



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Impact Report

April to September 2022





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 2022. 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.





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

22 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 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: 4 / Contributors: 6



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: 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: 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: 2 / Contributors: 3

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 15 standout stories published from April to September 2022.

“Impunity prevails in far too many cases where journalists are attacked for their work. When no one is held accountable for violence against the press, it sends a chilling message to others that may seek to bluntly censor reporting and deny the public access to information.”

~ Adopted by acclamation by delegates to the African Investigative Journalism Conference 2022.

Plunder from the East

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The investigation reveals how the Lin-Zhang syndicate, whose members have been jailed for wildlife trafficking, are also in the business of illegal mining and these operations continue while the gang’s leaders are behind bars. The mining is conducted without proper licences and the precious metals are exported illegally. The proceeds of these operations are not declared and there’s evidence that officials were bribed. [Read More](#)



Political appointments at all costs

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The Tonse alliance in Malawi promised the moon during campaign time but has delivered so little, including on its pledge of good governance. The PIJ exposes the frantic attempts by members of the alliance to install their preferred candidate as CEO of the National Water Resources Authority and how this state owned company’s board got fired when it refused to be strong-armed into making the appointment. [Read More](#)

Consequences: The recruitment was stopped and the senior official responsible for the attempt to install the Tonse alliance’s preferred candidate was removed, although it is not clear if this is related to the story.

Sex for jobs

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The PIJ investigation exposed how sexual abuse and gender-based violence continued on a Malawi tea plantation after women on the plantation won a GBP 2.3 million out-of-court settlement for alleged abuse by their bosses.

[Read More](#)

Top health officials meddle in medicine tenders

MakanDay

Zambia’s health procurement system is paralysed by a stand-off between officials in the ministry of health who want to clean up corruption and those fighting to secure contracts for companies that offer backhanders. The result? The billions available to buy medicine are not being spent and the country’s hospitals are battling critical shortages of medicine and equipment.

[Read More](#)

Consequences: The tender process in question was stopped according to sources within the health ministry.

Fraudsters pose as charity for the poor

MakanDay

This series looks into how fraudsters allegedly used Destiny Helpers International to fleece Zambians who were promised handsome returns on investments made in the organisation.

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

[Read More 3](#)

Government’s tactic to curb free speech

Inhase

In 2007 a Broadcasting Bill aimed at opening the airwaves by licensing more independent community radio stations was made public. It took 13 years before parliament adopted this legislation. By mid-2022 the bill still had not been signed into law by King Mswati III. This enabled the state to turn down radio licence applications for independent community radio stations.

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

Ex-miners denied access to benefits

Inhase

This series tracks how miners who have retired from South African mines cannot access social benefits once they return home to other SADC countries. In some cases, ex-miners die before accessing these benefits. Their widows and children are left destitute as they continue the fight to get the social benefits owed to them.

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

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

Consequences: The series nudged the SADC governments and the South African Revenue Service into action. The latter placed Ubank under curatorship and has promised families that their money will be paid. Ubank operates in the microfinance sector and mainly targets lower-income blue-collar workers, especially those in the mining sector.

“Information obtained by amaBhungane points to a major cover up of the 2020 theft of some US\$4 million in cash from President Cyril Ramaphosa’s Phala Phala game farm in Limpopo.”

~ Extract from collaboration on investigation between amaBhungane and The Namibian Investigative Unit.

Lesotho’s \$15-billion energy pipedream

MNN

This investigation reveals how a wind farm project that would have given Lesotho bragging rights to Africa’s largest renewable energy project, slashed electricity prices and created thousands of jobs, has vanished, leaving behind unanswered questions and politicians who don’t remember the details. [Read More](#)

DPP accused of protecting Thabanes at any cost

MNN

This story raises questions about Lesotho’s Director of Public Prosecutions, Hlalefang Motinyane, and how she bungled the murder case against the country’s former president, Thomas Thabane, and his wife. It raises questions about her motives and whether this is a deliberate plan to protect him from prosecution. [Read More](#)

Consequences: Two weeks after this story was published, the director of public prosecutions stepped down from the case. At the same time a date was also set for the murder trial. But, a week later the charges against the Thabanes were withdrawn. MNN worked with the Lesotho Times, The Post, Informative and Newsday to expose this story which is the first collaboration of its kind in Lesotho.

Lawyers siphon money from women’s rights NGO

MNN

This story uncovers how two executives at the Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust in Lesotho (WLSA) are alleged to have stolen donor funds for their private use. The women allegedly used a web of various bank accounts to divert funds from multiple donor-funded projects. [Read More](#)

Consequences: Lesotho’s anti-corruption organisation sprang into action and raided the WLSA office. Meanwhile, the NGO executives fired their finance manager who they blamed for leaking critical financial information. The NGO’s board defended the two executives.

Exposed: Letšeng secretly admits contaminating water sources

MNN

A leading mining company in Lesotho, Letšeng Diamond Mine, has admitted in confidential reports that its operations are polluting water systems that poor, rural communities rely on daily. But the company denies this in public.

The Patising and Maloraneng communities live near the mine and rely on surrounding natural water sources. Residents, who tell stories of blue and black water running in the streams they use to wash and cook with, believe this contamination is causing severe illness and death.

[Read More 1](#) | [Video Link](#)

Farmgate – mysterious theft at president’s game farm

The Namibian Investigative Unit

This investigation is an example of a successful collaboration between two IJ Hub member centres, the Namibian Investigative Unit and amaBhungane. The case involves foreign currency that was mysteriously stolen from South African President Cyril Ramaphosa’s game farm. Some of it found its way to Namibia. The articles were reproduced by other South African media outlets such as Daily Maverick and News24. The New York Times also picked up on this story. This is an ongoing investigation.

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

Presidential road to riches

The Namibian Investigative Unit

The story sets out how Namibian President Hage Geingob is set to get paid a lump sum of between N\$35 million and N\$80 million when he steps down in 2025. The Namibian Investigative Unit then details the salary for life, the mansions and luxurious lifestyles that the country’s former presidents are also guaranteed. This raises questions about how justifiable this is in a country with such high levels of poverty. [Read More](#)

Cost and complexity of divorce laws

The Namibian Investigative Unit

This article unpacks the long and expensive route to divorce in Namibia and the toll this takes on couples who want out of marriages. [Read More](#)

Consequence: The justice ministry has announced plans to make divorcing cheaper and easier with new legislation which is expected to be tabled in parliament.

Brothers blocked from state tenders

The Namibian Investigative Unit

The article exposes how Namibia’s procurement authority disqualified three companies for collusion when they bid for contracts valued at N\$382 million. The article sets out how the three brothers who own the companies have benefited significantly from other state tenders, and how they were planning to fight the disqualification in court. [Read More](#)

Consequences: After the article was published, the High Court in Namibia ruled that the bidding process for the contested tender should be redone. The procurement board disqualified the brothers again.

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.

7

Workshops

89

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

Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) Workshop: Virtual presentation and discussion

11 APRIL 2022 *(12 participants)*

GIJN journalists Rowan Philp and Benon Oluka presented their "top investigative tools" for non-profit newsrooms. These tools had been used to break big investigations (from Salud Con Lupain Peru to Dataleads in India and Rise Moldova). The session also included details on new, free digital tools and databases and how to integrate these with low-tech, old school reporting.

Cybersecurity Power Hour

21 APRIL 2022 *(16 participants)*

Cybersecurity is now as much a necessary skill for journalists as working the room and making contacts. Toby Shapshak, editor-in-chief and publisher at Stuff Studios, showed participants how to make their computers and communications more secure, using tools that are publicly available – and often free.

How to avoid lawsuits and other legal dangers

27 MAY 2022 *(10 participants)*

Webber Wentzel's media law specialists, attorneys Dario Milo and Avani Singh, unpacked the universal legal basics of investigative journalism. The presentation included the importance of hearing the other side/right of reply; what constitutes proof in a media article; accurate and fair presentation of facts; comment that is based on facts and reasonably held to be true; correcting and apologising when wrong as well as the right to privacy, protection of personal info and children.

The couch of cash, the Namibian connection and the dodgy politics of it all

2 AUGUST 2022 *(13 participants)*

Investigative journalists Tebogo Tshwane (ama-Bhungane) and Tileni Monghudi (The Namibian Investigative Unit contributor) shared how they collaborated on an investigation into a very large amount of money that was stolen from South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's game farm. The burglary was covered up and seems intricately linked to the politics currently playing itself out in South Africa and Namibia. This is an ongoing investigation and it has made headlines across the world.

Data Journalism

30 AND 31 AUGUST 2022 *(9 participants)*

This was the IJ Hub's first in-person workshop since the Covid-19 pandemic. Data expert Adam Oxford travelled to the MNN member centre in Lesotho where he ran a two-day course on why all journalists need to be data literate, where to get good data, how to verify it and then use it to tell better stories.

Workshops member centres facilitated and hosted

Investigative Journalism 101

15 MAY 2022 *(9 participants)*

MakanDay journalists conducted a training session on investigative journalism for journalism students at the Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts.

Exposing the polluters

15 TO 20 SEPTEMBER 2022 *(20 participants)*

MNN hosted and facilitated a five-day workshop on investigating issues related to water and the environment. Participants were taken to the sites where MNN is running investigations into pollution by diamond mines in Lesotho. All findings and techniques were shared and discussed.



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.

4

Cross-border

4

In-country



Christopher Bazilio Banda

March – May 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Zambia
hosted by MakanDay



Mirriam Chabala

July to September 2022.

IJ Hub fellow from Zambia
hosted by MakanDay



**Keketso Mohalenyana
Pakhela**

April to June 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Lesotho
hosted by amaBhungane



**Mefika
Ndlangamandla**

July to September 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Eswatini
hosted by amaBhungane



Lemohang Rakotsoane

April to June 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Lesotho
hosted by MNN



Retšelisitsoe Khabo

August to October 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Lesotho
hosted by the Investigative Unit
of The Namibian



Donald Matthys

June to August 2022

IJ Hub fellow from Namibia
hosted by the Investigative Unit
of The Namibian



Pascalinah Kabi

1 January to 31 December 2022.

Bertha fellow from Lesotho
hosted by MNN



Editorial support and new syndication system

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

"If we cannot speak out, we cannot express our humanity. If you don't have free expression, all your rights can be compromised because you can't speak up about it."

~ Professor Anton Harber speaking at the Eswatini Freedom of Expression Summit organised by Inhlase and The Campaign for Free Expression.

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](#)

22

Stories supported with editing during review period

3

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:

- Sebenzile Nkambule: sebenzile.nkambule@gmail.com
- Troye Lund: troye_ijhub@icloud.com





IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

www.ijhub.org



THE NAMIBIAN
INVESTIGATIVE UNIT