



“I can now provide a voice about our issues to those in power”

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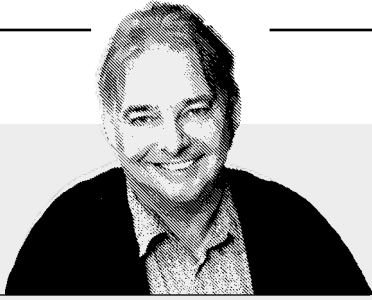
In the battle against disinformation, fake news, indoctrination and hate practices on social media and the internet, Free Press Unlimited started a unique project, ‘Keeping it Real’, for 13-year-olds in Mexico, Sweden and South Africa. The project analyses the media behaviour of 13-year-olds and based on that, works with them to develop ideas that enable young people to use social media safely and to access reliable information.

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Free Press Unlimited calls on the EC to take a stand against the killings of journalists

The ruthless killings of investigative journalists Daphne Caruana Galizia on Malta and Ján Kuciak in Slovakia have made it clear that extreme violence against journalists is a problem in European democracies. When journalists are killed, they are silenced and the public is deprived of the truth.

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How Press Freedom Is Won

In our mission to reduce/alleviate threats to journalists, we tend to focus on the myriad of pressures and challenges shaped by state-sponsored and criminal hostility towards the press. In Afghanistan this year, the deaths of nine journalists in suicide bombings that killed at least 25 people, marked the worst day for journalists in the country since 2002. More than 1,000 journalists have been murdered around the world in the last 15 years. Only a handful of the perpetrators have been brought to justice.

But we should not only focus on the negatives. We also need to acknowledge journalists and their supporters who fight for press freedom. In Slovakia, public outrage over the double murder of journalist Ján Kuciak, and his fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, forced Prime Minister Robert Fico to resign. For his successor, Peter Pellegrini, the unresolved murder is a public relations nightmare. In the Philippines, where independent news organizations receive death threats and are slandered by politicians and trolls, reporters reveal the truth with devastating effect. The news website Rappler deployed investigative journalism to uncover a network of trolls with links to government insiders.

When it comes to online censorship, authoritarian governments use numerous excuses to block or filter access to the internet. Nevertheless, half of the world's population today is connected and has access to more information – a 20% increase in only five years. In Sudan, journalists use the internet to save lives. When the government remained silent about a devastating cholera outbreak, Radio Dabanga broadcast information about prevention and treatment by tapping into and circulating knowledge from medical staff using WhatsApp. In Somalia, a country torn apart by violence, the sizable diaspora finances new online platforms connecting audiences inside and outside the country, facilitating a meaningful stream of news, information and discussion.

Legal standards are also improving. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of countries with freedom of information legislation increased from 90 to 112. In addition, the EU adopted a law to protect whistle-blowers in order to support investigative journalists by protecting their sources.

These are just a few of the highlights. So while we should remain vigilant about the many negatives, we must not forget to reinforce and support journalists in their struggle for resilience against those threats. Every day, journalists around the world bring us the news. We benefit from their courage and we have an obligation to honour their successes, not just their sacrifices.

Leon Willems
Director of Free Press Unlimited

Unbiased news from Syria goes global via WhatsApp

In East Ghouta, armed groups engaged in fierce fighting with the President Assad's army. To prevent the area from becoming completely isolated, and to facilitate reporting on the daily reality of its citizens, the Syrian Journalists Association created a WhatsApp group.

JANNEKE VAN RIEL

Sakher Edris, journalist and General Secretary of the Syrian Journalists Association, explains why the group was set up: "Armed forces belonging to Assad and Russia began with heavy shooting on Ghouta; they even targeted citizens and hospitals. After trying to contact the international media, we discovered that they no longer had access to news from the region. We started the WhatsApp group in February 2018 with about 10 members, but that soon grew to more than 80." Members include journalists and activists from Ghouta, and journalists from CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters, France 24 and Der Spiegel.

The WhatsApp group was one of the few ways the inhabitants of East Ghouta could place their story alongside the official reading of those in power. Edris: "International media use the group to verify facts and interview local people. When the Assad authorities denied having bombed civilian hospitals, we added a doctor to the group who had worked at one of those hospitals and could confirm it.

On April 7, 2018, international journalists received photos and videos of a chemical weapons attack via our WhatsApp group."

Impartial under all circumstances

Local journalists and activists provide impartial and factually correct information to the world, which is not easy in such harsh and volatile circumstances.

"Some freelance journalists now receive paid assignments from the international media."

So the Syrian Journalists Association started a second WhatsApp group, especially for journalists and activists in East Ghouta. Edris: "We help activists by providing guidelines for the use of impartial and professional terminology during their interviews and reports." The members were a sounding

board for each other and jointly acted as editorial moderator. Their crucial task: providing access to reliable, impartial and professional information locally and globally.

Edris: "We bring parties together and translate from Arabic into English. We are a bridge between activists and journalists in East Ghouta, and the international media, offering them contact with the outside world. Some freelance journalists now receive paid assignments from the international media."

A professional sector

Free Press Unlimited has contributed through a partnership, providing knowledge, money and strategy for the establishment and strengthening of the Syrian Journalists Association in 2013. As strategic partner, we support the Syrian Journalists Association enabling it to serve its members and maintain professional standards through forums, debates, networking activities, advocacy and training. ■

Young journalistic watchdog in Guatemala

Crimes against journalists and a shortage of funding make it difficult for independent media to publish stories about corruption and impunity in Guatemala. Digital news platform Nómada is a shining example of independent investigative journalism and freedom of expression.

BY OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

For three years, Nómada has exposed corruption and misappropriation issues with powerful reporting, enabling Guatemalans to hold the elite to account. It initiated the Latin American feminist women's magazine Volcánica. In 2017, with Free Press Unlimited support, Nómada published 24 high-quality thoroughly researched articles and blogs on transparency, justice and impunity, and won the National Prize for Journalism in Guatemala.

During elections in July, Nómada published secret recordings revealing how conservative parties in the election committee of the House of Representatives tried to sidestep the High Electoral Council, installed in 2015 in response to the population's demand for more transparency. The High Electoral Council held conspiring parliamentarians to account.

Bullet-proof glass

Journalists are already paying the price for their commitment to the truth. Eight were killed in 2017. The Nómada website, which attracts 350,000 visitors and 150,000 viewers of multimedia posts per month, was hacked and blocked, and the private tweets of the chief editor made public. With financial support from Free Press Unlimited, Nómada took safety measures, such as bullet-proof glass, an armoured car, extra website security and training in digital security protocols. ■





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Reporter Ali Haj Suleiman after the airstrike at Marzita town in South Idlib, Syria.

A story about a press freedom hero

Free Press Unlimited has played a crucial role in protecting Congolese journalist Tshivis Tshivuadi, who risked his life to defend press freedom in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thanks to this support, he can continue to do his crucial work.

NATALIA MERCHÁN

Violations of freedom of information are commonplace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is ranked 154 out of 180 in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index. Journalists work in dangerous, sometimes life-threatening situations where physical violence and arrests are common. Reporters without Borders reports that at least 11 journalists were murdered there between 2005 and 2015; the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. Sadly, Congolese

citizens are beginning to regard media censorship and attacks on journalists as normal. Action is needed. Everyone in DRC must make an effort to contribute to improving the country's general condition and to restoring democracy. As Tshivuadi says: "It is our responsibility to participate in the reconstruction of the country and the reinforcement of democracy."

Dangers and threats to journalists

In 1998, Tshivis Tshivuadi founded 'Journaliste en Danger' (JED), an independent organisation for the protection and promotion of press freedom in DRC. As General Secretary, he has a global coordinating role. One important activity is to monitor the state of press freedom in DRC, and to publish an annual report which lists the dangers and threats journalists face. Free Press Unlimited has been instrumental in funding the development and publication of the

report. Besides Free Press Unlimited, other international organisations and foreign embassies offer moral and other support to JED to improve its communication strategies.

As a result, JED was able to report on an increase in the number of attacks against journalists in DRC. Since 2016, the situation has been tense in DRC, as it prepares for elections. Tshivuadi holds the authorities responsible for several violent scenes between the opposition and President Joseph Kabila's government.

Men armed with rifles

In the November 2017 report, several high-ranking government members were listed as 'enemies of the press'. "In the last report we listed around 20 senior people. There have been a lot of reactions and threats against us. Clearly our report had a huge impact," says Tshivuadi.

A case in point is the night of 30 December 2017, when six men armed with rifles arrived at Tshivuadi's home,



"In defending others we defend ourselves"

- Tshivis Tshivuadi

assaulting guards and surrounding his property. Luckily, Tshivuadi was not at home, having already been forced to find a safe place to live. As yet there have been no political or legal measures to improve the freedom of the press in DRC. Meanwhile, heroes like Tshivuadi continue to advocate for a more democratic, free and open society in his country. ■

Help desk improves the **safety of journalists** in Nepal

ANNE BROEKSMA

Journalists in Nepal can now rely on the legal help desk of Freedom Forum, a social organisation based in Kathmandu, dedicated to press freedom and the right to information. It was set up 10 months ago by Ashmita Pokharel with support from Free Press Unlimited.

End to impunity

"In simple cases, like a confiscated camera, the first step is to publish a press release, which also makes it easier for other journalists to find us," she says. She will also telephone police stations. "But if necessary, I will visit the station. A journalist who had been locked up for twenty days was released after my visit."

Ashmita also contacts the families

of journalists who disappeared or were murdered during the civil war between 1996 and 2006. Ultimately, she hopes to put an end to impunity for these crimes.

Intimidation by local officials

The annual Freedom Forum report shows an increase in the number of violations of press freedom, especially at times of political unrest. Following national, provincial and municipal elections last year, Nepal now has municipal councils elected by the people. These local officials cannot deal with nosy journalists and resort to intimidation, which is becoming a serious problem. "If the Nepali government fails to protect these journalists, at least now they can call on Freedom Forum," concludes Ashmita. ■



"If the Nepali government fails to protect these journalists, at least now they can call on Freedom Forum"

- Ashmita Pokharel

"We do whatever we can to prevent terrible atrocities"



© Irina Raiu

Kees van Baar, **Human Rights Ambassador**, is leaving after four years in office.

He reflects on his cooperation with Free Press Unlimited and shares his vision on freedom of the press.

SAMUEL PEPERKAMP

In what way do you, as a Human Rights Ambassador, oppose impunity for crimes against journalists?

"I travel to countries where we have concerns about the human rights situation, but also countries where we see opportunities. We express our worries, work together wherever we can and try to make the governments aware of the importance of free expression. In a lot of these countries the civil laws are in place, but are ignored or even misused."

On what cases concerning freedom of the press have you been working?

"Too many to mention them all! For example, journalists in Central America and Mexico had to invest all their energy and money in lawsuits that powerful companies filed against them, to keep them from reporting on corruption and drug-related crimes. We supported them both financially and publicly. In Bangladesh we saw an increase in violence against journalists under the guise of fighting blasphemy: a blogger who reported on religion was hacked to death. We do whatever we can to prevent such atrocities."

Can you describe the cooperation between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Free Press Unlimited?

"In cooperation with Free Press Unlimited and UNESCO, we improved the monitoring of cases concerning violence and intimidation against journalists. By monitoring these cases, we assure journalists that they are looked after and show perpetrators that they cannot act violently without consequences. We also worked together on a project named Reporters Respond. This is a fund for social media workers who deal with a great amount of pressure. The fund helps them to restart their projects, or gives them some time out of the limelight, to relax and recharge."

Did the fate of your friend Sander Thoenes, who died while reporting on the political turmoil in East Timor, influence you?

"His death taught me how vulnerable journalists are. And even though these tragedies can occur, they should not be on the minds of journalists constantly. Otherwise they cannot do their work. And it is essential that journalists still report on those issues and in those areas, because they can make a decisive difference."

Do you have a message or words of advice for your successor?

"I believe that an ambassador should experience his or her position as a vocation and understand the importance of journalism. Journalists provide important information to the ambassador and the ambassador has access to higher levels of government to fight impunity for crimes against journalists. They need one another." ■





Men worldwide stand up for women in the media

Hundreds of men, working in the media in 14 countries, took to the streets on International Women's Day to stand up for their female colleagues. As part of Men4Women 2018, men from Free Press Unlimited's partner organisations in Bangladesh, Somalia, Nepal, Pakistan and DR Congo, spoke out for the right of women in the media to better rights and being portrayed more realistically.

Women all over the world are still underrepresented in the media, both in the positions they occupy and in the way they are represented. The Netherlands scores surprisingly badly: only 21 percent of Dutch media professionals are women. That is worse than in DR Congo (30%) and Pakistan (36%). When women are portrayed in the media, they are often portrayed in a stereotypical way. Women and girls, but also men and boys, have the right to see inspiring role models in the media.

Protests

All over the world, men took to the streets. With banners, music, debates and speeches, they

made Men4Women into a worldwide movement. In Bangladesh, activities were organised in 13 different places all over the country. In DR Congo and Somalia over 100 men participated and in Nepal over 500 men joined Men4Women. Other participating countries were Pakistan, Zambia, Indonesia, Central African Republic (CAR), Iraq, India, Venezuela, Nigeria and Mali. In the Netherlands, Free Press Unlimited and the 'Vaker in de Media' platform asked men at the Mediapark in Hilversum, in Amsterdam and online to speak out. Many Dutch men joined Men4Women, including radio host Jörgen Raymann.

Shout-outs

Men didn't just let their voices be heard on the streets, they also spoke out online. They did so by taking a picture with one of the 'shout-outs' featuring the special Men4Women frame for their profile picture on Facebook. The movement was widely shared and spread, using the hashtag #M4W18. This was the second year that Free Press Unlimited organised Men4Women on International Women's Day. Free Press Unlimited plans to make it an annual event, so join us next time! ■



Journalism through chat media

Early in the morning, an hour after Radio Dabanga's newsreader Ahmed announced the station's WhatsApp number to Sudanese listeners, hundreds of WhatsApp messages started pouring in. He and his team expected the initiative to be successful, but were overwhelmed by the sheer number of reactions. The app couldn't handle all the incoming messages and crashed.

ANNE KOEMANS AND IRINA RAIU

How it began

Radio Dabanga, the main source of reliable and independent news and information in Sudan, was founded in 2008. Despite government bans, it reported on the armed conflict in Darfur and delivered reliable independent news and life-saving information to people in rural areas. In 2013, Radio Dabanga launched a satellite TV channel to reach Sudan's city dwellers and decision makers who indirectly helped improve the situation in Darfur. Because this audience wanted reports on both regional and national issues, Radio Dabanga became a national media house.

Popularity of chat media

Applications like WhatsApp are crucial for gathering and spreading

news. The Sudanese are sociable and live in tight communities. However, circumstances have caused these communities to be dispersed throughout the country and other parts of the world. Social media and chat media keep them in touch with relatives and friends, and provide them with critical information.

Eager to contribute

Increased use of smart phones is making it easier for Radio Dabanga to communicate with the vast network of local sources who supply information on issues such as attacks on villages, humanitarian aid, gender-based violence etc. Since the announcement of the WhatsApp number, its audience is even more eager to contribute.



Applications like WhatsApp are crucial for gathering and spreading news.

Every morning Mustafa scans the individual chats and groups (doctors, lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, students, politicians etc.) in the app. "People from cities, rural areas and the Sudanese diaspora send feedback, greetings, news updates, pictures and questions," says Mustafa.

News gathering and distribution

Newsworthy information is discussed and assigned for fact checking and reporting. "When we received pictures of a fire in South Darfur, we verified that 50 houses were destroyed and reported it in our bulletin that evening," Mustafa explains. The Dabanga team uses WhatsApp for news gathering and distribution. "After our daily news bulletin, we share a summary via WhatsApp," says Mustafa. "If we forget to share on time, the reminders pour in." Radio Dabanga reaches approximately 25,000 people every day via WhatsApp and news is often reposted in other WhatsApp groups or on Facebook. ■

Hromadske.tv: the Ukraine's non-partisan television channel

In 2013, a team of Ukrainian journalists tendered their resignation. The TV station they worked for was about to fall under state control, and they could no longer guarantee objective and unbiased reporting. The journalists had always dreamt of setting up a public broadcaster in Ukraine, and so online TV channel Hromadske ('Public') was born.

ANNE KOEMANS

Hromadske, the premier platform for discovering and understanding developments in the Ukraine, broadcasts in Ukrainian, English and Russian on issues like the annexation of Crimea and the unrest in Eastern Ukraine. It had just been launched when the Euromaidan demonstrations, which led to the resignation of President Yanukovich and his government, broke out in November 2013. It quickly gained popularity thanks to live broadcasts from the streets of Kiev.

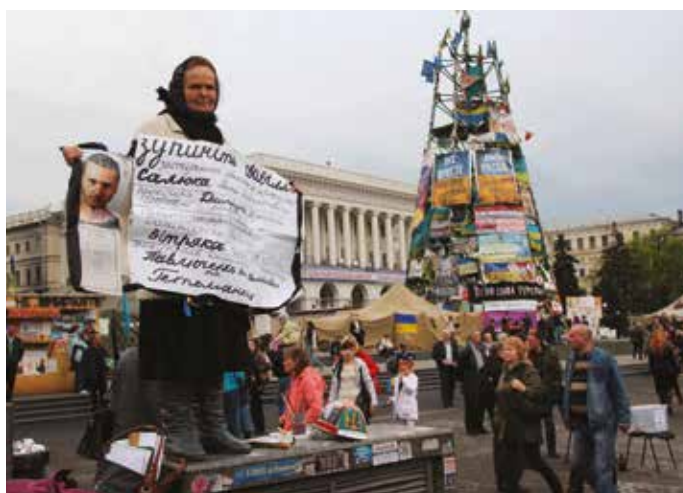
Rapid growth

In 2016, Hromadske was the first NGO in the Ukraine to be issued a broadcasting licence for cable and satellite networks. It increasingly takes on the role of a non-partisan public broadcaster – an institution that had not previously existed. Despite operating on a non-commercial basis out of a single studio, Hromadske has developed into a professional broadcaster with an audience of almost 1 million. The channel can be viewed on YouTube throughout the country, apart from the Crimean Peninsula where Hromadske's signal is blocked by the Russian government. Happily, many viewers have managed to bypass this restriction.

Trolls

Its non-partisan position isn't universally appreciated. In July 2016, Hromadske was targeted by an authorised

pro-government online trolling campaign. On its Facebook page, the Ukrainian army's press service accused Hromadske's reporters of smuggling a Russian journalist to the frontline and of revealing Ukrainian troop positions, exposing them to enemy fire. Hromadske's Director Katya Gorchinskaya recalls: "Within five minutes after this message was posted on Facebook, it had been shared over 360 times. Usually, a message like that has a few dozen shares at most. We received angry calls and social media messages from soldiers." Technical research by the channel revealed it was click fraud, which artificially boosts the number of likes for a post. ■



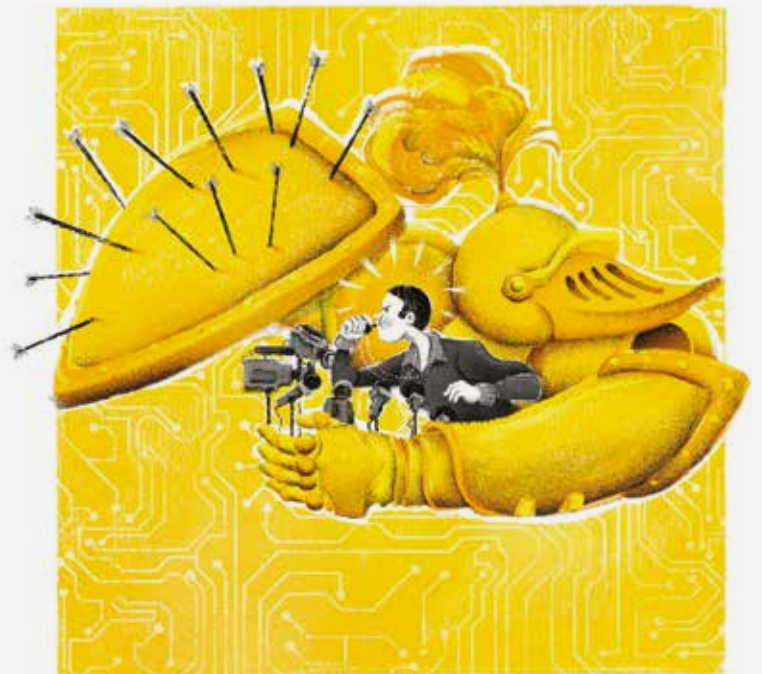
Russian Language News Exchange

The Russian Language News Exchange is a cooperation network of media from Central and Eastern European countries - and beyond. It started in 2015 as a first attempt to exchange Russian-language news and has grown into a unique multimedia and multi-platform, innovation-driven hub that gathers and disseminates the most relevant information for more than 40 million people. "Our main idea is to be stronger together. Independent media from this region often can't compete with big media on its own, but the network helps them to do it," says Natalia Marshalkovitch, the Prague-based editor-in-chief of the Exchange. Together with other experienced editors from the region, she manages the cooperation of media outlets working in or for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Ukraine, Russia, Baltic States and Central Asia. The cooperation, facilitated by Free Press Unlimited from its very start, has resulted in more than 1,500 trustworthy and fact-based stories reaching people of all walks of life in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

Publeaks connects whistleblowers to the media

Publeaks allows whistleblowers and journalists to communicate privately, anonymously and safely. Journalists undertake the important task of deciding on the relevance of tips and to verify the information. Only after a thorough investigation will a story be published to publicly expose wrongdoings. In this way, the public gets to hear about matters which the authorities, powerful businesses and criminal gangs want to keep under wraps.

Free Press Unlimited has been involved in setting up Publeaks in four countries: Mexico (*MéxicoLeaks*), Nigeria (*Leaks.ng*), Indonesia (*IndonesiaLeaks*) and the Netherlands (*Publeaks NL*). But the number of platforms around the world is growing. Free Press Unlimited will explore the possibilities for platforms in countries such as Pakistan and Tunisia. The Publeaks mission is to connect witnesses to the media, no matter who they are. ■



NIGERIA

Leaks.ng

- Since August 2017
- 25 media partners
- Dozens of tip-offs
- Dozens of publications



INDONESIA

Indonesialeaks

- Since December 2017
- Nine media partners
- Dozens of tip-offs
- Dozens of publications



MEXICO

Mexicoleaks

- Since March 2015
- Eight media partners
- Thousands of tip-offs
- Dozens of publications



THE NETHERLANDS

Publeaks NL

- Since September 2013
- 25 media partners
- Hundreds of tip-offs
- Dozens of publications

→ Continued from page 1

Indonesian investigative journalism exposes exploitation and corruption



The main challenge facing the Indonesian media used to be censorship. Now it is how to remain independent in a society where every stakeholder has their own agenda. For 46 years, Tempo has been the only independent publisher in Indonesia to publish investigative stories. Even during the Suharto regime, this weekly magazine and digital platform managed to maintain its watchdog role.

IRINA RAIU

Tempo excels at finding 'the story behind the story', but misses stories relevant to many citizens, because these occur far from the capital Jakarta, where it is based. To solve this, in 2017 Tempo and Free Press Unlimited organised a programme to train investigative journalists from all over Indonesia and to provide four or five months of personal guidance from a senior investigative journalist. They also worked actively with organisations like Greenpeace Indonesia and have

access to their unique sources and contacts.

Slave labour on fishing boats

With help from Taiwanese magazine The Reporter, Tempo has exposed serious injustices. One story published in 2017, concerned 40,000 Indonesians working 20-hour days as slave labourers on Taiwanese fishing boats. They were given little food and no clean drinking water and paid a pittance by the illegal recruitment agencies. They had false papers, were not registered to work, and were uninsured and unprotected. They were frequently beaten, sometimes to death. After the story's publication, the Indonesian government and national police created a committee to close the gaps in the system. After high-level talks between Indonesian and Taiwanese authorities, officials were arrested, civil servants fired, and regulations and supervision tightened. Another story revealed an organised network of human trafficking of maids between Indonesia and Malaysia.

On June 13th 2018, both reports received honourable mentions at the SOPA 2018 Awards for Editorial Excellence in the category 'Excellence in Investigative Reporting'.

Ruth de Vries, team leader at Free Press Unlimited: "We are proud of these honourable mentions. Our aim was to create a culture of investigative journalism in Indonesia. This can be a very effective way to increase transparency and to hold the authorities to account. We partnered with Tempo because of the long track record they have in the country and the shared goal to create a new generation of investigative reporters throughout the country."

Tempo lays a crucial foundation for professional, critical and independent journalism in Indonesia. Wahyu Dhyatmika, Managing Editor at Tempo: "We attach great importance to our independence, because our main reason for existing is to serve the public and thus build a more just society." ■

Journalists in Central America under extreme pressure

Physical, digital and psychological safety are basic requirements for independent journalism, especially in countries torn by violence. That is why, in 2017 in El Salvador, Free Press Unlimited organised safety training for media professionals from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Reporting in these central American countries, where bullets fly and the threat of kidnapping is ever-present, resembles a military exercise.

JACQUELINE SCHUILING

Participants are trained to prepare thoroughly and to make sure they carry the right equipment, such as a GPS, maps and a medical kit. They also learn to distinguish safe from unsafe terrain and to take care while marching through hostile territory. After all, their only weapon is a camera or a pen. The trainers also pay particular attention to psychological preparation and mental resilience.

What life-threatening risks am I taking today to report the news?

Keep calm

The work of journalists in Central America takes them into areas of extreme violence and areas run by drug gangs. Our safety training works on self-insight, calmness and a better work-life balance, prerequisites for delivering reliable news that



© Juan Carlos

matters to readers every time. This also counters the effects of the pressure and the violence journalists in Central America face.

For instance, while filming gangs extorting minibus drivers, Alex Cruz, a journalist in Guatemala, was robbed of his equipment at gunpoint. He lived to tell his story. He believes what saved him was that he had been trained to keep calm and not to panic.

Knowledge is life-saving

An extensive extortion industry is active in Central America. Drug gangs routinely infiltrate journalistic organisations to get information,

which leaves journalists asking themselves: what life-threatening risks am I taking today to report the news? Still they go out every night to report on the bloody tracks left by drug gangs and death squads. It's no surprise that they are traumatised. To ensure their safety, they need to know the special language used by gangs and be able to interpret and use their specific codes and signs. The training also attempts to give answers to questions such as: Who should I talk to? What should I do if I am approached for information via social media? How do I deal with online threats? And with shifts in the power of the cartels? This knowledge is life-saving. ■



Collaboration increases the safety of Iraqi journalists

JANNEKE VAN RIEL

On 26 December 2016, Iraqi journalist Afrah Shawqi was kidnapped from her home by armed men, shortly after she published an article on militias groups in Iraq. It triggered Free Press Unlimited to bring together international and Iraqi civil organisations and journalists and expose the ongoing crimes against journalists in Iraq. For the past eight years, the country has been ranked first or second on the Global Impunity Index of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Shawqi was freed after nine days, "thanks to the support from the population, solidarity and political pressure," as she herself says. It doesn't always end this well. Between May and November 2017, three journalists were murdered, and another three reporters attacked. Perpetrators are rarely prosecuted.

Solidarity is crucial

Media, civil society organisations and politics must form a united front to encourage the Iraqi government to act against this impunity, not an easy task in an extremely divided country like Iraq. Free Press Unlimited and several civil society organisations were asked to advise the government about the best way for dealing with individual cases of crimes against journalists and how to

increase the safety of journalists. A difficult task, as many organisations are so fragmented. Solidarity is crucial for the effective protection of journalists so Free Press Unlimited will continue to promote media solidarity and joint action against impunity.

Iraqi government takes the first steps against violence

Lobbying by Free Press Unlimited and UNESCO achieved an important breakthrough in 2017. On 3 May, they organised an event in Baghdad with the International Federation of Journalism on safety and impunity. Representatives from the government, civil society organisations and media discussed ways to break the silence about crimes against journalists. Millions of Iraqis followed the event live via eight TV channels.

Responding to so much media attention, in that same month the Ministry of the Interior published statistics on the number of journalists murdered. It was finally brought to light that since 2006 at least 125 journalists had been murdered in Iraq according to the ministry. Up to that point, Iraq, a United Nations member, had failed to comply with the obligation to disclose the number of journalists murdered in the country every year and whether judicial action had been taken to find the perpetrators. The report is a crucial step in the fight against impunity. ■

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The impact of our **community radio** fellowship programme in Bangladesh

INTERVIEW BY DENNIS BEDNAR AND ANNA GORTER



© Bashir Ahmed Sujan

How were you first introduced to the fellowship programme and how are you currently involved?

"In 2012, I was already listening to Radio Borendro when I heard of the fellowship programme, but it was only for females. I participated in the sixth batch for three months in 2017. I got recognition for a feature I wrote on a disabled boy with no hands who became the captain of a cricket team. Now I am a permanent voice reporter and presenter for Radio Borendro and I make my own programmes – local officials even know who I am.

"I can now provide a voice about our issues to the higher classes and those who have power and can influence others"

What has been the most significant change in your life since you participated in this programme?

"The most important change for

me is that being from this poor and disadvantaged Dalit community, I can now provide a voice about our issues to the higher classes and those who have power and can influence others."

Why is this change significant for you?

"You have to realize that as a Dalit, if we want an education we have to stay at other people's houses as there is no access to education in our community. I was lucky that I stayed with a journalist during my studies, I did groceries and worked for him in exchange for food and shelter. My father had met this man when he was writing a story about our Dalit community and so he approached him to ask if I could stay with him. He [the journalist] taught me some things about journalism too. So, as a member of the Dalit community, I know what issues we have and what rights we are not claiming. For example, fishermen in my community are not claiming their old-age benefits [pension]. During the fellowship, I wrote a feature on them and got a total of six fishermen their

Name: Subroto Halder
Age: 22
Occupation: Reporter/Presenter
Radio Borendro (part-time) and student
Location: Naogaon, Bangladesh
Partner: BNNRC

benefits from the government. In my district there are 95 Dalit families and only one, my own family, has educated people – me and my sister. Girls are usually given away at 10 or 11 for marriage to get money to survive. Seeing this, I felt responsible to stop it as the only educated one in my community.

My father is one of the leaders in my Dalit community, and even then my sister was being forced into child marriage. But I used my voice to convince my father to stop this so that she could also get an education. And now my sister is even going to participate in this Fellowship programme. I used my voice."

How has participating in the fellowship contributed to this change?

"The Fellowship helped give me financial support, for me and my family, and it also helped me create a better and stronger network because the name BNNRC was a way to get social recognition, especially as a Dalit. Now, key people know me and know that if I have any issue about my community, I can go directly to influential people." ■

The community radio fellowship programme in Bangladesh

Together with BNNRC (Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication) a community radio fellowship programme for young women, specifically Dalit women, has been developed. Over 120 fellows have been trained and, since 2017, young Dalit men have also been included. In May 2018, the Knowledge & Quality department of Free Press Unlimited evaluated the fellowship model using the Most Significant Change method, a story-based evaluation method to collect stories of change from the fellows themselves. Subroto Halder's story was selected by both BNNRC and Free Press Unlimited staff to highlight the impact of initiatives like this.

Free Press Unlimited in numbers 2018

Number of countries

43

Number of projects

67

Number of partners

100



With research articles, blogs and multimedia productions on corruption and misappropriation issues, **Nómada** holds the Guatemalan political and business elite to account. Its website attracts 350,000 visitors every month: mostly young people, but also politicians, decision-makers and CEOs.



With the increasing violence against journalists, the emergency fund **Reporters Respond** is more important than ever. In 2017, 140 journalists in distress received support from the fund, so they could immediately continue with their important work.



When Northern **Bangladesh** was hit by huge floods, five local radio stations continuously broadcast for 23 hours to inform and save the lives of **millions** of people in the affected areas. All 18 Bangladeshi community radio stations had recently been trained in fast and adequate reporting during disasters.

Somali female journalists lean in



Serious journalism in Somalia is traditionally a male stronghold. Women are expected to focus only on entertainment stories and often work under poor conditions. Media INK, partner of Free Press Unlimited, succeeded in breaking this tradition with targeted training and an unorthodox approach. Both the female journalists and their male chief editors were pleased with the results.

JANNEKE VAN RIEL AND JACQUELINE SCHUILING

Media INK took the first step, but it was the female journalists themselves who leaned in and showed their knowledge and expertise. Today it is their voices on the radio and their faces on TV that play an important role in encouraging public debate on a more equal Somali society.

Gender equality

Media INK's objective is to professionalise journalism in Somalia and achieve gender equality. It aims to promote the position and rights of Somali women and make sure basic facilities, such as women's toilets, are available. It also wants to see maternity leave introduced and equal pay for men and women. In addition, women should have the opportunity to follow worthwhile training programmes. For that reason, Media INK introduced a simple but effective rule: every training for journalists must have at least one female participant. The next step was to make sure the women could attend.

First, Media INK spoke with the editors. However, after convincing them, they stumbled on the next hurdle: the families and partners of the women, who did not always see the importance of women in the media and were concerned for the safety of their daughters and wives. Media INK employees decided on an unorthodox approach. They telephoned or visited families and made every effort to persuade them. They also promised to arrange separate accommodation for the women during training. In many cases they succeeded and the female journalists were able to take part in the training programmes.

They were concerned for the safety of their daughters and wives.

Women in leading positions

It looks like the Media INK approach works. Chief editors are now more proactive; they employ more women and send them to the training programmes. At the outset in 2012, only a handful of women attended, but by September 2017, 35% of the participants were women. In that same year, nine female journalists from eight radio stations were promoted to leading positions on their editorial teams. Furthermore, 13 of the 33 Somali radio stations now include maternity leave in their personnel policy.

Fatima Yusuf Said, programme maker and camera woman at WAABERI TV: "It didn't take long before my manager asked me to train colleagues, too. We now make more appealing programmes, and are better able to convey important information. My confidence has grown. I now supplement my small salary with assignments from other organisations." ■

More attention to the rights of children in Nepal thanks to youth news

ANNE BROEKSMA

Before NayaPusta was broadcast on Nepali television, not one programme paid any attention to the world of children. The youth news programme fulfils an important role, because those interviewed can speak freely. Sometimes a report sets the wheels in motion, and officials and communities come into action for the rights of children. NayaPusta is produced by Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ), a journalism organisation that is supported by Free Press Unlimited, with training, programme development and capacity building.

Stories from the children

NayaPusta can clearly influence the authorities. In one report, a 12-year-old boy shows the red marks on his legs where he has been beaten by the headmaster in front of his class because he was not good enough at gym. "When we went back for a follow-up story, the headmaster had been fired," says Swekshya Rimal, researcher at NayaPusta. "Corporal punishment is forbidden in Nepal, but still occurs on a regular basis." "We broadcast an interview with a nine-year-old girl from east Nepal whose father had committed suicide," Swekshya continues. "She was running the entire household single-handedly, and taking care of her sick

mother and her younger siblings." After the broadcast, the community reached out to help. "One woman said that she only found out about the family's situation after seeing NayaPusta."

In Nepal, children may experience other problems as well. Child marriage is illegal, but 37% of girls are married before they turn 18. They miss out on their education and are expected to take care of the housekeeping. A NayaPusta report may be the impetus for officials and communities to take action to protect their rights.

Stories from the provinces

This year, a training programme for stringers was organised in Kathmandu. Local journalists from all seven provinces of Nepal were trained in video journalism, specifically on reports for children, and now work closely with NayaPusta. Swekshya: "Children who see other children on TV will hopefully be encouraged to speak freely about their dreams, wishes or problems. After all," she says, "they have as much right to information and to freedom of expression as adults." Eleven local television stations have begun broadcasting NayaPusta and it is now also broadcast on the commercial channel, Avenues Television, immediately after the sports news, so adults also watch it. "NayaPusta shows adults the world of children. Adults have the power to improve that world," Swekshya concludes. ■



WADADA News for Kids

WADADA News for Kids' first show - the 10 Minuten Jeugd Journaal (10 minute kids news) - was broadcast in Suriname in 2004. Since then it has grown to become a worldwide cross-media cooperation and a network of news programmes for children and young people. It has spread across countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe, with more countries joining every year.

The children in these countries not only get access to local and national news, but also to information from and about other countries. Programme content is shared through an international multimedia library. For example, children from Myanmar also learn about the lives of children in Mexico, and vice versa. Their worlds and their knowledge are expanded and connected in this way. To guarantee the continuity of the youth media network it is looking for new funding partners. Today the network connects 20 countries worldwide and 15 of them are already self-reliant or sustainable. ■



10 years of Postcode Lottery Fund for Journalists

2018 marks the 10th anniversary of the Dutch Postcode Lottery Fund for Journalists. After signaling a decrease in in-depth foreign reporting in Dutch media, Free Press Unlimited and the Dutch Postcode Lottery created the special fund in 2008.

The fund aims to increase the number of internationally oriented (investigative) reports by financially supporting professional journalists to research and produce stories of humanitarian and/or environmental value. The money provided through the fund is meant to cover travel and accommodation costs abroad, and in some cases also pays for time and material spent on research. Since its launch, the fund has financially supported over 160 trips to countries all over the world resulting in over 300 publications.

The reports include articles, blogs, books, photo series and documentaries, and were made about subjects varying from the struggles of vanilla farmers in Madagascar, to the inhumane working conditions for women working in Bangladeshi factories. Free Press Unlimited manages the fund which means we collect and check all the proposals before sending them to an independent committee. This committee then decides which proposals fit the journalistic criteria and qualify for the fund. We are also the contact for all questions and updates the journalists might have regarding their travel and the publication of their story.

Best Report Award 'No Place for a Rebel'

At 10 years old, Opono was kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army and forced to become a child soldier in his own country, Uganda. After sixteen years, he escaped and returned home. For the next three years, journalists Maartje Wegdam and Ariadne Asimakopoulou followed him for the documentary 'No Place for a Rebel', which received the Best Report Award during Free Press Live.

JANNEKE VAN RIEL

"We wanted to tell the story of life after being a child soldier. Opono was optimistic, but faced several economic and social problems on his return to society. Who then is the victim and who is the perpetrator here? To give his story the depth and nuance it deserved, long-term trust and commitment were crucial," says Asimakopoulou. Wegdam and Asimakopoulou took time off from work and used their savings to visit Opono in

Uganda several times. They also received funding from the Postcode Lottery Fund for Journalists. "That was when we had run out of time and money, while the story was incomplete and not guaranteed to succeed. You need parties like that who believe you will make something worthwhile. That contribution enabled us to make one more trip, and with the footage we filmed then, more substantial funds came within our reach," says Wegdam.

Free Press Live

Shown in more than 10 countries, 'No Place for a Rebel' received the Best Report Award in November 2017, for reports made with the support of the Postcode Lottery Fund for Journalists. The award is presented annually during Free Press Live, an event organised by Free Press Unlimited about fighting impunity for violence against journalists. Wegdam: "Part of the prize money went into organising and attending screenings and discussions worldwide. Societies in many countries are faced with rehabilitation of fighters. We hope to keep the topic alive." ■

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'Keeping it Real', enhancing young people's digital resilience

ANDRE VAN DER VLUGT

Secretary-General Marie Dahllöf of the Swedish Postcode Foundation, which supports the project, says: "Social media is the most important source of information for many young people. They have trouble distinguishing reliable information from fake news. In developing and transition countries in particular, little attention is given to media literacy. We are happy to support Free Press Unlimited in the research into media use by young people. We

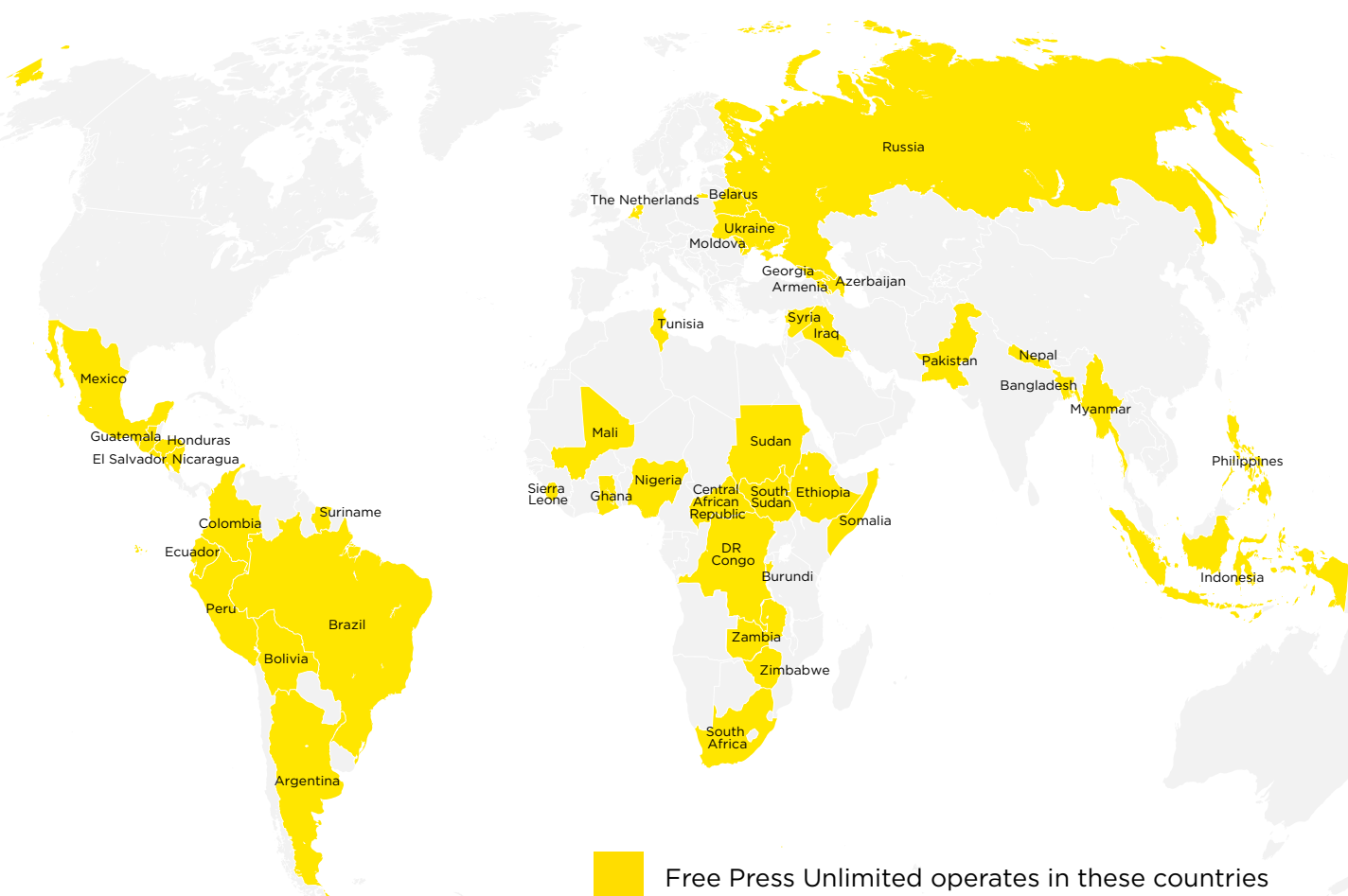
hope that this research will produce a useful toolkit to help them to identify false information and use real information."

Young people in the age group of the 'Keeping it Real' project, get almost all their news from social media and the internet, and often produce their own news stories to share with their peers. The project experts, together with the Free Press Unlimited partners and the young people in the three countries, investigate how they use their social media and distinguish reliable information

from fake news through observation and interviews. Jan-Willem Bult, youth and media expert at Free Press Unlimited: "If we can make a new generation resilient and critical in relation to fake news from the outset, then we can win the battle against it. Young people are themselves good media producers and distributors, but are in need of ethical rules. On the other hand, it is important for journalists to see how young people communicate and share their news. That is why research and the development of their ideas is so important." ■

Free Press Unlimited 2018

100 partners 67 projects 43 countries



Free Press Unlimited People deserve to know

Our vision is: People deserve to know. If you don't know what's going on around you, how can you make the right decisions? It is tragic then, that only one in seven people lives in a country with a free press. The annual check from the American organisation Freedom House shows that worldwide press freedom has dropped for the thirteenth consecutive year. Just one in seven world citizens has access to independent journalism; the other six are at the mercy of lies, half-truths or even, silence. Their right to information is being violated. According to UNESCO, every five days a media reporter is killed for doing their job. The perpetrators often go unpunished. We believe journalists should report the news, not be the news.

It is our mission to ensure that impartial information is available to people everywhere, today and in the future. The programmes run by Free Press Unlimited and its partners help journalists report and broadcast their stories, even in countries with little or no press freedom. If they are imprisoned or sabotaged, we help them get back to their vital work as soon as possible. We also fund local media outlets and train new journalists in countries where there is a dearth of (local) reporting.

In war zones and conflict areas, reliable news can be a matter of life and death. That is why we helped create a media charter to ensure fair journalism in Syria, and why the Free Press Unlimited offices in Amsterdam host Radio Dabanga, which broadcasts to 2 million listeners in Sudan. To help local media fulfill their vital role in society,

Free Press Unlimited vigorously promotes three key goals:

- 1 An enabling environment for the media, conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity.
- 2 Media that serve the interests of the public – both men and women – and act as a watchdog on their behalf.
- 3 Media professionals who work to the highest standards to ensure they are effective and sustainable.

These are the objectives we put our heart and soul into – every day. People deserve to know. To read more about our work, vision and mission, go to our website www.freepressunlimited.org

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Free Press Unlimited calls on the EC to take a stand against the killings of journalists

Free Press Unlimited and sixteen other organisations have urged the European Commission to take a firm stand and undertake concrete steps to better protect journalists within Europe, holding national governments accountable for impunity and for supporting press freedom and independence. Furthermore, Free Press Unlimited urged the Commission to take the lead and hold state officials and public figures to account for creating an environment in which the critical function of journalism is respected.

“I would like [...] to reiterate the Commission's commitment to media freedom and pluralism, including the protection of journalists, who are vital to the health of our democratic societies.”

- Frans Timmermans

On behalf of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission, replied that the murders had profoundly shocked the Commission. The Maltese and Slovak governments were requested to ensure a thorough investigation took place, to bring those responsible for the murders to justice.

Although Timmermans states in his letter that European member states are primarily responsible for the security of individuals, he does point out that since the crimes are cross-border in nature, information exchange and operational cooperation are crucial to solving them, as well as the support of Europol.

Free Press Unlimited monitors the efforts of the EC closely and will not hesitate to call for action again should this be necessary. On November 2nd, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, Free Press Unlimited will once again be calling attention to the safety of journalists. ■



Colophon

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