also excited to work with DFID through the PRIMED consortium led by BBC Media Action, which will support independent media in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. Being part of PRIMED allows Free Press Unlimited to work with a variety of stakeholders on innovative solutions.



Another of Free Press Unlimited's true and long-term friends is the Dutch Postcode Lottery, which contributes €900,000 annually to our work. In addition, the Postcode Lottery granted us €3.5 million for A Safer World for the Truth in 2019, and supported us to implement another important project: Lost in Europe. This collective of investigative journalists is dedicated to shining a light on the (at least) 10,000 missing migrant children in Europe and to hold inert duty-bearers to account. Free Press Unlimited will design a platform for the international journalists to co-operate safely and for European citizens and officials to share tips and information. Furthermore, through the Postcode Lottery Fund for Journalists we could enable 16 journalists to travel abroad and produce unique stories. In 2019, twelve Postcode-Lottery-funded stories appeared in the Dutch media – considerably fewer than in 2018 due to decreased interest of potential publishers.

In total, we succeeded in raising almost €14 million in funds for our projects. We submitted 41 proposals, 12 of which were still pending by the end of 2019. Of the remaining 29 submissions, 24 were approved: a success rate of more than 83%, significantly higher than in 2018 (56%).

Our Friends

We cherish the loyal Friends who support Free Press Unlimited's cause with their time, commitment and financial means. We are in close contact with our Friends throughout the year: we send them personal cards, updates on our projects, and twice a year they receive a special newsletter. Naturally we invite and welcome them

to special occasions such as World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and Free Press Live. To engage new Friends and draw the attention of a wider public to the lack of safety for journalists, we had inserts in *Vrij Nederland* magazine, and adverts in quality newspapers *De Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*. We also ran a small campaign in *LINDA*. magazine offering 'Censorship is so 1984' T-Shirts in exchange for donations. A total of €80,110 was received through our private and major donors, for which we wish to say a big thank you!

Our audience

'Show, don't tell' is the simple idea behind our storytelling work. Our annual newspaper *No News Is Bad News* is a textbook example of that idea: personal stories show how our projects change people's lives. In 2019 we produced both an English version and a Dutch one, targeted at a new Dutch audience that is not (yet) familiar with our work. We distributed the Dutch version during our pilot Free Press On Tour, another initiative to engage more people in the Netherlands with Free Press Unlimited. In the runup to Free Press Live, we took a carousel-style performance on tour to popular markets in Zwolle and Tilburg. People could walk around the carousel, ask questions and watch the actors inside performing scenes from journalists' everyday lives, such as arbitrary detention and online harassment. The Zwolle event was successful and was covered by local TV and online outlets; a local festival in Tilburg meant that we attracted a smaller audience there. We intend to adapt the carousel concept for use in 2020.

Free Press Unlimited wants to stay at the cutting edge of storytelling, not only to expand our audience but

also to share innovations with our partners. In 2019 we created a pilot podcast featuring stories of Nicaraguan journalists who have suffered threats and violence by the regime, and a psychotherapist who helps them – as part of a psychological support system built by Free Press Unlimited and media outlet Confidencial. We will continue these kind of initiatives in 2020.

Social media

Free Press Unlimited's digital channels are designed to increase the organisation's visibility and engage more people in our work. Each month we send a Dutch-language e-mail newsletter to almost 1,400 subscribers and an English version to 970 subscribers. Last year's efforts to make our website more user-friendly resulted in an increase of more than 9,500 unique visitors in 2019 (total: 55,000). These visitors spent the same amount of time on the website as they did in 2018, resulting in a similar number of actions.

Our audience increasingly engages with Free Press Unlimited through social media. The number of Twitter followers grew from 8,680 to 10,900 in 2019, and our LinkedIn network expanded considerably to almost 2,100 people. Unfortunately, the engagement figures of our Facebook friends were significantly lower than in 2018. However, we welcomed 445 new subscribers to our YouTube channel and saw the number of Instagram followers increase by more than 75% to 790.

Free Press Live 2019

The fourth edition of Free Press Live proved that there is still no shortage of journalists demonstrating "extraordinary strength of character, courage and perseverance in reporting the news" – in the words of Dutch Human Rights Ambassador Bahia Tahzib-Lie. Tahzib-Lie presented Iraqi photographer Ali Arkady with the Most Resilient Journalist Award for his documentation of war crimes, work that had forced him to flee his country. Arkady told us: "I sacrificed a lot in my life to publish these pictures. Getting this recognition feels great." Photography duo Hadas Itzkovitch and Anya van Lit won the Best Report Award for their project 'Love Zone South Africa', which portrays the impact of apartheid on today's interracial love relationships. Dutch parliamentarian and champion of the free press Sjoerd Sjoerdsma handed over the Newcomer of the Year – Hans Verploeg Award to Finnish journalist Elias Huuhtanen (24). Huuhtanen's investigation led to the discovery of the first video evidence of Finnish-made armoured vehicles being used in Yemen's civil war. "Despite all the dangers and risks that come with being a journalist, young people still want to enter this profession. That's why this award is perhaps the most important one to me," Sjoerdsma tweeted.



Organisation

Our organisational structure fits the knowledge organisation that Free Press Unlimited has increasingly become. A network of five project teams and seven support departments are closely interlinked. Such a structure evidently stimulates the sharing of knowledge and expertise within the organisation, and helps us to continuously improve our programmes.

In Communities of Practice the teams get together once a month to exchange knowledge/thematic knowledge and research results. Each project team has a team leader, four of the support departments (Communications, Knowledge & Quality, Donor Relations, and Finance) have a department head, and the other three are directly steered by the Board of Directors. The teams range in size from 3.8 FTE (Eurasia) to 10.1 FTE in the large Syria/MENA team.

A network of five project teams and seven support departments are closely interlinked. Such a structure evidently stimulates the sharing of knowledge and expertise within the organisation, and helps us to continuously improve our programmes.

Governance

Free Press Unlimited's governance structure changed slightly in 2019: we now have a Board of Directors with an equal status for both directors, and a downsized Board of Supervisors with a revised profile.

The board consists of Leon Willems (Director Policy & Programmes) and Ruth Kronenburg (Director of Operations), and is responsible for daily management including strategy, policy, finance, human resources, etc. This Executive Team conducts the daily policy and is accountable to the Supervisory Board. The annual gross remuneration of the Directors (Leon Willems €105,155 and Ruth Kronenburg €98,784) is in line with the remuneration scheme for directors set out by Goede Doelen Nederland and the Wijffels Code. Their unpaid additional activities are as special adviser to the Global Forum for Media Development (Leon Willems) and member of the advisory committee of Pro Bono Connect and of the TNI Supervisory Board (Ruth Kronenburg).

Rather than having a limited management team, Free Press Unlimited holds a strategic management meeting. This is a monthly meeting of the directors, team leaders and department heads. In addition, all team leaders and heads meet every month to discuss and co-ordinate operational matters that are important for the entire organisation, and to support each other as managers.

The Supervisory Board supervises (the Board of Directors of) the Foundation. The Supervisory Board acts as the employer of the Board of Directors. The budget, policy and strategy as developed by the Board of Directors, as well as the Annual Accounts and certain strategic decisions, require prior approval of the Supervisory Board. See also the report of the Supervisory Board on page 36.



Staff

Our staff are our primary asset; without their dedication and perseverance, we would not have been able to realise the results and impact that we did in 2019. It's their knowledge, networks and insights that enable us to achieve a lot with a limited budget for media organisations. It's important to us that they feel appreciated, rewarded and supported in their professional development.

HR policy

The three pillars of our HR policy demonstrate this appreciation of our employees:

- 1. Employees are the most important pillars of the organisation;**
- 2. Free Press Unlimited aims to be an attractive employer;**
- 3. We are constantly working to further professionalise the human resources (HR) department.**

Performance management plays an important role in supporting our employees to reach their full potential. In 2019 we reviewed our current performance management system FOCUS, based on the results of a survey among employees. At the end of the year, a proposal was sent to the Works Council for their advice.

In 2019 we managed to fill several key vacancies, including a new head of communications and an advocacy co-ordinator in Brussels. In total we welcomed 28 new colleagues (including six interns), while 14 people left the organisation to find new challenges. Our staff counted 48 women and 35 men by the end of 2019 (2018: 70 in total), filling 70.4 FTE; the average age is 41

years. Four women and three men perform management positions, alongside a board consisting of one woman and one man. Six interns brought their fresh ideas and knowledge as project assistants to three teams and Radio Dabanga. Two of them continued to work for Free Press Unlimited after their internships had ended (one as a freelance researcher).

The sick leave percentage rose slightly to 3.81%, mainly due to the long-term illness of three employees. Fortunately one of them has now begun to reintegrate into our organisation.

Education and training

In 2019, Free Press Unlimited offered its employees a range of education options including courses in Arabic and Dutch at different levels, feedback supervision sessions, financial training for project officers and security training for all travelling project officers. Throughout the year, employees can undergo training in how to use our internal wiki, social media and encrypted e-mail.

The Free Press Unlimited Days we organise twice a year are greatly valued by our staff as opportunities to meet, share and learn. In June 2019 we discussed our new integrity policy, digital security, and how to improve our knowledge management; we shared stories and insights, and presented innovations. During the second Day, in November, all staff members attended to reflect on ways to better work and learn together. We shared Pecha Kuchas, short creative presentations, about inspiring projects, and discussed the barriers to sharing and receiving knowledge.

Integrity policy and confidential counsellor

Our new integrity policy, launched in 2019, is based on two policies with which Free Press Unlimited already complied: the code of conduct and the fraud & corruption policy. Anyone who represents FPU – staff, partners, trainers – must sign the codes and uphold the principles of our integrity policy. To raise staff awareness of the new policy, we organised a workshop during the Free Press Unlimited Day in June. Attendees discussed eight themes involving our Code of Conduct and the fraud and corruption policy, shared practical examples, and identified best practices to deal with challenges and dilemmas.



An improved complaints and reporting mechanism also forms part of the new integrity policy. In 2019 we trained a dedicated integrity officer to ensure that our policy is being implemented and to investigate possible cases of misconduct. Three official complaints were reported and dealt with according to the procedures. As a result of our efforts, we were audited by Partos and qualified as integrity proof.

In 2019 the external Confidential Counsellor received no reports of unwanted conduct (2018: three reports), nor official complaints of misconduct. The counsellor delivered a protocol to guide her activities, and contributed to the Free Press Unlimited Days. In addition, she discussed the 2018 Annual Report with the Works Council, the Board of Directors and the HR manager.

Works Council

The Works Council aims to create a fair, healthy and safe working environment at Free Press Unlimited, operating in a Positive, Constructive, and Inclusive way. In 2019 the Works Council dealt with topics such as diversity and inclusion, HR, and the working environment. The Works Council met twice a month and regularly consulted Free Press Unlimited staff on various issues, including the new performance management system, the organisation's new governance structure, and the equal status of both members of the Board of Directors (BoD). The Works Council advised positively on the changes in governance structure and BoD member status, and will follow up on the new appraisal system in 2020.

Knowledge, quality and continuity

Free Press Unlimited has invested heavily in knowledge and quality in recent years. We want to know if and how we should adapt our strategies, how we can be more efficient and accountable, and what innovations might increase our impact. As a learning organisation, knowledge management – creating, sharing, organising and using knowledge – helps us to perform better. To decrease the security risks that come with our work, we employ a dedicated in-house security team and carefully manage other risks to protect ourselves and our partners.

Knowledge and Quality

In 2019 our Knowledge and Quality (K&Q) team consisted of a team leader and five officers, who implemented our research agenda and facilitated knowledge-sharing within the organisation and with partners. Following the NNIBN mid-term review (2018), the K&Q team trained other staff members on advocacy, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, Project Cycle Management, and facilitation. Part of the research agenda was moved to 2020, for various reasons including the important role played by K&Q in developing the application for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' new grant scheme, Power of Voices. K&Q continued to support the organisation in working according to ISO 9001:2015, further developed PROMIS, and performed internal ISO audits.

Gender research agenda

In 2019 we decided to focus our gender research on one key issue: gender in the workplace. Would it be possible to make a business case for gender equality in media

outlets? Many studies indicate that having more women in a company's management coincides with a better return on investment. Our research question was: Does this also apply to media outlets, and if so, is this the main reason for media managers to embrace gender equality – or do they simply prefer to do what is 'right'?

Free Press Unlimited conducted 18 in-depth interviews with media partners that had developed at least some gender equality initiatives, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. We asked them what strategies they had used, and with what impact? Although the approaches varied widely, a clear similarity was that most outlets answered our question by referring to the (increased) number of women quoted in their content or the number of female employees. However, we were trying to uncover successful strategies to promote equal participation and decision-making in media organisations. How do they ensure that all journalists are able to write about the same subjects, and that women and men have equal chances to obtain a management position? The conclusions of our research will be available by April 2020.

Financially sustainable media

How to find a business model that works for media in lower-income countries with little press freedom? This is typical of the type of question that our K&Q researchers love to dive into: complex and urgent for many of Free Press Unlimited's media partners. In 2019 we launched extensive desk research into different media business models. Since most literature focuses on Europa and the US, we decided to fill the gap; we searched for business models that could be suited to the specific purposes of our partners.

As a first step, we selected countries based on three income categories – middle-class and lower – and four categories of press freedom, ranging from problematic to even more restrictive. We collected the evidence-based examples we already had, ranging from poor audiences contributing a new door to 'their' community radio, to close co-operation between media (e.g. RLNE) and producing videos for commercial customers. In our research we deliberately went beyond looking at revenue streams to uncover feasible, future-proof business models.



In 2019, we interviewed 62 media representatives in 23 countries and planned for some 40 more in 2020. What do you know about your audiences, what kind of 'products' do you offer them? Where do your revenues come from? Have you experimented with new earning models? Preliminary conclusions indicate that media organisations did diversify their revenue streams – including an unexpected growth in advertisement income – but donor funding remains important for their survival. Furthermore, media with a clear audience segmentation strategy linked to monetisation did not feel their financial position had improved. We will continue our research and publish the outcomes in 2020. Meanwhile, to enhance innovation and experimenting by our partners, we piloted a summer school and one-on-one coaching (see story 4, page 24).

PROMIS

Our self-developed project management system PROMIS was ready for launch in January 2019. The system delivered on its promises: it is user-friendly and customised to Free Press Unlimited's way of working. Based on our own wiki, PROMIS has already saved our employees a lot of time and our organisation a lot of money (compared to the existing ready-made systems). Both PROMIS and our wiki are open-source systems.

Quality management

As a regular check of how we perform as an organisation, we use a number of recognised quality standards:

- ISO 9001. In 2019 we had two external surveillance audits and one remote audit, all of which we passed successfully. Following the remote audit, Free Press Unlimited proved ready for the most recent 'Partos ISO 9001:2015 version 2018' certificate, which includes additions on integrity;
- CBF-Recognised Charity. This quality label dates from 2016, and is an initiative of co-operating quality label organisations such as CBF and Goede Doelen Nederland;
- IATI. We report on projects in the Strategic Partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in accordance with IATI standards;
- Our own Code of Conduct, to which all employees must adhere, and those of Goede Doelen Nederland.

Risk management

Free Press Unlimited enjoys a vibrant and inclusive security culture, which we maintain and update regularly. In summer 2019 we recruited an information security officer to complement our in-house security team. Together, they conducted a survey on the organisation's attitude to digital security and organised regular awareness-raising events including a visual campaign.

Beside ongoing digital security training, Free Press Unlimited's staff can receive tailor-made (technical) support. Our security team also addressed vulnerabilities at the operational level, reviewed the infrastructure, and upgraded the server.

Our risk management is based on the international ISO 31000 standards.

The table below lists the most important risks, how likely they are, their consequences, and the measures we take to reduce these risks. This table is in line with the RJ650 guideline, amongst others.

Sustainability

Free Press Unlimited aims to keep its carbon footprint to a minimum. We encourage travelling by public transport and working from home. We use green energy from renewable sources and fly climate-neutral. In 2019 we made shorter flights, causing our CO₂ emissions to rise; our aim in 2020 is to make more of our journeys within Europe by train. Our paper consumption remained stable, despite the increase in the number of employees. Wherever possible we choose the greenest, most sustainable variant when purchasing products, installations and services.

	Threat	Measure	Opportunity	Impact
Continuity of the organisation	Funding of media projects becomes more difficult through the decreased attention (including from donors) for press freedom, human rights etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active policy influencing via GFMD for Sustainable Development Goal 'access to information'. Active policy influencing for media development in EU and Dutch politics. Actively searching for alternative funding. 	Possible	Major
Reputation	Threat of damage to Free Press Unlimited's reputation due to poor project execution or negative reportin. On projects / in crisis situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with and regular monitoring of project procedures. Crisis management plan is integrated in organisation and management is trained. Managers followed a media training. 	Possible	Major
Fraud	Fraud or other false information is discovered during the execution of a project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with project procedures, incl. financial controls, location visits, limiting sub-grants (one year), sanctions. 	Probable	Minor
Integrity	Employees and freelancers (trainers, consultants) fail to comply with the Code of Conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Code of Conduct forms part of all contracts. Free Press Unlimited has an ISO complaints mechanism and a Confidential Counsellor. 	Possible	Limited
Digital safety	Sensitive information that may endanger people's lives is leaked via hacks, phishing, spying, or unsecured digital communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital environment is outsourced to specialist IT host. Regular training of employees. Security policy is part of the general safety policy. 	Probable	Limited
Compliance	During the performance of a project, Free Press Unlimited or its partner(s) fail to keep to the agreements made with the donor, resulting in damage to the finances and/or reputation of Free Press Unlimited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The finance department checks all demands prior to project submission and the reports during project performance. Compliance with donor demands forms part of the startup procedure. 	Possible	Limited

Looking ahead

By the end of 2019 we witnessed millions of citizens taking to the streets, from Hong Kong to Chile and from Lebanon to the United Kingdom. They demanded freedom of speech, action on climate change, and more equal economies and societies. In 2020, Free Press Unlimited will continue to support independent media that give these social movements a voice and enable citizens to participate in their own societies.

Shortly afterwards, information started to flow about a new coronavirus that threatened to become a pandemic. This information from doctors, health workers and local journalists was initially suppressed by the authorities, which unfortunately significantly added to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The full extent of this crisis is yet to become clear, but it once again demonstrates the enormous importance of independent information and local journalism. Along with our partners, Free Press Unlimited will respond by doing the best we can to keep the public informed. Our expectation is that this will require additional efforts into 2021.



With regard to gender and media, Free Press Unlimited will expand its programme and upscale the most successful approaches to other regions and countries. In the Netherlands we will seek concrete co-operation with networks such as WO=MEN to increase our work in this domain.

To promote a safer media environment, we will continue our international work with the Journalists in Distress Network. On a practical level, through our global Justice and Safety programme Free Press Unlimited will provide support to journalists and media houses facing court cases. And last but not least, in 2020 we will dig deep into cold cases of murdered journalist to help end impunity, in A Safer World for the Truth.

The Covid-19 crisis once again demonstrates the enormous importance of independent information and local journalism.
Along with our partners, Free Press Unlimited will respond by doing the best we can to keep the public informed.

We will continue our Balkan pilot project in various ways in 2020, including by launching the social media campaign that local media partners prepared with our support in 2019. The campaign aims to engage young people, share their stories and amplify their voices. We also hope to obtain funding to enhance the competences of law enforcers and judicial authorities on freedom of expression issues, together with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee.

Free Press Unlimited will continue its successful advocacy and policy work. At the international level we plan to advocate around the time of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration on women's rights, to ensure that gender equality in the media remains a priority field; this event has been suspended due to the corona crisis. In October 2020 the Netherlands will host UNESCO's World Press Freedom Conference, which attracts over 60 parties from across the world. Free Press Unlimited is preparing this event together with UNESCO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underlining our frontrunner position in promoting press freedom. We are continuing our advocacy to governments about safety for journalists in the CSO Safety Coalition and towards the second Media Freedom Coalition meeting in September in Canada.

Our financial future looks quite bright: our budget for 2020 shows a significant increase compared to 2019. By the end of 2019 we had already secured €21 million of the budgeted income of €21.3 million. This allows us to concentrate our fundraising efforts on unearmarked funding, which is especially important because the current five-year partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs will end in 2020. Free Press Unlimited will apply for the Ministry's next five-year grant scheme, Power of Voices.

Board of Supervisors' Report

At Free Press Unlimited, the Board of Supervisors operates at sufficient distance from the Board of Directors. The Directors are given all the space they need to make decisions, carry out their work, and achieve objectives; both financially, operationally and strategically. If necessary, the Board of Supervisors offers both solicited and unsolicited advice in these areas.

Over the past year, the main focus of the Board of Supervisors has been on two matters: implementing a new governance structure at Free Press Unlimited and recruiting new members for the Board of Supervisors. In 2019, the Board of Supervisors had three meetings in the presence of the Board of Directors and it also had several meetings as a committee to discuss governance, to discuss the annual accounts and budget, and to discuss recruiting new members for the Board of Supervisors.

A new governance structure

The Board of Directors takes joint decisions and in 2018 it expressed the wish to change the structure accordingly into a collegial board. The Board of Supervisors agreed to this request, but asked for advice from an external consultant first before being able to properly implement this change in governance structure. The Works Council of Free Press Unlimited was also involved in this advice. The advice was not only focused on the functioning of the Board of Directors, but it also took the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors into account. This resulted in new Regulations for the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Directors, and also in adjustments in the Articles of Association. The two directors each have their own responsibilities that complement each other. The new collegial governance structure came into effect at the meeting of 25 September 2019. The Board of Supervisors is of the opinion that this procedure was very thorough.

Recruiting new members

There was some bad news in the summer of 2019. Mr Henk Boer, member of the Financial Audit Committee (FAC), was forced to resign from his position in the Board of Supervisors and FAC with immediate effect due to health reasons. Just before that, the Board of Supervisors had been informed that Mr Teus Eenkhoorn also wanted to step down because of health reasons. Not long after that, Mrs Marietje Schaake, vice-chair of the Board of Supervisors, resigned because she accepted a position at Stanford University in the US. We would like to wholeheartedly thank them all for their efforts in recent years. After the summer of 2019, the Board of Supervisors started to proactively look for new members and can now report that the Board of Supervisors has been complete again since 6 December 2019.

Just before this Annual Report went to print, we received the sad news that Jan Hendrik (Henk) Boer died still rather suddenly on 15 March 2020. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Anky Beek and wish her all the very best in coping with this loss. We will miss Henk as a highly-driven and empathetic colleague.

Composition of the Board of Supervisors

In 2019, the term for the members of the Board of Supervisors changed from four to five years, and it can – in principle – be extended twice (this used to be three times). In 2019, the Supervisory Board consisted of the following members:

- Joop Daalmeijer (chair), 2nd term, end of current term: 9 December 2020. Occupation and other positions: media advisor for the Council for Culture, Chair of the Board of Supervisors of the University of the Arts Utrecht (Hogeschool voor de Kunsten), member of the Supervisory Board of the Flemish-Dutch Cultural House *De Buren* in Brussels, Lector at the Flamish audio-visual Fund for documentaries (Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds), Member of the board of the culture management fund at the University of Antwerp, Confidential counsellor at the Dutch Authors Association (Nederlandse Auteursbond), Chair of the supervisory board of the National Dutch Gin Museum in Schiedam.

- Marietje Schaake (vice-chair until 25 September 2019), 2nd term. Occupation and other positions: International Director of Policy at Stanford's Cyber Policy Center, member of SuperVisory Board of Prince Clause Foundation.
- Monica Bremer (vice-chair as of 6 December 2019), 1st term, end of current term: 6 December 2024. Occupation & other positions: Lawyer/partner at Bremer & De Zwaan, member of the Supervisory Board of Dutch broadcasting corporation VPRO, supervisory director of Bosch Transmission Technology BV.
- Teus Eenkhoorn (chair of FAC until 25 September 2019), 2nd term. Occupation: Director of the Dutch Open Air Museum in Arnhem.
- Paul Hofstra (chair of FAC as of 6 December 2019), 1st term, end of current term: 6 December 2024. Occupation & other positions: Director of the Rotterdam Court of Auditors, external member of the audit committee of IND, Committee member at BADO (Operations and auditing of decentralised government), Member of the expert group at the Zijlstra Center of VU University for administration and governance, treasurer of the Groene Beheer foundation, treasurer of the Fonds 1877 foundation, member of the chamber for internal investigations at the Institute for Financial Crime (IFFC).
- Henk Boer (member of FAC until July 2019), 2nd term.
- Corine de Vries (member), 2nd term, end of

current term: 9 June 2020. Occupation: Editor-in-chief of the regional newspapers published by Mediahuis Nederland.

- Ronald Gijsbertsen (proposed by the Works Council), 2nd term, end of current term: 14 December 2023. Occupation & other position: Managing Director of SOMO.

In accordance with the schedule for becoming and/or retiring as a member of the Board of Supervisors and based on the new Regulations, Mrs De Vries and the chair Mr Joop Daalmeijer will need to be replaced. To prevent a situation in which the Board of Supervisors will have to operate without any historical awareness, it has been decided that Mrs De Vries will leave in June 2020 and Mr Daalmeijer will step down at the end of 2020.

The Board of Supervisors is positive about how Free Press Unlimited is developing in terms of organisation and programmes. The Works Council is a professional body, which is a clear reflection of the organisation as a whole. The financial position of Radio Dabanga and Radio Tamazuj was weak but new funding was found in 2019 making sure that both radio channels have no financial problems for the time being. The Board of Supervisors will closely follow their road to independence, which will be completed in 2020.

Joop Daalmeijer
Chair of the Board of Supervisors

Financial Information

Introduction

At the time of drawing up these annual accounts, the world is in the grip of the coronavirus pandemic. This is why it seems somewhat inappropriate to be very pleased about the financially successful year of 2019. Having said that, it is precisely because of this success that Free Press Unlimited will be able to come through this crisis. After all, we managed to realise nearly €1 million more in income than we budgeted. What's more, we can add an operating surplus of €278,500 to our reserves and we have been successful in obtaining more than €18 million in long-term donor contracts for future projects. This is partly why we do not expect any material financial adversity as a result of the crisis and we consider the continuity of the organisation to be sufficiently guaranteed: The continuity reserve is now above the minimum standard level again (see the explanatory notes to the balance sheet), the budget for 2020 has been almost completely contracted and operationally we are able to continue with our work (making a few adjustments of course). We aim to help journalists, our partners and vendors as much as possible in coping with the implications of this crisis. Several donors have already indicated that existing contracts provide room to do so.

In contrast to the year 2018, Free Press Unlimited only carried out fully funded projects in 2019. In 2018 an operating deficit occurred because there was no funding for two projects demanding own contributions for a total of €625,000. The year 2019 ended with a surplus because financial contributions from donors were available for all activities. This means that the amount of €196,108 withdrawn from the reserves in 2018 has now been sufficiently compensated for by adding €278,500 in 2019. This was mainly achieved by the unearmarked contribution from the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

The strategic partnership No News Is Bad News, with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, can look back on another successful year. It is the largest programme, generating more than €7 million of income. The Russian Language News Exchange programme enjoyed the same success. It received support from various donors and also generated more income than budgeted. This was not the case for the Syria programme developed jointly with the Swedish development agency Sida, due to its highly complex working area. The activities have at least been successful, but they were on a smaller scale than budgeted.

All in all, the total income amounted to an unprecedented €17,704,666. This is more than €900,000 higher than we had budgeted. This difference with the budget was mainly caused by the fact that we were able to make up for underspending in previous years on a number of large long-term programmes.

Finally, we would like to mention that in terms of risks, obtaining funding for our projects beyond the year 2020 continues to be a high priority in our risk analysis. This is why a follow-up proposal to the current No News Is Bad News programme was submitted to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2020. Other fundraising capacities are focused expressly on obtaining unearmarked funds that will be risk-mitigating and will partly serve to cover the costs of the growing organisation. The major risks are, of course, extending the long-term grants, which all run until year-end 2020 or mid-2021. All fundraising activities are therefore aimed at achieving this, as stated in the Multi Annual Strategy Plan.

Everything depends on the question whether we will be able to return to 'normal' within a reasonable amount of time and more specifically, whether our partners will survive this pandemic and will be able to continue their important work. We will do our very best to achieve this.

Ruth Kronenburg,
April 2020

Balance sheet as of 31 December 2019

All amounts in euro

Assets	31/12/2019	31/12/2018
Fixed assets		
Intangible fixed assets		
Website	2,601	4,332
Tangible fixed assets		
Renovation	78,149	113,596
Office furniture and equipment	40,840	50,149
Hardware and software	27,731	38,178
Total tangible fixed assets	146,720	201,923
Total fixed assets	149,321	206,254
Current assets		
Accruals	305,902	121,358
Accounts receivable and advances	38,144	19,997
Grants to be received	1,927,189	1,894,089
Total current assets	2,271,235	2,035,444
Liquid assets		
The Netherlands	11,278,974	5,311,670
Abroad	360,262	399,749
Total liquid assets	11,639,236	5,711,419
Total assets	14,059,792	7,953,117

Balance sheet as of 31 December 2019

All amounts in euro

Liabilities	31/12/2019	31/12/2018
Reserves and funds		
Continuity reserve	2,315,799	2,037,299
Security Fund	27,490	27,490
Total reserves and funds	2,343,289	2,064,789
Current liabilities		
Payable to staff	291,157	267,543
Payable to suppliers	242,523	204,573
Other short-term liabilities	330,554	124,844
Obligations related to current projects	1,288,940	1,148,397
Grants received in advance	9,563,329	4,142,972
Total current liabilities	11,716,503	5,888,328
Total liabilities	14,059,792	7,953,117

Statement of income and expense

All amounts in euro

Income	2019	budget 2019	2018
Income from government subsidies	15,661,855	15,070,000	12,752,158
Income from Lottery organisations	1,438,014	1,210,000	1,131,815
Income from other non-profit organisations	464,394	350,000	356,057
Income from companies	60,293	120,000	27,284
Income from individuals	80,110	50,000	80,405
Total income	17,704,666	16,800,000	14,347,720
Expenditure			
Media support programme	16,578,556	15,707,966	13,678,857
Cost of income generation	477,206	457,718	451,780
Management and accounting costs	419,959	585,316	411,796
Total expenditure	17,475,721	16,751,000	14,542,433
Result excluding financial gains and losses	228,945	49,000	-194,713
Financial gains and losses	49,555	-25,000	-1,395
Balance of income and expense	278,500	24,000	-196,108
Appropriation of the balance			
Additions to / withdrawals from:			
Continuity reserve	278,500	24,000	-196,108
Security Fund	0	0	0
Total	278,500	24,000	-196,108
Financial ratios			
Spent on the organisation's objectives / Total generated income	93.6%	93.5%	95.3%
Spent on the organisation's objectives / Total expenditure	94.9%	93.8%	94.1%
Costs of income generation / Total generated income	2.7%	2.7%	3.1%
Management and accounting costs / Total expenditure	2.4%	3.5%	2.8%

Cash flow statement

All amounts in euro

	2019	2018
<i>Operational activities</i>		
Balance of income and expense during the financial year	278,500	-196,108
Depreciations	73,301	84,514
Gross cash flow on the basis of operational activities	351,801	-111,594
<i>Changes in current assets and liabilities</i>		
Changes in current assets	-235,792	87,132
Changes in current liabilities	5,828,175	1,136,243
Net cash flow on the basis of operational activities	5,944,185	1,111,781
<i>Investment activities</i>		
Changes in fixed assets	-16,368	-82,526
Changes in liquid assets	5,927,817	1,029,255
Liquid assets at the start of the financial year	5,711,419	4,682,164
Liquid assets at the end of the financial year	11,639,236	5,711,419
Changes in liquid assets	5,927,817	1,029,255

Accounting principles

The Annual Accounts have been prepared in accordance with Guideline 650 for Fundraising Organisations (Richtlijn 650, revised 2016).

These guidelines are in line with international standards, general guidelines and the guidelines of the CBF.

Accounting principles for the balance sheet

Consolidation

The financial report for 2019 has been drawn up on the basis of a consolidation of the financial accounts of Stichting Free Press Unlimited, our office in eastern Africa and our office in eastern Europe. We are obliged to include the figures from the latter two organisations in our accounts, to comply with the stipulations of the guideline for annual reporting and our formal consultation and participation structure. Nevertheless, Free Press Unlimited intends for this to be a purely temporary arrangement – one that we aim to abolish as soon as possible in the case of both FVSS and our office in eastern Europe. Free Press Unlimited wishes to emphasise that in actuality, both foundations operate independently.

Intangible fixed assets

The intangible fixed assets are valued at their purchase cost minus the depreciations determined on the basis of the asset's estimated lifespan. The depreciation term for the website is 3 years (33.3%).

Tangible fixed assets

The tangible fixed assets are valued at the purchase price minus the depreciations based on the estimated life span. The depreciation period for hardware and software is 3 years (33.3%). Office inventory is written off over 5 years (20%) and renovations over 7 years (14.3%).

All (in)tangible fixed assets are held for business operations.

Receivables and accrued receivables

Receivables and accrued receivables are valued at nominal value minus certain impairments.

Obligations in connection with current projects

The item 'Obligations in connection with current projects' is the balance of contracts actually entered into with partner organisations (obligations) minus advance payments to these partner organisations.

Grants received in advance/Grants to be received

Many grants have a term that extends beyond a single calendar year. The difference between the advance awarded by the donor (the organisation issuing the grant) in a specific financial year and the project funds that are spent in that same year (realised grant income) is accounted for on the balance sheet as a 'Grants received in advance'. If the realised grant income amounts exceed the donor's advance, the difference is entered on the balance sheet as a receivable.

Accrued liabilities

Accrued liabilities are valued at nominal value.

Accounting principles for the statement of income and expenses

Grant income

Grant income amounts are allocated on the basis of the realised direct and indirect spending on the organisation's objective within the guidelines established in the grant decision.

Income from lottery organisations

Processing of earmarked income from lottery organisations takes place in the year in which the amount is allocated. If on the balance sheet date this is a firm commitment and relates to the current financial year without explicit repayment obligations, it is stated as a receivable and as income.

Contributions and donations

Contributions and donations are accounted for in their year of receipt. Consequently, contributions and donations received in advance are not taken into account.

Allocation of costs

Management and administration costs, the costs of the organisation's fundraising activities and costs of various objectives have been calculated based on an apportionment formula in accordance with the revised Dutch Accounting Standards for Fundraising Institutions (Richtlijn 650, revised in 2016), as explained on page 23 and 24.

Balance of income and expenses

The balance of income and expenses is calculated as the income that can be allocated to the relevant financial year minus the expenses required to realise this income.

Notes to the balance sheet

All amounts in euro

Assets				
Intangible fixed assets	total			
<i>Balance at the start of the financial year</i>				
Purchase cost	58,727			
Cumulative depreciations	-54,396			
Book value at the start of the financial year	4,332			
<i>Changes over the course of the financial year</i>				
Additions to fixed assets	0			
Depreciations	-1,731			
Balance of changes over the course of the financial year	-1,731			
<i>Balance at the end of the financial year</i>				
Purchase cost	58,727			
Cumulative depreciations at the end of the financial year	-56,126			
Book value at the end of the financial year	2,601			
Tangible fixed assets	total	office	hardware/ software	renovation
<i>required for regular operations</i>				
<i>Balance at the start of the financial year</i>				
Purchase cost	558,195	128,274	151,262	278,659
Cumulative depreciations	-356,273	-78,125	-113,085	-165,063
Book value at the start of the financial year	201,922	50,149	38,177	113,596
<i>Changes over the course of the financial year</i>				
Additions to fixed assets	16,368	4,824	8,635	2,909
Depreciations	-71,571	-14,133	-19,081	-38,356
Balance of changes over the course of the financial year	-55,202	-9,309	-10,446	-35,447
<i>Balance at the end of the financial year</i>				
Purchase cost	574,563	133,098	159,897	281,568
Cumulative depreciations at the end of the financial year	-427,844	-92,258	-132,166	-203,419
Book value at the end of the financial year	146,720	40,840	27,731	78,149

The additions during 2019 consisted of improvements to the office premises, computers and furniture.

Notes to the balance sheet *continued*

All amounts in euro

Current assets	31-12-2019	31-12-2018
<i>Accruals</i>		
Other prepayments	291,242	106,698
Various securities	14,660	14,660
Total	305,902	121,358
<i>Accounts receivable and advances</i>		
Other accounts receivables	3,100	14,117
Advances to own staff	6,454	3,352
Advances to external contractors	28,109	1,495
Accrued interest	481	1,033
Total	38,144	19,997
<i>Grants to be received</i>		
Dutch Postcode Lottery	900,000	900,000
USAID	863,714	344,802
Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Int. Zusammenarbeit	87,725	0
European Union	43,767	282,238
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Various projects	16,950	167,737
Dance4Life	2,749	13,622
Particip	0	96,406
Cordaid	0	14,662
Various	12,284	74,622
Total	1,927,189	1,894,089

Notes to the balance sheet *continued*

All amounts in euro

Liquid assets	31-12-2019	31-12-2018
<i>The Netherlands</i>		
ASN Bank	2,139,055	1,238,155
ABN AMRO Bank	5,597,933	3,868,342
ING Bank	3,539,720	203,624
Cash	2,266	1,550
Total	11,278,974	5,311,670
<i>Abroad</i>		
Eastern Europe office	339,031	392,003
Eastern Africa office	21,232	7,746
Total	360,262	399,749

The liquid assets are at the free disposal of the organisation. A total amount of €39,097 (2018: €192,723) in balances on US Dollar accounts have been included. The total position of the bank accounts at year-end 2019 is higher mainly due to the prepayments for the projects 'A Safer World for the Truth' and 'Lost in Europe'; see also the notes on the Grants received in advance.

The organisation does not have any significant liquidity or currency risks. In most cases, projects are pre-financed by a donor. In addition, most grant and donor contracts are drawn up in euros. For those subsidy programmes

where the receipt of the funds is in a different currency, the euro equivalent is adjusted in the budget to the actual amount to be spent, immediately on receipt.

Free Press Unlimited is a supporter of banking according to the Fair Bank Guide. The Fair Bank Guide compares providers of bank accounts on the Dutch market on several sustainability themes, such as environment, human rights and animal welfare. Due to the nature and location of our activities we are however forced to also maintain accounts with banks that do not perform as good on these themes.

Notes to the balance sheet *continued*

All amounts in euro

Liabilities		
Reserves and funds	31-12-2019	31-12-2018
<i>Continuity reserve</i>		
Balance as of 1 January	2,037,299	2,233,407
Appropriation to reserve	278,500	-196,108
Balance as of 31 December	2,315,799	2,037,299
<i>Security Fund</i>		
Balance as of 1 January	27,490	27,490
Contributions	0	0
Spent on objective	0	0
Balance as of 31 December	27,490	27,490

The balance the operating income for 2019 will be added to the continuity reserve, bringing it to 72% of one year's operating expense (2018: 68%). This is 2% above the organisation's self-imposed standard as described below. Because of a number of bigger, long-term donor contracts such as the Strategic Partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No News is Bad News' (€6.4 million per year until year-end 2020), this offers sufficient security for the organisation's continuity.

Policy in relation to the continuity reserve

The Supervisory Board and the board have agreed to a reservation policy to ensure the continuity of the

Foundation. The reserve required for this is set equal to one year of operating costs and therefore more than meets the CBF regulations (max. 1.5 years). This reserve is accounted for as a continuity reserve but relates to freely disposable capital. With the reserve, a financial loss can be absorbed without an immediate danger to the continuity or the fulfillment of obligations already entered into. The operating costs of Free Press Unlimited in one year are set at €3.2 million for the financial year 2019.

It has been agreed that, depending on the size of the organisation, the reserve is at least 70 percent and at most 150 percent of €3.2 million.

Notes to the balance sheet *continued*

All amounts in euro

Current Liabilities	31-12-2019	31-12-2018
Obligations in connection with current projects	1,288,940	1,148,397
Payable to suppliers	242,523	204,573
Reserves for holiday allowances	170,782	144,450
Provisions for statutory leave entitlements	141,643	116,089
Other short-term liabilities	168,907	89,212
Taxes and social security contributions	120,375	33,880
Pension premiums	20,004	8,755
Total	2,153,174	1,745,356
The item 'Other short-term liabilities' includes an amount of €77,715 (2018: €3,683) charged against the balance of our office in eastern Europe.		
Grants received in advance or to be returned	31-12-2019	31-12-2018
Dutch Postcode Lottery - Various projects	4,454,927	90,957
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Various projects	2,644,415	1,980,167
SIDA - Syria	1,033,419	1,211,552
European Union	913,091	580,671
Foreign and Commonwealth Office UK	282,125	0
Oxfam Novib	100,839	107,076
Swedish Postcode Lottery	27,542	68,540
Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	25,103	24,751
USAID	20,449	33,405
Cordaid	16,776	0
Various	44,644	45,855
Total	9,563,329	4,142,972

Notes to the balance sheet *continued*

All amounts in euro

The grant received in advance from the Dutch Postcode Lottery consists of the projects 'A Safer World for the Truth' (€3.0 million) and 'Lost in Europe' (€1.4 million)

The full amounts for the entire project duration were received at the end of 2019.

Financial obligations that are not included on the balance sheet

Free Press Unlimited entered into a rental agreement for an office space and 5 parking spaces at Weesperstraat 3-5 in Amsterdam.

The agreement was extended for another five years on October 1, 2018. The rent for 2020 is €162,551 per year. A bank guarantee of €44,383 has been issued for this agreement.

In June 2019 an operational lease contract for a multifunctional copier was entered for six years. The annual costs amount to €6,891 with additional charges for additional consumption.

The funding awarded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the programme 'No News is Bad News' has a term of five years (2016-2020). This funding is subject to certain conditions.

Every year, the Ministry reserves the right to make cuts in the awarded funding. Free Press Unlimited has incorporated this condition in the contracts it enters into with its partners, and has limited the term of these agreements to one year.

The funding awarded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for the programme 'Ethical Journalism for Syria' also has a term of five years (September 2016 - September 2021).

For the Radio Dabanga project, Free Press Unlimited has formed a lease for office space in Amsterdam. The lease was formed on 1 March 2020 and has a duration of 5 years.

The rent for 2020 is €65,812 per year. A deposit of €16,453 has been provided for this lease.

Notes to the statement of income and expenses

All amounts in euro

Income	2019	budget 2019	2018
<i>Income from government grants</i>			
Dutch Min. of Foreign Affairs – No News is Bad News	7,044,667	6,690,000	6,413,938
Various governments – RLNE / Eurasia	2,255,521	2,060,000	1,490,984
Various governments - Syria	1,742,499	2,025,000	2,108,653
Various governments – Radio Dabanga	1,138,681	1,200,000	759,785
Various governments – Radio Tamazuj	1,011,255	725,000	574,297
Dutch Min. of Foreign Affairs – Legal Defense Fund	748,615	680,000	41,371
Various governments – Great Lakes	687,728	415,000	490,194
Embassy of the Netherlands – Costa Rica	323,135	215,000	52,594
Various governments - Somalia	135,171	170,000	238,654
Dutch Min. of Foreign Affairs – VIMES	119,909	0	0
Embassy of the Netherlands - Serbia	84,651	0	0
Embassy of the Netherlands - Tunisia	46,504	150,000	138,199
Various projects	258,092	740,000	443,489
	15,596,428	15,070,000	12,752,158
<i>Income from lottery organisations</i>			
Dutch Postcode Lottery – Structural funding	900,000	900,000	900,000
Dutch Postcode Lottery (additional project contribution)			
Dutch Postcode Lottery – Oxfam – Money Trail	197,922	190,000	84,934
Dutch Postcode Lottery – A Safer World for the Truth	126,945	0	0
Swedish Postcode Lottery – Keeping It Real	154,063	120,000	11,483
Dutch Postcode Lottery – various projects	59,085	0	135,398
	1,438,014	1,210,000	1,131,815
<i>Income from other non-profit organisations</i>			
Cordaid - C.A.R. / D.R.C.	370,884	350,000	306,705
Various projects	93,510	0	49,352
	464,394	350,000	356,057
<i>Income from companies</i>			
Google DNI	37,030	0	12,167
Various	88,690	120,000	15,118
	125,720	120,000	27,284
<i>Contributions from private donors</i>			
	80,110	50,000	80,405
Total generated income	17,704,666	16,800,000	14,347,720

Notes to the statement of income and expenses *continued*

All amounts in euro

Explanation regarding the differences

Free Press Unlimited has been active in fundraising throughout the year. As a result, subsidies may be awarded throughout the year. However, the budget is drawn up and approved in September of the preceding year, meaning that the organisation includes an assumption regarding the expected income.

The total income was €0,9 million higher than budgeted, mainly due to higher income from government subsidies. In that category No News Is Bad News and RLNE / Eurasia compensated both underspending from previous years which lead to the higher income. The other difference in actual and budgeted income can be explained mainly by the projects 'VIMES' and 'A Safer World for the Truth', for which no specific values had been budgeted.

Almost all income raised is programme-related and is incidental. The structural contribution from the Dutch Postcode Lottery and incomes from private individuals are the only gifts which are not earmarked, jointly 5.5% (2018: 7%) of the total income raised. Last year, those funds were used in part to restore the continuity reserve to its required level. The funds were also used to cover part of the general office costs of the office in Eastern Europe.

Notes to the statement of income and expenses *continued*

All amounts in euro

Expenses	2019	budget 2019	2018
<i>Spent on the organisation's objective</i> (not including the allocated costs of Free Press Unlimited's own organisation)			
Strategic Partnership: No News is Bad News	4,826,725	4,200,000	4,206,225
RLNE / Eurasia	2,019,516	1,800,000	1,270,157
Syria	1,320,684	1,400,000	1,616,813
South Sudan	1,003,862	1,000,000	704,469
Sudan	988,694	900,000	1,016,713
Great Lakes	624,808	200,000	441,484
Legal Defense Fund	600,931	600,000	0
Cordaid - C.A.R. / D.R.C.	293,902	300,000	237,145
Journalist Safety in Central America	279,339	220,000	0
Money Trail	143,487	150,000	50,593
Keeping It Real	104,443	100,000	0
Somalia	99,315	100,000	208,882
VIMES	92,031	0	0
A Safer World for the Truth	75,361	0	0
Media4Democracy	64,173	40,000	76,062
Various projects	298,413	609,600	653,857
	12,835,685	11,619,600	10,482,399
Allocated costs of own organisation	4,640,036	5,131,400	4,060,034
Total expenses	17,475,721	16,751,000	14,542,433

Remuneration of the members of the Board of Directors

All amounts in euro

Stichting Free Press Unlimited falls within the scope of the Dutch Standardisation of Top Incomes Act (Wet normering topinkomens), which came into force on 1 January 2013. In 2019, the applicable remuneration maximum for Free Press Unlimited was €181,000. This is the maximum for the sector of Development organisations (Ontwikkelingssamenwerking).

The remuneration policy is explained below and in the Report of the Board of Directors in the 2019 Annual Report. These notes also show that the members of Free Press Unlimited's Board of Supervisors are not reimbursed for their activities.

Table 1a. Senior Executives

Details for 2019	Willems, L.A.M. (Leon)	Kronenburg, R.C.E. (Ruth)
Details of position	<i>Director of Policy and Programmes</i>	<i>Director of Operations</i>
Start and end of position in 2019	01/01-31/12	01/01-31/12
Part-time factor in FTE	1.0	1.0
Employment contract	Yes	Yes
Remuneration		
Remuneration plus taxable expense allowances	105,155	98,784
Remuneration payable over time	12,863	11,732
Subtotal	118,018	110,516
Individual remuneration cap	181,000	181,000
Less: unduly paid	Not applicable	Not applicable
Total remuneration	118,018	110,516
Reason why maximum may or may not be exceeded	Not applicable	Not applicable
Notes to unduly paid amounts	Not applicable	Not applicable

Remuneration of the members of the Board of Directors *continued*

All amounts in euro

Table 1a. Senior Executives

Details for 2018		
Start and end of position	01/01-31/12	01/01-31/12
Part-time factor in FTE	1.0	1.0
Employment contract	Yes	Yes
Remuneration plus taxable expense allowances	93,908	92,781
Remuneration payable in the future	12,497	11,036
Subtotal	106,405	103,817
Individual applicable maximum remuneration	174,000	174,000
Total remuneration	106,405	103,817
Basic Score for Director roles (BSD-points)*	413	380

* The Basic Score for Director roles needs to be determined as a result of the "Regulation for remuneration of directors of charitable organisations". This arrangement regulates remuneration for directors with a points system, the Basic Score for Director roles (BSD-points). The BSD-points are awarded on the basis of several quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the charitable organisation, classified in three main criteria: the size, complexity and organisational context. The score is approved annually by the Supervisory Board and assessed by the Central Fundraising Office (CBF). In 2019 the Supervisory Board approved the score mentioned above for 2018.

Remuneration of the members of the Board of Directors *continued*

Table 1d.** Senior supervisory roles with remuneration of €1,700 or less (end 2019)

Position	Name	Resigned in 2019
Chairperson Supervisory Board	Joop Daalmeijer	
Member Supervisory Board	Corine de Vries	
Member Supervisory Board	Ronald Gijsbertsen	
Member Supervisory Board	Monica Bremer	
Member Supervisory Board	Paul Hofstra	
Member Supervisory Board	Teus Eenkhoorn	yes
Member Supervisory Board	Marietje Schaake	yes
Member Supervisory Board	Henk Boer*	yes

* At the time of drawing up this Annual Report we received the sad message that Henk Boer has passed away.

** Tables 1b and 1c are not applicable to our financial report.

Staffing ratios

At the end of 2019, Free Press Unlimited employed the equivalent of 71.5 FTE (2018: 61,6 FTE). This includes both permanent and temporary employment contracts. The workforce can be subdivided into 62.7 FTE (2018: 54.8 FTE) in organisation positions at Free Press Unlimited and 8.8 FTE (2018: 6.7 FTE) working on the Radio Dabanga project. For further details, see the Report of the Board of Directors in the 2019 Annual Report.

Specification and allocation of costs according to category

All amounts in euro

	Spend on objective Media support	Acquisition of grants	costs of management and accounting	Total 2019	Budget 2019	Total 2018
Grants for partner organisations/ own activities	12,772,891	54,621	8,174	12,835,685	12,104,938	10,482,399
Communication costs	134,920	14,982	14,599	164,500	183,897	132,252
Employee costs	3,218,931	357,434	348,299	3,924,664	3,827,099	3,433,787
Housing costs	144,962	16,097	15,685	176,744	166,959	150,845
Office and general costs	251,937	27,975	27,260	307,173	407,127	267,733
Depreciations	54,915	6,098	5,942	66,955	60,980	75,417
Total	16,578,556	477,206	419,959	17,475,721	16,751,000	14,542,433

Spent on objective

Expenditure on the Media support objective in accordance with the statutes:

- the promotion of free and pluriform opinion forming, democratic relationships and sustainable peace, for example, by improving the freedom of expression and press freedom, all over the world.
- the provision of help to developing countries, repressive states and conflict countries, through the implementation of development projects in the area of media and their audience;
- the training and dispatch of experts and other assistants to developing countries, conflict countries and repressive states and the training of persons from those states;
- the promotion of the interests of the media, media organisations and their audience.

Specification and allocation of costs according to category *continued*

All amounts in euro

As prescribed in the Guideline 650 costs are allocated to the objective, income fundraising and management & administration. Allocation is done on the basis of the following principles:

- directly attributable expenses are directly allocated
- non-directly attributable expenses are allocated on the basis of an allocation key, based on the number of FTE per category:

	% of the total number of FTEs		
Media support	82.0%		
Acquisition of government grants	9.1%		
Management & accounting	8.9%		
	100.0%		
<i>Staff costs as shown above can be subdivided into:</i>			
	Total 2019	Budget 2019	Total 2018
Salary costs	2,688,877	2,621,851	2,318,009
Social security contributions	515,111	637,747	459,748
Pension premiums	314,202	283,443	268,022
Other staff costs	406,475	284,057	388,008
	3,924,664	3,827,099	3,433,787



Free Press Unlimited works to ensure that impartial news and information are and remain available to people across the globe. Particularly in countries where there is little to no press freedom.

Colophon

Text: Jacqueline Schuiling Tekstproducties, Free Press Unlimited
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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To: the Supervisory Board and the Management Board of
Free Press Unlimited, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

A. Report on the audit of the financial statements 2019 included in the annual report

Our opinion

We have audited the financial statements 2019 of Free Press Unlimited based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Free Press Unlimited as at 31 December 2019 and of its result for 2019 in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 650 "Fundraising Organisations" of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board and the Policy rules implementation of the Standards for Remuneration Act (WNT).

The financial statements comprise:

1. the balance sheet as at 31 December 2019;
2. the income and expenditure account for 2019; and
3. the notes comprising a summary of the accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Basis for our opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Dutch law, including the Dutch Standards on Auditing as well as the Policy rules implementation WNT, including the Audit Protocol WNT. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report.

We are independent of Free Press Unlimited in accordance with the Verordening inzake de onafhankelijkheid van accountants bij assurance-opdrachten (ViO, Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, a regulation with respect to independence) and other relevant independence regulations in the Netherlands. Furthermore, we have complied with the Verordening gedrags- en beroepsregels accountants (VGBA, Dutch Code of Ethics).

We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

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Compliance with rule against overlapping pursuant to the WNT not audited

In accordance with the Audit Protocol under the Standards for Remuneration Act (“WNT”), we have not audited the rule against overlapping as referred to in Section 1.6a of the WNT and Section 5(1)(j) of the WNT Implementing Regulations.

This means that we have not audited whether an executive senior official exceeds the norm as a result of any positions as executive senior official at other institutions subject to the WNT, and whether the explanation required in this context is correct and complete.

B. Report on the other information included in the annual report

In addition to the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon, the annual report contains other information that consists of:

- the Management Board’s report;
- report from the Supervisory Board.

Based on the following procedures performed, we conclude that the other information is consistent with the financial statements and does not contain material misstatements.

We have read the other information. Based on our knowledge and understanding obtained through our audit of the financial statements or otherwise, we have considered whether the other information contains material misstatements.

By performing these procedures, we comply with the requirements of the Dutch Standard 720. The scope of the procedures performed is substantially less than the scope of those performed in our audit of the financial statements. Management is responsible for the preparation of the other information, including the Management Board’s report, in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 650 “Fundraising Organisations” of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board.

C. Description of responsibilities regarding the financial statements

Responsibilities of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board for the financial statements

The Management Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 650 “Fundraising Organisations” of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board and the Policy rules implementation of the Standards for Remuneration Act (WNT). Furthermore, the Management Board is responsible for such internal control as the Management Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

As part of the preparation of the financial statements, the Management Board is responsible for assessing the organisation’s ability to continue as a going concern. Based on the financial reporting framework mentioned, the Management Board should prepare the financial statements using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to dissolve the foundation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.



The Management Board should disclose events and circumstances that may cast significant doubt on the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern in the financial statements.

The Supervisory Board is responsible for monitoring the financial reporting process of the organisation.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objective is to plan and perform the audit assignment in a manner that allows us to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence for our opinion.

Our audit has been performed with a high, but not absolute, level of assurance, which means we may not detect all material errors and fraud during our audit.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. The materiality affects the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures and the evaluation of the effect of identified misstatements on our opinion.

We have exercised professional judgement and have maintained professional scepticism throughout the audit, in accordance with Dutch Standards on Auditing, as well as the Policy rules implementation WNT, including the Audit Protocol WNT, ethical requirements and independence requirements.

Our audit included e.g.:

- identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, designing and performing audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtaining an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organisation's internal control;
- evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board;
- concluding on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting, and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause an organisation to cease to continue as a going concern;

- evaluating the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures; and
- evaluating whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant findings in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Amsterdam, 14 May 2020

Dubois & Co. Registeraccountants

A.P. Buteijn RA