



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Impact Report

October 2024 to March 2025





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 2024 to March 2025. It also highlights the punch they pack above their weight.

The IJ Hub currently has **seven** 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 amaBhungane and

Oxpecker member centres do not require IJ Hub funding and support, but collaborate with the IJ Hub and other member centres on cross-border investigations and fellowships.



ZAMBIA
Lusaka

The MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism

MALAWI
Blantyre

The Platform for Investigative Journalism

ESWATINI
Mbabane

The Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism

LESOTHO
Maseru

The MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism

NAMIBIA
Windhoek

The Investigative Unit of The Namibian

SOUTH AFRICA
Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town

AmaBhungane

SOUTH AFRICA
Mbombela, Durban and Cape Town

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental 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

28 Journalists

42 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, award-winning investigative outfit.

● 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: 4



MBOMBELA,
DURBAN AND
CAPE TOWN,
SOUTH AFRICA

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

Founded in 2012, Oxpeckers is Africa's first journalistic investigation unit focusing on environmental issues. It combines traditional investigative reporting with data analysis and geo-mapping tools to expose eco-offences and track organised criminal syndicates.

● Journalists: 10 / Contributors: 18



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: 2 / Contributors: 10



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 an 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 fellows.

● Journalists: 6 / Contributors: 1



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: 2 / Contributors: 3



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: 2

Journalism

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

On the right is a selection of 17 standout stories published from October 2024 to March 2025.

Defence Ministry Pays N\$60m to company that failed to deliver

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

The defence ministry paid Enercon N\$60 million in 2025, despite cancelling its contract for failing to deliver fuel for six months. Enercon is a part state-owned company that is also linked to other scandals. The payment followed a legal directive, based on a clause dubbed the “devil’s clause” that requires government to pay even after termination. This raises questions over Namibian government contract terms.

[Read more](#)

No answers: Zambia’s police failing murder victims

MakanDay

The story uncovers a widespread pattern of unsolved murder cases in Zambia and the desperate need for reform in Zambia’s criminal justice system. The failure of Zambia’s police to effectively investigate and solve murder cases causes deep frustrations among families who are left without justice or explanations for police inaction, negligence and broken promises. Victims’ families are calling for accountability, while police try to defend their record amid mounting criticism.

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

[Read more 4](#)

Consequence: After MakanDay published the story, the Police Public Complaints Commission announced that two of the cases mentioned in the story had been re-opened and the officers involved were being investigated for possible misconduct.

Power crisis: How droughts drain hydropower and skyrocket energy costs

MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism

The two-part series highlights the severe impact of droughts on Lesotho’s hydropower generation, which exacerbates the country’s power crisis. The stories detail how dry spells have reduced the water levels in key dams, crippling the country’s ability to generate hydroelectric power. This forces Lesotho to import expensive electricity which places further strain on the economy and Lesotho citizens battling to make ends meet.

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

Impact: Two months after the story was published, an NGO called Equal Rights and Justice approached the High Court of Lesotho asking for amendments to the 1986 Lesotho Highlands Water Project Treaty, a bilateral agreement between Lesotho and South Africa signed during apartheid and military rule. Citing both of our stories, the NGO argued that certain sections of the treaty are unconstitutional and must be revised to ensure that both nations uphold the principles of equitable and reasonable utilisation, as well as the sustainable development of the river systems involved.

How a migrant trafficking syndicate took over Malawi

Platform for Investigative Journalism

After six months of investigation and traveling the treacherous routes used by human traffickers, journalists expose a chilling underworld of exploitation involving a network that preys on vulnerable migrants. Kingpins are protected by powerful but corrupt government officials. The result is a ruthless but lucrative business that leaves a trail of death and despair.

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



Journalism

... continued

Boast: *The Namibian's* Investigative Unit swept the board at the 2024 Editors' Forum of Namibia (EFN) Journalism Awards held in November. It secured four awards, including Journalist of the Year for Sonja Smith as well as awards in other categories for Timo Shihepo and Esther Mbathera.



Help on the inside: Officials help rhino poachers and smugglers

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

This deep dive into cross border rhino horn poaching and smuggling exposes the role of corrupt law enforcement officials in facilitating illegal cross-border rhino horn trade between South Africa and Mozambique. Journalists speak to insiders who explain how police at border posts, like Lebombo, often ignore or accept bribes from traffickers. Smugglers use small, less-regulated routes and insider connections to evade detection. Experts explain that poor border enforcement and weak coordination between agencies enable these criminal networks to thrive. This corruption undermines anti-poaching efforts and fuels the illegal wildlife trade.

[Read more](#)

Impact: Days after publication, the South African government launched the Border Management and Immigration Anti-Corruption Forum to clamp down on this type of corruption.

Favouritism and a N\$6m road maintenance tender

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

This story reveals how the CEO of Roads Contractor Company (RCC) Dasius Nelumbu, who is already being investigated by the country's Anti-Corruption Commission, allegedly awarded a N\$6 million road maintenance tender to the Ondonga and Oukwanyama Traditional Authorities, despite their lack of capacity to execute the work. Both authorities subcontracted the project to local companies with the necessary equipment. Nelumbu defended the decision as a "social allocation" to support communities. Critics question the legitimacy of the tender, especially since the authorities lacked the required grading units.

[Read more](#)

Impact: The state-owned company Roads Authority of Namibia publicly labelled the RCC's actions illegal. The story also sparked demands from other traditional authorities (Khomanin) for similar tender benefits and opportunities, indicating broader implications for fairness in public contracting.

Critical balance: Mineral wealth, social justice and economic growth

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

As South Africa positions itself as a key player in the global green energy transition, critical minerals like lithium are at the forefront of this economic strategy. As new lithium mining projects in KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape move forward, the country aims to tap into the growing demand for minerals essential to electric vehicles and energy storage. However, these projects face significant opposition from local communities concerned about land rights, environmental damage and inadequate consultation. The story underscores the tensions between economic growth, social justice and sustainable development in the race for transition minerals.

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

[Read more 4](#)

Dubious injury claims

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The investigation exposes a group of unethical lawyers who defraud a major tea producer in Malawi, Conforzi. They do so by filing an alarmingly long list of claims under the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act.

The investigation involved scouring a cache of documents. The ramifications of this investigation go beyond one company's financial losses; they strike at the core of justice in Malawi where there are growing public calls for judicial accountability.

[Read more](#)



Journalism

... continued

Boast: After the publication of *Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism's #PowerTracker series on renewable energy in November 2024 a new matchmaking platform for green energy funding was set up by the JET Project Management Unit (PMU), offering solutions to coal-dependent communities at the frontline of SA's energy transition.*



In a follow-up blog titled 'We asked – the PMU has answered' ([Read more](#)), we described how this funding platform would work. Launched in Mpumalanga, it prioritises initiatives such as community-owned renewable energy models and reskilling programmes, with the aim of delivering practical and accessible solutions directly to those who need them most.

Stuck in limbo: Forgotten resettlement victims

MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism

This article explores the plight of five households displaced for the construction of Mohale Dam in Lesotho, who are still fighting for compensation 20 years after resettlement. The families were promised funds to compensate for the loss of grazing land, medicinal plants, and other vital resources, but they have yet to receive their due. Instead, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) insists on communal compensation, which the resettled families argue is unfair. Despite legal battles and promises from the LHDA, the families remain in limbo, hoping for a fair resolution.

[Read more](#)

Impact: Following a meeting with LHDA and consultants in January 2025, residents are now voicing concerns and pushing for better resettlement packages after learning from the experiences of those resettled earlier.

The dead mother is alive

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The investigation unpacks a complicated web of corruption and human trafficking. The report explores illegal adoption in Malawi which involves key figures, including a former government minister. It further explores the international aspect, as the U.S. Embassy raised concerns over the legitimacy of the death certificates during the adoption process, leading to a broader investigation into unethical adoption practices in Malawi. Agness' brave decision to speak out despite threats to her life is a key moment in the investigation.

[Read more](#)

Impossible choice: Housing or cash

MakanDay

The story reveals the struggles of former Southern Africa Ferro Alloys (SAFAL) workers who developed serious health conditions from manganese exposure. They are divided into two groups: one seeking housing from SAFAL, while the other wants cash compensation.

Despite the company offering housing, many workers feel it is insufficient. A local MP has intervened to mediate, but challenges persist, including unclear land agreements for housing and inadequate financial support. Legal action and ongoing health issues underscore the workers' distress and fight for justice.

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

[Read more 4](#) | [Read more 5](#) | [Read more 6](#)

[Read more 7](#)

Impact: MakanDay was invited to participate in the 2024 Zambia Anti-Corruption Conference (ZACC), hosted by Transparency International Zambia in October where it highlighted this story as an example of an ongoing human rights issue that has been largely ignored by both the government and the international community.

[Read more](#)



Missing medical records for ex-miners means no compensation

Inhlase

Mineworkers from Eswatini who worked on South African mines and retired without getting their medical records are unable to get proper medical treatment or compensation for respiratory diseases such as TB, silicosis, and other work-related illnesses. With their medical records withheld by their former employers, 98 percent of these workers are unable to access their medical histories. This also means there is a backlog of unclaimed benefits. Many of these workers die in poverty and their dependents are left without access to these unclaimed benefits.

[Read more](#)

Impact: Government and the Mineworkers Provident Fund plan to locate 581 former miners who haven't claimed their benefits.

Africa's biggest trout farm: Broken promises and mismanaged funds

MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism

SanLei Premium Trout, claiming to be Africa's largest trout farm, has faced criticism for its failure to deliver promised community benefits despite the significant impact of its operations in the Katse Dam catchment area. The company contributed a mere R5,000 to the Catchment Resilience Fund, which was intended to support local farmers facing challenges due to the environmental changes caused by the dam. The fund, however, collapsed after less than a year, with the money misused for unrelated purposes. Despite ongoing environmental struggles in the region, SanLei has yet to address these concerns or revitalise the fund, leaving many in the community disenfranchised.

[Read more](#)

Impact: Community pressure has increased to revive the fund.

Journalism

... continued



Boast: *The Platform for Investigative Journalism's story that exposed how a U.S. couple running a Christian charity registered in the U.S. and Malawi used funds for their luxury lifestyle was named by the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) as one of the best investigative stories out of Sub Saharan Africa in 2024.*

The story was also picked up and followed by an Arkansas-based NBC affiliate KARK TV and The Wall Street Journal. The U.S. Diplomatic Security Services — an arm of the State Department — launched a criminal investigation into this case in June 2024.

Eswatini's farm subsidies benefit rich not poor

Inhlase

While wealthy emaSwati benefit from the E59 million Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP), people with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly, who rely on modest social grants of E400 and E500 respectively, are excluded from the scheme. This programme was designed to help vulnerable groups cope with the rising costs of farm inputs and tractor hire. The exclusion of PWDs is a clear violation of Eswatini's legal and international obligations to promote inclusivity. It also raises concerns about the government's commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Agenda 2030, which emphasises: "No one is left behind."

[Read more](#)

Germany threatens to cut funds for hydrogen project

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

The German government wants answers and may stop funding Namibia's Dâures Green Hydrogen project, which has spent N\$232 million to set up the country's green hydrogen village project. Following delays, setbacks and cost overruns, Germany is considering its options which means the Namibian government may be asked to step in.

[Read more](#)



Blowing the whistle is a dangerous business

MakanDay

This investigation is one that MakanDay has been involved in since 2021. It exposes a massive corruption scandal in Zambia's Ministry of Finance. The deeply rooted corruption also makes it dangerous for insiders wanting to blow the whistle as Grandy Ntumbo discovered and as MakanDay can reveal. Despite evidence of a 30-year money laundering scheme, key officials continue to evade arrest, and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has yet to take action.

[Read more](#)

Impact: Following this story, the European Union has requested a meeting with the whistleblower.



The helium gamble

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

An ambitious helium and natural gas project in South Africa's Free State province, which is spearheaded by Renergen, aims to turn the town of Virginia into a major energy hub. The project is set to produce the country's first liquid helium and has the potential to become one of the world's leading helium producers. Despite the project's promise, concerns over environmental risks and its impact on the transition to renewable energy persist. The development of the helium hub offers both economic opportunities and challenges for South Africa's energy future.

[Read more](#)



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.

5

Workshops

58

Participants

IJ Hub workshops

We arrange and host workshops on topics that are relevant to investigative journalism and tailored to the needs of our member centres. The aim is to inspire and transfer skills to member centres and other journalists – and in so doing, facilitate the generation of high-quality stories that hold the powerful to account and increase accountability in the region.

Zooming Story Maps in Flourish

Date: 19 March
Participants: 15

Participants learned how to create engaging, interactive maps to enhance their stories and add visual appeal, guided by Adam Oxford and specialists from the Africa Data Hub.

Investigating corruption 101

Date: 30 September to 4 October
Participants: 11

The training by MakaanDay and BBC Media Action combined essential investigative skills, including theoretical knowledge and practical exercises, empowering participants to produce impactful investigative stories that could prompt action from relevant authorities.

Scrolly storytelling with data

Date: 11 February 2025
Participants: 12

Participants were introduced to a digital storytelling technique called scrollytelling, which combines text, images, graphics, video, maps, and data visualizations that dynamically change as the user scrolls through the page. The workshop hosted by Adam Oxford and Africa Data Hub was aimed at telling complicated stories in a more visual, interesting way.

Exposing wildlife crime

Date: 10 to 22 November 2024
Participants: 10

MakaanDay took participants through the steps of monitoring and investigating crimes against nature, including wildlife, which are on the rise and which are often facilitated by corrupt officials.



Deepening democracy project

Date: 28 to 29 March 2025
Participants: 10

Journalists in Lusaka were hosted by the BBC Media Action and trained by MakaanDay on key tools to pursue a series of corruption-related stories.



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.

2

In-country



Julius Mbewe

October 2024 - February 2025
PIJ fellow hosted in Malawi



Owen Gagare

January - March 2025
IJ Hub fellow hosted in Zimbabwe

Editorial support & syndication system

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

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](#)

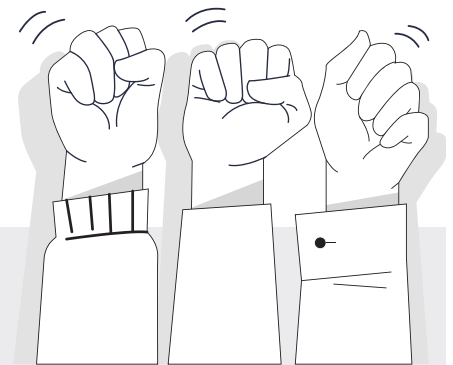
[Read more 4](#) | [Read more 5](#)

22

stories supported
with editing

5

stories syndicated



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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