



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Impact Report

April to September 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 April to September 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, fellowships and skills development.





IJHub

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

30 Journalists

25 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: 4 / Contributors: 6



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



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: 13



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



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: 5 / 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: 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 / Contributors: 1

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 18 standout stories published from April to September 2025.

ACB boss kills probe into Lilongwe mayor's land scandal

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The Director of Malawi's Anti-Corruption Bureau shut down an investigation exposing the Lilongwe mayor's illegal allocation of 70 prime plots to herself and allies just months before elections. The investigation revealed the involvement of presidential palace officials and ruling party insiders.

Impact: Sparked public debate on corruption and may lead to accountability under the new administration.

[Read more](#)

Pangas and politics

Platform for Investigative Journalism

Two politically connected men brutally attacked activist Silvester Namiwa in full view of police, exposing a network of hired enforcers tied to the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and a pattern of political violence.

Impact: Exposed impunity and raised awareness of threats against activists.

[Read more](#)



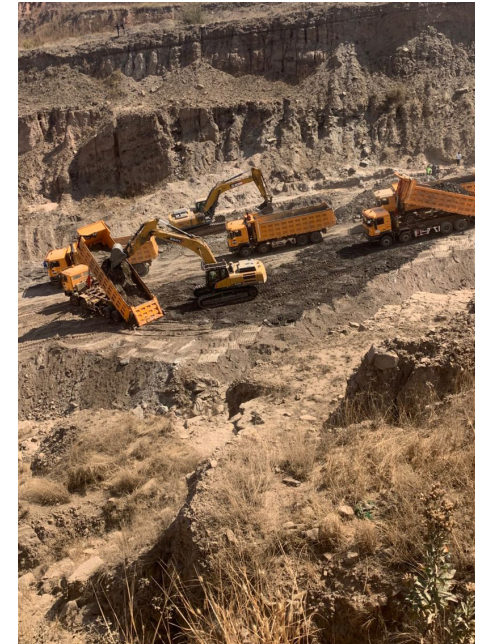
Infighting paralyzes public education

Inhlase

Factional power struggles marked by infighting among Eswatini's top education officials have brought schools and public services to a standstill, affecting thousands of learners.

Impact: The principal secretary was given early retirement. The Minister of Education also reported the incumbent to the Secretary to the Cabinet for misconduct.

[Read more](#)



Construction contractor suspended for polluting rivers

MNN

A Lesotho Highlands Water Project contractor contaminated local rivers with acidic and oily wastewater, threatening community health and livelihoods. The investigation triggered regulatory action.

Impact: The story prompted a formal statement from South Africa's Democratic Alliance, calling for an urgent investigation. In response, Minister of Water and Sanitation Pemmy Majodina issued her own statement and later visited the project site in Lesotho.

[Read more](#)



On the brink of collapse: Eswatini mobile's E13m debt

Inhlase

Eswatini's state-owned telecommunications company controversially wrote off millions owed by a private competitor, raising serious questions about governance and fairness.

[Read more](#)

Boast: *The PIJ Gleaner is here - a quarterly roundup highlighting PIJ's investigative stories, capacity-building efforts, and the issues shaping investigative journalism across Malawi and Southern Africa.*

[Read more](#)



First contact

MakanDay

Hundreds of young African women are being recruited to Russia to build drones. This investigation traces the recruitment pipeline from Zambia to a military-industrial complex in Alabuga, Russia.

[Read more](#)

Impact: MakanDay's first story on Russia's Alabuga programme inspired journalists in seven other countries to pursue their own investigations, resulting in a significant cross-border collaboration.

Inside Zambia's 'jobs for sale' syndicate

MakanDay

Desperate job seekers are paying up to K40,000 for non-existent public health positions. The investigation identifies the people behind this corruption.

[Read more](#)

Impact: The alleged agent behind the scam, an employee of the state power company, Zesco, was suspended from work, pending investigations by his employer.



Bankrupt Romanian company and state tenders in Malawi

Platform for Investigative Journalism

A Romanian company with a history of insolvency is securing Malawi government contracts and funding despite legal and financial troubles, revealing links between corporate interests and political influence.

[Read more](#)



Sino metals spill: Disaster too big to bury

MakanDay

A Chinese state-owned copper mine's waste dam collapse devastated communities and rivers. This report documents the environmental and human impact of one of Zambia's worst mining disasters.

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

Impact: MakanDay's reporting prompted NGOs and independent groups to take up the issue and call for justice. In recognition of this work, the managing editor was invited to speak on a public discussion programme organised by Lusaka based business consultancy PRS 365.



Journalism

... continued



Boast: A documentary produced by our Lesotho-based member centre, MNN was featured in Films Investigating Global Manufacturing – a special screening at the Environmental Film Festival in Washington D.C.

This international compilation showcases urgent stories exploring the hidden costs of global production – and MNN's documentary is featured from 33:33 minutes in.

[Watch it here:](#)

Wounded in combat, short changed at home

MNN

Twenty Lesotho Defence Force soldiers wounded on SADC Missions in Mozambique (SAMIM) in 2021 claim they were underpaid due to flawed disability calculations, leaving them without fair compensation.

[Read more](#)

Impact: After our report on injured LDF soldiers, Basotho National Party leader and MP Machesetsa Mofomobe questioned the Defence Minister in Parliament. His question was delayed, then removed from the agenda and answered in writing, denying him a chance to seek clarification. The written reply, from the Prime Minister's Office, listed payments to SAMIM soldiers and said compensation claims were with SADC, citing security reasons for withholding details. This contradicted the army's claim that all payments were settled, while soldiers insist they were underpaid and that compensation remains unresolved.

Red flags along South Africa's south coast

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

Critical mineral mining applications and small harbour developments in KwaZulu-Natal raise environmental and community concerns, revealing governance gaps.

[Read more](#)

USAID cuts and Eswatini sex workers

Inhlase

The sudden withdrawal of USAID funding has left key populations, including sex workers, without vital health services, pushing vulnerable communities deeper into crisis.

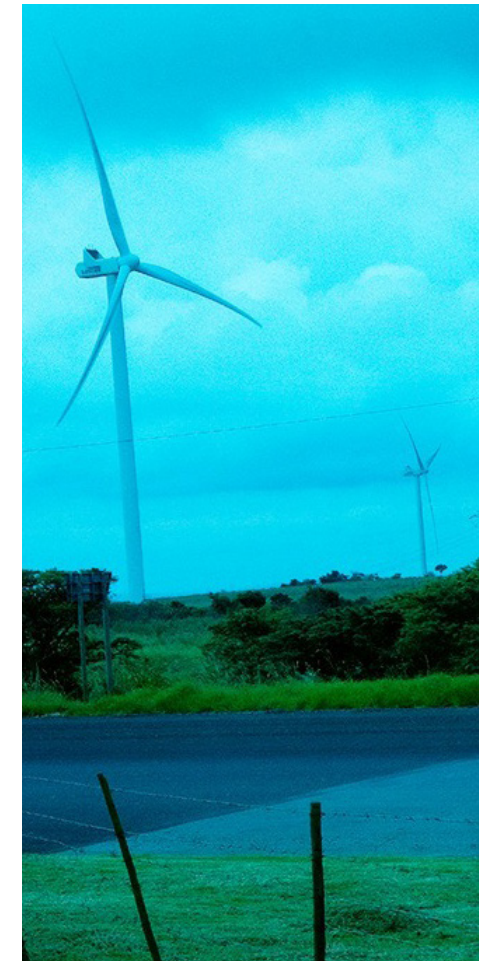
[Read more](#)

Whose land, whose power? South Africa's renewable energy conundrum

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

Wind farm land deals are hidden behind opaque agreements. A case study in the Eastern Cape exposes the lack of transparency in South Africa's green energy rollout.

[Read more](#)



Journalism

... continued



Boast: A clean sweep for PIJ at the 2025 MISA Malawi Awards!

We're thrilled to celebrate the Platform for Investigative Journalism which dominated the annual MISA Malawi Awards, taking home 12 major journalism awards across a wide range of categories. We are especially proud of the strong showing by female investigative journalists, who brought home several top honours.

Imprisoned ex-Fishcor boss pockets N\$1 million

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

While in prison on corruption charges, former Fishcor CEO Mike Nghipunya sold off his 15% stake in a fishing company and pocketed over N\$1 million — raising fresh questions about accountability and state oversight.

[Read more](#)

On the trail of lithium smugglers in Southern Africa

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

Lithium exports from Southern Africa are booming, but much is untracked. This investigation maps the smuggling routes feeding Chinese markets.

[Read more](#)

The chief and his Range Rover

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

Ondonga Chief Fillemon Nangolo received a N\$1.7 million Range Rover from businessman Victor Malima, linked to Namcor fuel corruption. Documents show Nangolo also repaid N\$500,000 and transferred a property to Malima. The gift has raised concerns about Malima's influence over traditional leaders.

[Read more](#)

Fired Malawian politician reemerges on Lesotho water commission

MNN

Helen Buluma, dismissed from Malawi's state-owned oil company in 2022, was controversially appointed as secretary of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, raising governance concerns.

[Read more](#)

Impact: After ignoring repeated requests for comment, Helen Buluma issued her first public response only after our story was published. Days later, a local newspaper ran a Q&A in which she claimed to have faced resistance within the LHWC, revealed that a forensic audit was under way, and said some staff had been suspended. She further alleged that the ombudsman's investigation and her dismissal were politically motivated and accompanied by threats — claims that were not tested in the interview. Buluma has since continued to ignore our calls and interview requests.

Swapo-linked company tied to N\$3 billion oil project

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

A ruling-party linked firm, Guinas Investments, and the Namibia Industrial Development Agency (NIDA) are implicated in a secretly negotiated contract worth over N\$3 billion for a new oil and gas supply base at Lüderitz, raising serious questions about transparency, the tender process, and possible political leverage.

[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.

6

Workshops

200
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 overall accountability in the region.

Whose land, whose power? The nexus of renewable energy, land rights and social ownership

Date: 25 June 2025
Participants: 105
Host: Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

The webinar explored the intersection of renewable energy projects, land rights, and social ownership in Southern Africa. The event unpacked the impact of large-scale renewable energy investments on rural communities and land access. The discussion attracted 105 participants, including journalists, civil society leaders, academics, and policymakers.

Investigative journalism training with Transparency International Zambia

Dates: 12-13 June & 25-26 August 2025
Participants: 16
Host: MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism

MakanDay was invited by Transparency International Zambia to lead two investigative journalism training sessions focused on uncovering corruption and improving story development skills. The sessions equipped participants with practical tools for evidence-based reporting and ethical investigative practices.



Fact-checking and verification workshop

Date: 13-15 September 2025
Participants: 30
Host: Platform for Investigative Journalism

In collaboration with the Media Council of Malawi (MCM) and with technical support from Africa Check, PIJ conducted a three-day in-person workshop ahead of Malawi's September elections. The training focused on strengthening fact-checking, verification, and electoral reporting skills to counter misinformation during the campaign period.

Investigative journalism training workshop

Date: 10 June 2025
Participants: 19
Host: Area of Effect

Area of Effect hosted a training workshop aimed at strengthening the storytelling and investigative capacity of emerging reporters. The session focused on advanced investigative techniques and cross-border collaboration.

Digging where you are: The power of local investigations

Date: 11 September 2025
Participants: 30
Host: IJ Hub and fraymedia Foundation

IJ Hub, in partnership with the fraymedia Foundation, hosted a regional virtual training session under the theme "Digging Where You Are: The Power of Local Investigations". The session focused on the role of local journalism in exposing corruption, improving accountability, and connecting community-level stories to broader national and regional narratives.

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.

11
In-country



Owen Gagare

April 2025 - December 2026
IJ Hub fellow hosted in Zimbabwe



Mamello Mochesane

April - June 2025
IJ Hub fellow hosted in Lesotho



Florence Phiri

May - July 2025
IJ Hub fellow hosted in Malawi



Joanna Ndabala

May - July 2025
IJ Hub fellow hosted in Zambia



Mandisi Ndlovu

August 2025 - January 2026
IJ Hub fellow hosted in Johannesburg



Kennedy Mbewe

June - August 2025
MakanDay fellow hosted in Zambia



McStan Ng'andu

June - August 2025
Makanday fellow hosted in Zambia



Alex Batison

April - June 2025
PIJ fellow hosted in Malawi



Maria Bosco

April - June 2025
PIJ fellow hosted in Malawi



McDonald Dawala

July - October 2025
PIJ fellow hosted in Malawi



Tumpale Ng'ambi

July - October 2025
PIJ fellow hosted in Malawi



Editorial support and syndication system

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

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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.

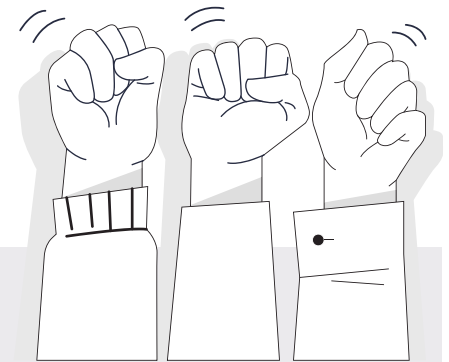
[Read more 1](#) | [Read more 2](#) | [Read more 3](#)
[Read more 4](#)

24

stories supported with editing

4

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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