



NARRATIVE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

The IJ Hub NPC is a South African non-profit and public benefit organisation. We support investigative journalism in the SADC region of Southern Africa in the service of a free, capable media and open, accountable democracy.

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ORGANISATIONAL UPDATE

The IJ Hub NPC was born of a realisation that, although investigative journalists in the SADC region 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. That is what the Hub has set out to do.

The amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism, South Africa's premier investigative non-profit, spun off the Hub in June 2019 and incubated it administratively until June 2021.

The Hub's objective is to *support investigative journalism in the SADC region in the service of a free, capable media and open, accountable democracy*. It pursues this mandate by raising and de-risking philanthropic funding for member investigative journalism centres; by supporting and building organisational capacity at member centres; and by supporting and building investigative capacity among journalists at member centres and beyond.

The Hub's investigative centre membership remained unchanged during the review period:

[MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism](#) (Lesotho)

[The Investigative Unit of The Namibian](#) (Namibia)

[Platform for Investigative Journalism](#) (Malawi)

[Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism](#) (eSwatini)

[INK Centre for Investigative Journalism](#) (Botswana)

[MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism](#) (Zambia)

[AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism](#) (South Africa)

The Hub intends to expand its membership base when capacity and funding permits. Zimbabwe is high on the priority list.

The Hub acknowledges these funders and their grants relevant to the review period with gratitude:

Joffe Charitable Trust (United Kingdom) – GBP 90 000 over the 36 months commenced October 2021. Joffe is a new funder.

Millennium Trust (South Africa) – ZAR 2 000 000 for the 12 months commenced October 2020; ZAR 6 000 000 for the 36 months commenced October 2021. Millennium has supported the Hub since its operational launch.

Open Society Institute (United States) facilitated by the Open Society Foundations Program on Independent Journalism – USD 280 000 for the 18 months commenced January 2021; USD 200 000 for the 12 months commenced April 2022. The OSF group has supported the Hub since inception.

The reorganisation of the OSF group has introduced some uncertainty into the Hub's sustainability planning. After the review period, the Hub applied to OSF-Africa, a new entity within the group, for successor funding, and approached several potential funders. The Hub will strive to diversify and grow its funding to decrease risk and expand member centre disbursements.

PEOPLE AND GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Hub is staffed by two managing partners, one editorial and one organisational. Though much responsibility is shared and many tasks are indivisible, the former has an overarching responsibility for editorial capacity building and the latter for organisational capacity building – and managing the Hub itself.

By mid-2021, when the Hub's incubation with amaBhungane ended, it had in place what appeared to be a stable, permanent team: **Vicki Robinson** (editorial) and **Hamadziripi Tamukamoyo** (organisational). This was not to last. Vicki left in January 2022, having been offered a position she felt she could not refuse. Hama, for reasons unrelated, submitted his resignation effective the end of March 2022.

Vicki was succeeded by **Troye Lund**, an experienced reporter who held senior positions with the Independent group in the 1990s and subsequently with Cape Talk, Fairlady, Finweek and Financial Mail/Business Day. She started with the Hub on 1 March; has tackled the job with gusto; and has built up a great rapport with member centres.

Hama's departure presented continuity risk coming at a time when Troye was to onboard. To preserve institutional memory and mitigate risk, the board deployed **Stefaans Brümmer**, a non-executive director, to take over as managing partner (organisational) for six months starting 1 March in an acting, part-time capacity. Stefaans had helped set up the Hub in 2019 while joint managing partner at amaBhungane. His to-do list included showing Troye the ropes and helping to recruit a permanent successor to Hama and himself.

At the time of writing, the gifted **Sebenzile Nkambule** had just started in the position of managing partner (organisational). She is a Fulbright Humphrey fellow, journalist and talkshow host who gained management experience as a consultant and in the non-profit sector.

The Hub's MOI determines that it is governed by a board of three to five non-executive directors elected by member centres, and up to two ex-officio, non-voting, executive directors. At least one third of the elected directors are up for rotation annually, but may be re-elected for a further two terms.

The board is actively engaged with appointments, matters of compliance and significant financial decisions. During the review period it comprised:

Prof Dumisani Moyo, dean of humanities at North-West University – non-executive director and chair

Mantoe Phakathi, communications practitioner in eSwatini – non-executive director

Adv Steven Budlender, senior counsel specialising in constitutional and media law – non-executive director

Stefaans Brümmer, journalist and amaBhungane co-founder – non-executive director, executive director as of 1 March 2022

Andrew Forrest, then Hub managing partner (editorial) – non-executive director, resigned 30 April 2021

Vicki Robinson, then Hub managing partner (editorial) – ex-officio executive director 11 May 2021 to 2 January 2022

Hamadziripi Tamukamoyo, then Hub managing partner (organisational) – ex-officio executive director, resigned 31 March 2022

Troye Lund, Hub managing partner (editorial) – ex-officio executive director appointed 1 March 2022

Post-review period and on commencing her employment as managing partner (organisational), **Sebenzile Nkambule** joined the board as ex-officio executive director, and **Stefaans Brümmer** was to revert to being a non-executive director.

MEMBER CENTRE GRANTS

The Hub presents a de-risked opportunity for philanthropic funders to support independent investigative journalism in the SADC region. Those who prefer not to support centres directly donate to our funding pool, which we disburse to member centres based on their relative needs and accountability profiles.

In this way, funders contribute to an established network impactfully covering much of the region; a collective growing in capacity and reach.

The Hub has accelerated its provision of core financial support to member investigative journalism centres. During the review period, it disbursed a net ZAR 3.47-million – an increase of about 19% on the previous year's ZAR 2.92-million.

The Hub's management guides member centres in need of financial support through application, contracting and reporting processes that are intended to be robust yet light on bureaucracy. The Hub attempts (a) to learn about a centre's overall organisational health and not only its specific needs; (b) to encourage quality investigative story output while absolutely respecting the centre's editorial independence; and (c) to design appropriate support interventions where compliance challenges are apparent. Overall, we want to ensure that member centres are not only better resourced, but that they are capacitated to use their resources effectively and accountably.

These are the FY 2022 disbursements:

Date	Description	ZAR
Centre disbursements for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022		
01 Apr 2021	MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism, Zambia, emergency assistance	2 000
15 Apr 2021	MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism, Lesotho, 6-month grant	400 000
13 Jul 2021	MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism, Zambia, 6-month grant	314 138
23 Jul 2021	Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism, eSwatini, 6-month grant	272 628
12 Aug 2021	The Namibian Investigative Unit, Namibia, 6-month grant	371 866
17 Aug 2021	Platform for Investigative Journalism, Malawi, 6-month grant	320 000
31 Aug 2021	INK Centre for Investigative Journalism, Botswana, underspend write-off	4 244
30 Sep 2021	MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism, Lesotho, underspend	(11 243)
08 Nov 2021	MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism, Lesotho, 6-month grant	400 000 ¹
15 Dec 2021	MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism, Zambia, 6-month grant	399 661
28 Feb 2022	Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism, eSwatini, 6-month grant	284 578
22 Mar 2022	Platform for Investigative Journalism, Malawi, 6-month grant	335 200
23 Mar 2022	The Namibian Investigative Unit, Namibia, 6-month grant	375 000
Total		3 468 072

Though relatively modest, the grants have gone a long way. For three of the five centres that received support, grants from the Hub have been their biggest source of income.

MakanDay and Inhlase, two centres that were effectively dormant for lack of resources before receiving Hub grants, have been prolific during the review period. And the Platform for Investigative Journalism, which started up in 2020 with Hub support, has proved its mettle with exposés on a state capture ring. It swept the board at the Misa Malawi 2022 awards, walking away with the Overall Winner, Investigative Story of the Year and Electronic Media House of the Year trophies.

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Making resources available to member centres is not enough. A centre's editorial performance is optimal when its organisational base is solid. And increased resource flows demand heightened accountability. We advise member centres on matters as diverse as corporate registration, compliance with non-profit requirements, accounting, auditing, funding applications, digital security and websites.

Financial accountability is particularly important to the Hub, given that this is the standard against which investigative journalists measure others. Examples of our work helping member centres get their own houses in order include:

The Hub had intensive engagements with a member centre about it missing annual audits following a period of managerial instability. We also offered to pay the auditors' fees, although this turned out not to be necessary. The centre caught up two years' auditing during the review period.

A member centre, effectively dormant when the Hub started funding it, needed to build accounting and compliance capacity from scratch. During 2021, the centre engaged a part-time accountant, and the Hub provided it with subscriptions to a cloud-based accounting package and some training in its use. Though the transition to the cloud-based package was not yet complete, the centre subjected itself to auditing in early 2022.

Another member centre, newly launched, needed to build accounting capacity. During the review period the Hub funded the centre specifically to retain a part-time accountant. The centre has supplied us with management accounts.

At the time of writing, only one member centre has still to perform its maiden audit. It has committed to do so in respect of its current financial year.

The Hub has encouraged member centres to diversify their sources of funding. A notable success during the review period was a member centre getting a grant from a United Kingdom-based funder after the Hub advised on the application. Though modest, the grant was the member centre's first not from the Hub itself – an important step towards funder diversification. As the process was new to the member centre, the Hub also helped it to fulfil its reporting obligations to the funder.

Shortly after the review period, police detained the head of one of our member centres and confiscated his devices in an attempt to discover the centre's sources for a story that upset prominent officials. We arranged for a lawyer to travel to the police station where he was held to help secure his release. After his devices were also returned, we arranged for a digital expert to ensure the devices remained secure. When the centre's website also came under attack soon after, our expert helped secure it too.

EDITORIAL SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The final proof of our work is in the investigative stories that see the light of day. Our inputs detailed above – the grants to member centres and the organisational support – go a long way. The final push comes at the editorial coalface.

We network and advise member centres and their journalists. We help those who need it to get their stories ready for publication. We sponsor qualifying journalists for three-month fellowships where they get hands-on experience at investigative newsrooms. And we arrange regular workshops: anything from investigations 101 to following the money, the latest tools and techniques, and digital security.

The fellowships and workshops are open to regional journalists regardless of whether they are from member centres.

During the review period, we arranged six **workshop** sessions. They were:

On 9, 16 and 23 July 2021, a team of four experts from The Namibian Investigative Unit gave intensive training in **multimedia production** to 24 journalists drawn both from our member centres and other regional media outlets. The training was triggered by a story of the Inhlase Centre on the impact of global warming in eSwatini. Inhlase’s journalists wanted to present their story visually to enhance its impact. Consistent with our strategy of proliferating skills already found within our network, we arranged for the Namibian team, which is known for its multimedia work, to do the training for them and others.

On 19 and 20 August 2021, our Vicki Robinson presented two **investigative journalism 101** workshop sessions. Attended by six regional journalists, including two IJ Hub fellows, the first session was theoretical, while at the second, each participant presented an investigative story idea, which was brainstormed. In subsequent weeks, Vicki worked with the participants to bring their stories to publication, which three of them did.

On 17 November 2021, Pieter-Louis Myburgh, one of South Africa’s top investigative journalists, regaled 12 journalists drawn from among Hub member centres with the ins and outs of his “Digital Vibes” investigation into a procurement scandal that brought down the country’s health minister. The format of the workshop was that of **fireside chat** – informal and interactive, and meant to inspire as much as impart specific skills.

The number of workshop sessions fell short of our target of 12 per year. The ball was dropped during two changes of the guard. As of the new year, after the review period, workshops have been on target. Planning has also gone into making workshops more targeted to specific needs given the proliferation of virtual workshops offered by media support organisations worldwide. The workshops above were all held virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions. At the time of writing, we are scheduling in-person workshops again.

During the review period four three-month **fellowships** were arranged and sponsored by us, and a fifth commenced.

Linda Soko, a print and television journalist, was placed with the MakanDay Centre in Zambia for the months of June to August 2021.

Zwelethu Dlamini, a print and radio journalist, was placed with the Inhlase centre in eSwatini for three months starting mid-June 2021.

Maureen Kawerama, a radio reporter, was placed with Platform for Investigative Journalism in Malawi for the months of July to September 2021.

Mathatisi Sebusi, a print and radio reporter, was placed with the MNN Centre in Lesotho for the months of October to December 2021.

Bazilio Banda, a radio reporter, was placed with the MakanDay Centre in Zambia for the months of March to May 2022.

We fell short, once again owing to changes of the guard, of attaining our eight-fellows-a-year target. After the review period we have gone beyond target to regain lost ground. At the time of writing, we have hosted at a rate that will result in 12 fellowships for the year. The fellows above were all hosted within their own countries at member centres, a strategy commenced in response to Covid-19 travel restrictions. After the review period we started arranging some cross-border fellowships again to give candidates wider investigative exposure.

The Hub continued helping to **edit** member centre journalists’ stories where they felt a need. Far from a mere linguistic edit, the process is often an interactive experience and may involve several drafts where investigative gaps, legal risks, etc are addressed. This is a great mentoring opportunity.