



IJH Hub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Impact Report

October 2022
to March 2023





IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Who we are and why we do what we do

The IJ Hub was born of a realisation that, although investigative journalists in Southern Africa may face substantial challenges individually, collectively they hold huge potential to change their societies for the better.

Investigative journalists and journalism centres are a prospect worth networking and nurturing, to increase their impact, to multiply their force. The IJ Hub, a non-profit based in South Africa, has set out to perform this important task by raising philanthropic funding for its member investigative journalism centres, by networking them, and by building editorial and organisational capacity among them and beyond.

This report offers a sense of what the centres have been busy with over the six months from October 2022 to March 2023. It also highlights the punch they pack above their weight.

The IJ Hub currently has **six** member investigative journalism centres, all of them in the SADC region of Southern Africa. A Membership Code and an Editorial Charter guide their conduct. The IJ Hub raises philanthropic funds and offers editorial as well as organisational support to five member centres. The sixth member centre, amaBhungane, does not require IJ Hub funding and support, but collaborates with the IJ Hub and other member centres on cross-border investigations and fellowships.





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SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Our Partners

The IJ Hub's members are the leading non-profit investigative journalism centres in each of their countries. Some may be small, but they pack a big punch. Collectively, they are a high-impact investigative force.

Together with the IJ Hub, our partners have done great things.

6 Countries

23 Journalists

22 Contributors



BLANTYRE
MALAWI

Platform for Investigative Journalism

Founded in 2020, the Platform is the youngest IJ Hub member centre. It has quickly established itself as the country's pre-eminent investigative outfit, walking away with the Overall Winner, Investigative Story of the Year, and Electronic Media House of the Year prizes at the 2022 Misa Malawi awards.

● Journalists: 2 / Contributors: 10



WINDHOEK
NAMIBIA

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

The investigative unit, founded in 2015, has undertaken and published major investigations into corruption and the abuse of power. Its series on the FishRot scandal culminated in the resignation and prosecution of senior officials and politicians.

● Journalists: 3 / Contributors: 4



LUSAKA
ZAMBIA

MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism

MakanDay was established in 2016. It is geared towards investigative journalism that serves the interests of the public. From small beginnings, it has made a name for itself with its combination of grassroots investigations and strong analysis.

● Journalists: 4 / Contributors: 3



JOHANNESBURG,
DURBAN AND CAPE TOWN,
SOUTH AFRICA

amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism

AmaBhungane (isiZulu for "the dung beetles") launched as an independent, non-profit newsroom in 2010 with the aim of developing investigative journalism to promote free, capable media and open, accountable, just democracy. Its hard-hitting exposés have earned it international acclaim.

The IJ Hub was spun off from amaBhungane in 2019. AmaBhungane now acts as a partner that collaborates with other member centres on stories, presents some workshops, and hosts IJ Hub fellows.

● Journalists: 8 / Contributors: 2



MBABANE
eSWATINI

Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism

Inhlase ("spark" in siSwati) registered as a non-profit in 2017. In Africa's last absolute monarchy, a country where few dare take on the powers that be, the centre has been hard at work uncovering corruption and making it public. It aims to ignite positive change in the country.

● Journalists: 3 / Contributors: 2



MASERU
LESOTHO

MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism

Founded in 2016, MNN is strongly living up to its vision to be the leading investigative journalism organisation in the Mountain Kingdom; promoting accountability and transparency; exposing corruption and wrongdoing; and promoting an open and democratic society.

● Journalists: 3 / Contributors: 1

Journalism

Journalists at the five IJ Hub-supported centres produce many impactful stories enabled by IJ Hub funding and editorial support.

On the right is a selection of 13 standout stories published from October 2022 to March 2023

"It's time to form a new kind of journalism that incorporates a new kind of thinking. Business as usual is not an option. The age of gatekeeping has been over for about 15 years and we are in an era where people are empowered to build their own media start-ups, doing everything from research and collaboration, to distribution and advertising, right from their phones."

~ President and founder of the Sustainable Journalism Partnership, Lars Tallert

Tenders for connected clique

The Namibian Investigative Unit

The investigation reveals how a clique of politically connected Namibians and their briefcase companies won lucrative tenders that were part of a wider N\$2.8 billion batch of government health contracts. One of these tenders was awarded to businessman Shapwa Kanyama's Amnics Trading company, which officially employs three permanent staff. This company won a two-year N\$650 million government medical supply contract, including condoms. Another tender worth N\$141 was awarded to a closed corporation that employs one person and is owned by the daughter of Saara Katiti who is a former TansNamib chief executive officer.

[Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#)

Impact: Both tenders were cancelled following a public outcry.

The N\$50m lithium mine 'heist'

The Namibian Investigative Unit

This series looked into mineral exploration in Namibia, especially lithium, which has attracted global attention because it powers the green economy. The story links three government officials to a lucrative lithium mining deal that enriched their friends and family. While the same group were also linked to a questionable copper mining license, the investigation shows how ministry officials use administrative loopholes to allegedly enrich their associates. [Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#) | [Read More 3](#)

A drug cartel godfather bid millions to buy obsolete military aircraft

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The PIJ collaborated with the Centre for Investigative Journalism to investigate a cache of

documents that allowed the journalists to expose how international drug lord Christopher Kinahan Sr. was involved in an audacious bid to purchase a fleet of Egyptian military transport planes, as he sought a safe haven and new bases close to drug-trafficking routes in Africa. [Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#)



Terminal silicosis – miners fight for compensation

Inhlase

Ex-miners who contracted silicosis and work related tuberculosis while working underground often die before getting their rightful compensation from the Tshiamiso Trust. This was set up by South Africa's six biggest mining companies to compensate miners suffering from these illnesses. Inhlase tracks how hard it is for ex-miners to get their rightful compensation and gets to the bottom of why this is so. [Read More](#)

Impact: Tshiamiso Trust officials visited Eswatini to meet government officials and discuss how to overcome the challenges ex-miners experience in getting their rightful compensation. The government has set up a multi-sectoral task force to help miners and ex-miners manage claim processes.

Fuelgate

Platform for Investigative Journalism

This investigation is based on a massive leak of confidential correspondence between senior government officials and business people. It exposes interference by powerful government officials and politicians into the state-owned oil company's fuel procurement. For example, one story shows how the embattled Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Colleen Zamba, lobbied, cajoled and pressured the state-owned National Oil Company of Malawi (NOCMA) to grant contracts to suppliers under the guise of the country's prevailing fuel emergency. This was not only unorthodox, it defied procurement procedures. Another story shows how a law firm belonging to former Justice Minister Samuel Tembenu is withholding over K660 million awarded by a court to NOCMA after the state-owned company terminated the law firm's contract for external legal services.

[Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#) | [Read More 3](#)

Impact: There is a criminal investigation into the matter.

The pastor and the orphans in his care

Platform for Investigative Journalism

PIJ's investigation into allegations of physical and mental abuse by a pastor at Kondanani Children's Village, which is where the pop star Madonna adopted her second child, culminated in a sex abuse scandal. The pastor, Ryan Lilli was accused of sexually abusing two orphans over a five year period. [Read More](#)

Impact: Lilli is facing charges of indecent assault. The magistrate's court found that he did not have a case to answer on charges of rape and sex with a minor. The trial is ongoing.

“When you are a woman investigative journalist trying to dig for information, they intimidate you. At times they even propose bribes so that you don’t divulge information about what they are doing. Another reality... is that you can be in danger of being raped or killed as a way of trying to silence you.”

~ Founder of Uweso Afrika Initiative,
Douce Namwezi

Homosexuality in an abusive prison system

Platform for Investigative Journalism

Malawi’s government neither permits nor recognises homosexuality. It remains a criminal offense. In prison, however, men have sexual relations with one another but, because no condoms are supplied or permitted and because asking for treatment for an STI is not an option inmates are dying from illnesses that are easy to treat. This combined with brutal conditions in these prisons means sexual preference is not always about choice – some male prisoners are forced or trapped into having sexual relationships with fellow prisoners to obtain favours such as space to sleep and money for their needs.

[Read More](#)

Impact: The Malawi Human Rights Commission has committed to look into the matter.

Mines pollute key rivers as government turns a blind eye

MNN

These stories raise uncomfortable questions about how mines in Lesotho are polluting key rivers that feed the Lesotho Water Highlands Project. They seem to do so without consequence. As Lesotho’s government ministries shift blame and justify not doing their job monitoring these mines due to a lack of funding, dangerous levels of toxic mining effluent enter key rivers. South Africa, which buys water from Lesotho, has expressed concern. [Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#) | [Read More 3](#) | [Read More 4](#)

Impact: After MNN published the stories, the Lesotho Chamber of Mines engaged two local journalists to write positive stories about the mining industry, paying each of them on top of their regular salaries from their respective media outlets. MNN has proof of this.



One of these reporters was sent to Cape Town for the Mining Indaba in February 2023. At this event, the Mining Indaba’s sustainability committee gave Letšeng Diamond Mine an award for “best practices in conserving water in the mine and surrounding communities”.

Lesotho’s department of water performed its own tests on water samples taken from the streams and creeks that flow down from the Letšeng Diamond Mine. We have a copy of their findings, which confirm pollution as revealed in MNN’s own tests. While MNN waits to see punitive measures taken against Letšeng, MNN will publish another story exposing this “confidential” report.

In April 2023, Letšeng Diamond Mine has also advertised for three water analysts to help the mine comply with national water standards.

As a result of MNN’s stories, attorneys in Lesotho have expressed interest in filing a case against the Letšeng Diamond Mine for pollution, which is illegal under the Lesotho Environmental Act.

Sex for cash on Lesotho Water Highlands Project

MNN

The story is about women in Lesotho who sell their bodies to construction workers at the site where the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is under construction. This project supplies clean water to South Africa’s Gauteng province which is the country’s economic hub. MNN’s research exposed sex-for-cash dealings that involves schoolgirls and causes many complex social problems for the community living near the construction sites. [Read More](#)

Impact: The Africa edition of Global Investigative Journalism picked up on this story. The director of the Seinoli Legal Centre also wrote an opinion piece on it for the Daily Maverick. Seinoli Legal Centre’s mission is a non-government organisation that aims to protect communities impacted by large development projects.



Textile industry dumps chemicals into Lesotho rivers

MNN

This investigation shows how Lesotho's textile factories flout laws and release toxic wastewater into water courses, including the Mohokare River that separates Lesotho and South Africa (where it is called the Caledon River). This water flows into the Orange-Senqu basin which extends across Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

[Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#) |
[Read More 3](#) | [Read More 4](#) | [Read More 5](#) |
[Read More 6](#)

Impact: The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), which is a body responsible for attracting foreign investment, tried to stop MNN from publishing this series. Officials said that the stories would damage "Lesotho's image" and potentially cause order cancellations and job loss. MNN went ahead with the stories.

MNN visited Maputsoe two months after publishing the stories and found that the industrial effluent no longer flowed through the villages. On Tuesday, 14 February 2023 the LNDC took out full-page adverts in local newspapers that read: "LNDC is currently conducting an investigation into allegations of water pollution in Ha Tikoe/Thetsane". On the 2nd of March 2023 MNN received a letter from a law firm representing Vishan Clothing demanding a retraction of the series. It claimed that some of its orders had been cancelled as a result of MNN's story. The letter threatened to take MNN to court if it failed to retract the story. MNN did not retract it and has heard nothing more from the company or its lawyers.





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Journalism

...continued

Boast:



Our investigative journalist Sechaba Mokhehi's *Gone with the Wind* story (see IJ Hub Impact Report April to September 2022) was rated the best among the Oxpeckers Centre for Investigative Journalism's Data-driven Reporting on Green Energy in Africa project in 2022. The Centre for Investigative Journalism invited him to share tools he used in his investigation at a conference in London. MNN also launched a book titled "Pollution, Profits and the People" authored by MNN's former fellow Pascalinah Kabi. It exposes environmental injustices against vulnerable communities living near Lesotho's diamond mines.

Manganese mining causing Parkinson's-like disease

MakanDay

This is part of an ongoing investigation into manganese miners who, because of their exposure to manganese over years of working in mines, are developing a neurological condition with symptoms that are similar to Parkinson's disease. This is threatening the lives of many residents in areas where manganese is a major source of income. It raises questions about the safety of workers in Zambia. [Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#) | [Read More 3](#)

Impact: The Human Rights Commission has launched an investigation. A senior officer at the commission, Lucy Munthali, confirmed to MakanDay that the investigation is a direct result of the stories.

The business of potholes raises a bigger democratic question of a new dawn

MakanDay

This story looks into the state of Zambia's potholed roads and asks why the government is not using significant funds it collects from tolls to fix them. The issue raises questions about President Hakainde Hichilema's promise that his rule would usher in a new dawn. [Read More 1](#)

Impact: We have noticed some works (patching potholes) on a number of roads in Lusaka. It is unclear if this is a direct result of MakanDay's work but the links to the story have been shared with the presidency and relevant ministries.

Recruited from prison to fight for Russia in Ukraine

MakanDay

Lemekani Nyirenda was a second year nuclear engineering student at Moscow Engineering Physics Institute before his imprisonment in April 2020. He was serving a nine-year prison sentence at Tyer Medium Security Prison on the outskirts of Moscow for drug possession. While in prison he was recruited to fight for Russia in the war against Ukraine. His family did not know about this. The Wagner Group, which is a private military outfit, has admitted to recruiting the 23-year old from prison, claiming the young man willingly agreed to go and fight against Ukraine. Nyirenda died while fighting for Russia in September 2022. His family was informed six weeks after his death. They fear Nyirenda was forced to go an fight. MakanDay's investigation into this matter continues. [Read More](#)

Impact: This story attracted significant attention on social media and in the international media.



Workshops

To strengthen the field of investigative journalism in the region, the IJ Hub and its member centres also plough back via workshops and fellowships.

6

Workshops

138

Participants

IJ Hub workshops

We arrange and host workshops on topics relevant to investigative journalism and tailored to our member centres' needs. The aim is to inspire and transfer skills to member centres and other journalists leading to high quality stories that hold power to account and increase accountability in the region

How to speak so your audience will listen

24 JANUARY 2023 *(5 Participants)*

This two-hour workshop was designed for the Inhlase team who needed help developing a social media strategy to promote stories. The workshop was hosted by social media and data specialist Adam Oxford. The workshop dealt with audience development in general, including the concepts of a loyalty funnel and building user persona. This stimulated conversation and ideas about what might be appropriate social media to use and how to measure readership. The workshop also introduced the concept of segmentation in Google Analytics and set out how to monitor success for social media channels. It came with warnings about vanity metrics and also explored the power of visual stories, infographics as well as how best to call readers to action.

Supercharge your browser for better OSINT investigations

15 FEBRUARY 2023 *(2 participants)*

This workshop was hosted by Roelof Temmingh, managing director of Vortimo. The aim was to help the Platform of Investigative Journalism with a specific investigation and, at the same time, expose the journalist to new investigative tools. This is part of the IJ Hub's intention to provide more bespoke training.

Why is investigative journalism important?

14 FEBRUARY 2023 *(50 participants)*

The Anti-Corruption Commission organised an investigative journalism training workshop for Zambian journalists in private and public institutions. MakanDay was invited to facilitate a two-hour session on investigative journalism and how it can help in the fight against corruption. This is a sign of the recognition that MakanDay is receiving for its work in Zambia

Stakeholders' engagement meeting:

17 FEBRUARY 2023 *(30 participants)*

The Free Press Initiative is implementing a project to support the development of a curriculum for investigative journalism in Zambian colleges and universities. MakanDay, which is part of the initiative, used its experience to share some of the challenges facing the growth of investigative journalism in Zambia. The first meeting was held by representatives of all key universities (including the University of Zambia) and colleges, the ministry of media and information as well as the Curriculum Development Centre.

PIJ Investigative Journalism guest lecture to journalism students

10 FEBRUARY *(23 participants)*

The PIJ was invited to speak to journalism students at the Media Institute of Journalism about critical role investigative journalism plays in exposing corruption and, in the end, holding people in power to account on behalf of ordinary citizens.

Investigative journalism and corruption

3 JANUARY 2023 *(28 participants)*

The Platform for Investigative Journalism hosted this workshop which was attended by investigative journalists, members of the Media Council of Malawi and government's Anti-Corruption Bureau. (ACB). The PIJ was asked by the ACB to provide training to other journalists on how to use investigative journalism to expose corruption.



Fellowships

We arrange and fund three-month fellowships at member centres and other investigative newsrooms. The aim is to enhance investigative skills at member centres and in the region generally (as talented journalists outside of member centres also qualify). Some member centres also host fellows independently of IJ Hub support.



Timo Shihepo

1 October – 31 December 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Namibia
hosted by amaBhungane
in Johannesburg



Suzgo Chitete

1 January – 31 March 2023

IJ Hub fellow from Malawi
hosted by amaBhungane
in Johannesburg



Pamela Kapekela

3 October - 31 December 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Zambia
hosted by MekanDay in Zambia



Josephine Chinele

1 January – 31 March 2023

IJ Hub fellow from Malawi
hosted by the Platform for Investigative
Journalism in Malawi



Thomas Kachere

1 February – 30 April 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Malawi
hosted by GroundUp in Cape Town

3

Cross-border

2

In-country



Editorial support and syndication system

We provide story editing, mentoring, publication and networking assistance to member centres.

"The number one challenge is access to resources. As you know, investigative journalism is expensive. An investigation may require you to go to a certain location for three weeks with a production crew. They often do budgets that they take to their editors and their editors just say wow, what is the opportunity cost of spending \$15,000 on your story? And because many of the newsrooms do not have the budget, many of these stories never make it to print or to broadcast."

~ Solomon Serwanjja, founder of the African Institute for Investigative Journalism

In September 2022, after protracted consultation and planning with member centres, the IJ Hub kicked off a syndication service. This means working more closely with journalists from member centres to prepare and circulate important stories to the rest of the network for publication. The benefits are clear: If member centres regularly publish each other's stories, each gets a bigger, region-wide audience, and each has more material with which to make its own website more valuable to readers.

[Read More 1](#) | [Read More 2](#) | [Read More 3](#) | [Read More 4](#) | [Read More 5](#)

22

Stories supported with editing

5

Stories syndicated during review period



Get involved

IJ Hub member centres do not have pay-walls or advertising. They rely on charitable funds to uncover the stories that the powerful and crooked want to keep secret. You can help by donating to the IJ Hub for disbursement or to the centres directly.

To find out more, contact the IJ Hub's managing partners:

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- Troye Lund: troye_ijhub@icloud.com





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THE NAMIBIAN
INVESTIGATIVE UNIT