

# OUR STORY 2019



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Fojo Media Institute strengthens free, independent and professional journalism in Sweden and worldwide. We are an independent institute at one of Sweden’s leading public universities, the Linnæus University. Since 1972, Fojo has built capacity for more than 50,000 journalists from more than 100 countries and supported media development in more than 40 countries.

Fojo is Sweden’s leading media development institute, operating nationally and internationally, in Africa, Asia and Europe. We are bridging support to institutional and individual capacity building, digital innovation and convergence, gender awareness, monitoring of corruption, business management as well as administrating complex media development portfolios.

This is our story.

# Journalism stands strong

**S**trengthening free, independent and professional journalism is more important than ever. Quality journalism, as a way of describing reality and providing citizens with access to information on which they can make vital decisions, is more needed than ever.

At the same time, producing and publishing quality journalism in a media landscape dominated by social media is becoming increasingly difficult. The global tech platforms seize most of the advertising revenues. Social media is poisoned with disinformation and threats against journalists, many times orchestrated by people in powerful positions and even governments. The space for freedom of expression is dramatically shrinking as governments set out to dismantle the democratic, liberal core functions in society - where a free media is seen as one. And while climate change is affecting us all, free, independent and professional journalism has extraordinary possibilities to shed light and provide facts, arming citizens with the information needed to act.

Journalism still stands strong - in many cases, stronger and more innovative than ever. Fojo Media Institute has the privilege to cooperate with media partners and individual media workers in Sweden, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Central and Eastern Europe to lead the way towards new concepts, methods and approaches and increased resilience. Our unique position as a Swedish Public University, well anchored in the Nordic media landscape, with a global overview, gives us exceptional possibilities to find new paths to take journalism into the next decade, confronting and responding to the increasing threats.

In Sweden, Fojo continues to be the leading institution for mid-career training, working with some of the most prominent Swedish journalists and trainers. We also organised the biggest media event in Sweden during 2019 - the summit for investigative journalists, Gräv. While doing so, we could

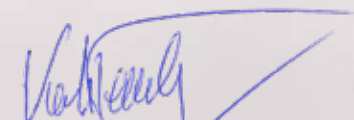
draw on our experience from our international programmes. For example the leading programme in improving investigative journalism in Bangladesh, where we work hand in hand with Bangladeshi media houses in cooperation with international organisations, such as the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN).

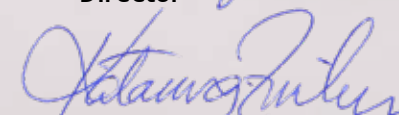
Finding ways to improve fact-checking and create resilience against online hate and threats is also at the core of Fojo's activities, both in Sweden and internationally. Our fact-checking desk in Sweden has expanded, we have increased our international cooperation with GIJN, we organised an international conference on the theme and we have strengthened the fact-checking hub in Zimbabwe, Zimfact. In Kenya, our innovative anti-corruption project "Action for Transparency" has shown the way on how coalition-building between media, civil society, government and the tech industry can increase transparency and put the light on suspected corruption.

In Ethiopia, Fojo has been instrumental in supporting the beginning of the media reform. In April, Fojo

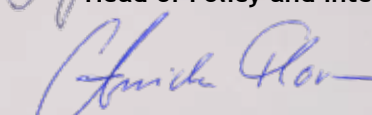
organised the first ever regional media development conference in Addis Ababa, where government, media and civil society were given a forum to discuss reform and how international support can assist Ethiopian media stakeholders in the process towards free, independent and professional journalism. In December, Fojo signed a four-year agreement with the Swedish and Danish Embassies, providing an opportunity to continue our support, in cooperation with our local partners and International Media Support (IMS).

These are just some examples of our work to strengthen free, independent and professional journalism. In this annual report you will find fascinating stories on media development from around the globe. If you want the full story, please check our website [fojo.se](http://fojo.se).

  
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# An SOS from the Baltic Sea

TEXT: AARON ISRAELSON | PHOTOGRAPHY: KARL NILSSON

COURSES IN SWEDEN



While the world is belatedly rising up to the climate challenge, a less-noticed environmental disaster is silently destroying the habitat of 90 million people. One single voice is trying to stop the tragedy. Legendary reporter and now Fojo teacher Folke Rydén is a Greta Thunberg for the Baltic Sea. Although he is not exactly thrilled about the comparison.

“Clams have a brain”, a poaching fisherman tells me. But the moral of this story is that humans need to smarten up in order to save our planet. That’s the message of a familiar voice to the Swedish TV audience.

For anyone having watched TV news during the nineties, Folke Rydén is a household name. This legendary news reporter’s very characteristic - homegrown - accent and his sharp facial features make his appearance a bearer of coziness and nostalgia for the last generation growing up without internet.

For the last decade, Folke Rydén has made it his mission to help save the Baltic Sea, the shores of which are the home of nearly a hundred million people, from environmental disaster.

Rydén makes documentary movies and teaches a course at Fojo called “The Baltic Sea”. His goal is to get more reporters to cover this blow to our ecosystem.

**Once a commercial centre** of the Hanseatic League and capital of the 15th century Kalmar Union, picturesque Kalmar, inspires much the same sensation as Folke Rydén - one of nostalgia and coziness.

At this time of year, however, in early September, when the summer tourists are all gone, the atmosphere is somewhat uncanny in Kalmar’s medieval alleys. As if a zombie apocalypse has just occurred. The unpleasant

stench from the polluted Baltic Sea is all-present and adds to the feel.

In a classroom at Fojo headquarters in the old harbor area, Folke Rydén talks to a group of about 30 journalists who are attending his course.

He begins with a recap of his life as a news reporter. In the revolutionary year of 1989 he was sent to what is usually the most sought-after posting in the Swedish news industry: correspondent for the public broadcaster SVT in Washington D.C.

Because of the dramatic events unfolding in Eastern Europe at the time, however, he received few assignments until 1990. That’s when George Bush the elder made the mistake of announcing he was not a fan of broccoli and farmers all over the country sent truckloads of the stuff to D.C. Folke Rydén concluded the segment with a humorous twist. Instead of a mic he held a broccoli in his hand.

A mistake as grave as Bush’s. The piece was never aired.

After this initial gaffe, Rydén’s career was prosperous, he stayed on in the USA for years, and then went on to numerous warzones and famines. But eventually he feared the cynicism of the media business had caught up with him.

“If any of our viewers called in, it was because (anchorman) Claes Elfsberg’s tie was skew, not because of me reporting that people were starving.”



*For twenty years, Folke Rydén was a familiar face to everyone watching news on Swedish television. But since 2007, the renowned reporter produces documentaries about the Baltic Sea and in 2019 he held his first Fojo course on the subject.*

**At a point where Rydén** was starting to tell journalism students not to believe that they could change anything, he had an encounter in the bar at the Gothenburg Book Fair.

“Do you want a beer?” someone asked him from behind.

He didn’t have to turn around to answer.

“I like beer.”

The generous bar buddy was famed photographer Mattias Klum.

They started talking about environmental issues around the world.

“We have this moral superiority in Sweden that makes us feel that we can tell Malaysia not to cut down their rainforest or Africa not to shoot their rhinos. But we are not capable of taking care of our own environment back home.”

In 2007, Klum and Rydén started working on their ten-year project on the Baltic Sea. All in all, they made seven documentaries. The first one was about the cod population.

“No one wanted to talk to us at first. The fishermen thought media reporting was too one-sided. The scientists that it was too simplified. And the politicians didn’t want to touch on this at all.”

After some persuasion Folke Rydén and Mattias Klum managed to get a fishing boat to let them tag along.

“We couldn’t believe our eyes. This fisherman Kenneth had to dump half his cargo because of EU regulations. Not a single one of the cods that were thrown back into the water survived.”

Later their film, “For cod’s sake”, was able to



Janne Andersson, a retired diver, took the participants for a tour in his boat on the Baltic Sea, discussing sealife and water pollution.



help in attaining useful results. The European parliament banned dumping.

Their next documentary was “Dirty waters” (2011), about the pig farms and chicken factories in Poland, Russia and Belarus, which spew out manure that ends up in the sea.

“It’s as if a city the size of Uppsala would not have sewage”, says Folke Rydén.

The third film “The second wave” features the baby boy Alfred, in the Stockholm archipelago, who has 20 times more toxins in his little body than his mother.

“Let’s have some cod and some chicken, shall we?” Folke Rydén sardonically concludes when it’s time for lunch.

Thirty years ago, there was quite a lot of debate on the already deteriorating situation in the Baltic Sea. Now there’s mostly talk about climate change. Is there room for several conversations on the environment at any given point in time?

“You cannot automatically assume that people will be interested. But their commitment will rise when they realize this affects them. Knowledge results in action. I mean, we can build nuclear power plants, we can fly to the moon, we should be able to stop filling the oceans with shit. The climate is very abstract. What happens with the Baltic Sea is much more concrete.”

Would you agree that you are the Greta Thunberg of the Baltic Sea?

“That is the worst comparison I’ve heard.”

As we finish the cod on our plates and board the bus, Rydén sums up the imminent threat to the cod.

“Although there is now a dumping ban in place it is hard to police compliance. There are no inspections at sea. In Canada, the cod

population collapsed in 1992. The world’s largest stock disappeared over 20 years ago and has not returned since. Then again, in the North Atlantic the situation is sustainable. So, it can be done.”

**The serene Hagby fishing village** at the Kalmar strait is nowadays turned into an ecological laboratory. In an old barn Folke Rydén gathers his Fojo students for a last pep talk before we’re to take a closer look at the clam farm out at sea.

“Get your ideas ready before going back to your newsrooms. Make something of them right away. Get this out of your system.”

That’s exactly what the clam farm in the strait between the coastline and the island of Öland is supposed to do. Shells are being planted in order to suck up a lot of the overfertilisation that otherwise would add to the ecological problems. They get it out of the system.

Janne Andersson, a retired diver, takes us out in his fishing boat.

“The clams have a brain when they move around, you see. But when they root in a colony they go into a vegetative state. But they still have some brains left, because when they don’t like it, they let go.”

“Why import manure from Brazil when we have this field in the sea right here? You journalists need to help us fertilise the public so that they become aware”, says Janne Andersson.

He points to a vulture flying over us and says it looks hungry.

“I used to be a predator in these waters myself. Nowadays my grandchildren have me throw the eel back into the sea. That sucks for an old poacher like myself.” ■



# Soaking participants with photography

Göran Segeholm is one of the most experienced photography teachers in Sweden. His Fojo course has been running for 25 years, but he keeps no pictures on his own wall.

A self-taught photographer, Göran Segeholm has been in the business of taking pictures for 37 years, written four books on photography and is one of the most sought-after teachers within the very art form. But he finds photographs too good to be decorative.

“Of the one hundred best photos in the world, I would not put up a single one on my wall. Pictures need to be bland or they will eat up the room.”

**When do you feel that you have failed as a photographer?**

“When the object only thinks about how they look. The goal is for them to forget about the camera. Taking pictures of celebrities is hopeless. They already know what they want to look like and don’t like surprises. Pictures of them are like a currency.”

**We live in an image centered world with people posting their lives through photos on Facebook and Instagram. Is that encouraging for a photographer such as yourself?**

“Social media platforms are enclosed worlds that do not mean anything to me. The family photo has gone from being documentary to commercial. What I like most about my old family photos are the mistakes. The things that are not supposed to be in them: ‘Oh, that’s how a milk box looked like back then.’”

**Can smartphone cameras be a tool for photojournalists as well?**

“Absolutely. Luisa Dörr’s photos of successful women in Time Magazine taken with an iPhone are great examples. To me those pics are more intimate than they would have been in a rigged studio. But you need to be a skilled photographer to do it right.”

**And if you are not - how do you go about when you’re sent out to take a picture to accompany your text, if you are a writing reporter such as myself?**

“You need to take an interest in photography. You need to plan and you need to separate the interview from the photographing. Also, you

have to think about what the picture is supposed to bring to the reader that the text does not.”

**You teach at The Museum of Photography in Stockholm and Jönköping University. How does the Fojo course differ?**

“The complete soaking. At Fojo, the participants are brainwashed for a week with assignments even at night. One of them just told me that the funny thing is he became a better writer as well. These journalists have failed so many times and are highly motivated to be better photographers.”

**TEXT: AARON ISRAELSSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDY PRHAT**

## PHOTOGRAPHY CRASH COURSE

...according to Göran Segeholm:

1: Plan your idea as soon as you get the job. You need to get the engine running. Take 15 minutes to check out earlier pictures of the object or something close to it. Check out the location on Google Street View. Prepare everyone involved for the photo op.

2: When you’re on location, be prepared to abandon your plan.

3: Know the supposed function of your pic. Is it informative, emotional or thoughtful? What can it communicate that the text does not?



# Trying to meet the demands when journalists are challenged by reality

Fewer journalists work in a challenged field, in Sweden and globally. Journalists are affected by cutdowns and closures of editorial offices, TV-stations, newspapers and magazines. This shows in the applications for our trainings and courses in Sweden.

The second decade of the 21st century was draining for journalists, surviving cutbacks and fewer felt they could leave exhausted colleagues behind to attend a course. 2019 was no different, fewer applied to the Fojo courses in Sweden and more than usual declined when accepted.

We needed to find ways of meeting the challenges.

Fewer journalists work harder and need even better skills. This is the reality. We must meet those demands and make sure the courses are useful and planned carefully together with the best trainers and lecturers. We offered more short courses around Sweden, in addition to the week-long courses in Kalmar so participants did not need to leave work for too long.

Participants are chosen among the applicants, much based on what they write in their motivation letter. Journalists attending a Fojo course will return home with not only greater knowledge, but also stronger and with better self-esteem, having shared experiences with colleagues.

Those attending have high expectations which we must meet. And we do!

The evaluations 2019 speak their own language.

One long-term goal is to attract more men to

the courses. It is known within the entire system of higher education, that more women attend. Ten years ago, only 20 percent of participants were men, 2019 it was 34 percent. When will we reach 40 percent?

At the end of 2019, we were happy to see that the number of applications for the spring courses in 2020 were again high!

TEXT: NINA HJELMGREN

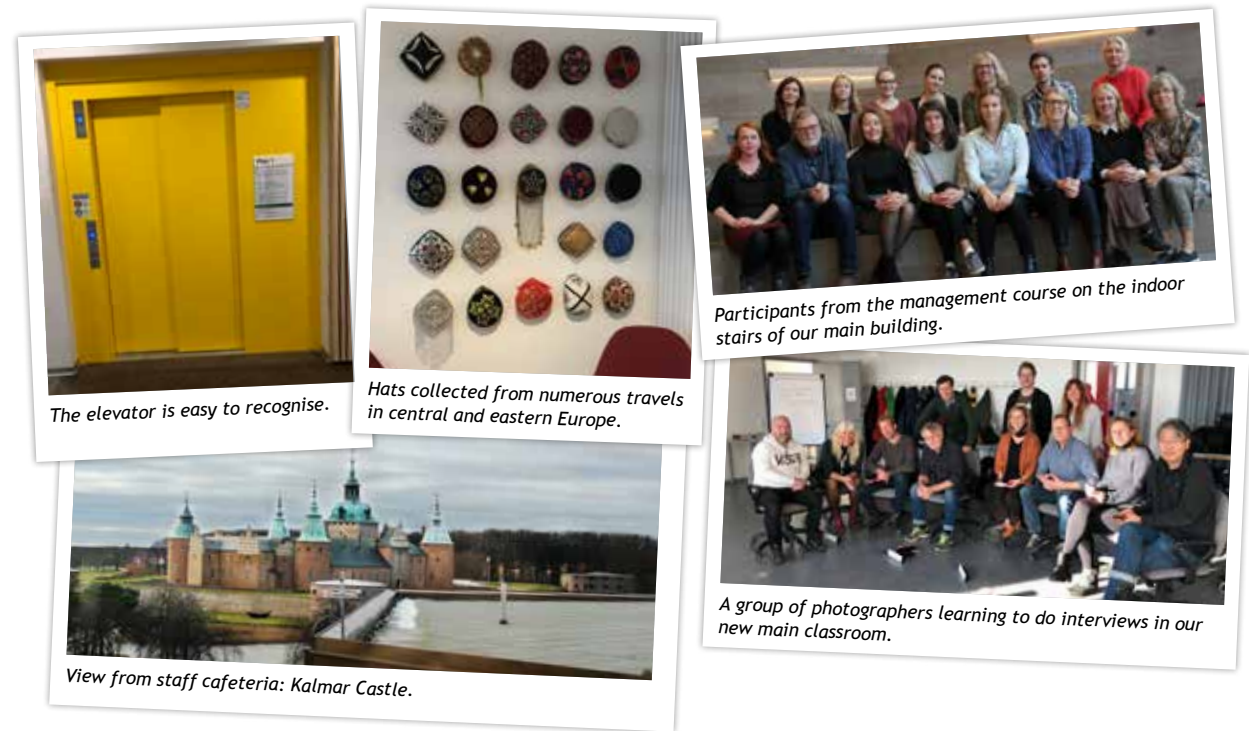
# 96%

find the Fojo course  
useful or very useful.

# 98%

think the overall impression  
is good or very good.

(Numbers from the post-course evaluations.)



## Fojo's new offices amaze visitors

“Woah!”, “What an improvement. This is so nice. And what a view!”

Most visitors to our new headquarters in Kalmar are startled. Once they have vanquished the talking elevator behind the yellow door and reached the fifth floor, they enter Fojo with big, curious eyes. Many have been to Fojo before; they, too, are amazed by what they find behind the entrance.

An amazing view of the harbor, the Baltic Sea and the island of Öland.

The first fascinating piece of interior design where everybody pauses and looks is the wall decorated with hats from all over Central Asia, collected over the course of many years by one of Fojo's staff members. Of course it is also a treat that the new premises are only a few minutes walk from the train station and downtown Kalmar.

Our lecture hall has a stunning view over the Baltic Sea. With some imagination you can see how the Danes in medieval times closed in on Kalmar sailing. From the staff cafeteria, on the same floor as Fojo, you have the view of Kalmar Castle. Here, the Danish queen Margareta initiated the Kalmar Union in 1397, a union between Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Today, Fojo is one of the most vigorous meeting places in Kalmar. It is either Swedish journalists attending a course or international groups growing insights regarding media.

When you enter Fojo, we want you to feel both welcome and important!

TEXT: NINA HJELMGREN



# “It’s always the local media that stick”

It was only 11 am and I was already blown away. In a small, oddly shaped room, a professor was speaking about what could be seen as the most boring topic ever: public procurement and administration. He was geared with nothing more than a simple powerpoint presentation and his glasses steadily resting near the top of his nose. Still, the room was packed, with some people sitting on the floor or standing pressed against the wall, others barely seeing anything, blocked by large pillars.

This was one of the first sessions at Grävseminariet, the annual investigative journalism conference in Sweden. The professor was Olle Lundin from Uppsala University, the spectators were investigative journalists from all over Sweden and the scene blew me away because it captured the essence of investigative journalists.

We are nerds.

And we happily spend an hour (or hours) to better understand boring stuff in order to get better at exposing corruption in society.

It also captured the essence of Grävseminariet, in Sweden known as just Gräv. It is one of the biggest investigative journalism conferences in Europe, and this year it was held in Kalmar, hosted by Fojo and several local media outlets.

**Some 700 journalists**, speakers and volunteers from Sweden and across the globe joined us. With one of the main themes for the conference being global collaboration, Fojo and the media outlets in the organising committee took their task seriously. The result was one of the most international Gräv conferences ever. We were proud to welcome speakers and participants



from at least a dozen countries, with Bangladesh, Jordan, Russia, Kenya and the US being just some of them.

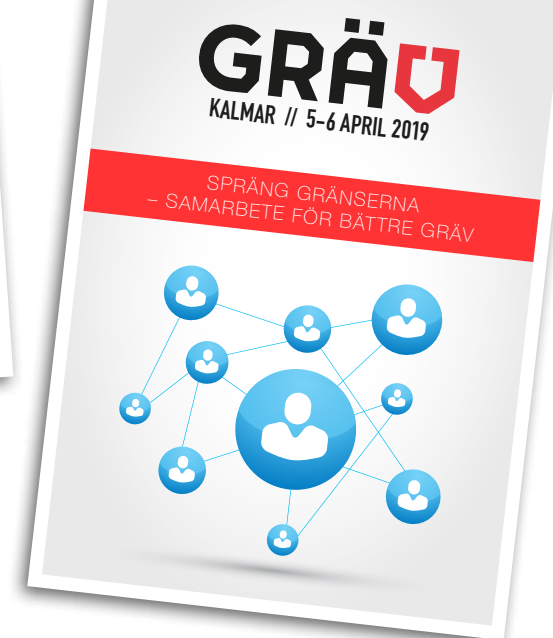
For two days, the participants were drilled in data journalism, research techniques, source protection and fact-checking. It is an understatement to call it a tsunami of knowledge. Everywhere you turned, you would find yourself surrounded by knowledge you didn’t even know existed. Martha Mendoza from AP told us about how to track freight containers across the globe; Karin Nelsson from the survey institute Inizio spoke about pitfalls when interpreting statistics, and journalist Nils Hanson spoke about bulletproofing investigative stories.

**This year, Fojo and the other** organisers also started new projects linked to the conference. Together with media outlets from across Sweden, they investigated the cocaine business. The idea led to a number of stories published in several newspapers. The initiative was very much in line with the overarching theme of collaboration. Also, a hackathon was held, with some 50 people working together to develop tools to help investigative journalists.

Collaboration is also a crucial ability to have when organising Gräv. The event costs several million kronor, and participants expect impeccable lectures, food, wi-fi and of course coffee. Lots and lots of coffee.

Participants at Gräv also expect a great ending to the two days. And they got it. With the big Golden Shovel award (alluding to that investigative journalists in Swedish are called “digging reporters”), more than 500 people got the celebration of investigative journalism the business deserves. The Golden Shovel goes to the best investigative work of the previous year and is awarded in seven categories. The two local categories are always those that stick with me. Local media outlets are struggling with being able to put effort into investigative journalism. But the award - and of course the investigations themselves - make it all worth it.

**FOUAD YUCEFI**, President Föreningen Grävande Journalister





For the third time, Fojo had the honour to organise a scholarship study tour to East Africa on behalf of the Swedish Journalism Fund. This year, ten scholars travelled through Rwanda and Zimbabwe for ten days. Fojo's **Nina Hjelmgren** was the guide and photographer **Kristian Pohl** took the pictures. Read the full story and see more photos on [fojo.se](https://fojo.se).





## Integration with the faculty leads to more collaborations

As a part of the public Linnaeus University, Fojo is guaranteed its academic freedom and independence. During 2019, Fojo also became an integrated part of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, meaning a closer collaboration with the rest of the University.

More important than the organisational change is that Fojo since last summer is one of three institutions participating in the Linnaeus Creative Knowledge Environment “A challenged democracy” (En ifrågasatt demokrati, If-dem).

The knowledge environments are a new way of collaborating on cross-disciplinary research, education and collaborations with the surrounding society.

During 2019, Fojo and the Department of Media and Journalism (MJ) started several new collaborations. Among other things the journalists teaching at Fojo, now also give lectures to the journalism students.

In November, a conference on fact-checking was jointly organised by Fojo and MJ (see other article).

TEXT: KERSTI FORSBERG

### FOJO + FKH

Until 2018 Fojo did not formally belong to a faculty but was organised directly under the Vice-chancellor of the University.



Måns Mosesson, reporter at Dagens Nyheter, receives the 2019 Wendela Award, at Wendela Hebbe's house in Södertälje. The award was handed over by Negra Efendic, herself being one of the previous winners.

Award, at Wendela Hebbe's house in Södertälje. The award was handed

## Social justice journalism

- ✓ The police did everything by the book and followed instructions and regulations. Still, a young man with Down syndrome died, shot by several police bullets while “playing hide-and-seek” with the officers. How could it go so wrong?
- ✓ Two men living in the streets of Gothenburg had a unique friendship, supporting each other until death separated them.

These were the two pieces of excellent journalism that won the Wendela Award 2019, an award for the best written piece of social justice journalism in Sweden.

## continues to excel

It was awarded for the twelfth time, by the organisation Wendelas vänner and Fojo Media Institute which has been part of the organising committee since 2015.

Every year more nominations are submitted and the jury, consisting of five experienced Swedish journalists and linguists, has a tough job naming the winners.

The Wendela Award is jointly organised by the association Wendelas vänner and Fojo Media Institute.

TEXT: KERSTI FORSBERG

## Respected as a journalist for the first time

“This course made me realise how much I love my job and how much I miss it”.

In November, 19 journalists from different parts of the world, many of them refugees now living in Sweden, gathered to attend the three-day course “Journalism in Sweden”. The one thing they have in common is that they would love to take up their profession again.

“It was really fantastic. I could get a feel for what journalism is like here in Sweden”, one participant said.

The course took place at Södra Vätterbygden's school for adult education in Jönköping. Apart from lectures and workshops, the participants went on study tours to visit newspapers and local politicians.

This was a joint effort by Reporters Without Borders, Södra Vätterbygden, and Fojo. For many, it was the first time since arriving in Sweden that they felt respected as professional journalists. Encouraged by the overwhelming response, we continue to work together on finding ways to include our foreign colleagues in the journalism profession.

TEXT: NINA HJELMGREN



Mats Amnell, Fojo, lectures on access to information and freedom of the press.



# “Those who need our facts don’t pay for news”

In November, almost 60 participants from around Sweden and the world gathered in Kalmar to discuss the challenges, possibilities and consequences of disinformation issues and fact-checking. The Fojo project Faktajouren is now the leading force in the fight against disinformation in Sweden.

“Those who spread disinformation cooperate. So must we. And we will start tonight,” said Kersti Forsberg, director of Fojo, when she welcomed close to 60 participants to the fact-checking conference in Kalmar, in late November.

“It’s been a really interesting meeting between people who handle disinformation, those who gather data, researchers who study the phenomenon, journalists who write about it and the society that has to act against it. Everyone agrees that disinformation is a problem and these days have given us new ideas,” summarised Per Enerud, who handles disinformation from the Russian government at his work at East StratCom with the EU foreign services.

A broad picture of the problems with disinformation was presented during the conference - how it is spread and its consequences. But also how hatred and threats against journalists affect the everyday journalistic work and may have wider consequences, like journalists avoiding to report on certain things due to fear of consequences.

Eva Burman, editor in chief at the Swedish

newspaper Eskilstuna-Kuriren, shared her story about threats and hatred addressed at both her and her staff.

“We won’t stop investigating, but I can’t see that the situation is getting any better and that feels very tough.”

Several tools for fact-checking were presented, as well as advice on how to map, analyse and track digital information. The participants also listened to several good examples, for instance from the Norwegian fact-checking organisation Faktisk. Their reviews are spread in both traditional news media, alternative news sites and blogs, with the ambition that the fact should be easily found - regardless of which online environment you’re in.

“Those who need our facts don’t pay for news. That’s why we give it all away for free. It’s a really bad business model, but the value of fact-checking must be seen in more than money. Our mission is to get the facts out,” said Kristoffer Egeberg, editor in chief at Faktisk.

The conference also focused on how to handle the challenge of disinformation. Fact-checking



The participants were given examples of challenges for journalists with disinformation, for instance ongoing smear campaigns.



Three of the speakers: Hanna Linderstål (founder of Earhart Business Protection Agency), Paul Rapacioli (journalist and author) and Vivian Baker (professor in journalism at Bangor University, UK) talked about the challenges with disinformation.



as a new journalistic genre was discussed, as well as the role of journalism. Since the internet is a big part of many people's lives it's important that journalists are aware of what's happening online.

Within this, discussions about how to strengthen journalists to face hatred and threats were in focus. For instance, Hanna Andersson, from Fojo's project Demokratijouren, advocated for the importance of information security, making risk analysis and creating contingency

plans for publications that risk provoking hatred and threats.

Other suggestions were collaborations between different media and alerting authorities to journalists' vulnerability in this new, threatening landscape. The importance of managers being strong publicists, who stand up for their employees and journalistic values, was also highlighted.

Another aspect is the general level of education and the journalistic role of alerting

and informing the public to the threat of disinformation and the forces behind it.

"Youth are important; they need to learn more about disinformation. That way they can be part of the solution, instead of spreading disinformation. We need to increase the understanding that we have something important to protect - democracy," said Mikki Salo, founder of the Finnish fact-checking organisation Faktabaari.

TEXT AND PICTURES: MALIN GUSTAVSSON

## #SWEFACTCHECK

In conjunction with the conference, the hashtag #swefactcheck was used on social media. The same name is now used at Fojo's site Faktajouren, where Fojo will gather fact-checks that in various ways affect Sweden.



**Jonathan Lundberg**, journalist and author

"Excellent initiative from Fojo. I spoke to a lot of smart people with smart ideas that I wouldn't have met anywhere else. The best thing was probably what happened in between seminars with great discussions, shared thoughts, methods and experiences - not least for those of us who work very independently with fact-checking and disinformation in our daily lives."



**Åsa Larsson**, journalist and former editor at Swedish fact-checking organisation Viralgranskaren

"Meeting colleagues within fact-checking was the most rewarding for me. There are huge benefits in discussing and listening to how others approach issues. I've been thinking a lot about how to design fact-checks so we can reach whoever saw the original, fake news. So it was really interesting to listen to researchers and scientists on the subject."



**Martin Carlstedt**, Commission on media and information literacy, Government office of Sweden

"My knowledge about disinformation has deepened and I have seen a lot of interesting international aspects and research I didn't know about. The combined knowledge on disinformation is vast, but we still need more research on the most effective way to counter fake news and propaganda. It really is an important issue."



**Irene Christensson**, senior analyst, counter influence, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

"It's been very valuable to listen to discussions on fact-checking. It's important to uphold the democratic conversation and a part of that is to have room for fact-checking to counter disinformation. Journalism has an important role to highlight lies and give the public a correct picture of small and big issues."



**Göran Svensson**, Senior lecturer at Department of informatics and media, Uppsala University

"The conference has been a great meeting point for representatives from research, education and journalism. It's given me a deeper insight into research in the area, which I am sure can lead to collaborations in the future. I appreciate having been invited to take part of the many good and important contributions Fojo has in the field."



# “A wonderful programme that should be expanded to other regional states”

Interesting study visits to media outlets in Nairobi, lectures, vivid discussions and hard work in the different country teams - the members of the International Training Programme, ITP, met for the third time during an ITP-session in Kenya.

The ITP, Media Development in a Democratic Framework, focuses on self-regulation and is now running in four regions: East Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. The participants work together in national teams with different change projects engaging on media reforms and media self-regulation in young democracies. The programme is financed by Sida, and carried out by NIRAS, Fojo Media Institute, IMS and Global Reporting.

Here are some voices from the participants when they met in Kenya.

**NAME:** Gladys Oroma

**COUNTRY:** Uganda

**WORKPLACE AND POSITION:**  
Northern Uganda Media Club,  
Project Editor



**On a personal level, what have you learnt from the programme?**

“The programme equipped me with knowledge on how media regulation works which made me reflect on journalism upcountry, evaluate the situation and look for shortcomings in the industry, for example the lack of code of conduct for many small media houses.”

**What have your country team achieved so far?**

“Uganda has achieved a lot since the

beginning of ITP 1. The first team instigated the Uganda Editor’s Guild, and team two is embedding the concept to the different relevant stakeholders, while at the same time conceptualising the idea of a Uganda Media Sector Working Group.”

**What do you think of the ITP?**

“The ITP is a good training programme that has given several journalists, policy makers, and lawyers the opportunity to cause change in the media industry in different countries in Africa. It has allowed the journalists to analyse the situation of their media and come up with suitable solutions to improve journalism in those different countries.”

**NAME:** Settlement Chikwinya

**COUNTRY:** Zimbabwe

**WORKPLACE AND POSITION:**  
Parliament of Zimbabwe, Media  
Committee, Member of Parliament



**What have your country team achieved so far?**

“The Media Law that is set to establish co-regulation has now been introduced in Parliament for debate. The Zimbabwe Media Commission Bill is set to pass as a law by the first quarter of 2020.”

**What is the next step?**

“To lead a countrywide communications programme in order to popularise the co-regulation concept for the benefit of the

ordinary public. This will be done by working with various media stakeholders throughout the country.”

**On a personal level, what have you learnt from the programme?**

“The realisation that free media is the bedrock of national economic development and human rights protection.”

**What do you think of the ITP?**

“The experiences obtained in Sweden and Kenya establish that it is factual to state that national development is directly linked to an accountable government which is only possible through free media.”



**NAME:** Miriam Mukondeimba

**COUNTRY:** Zambia

**WORKPLACE AND POSITION:**  
Mirand Media Limited, Founder  
and CEO



the associations together and getting consensus on an umbrella association to help unite the journalists.”

**What is the next step?**

“Besides building capacity of the media umbrella body, the project will focus on training of journalists to enhance media professionalism and credibility.”

**What are the challenges working with media development?**

“We are operating under an atmosphere where the media is highly polarised and there is mistrust among stakeholders. So to bring players together and get them to work as a team requires patience and understanding.”

**What do you think of the ITP?**

“Most importantly, the ITP involves participants from other countries and this offers an invaluable opportunity to share knowledge on best practices. I like the fact that the sponsors of the programme do not prescribe the solutions but the participants are expected to come up with their own homegrown solutions.”

**What have your country team achieved so far?**

“We have so far succeeded in bringing all

**NAME:** Victor Maleko

**COUNTRY:** Tanzania

**WORKPLACE AND POSITION:**  
Programme Officer



**What are the challenges working with media development?**

“The challenges are mostly on security for journalists in Tanzania, caused by draconian media laws and regulations, and lack of unity and support amongst journalists and media institutions in Tanzania.”

**What do you think of the ITP?**

“The fact that the programme is linking experiences from different East African media expertise makes it unique.”

**What have your country team achieved so far?**

“We have organised a meeting with media stakeholders aiming at briefing them on our change project which is producing self-regulation guidelines for online content producers.”

**Anything else you want to bring up?**

“Invite members of ITP to be silent observers on general elections for East African countries so as to have a better understanding on how media operate during general elections, but also to see how self-regulation/co-regulation and press freedom are progressing.”

**NAME:** Roselyne Obala

**COUNTRY:** Kenya

**WORKPLACE AND POSITION:**  
Standard Group Limited PLC/  
Board member Media Council of  
Kenya (MCK)



participants agreed there were gaps in editorial standards and there is need to meet and develop guidelines and a mechanism for handling complaints.”

**On a personal level, what have you learnt from the programme?**

“I have learnt a lot which has completely changed the scope of issues experienced in the

media industry with the digital disruption. Shared experiences among best practices in developed democracies and the regional nations, is an eye opener. It has offered an opportunity to explore new areas and benchmark with other nations towards self-regulation and independence.”

**What do you think of the ITP?**

“This is a wonderful programme that should be expanded to other regional states. It gives participants an experience of a kind. The programme phases are well thought out, as they benchmark on the world’s best practices like Sweden and Denmark.”

**What have your country team achieved so far?**

“For example a media stakeholders’ workshop at the Communications Authority (CA) where





# Pushing the lifeline and the health of journalism

Think of journalism as a living being. Something with heartbeats, and a zigzag lifeline that reacts to joy, frustration, insecurity, threats, pressure, pleasure and everything that affects a human. Health of journalism is heavily influenced by its environment. When the environment is free, the line goes up and steady; and when in restriction, it goes down, impacting not only the profession or media industry itself, but the whole democracy.

In a country like Bangladesh, the struggle to push the journalism curve up is a lifelong struggle. There are flaws in democracy; media business is shrinking; journalists are losing jobs; ownership mostly is confined within political elites; newsrooms practice self-censorship, and it is facing pressure - from the power and within. It doesn't require being highly imaginative to visualize the lifeline in this environment - it is in a freefall, that said, sick.

FojoMedia Institute and its Bangladeshi partner Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) are trying to push this line up, by supporting investigative journalism in a depressing media environment. The idea is simple. Journalism - though in sickbed - still reacts to hope, opportunities, inspirations, and excitement of producing something extraordinary.

Fojo-MRDI supports media houses and

investigative journalists, in a way that they can produce quality stories. The project helped the production of more than 100 reports with funds, mentoring, training, and sometimes just by showing how others have done things in a more adverse environment. Result? One can see the list of winners of the 2019 Investigative Journalism Award by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). Three out of the four reports awarded, were supported by this project.

**The list is long.** In the last two years, project supported stories have won 15 major local and regional honours, including the South Asia Journalism Award by WAN-IFRA. It inspires young and mid-career journalists pursuing the troublesome path of Investigative Journalism. Guess what else it does? It pumps the heartbeat, a bit up.

But what about highly censored media houses? Take the case of Kaler Kantho, one of the leading dailies the project supports. Mostofa Kamal, the Acting Editor says, "daily circulation of the newspaper, in Dhaka alone (which is the most competitive market) has grown by 2500 copies, since they have started prioritising investigative reports on the front page," whereas the sales of their rivals are falling apace. Can investigative journalism push the business curve up? It is hard to answer, and dependent on market variances. But the push... it worked in this case.

Kaler Kantho produced more than 20 stories under the Investigative Journalism Partnership with MRDI and Fojo. One of them was a cross-border project with MalaysiaKini. It exposed widespread abuse and exploitation of migrant workers by recruiting and employing companies. Impact was immediate: a review of the worker



A group of Bangladeshi journalists at the 11th Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Hamburg, Germany. Photo: MRDI

recruitment process between Malaysia and Bangladesh. Right at this moment (February 2020) local media houses are collaborating with their international counterparts on at least five major investigations. The project just linked them with each other, built a bridge. Even two years back, Bangladeshi journalists were unnoticed and unseen in the global space of collaborative journalism. But now, they can dream big and think beyond the border.

**There was huge** admiration and cheers for investigative journalist Haider Ali when the collaboration between Kaler Kantho and MalaysiaKini was published in both countries. In an immediate response, excited Haider told this writer, "Brother, this is what I want to do. This is what I have always wanted."

Haider was among ten other Bangladeshi reporters who attended the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Hamburg last year. They are those, who either received a GIJN fellowship or produced the best stories under





Haider Ali at Kaler Khanto collaborated with MalaysiaKini and exposed the abuse and exploitation of migrant workers.

the project. It was an opportunity to connect with 1700 journalists from 130 countries, learn new things and refill the heart with courage. Jebunnesa Alo, one of the fellows writes in a post on the conference, “I learned that journalism is challenging not only in Bangladesh but in other countries too.” She has returned with high hopes, as others in the team.

**From the International** Journalism Festival in Perugia, and after listening to the heartbreaking stories on state of journalism around the world, GIJN’s Managing Editor Tanya Pampalone wrote, “For now, I suppose we have to hold tight and

keep talking about how we’re going to get ourselves out of this mess. But there is something important about remembering that we can save ourselves by doing what we do best.”

In an environment like Bangladesh, there are always stories that you cannot do, but there are even more, that you can.

And we - as media development organisations - can help the journalists “to do what they can do best.” We can push the lifeline up by supporting them with knowledge, resources, networks, and courage.

In Bangladesh, we are doing just that.

**TEXT: MIRAJ CHOWDHURY**

## Shared Knowledge Inspires at ECER Annual Conference

ECER - Fojo’s programme in Eastern and Central Europe and Russia - covers the whole region with a tight virtual net of professional contacts, exchanges, and long-term cooperation. In September 2019, for the second time in the programme’s history, this virtual network of like-minded people gathered for the annual conference - now in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Running a media in Eastern and Central Europe or Russia is hardly an adventure that lacks a good challenge. Think ever-changing legislation, audiences that are not used to paying for content, and losing your best staff members to other, more stable and lucrative industries. All the way through 2019 Fojo has been active helping its partner organisations and targeted media houses to maneuver in this rocky landscape. Our trainers helped local media to develop more effective work routines, establish functional web-presence, master multimedia storytelling trends and experiment with monetisation models.

**The conference in Tbilisi** built on these thematics and expanded on them. More than 60 local media representatives from Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Georgia, Poland, Latvia and Sweden gathered to speak about their successful and failed projects. And just like the region itself, this showcasing of media initiatives and experiments was diverse and impressive.

All the way from the cold Siberian plains to high Georgian mountains, journalists found new and creative tools to tell the stories that

no one had ever told before. And at the same time - connect with their audiences in a totally new way, raise funds and employ the newest technology to turn their media into successful businesses.

**“Recently, we have** been feeling that horizontal connections between the people working in media have weakened significantly in our region. This was a great opportunity to re-establish such connections - both to share experiences, but also to protect our common interests together”, one of the participants writes in his feedback after the conference.

Looking into Fojo’s ECER programme plans for the next year, it would be safe to say this was definitely not the last opportunity for our partners and colleagues to meet and inspire each other for new achievements. Especially now, when a new country - Armenia - has joined the programme. There is so much more cooperation, shared knowledge and experiences to come!

**TEXT: ALONA MELNYK**

■ Watch the three-minute video from the conference at <https://fojo.se/where-we-work/ecer/>



# Dreams coming true with a little help from an app

Two breaking news stories that came right out of the Fojo programme in Kenya have taken Amina Wako to her dream position as a journalist. The collaboration with Transparency International Kenya and the development of an app that makes it possible to safely and anonymously report suspected corruption has really had an impact on investigative journalism in the country.

Amina Wako always dreamt of becoming a top journalist in Kenya. She even pioneered the publication of a magazine while in high school, and in 2008, she moved to Nairobi to begin her career journey.

Her eyes brighten, when she narrates memories of how she emulated a fellow Kenyan covering top stories across Africa for CNN.

“I have never thought of becoming anyone else”, she says.

**Amina graduated from college** in 2013, at a time when there were little or no employment opportunities in local news outlets. Her assertiveness led her into writing for various online media platforms as a freelance journalist, but the pay was low.

Along the way, she took a break from media, trying to figure out what else she could do. She worked with communications for a local organisation, while occasionally doing some stories on the side, for the passion she held, journalism.

Then, a friend referred Amina to a weblink seeking applications for an investigative grant and mentorship programme, which was part of the Action for Transparency project (A4T). She took up

the chance by applying, even with doubts of qualifying.

A few weeks later, Amina, together with 40 other journalists, had completed a training in investigative and data journalism. She also qualified for the grant and mentorship programme where she was paired with an experienced mentor and awarded a grant to investigate corruption.

**Her first story concentrated** on a review of the Kenyan Auditor General’s reports from 2015. One constituency had bought two school buses, but the auditor couldn’t verify their existence.

Amina dug, and in her investigations, she found that the buses had been bought by the area Member of Parliament (MP) through the National Government Constituency Development fund - a fund meant for projects that benefit communities, which was chaired by the MP.

Amina revealed how one of the buses had been presented to a primary school during a handover ceremony, and after the event, the bus left together with the guests who brought it, never to be seen at the school again.

Her sources spotted the bus during the 2017 general elections, branded in a popular political party’s colours and ferrying campaigners. At the same time, the school, serving a large slum population, was in dire need of other basic amenities like piped water and extra rooms.

The story was published when by-elections were being held for the area. The MP did not like it, and he called Amina with threats and pleads to drop the story. But it ran, and the MP was not re-elected, an impact Amina attributes to the story that created awareness amongst the residents. It also became a trending topic on social media for a while.

A few months later, Amina lost her job at





the local organisation, but managed to secure another through the help of her A4T-mentor at Nation Media Group.

In another investigation, the now fiery journalist took interest in a report that came in through the A4T mobile App, of a swimming pool constructed at a primary school. Parents of pupils had reported that the area MP and his accolades could be benefiting from the swimming pool by charging users, including the pupils of the very school the pool was meant for.

Amina found out that a query had been raised by the Auditor General about the cost of construction of the pool, which was twice the normal cost. As soon as the story was published, a corruption probe was initiated by the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission.

**Amina acknowledges that** the A4T grant and mentorship programme has enabled her to do the stories and appreciates the support she received from her mentor, always challenging her to do more.

When asked about the challenges, Amina pauses and gazes down.

“While we pursue stories, we get threats, we get people following us, we get offered money to drop stories. And as much as we have freedom in the country, sometimes we don’t get all those investigative stories published, because, the government is a major advertiser in these newspapers. So when you try to do a story that is negative towards the government, they can pull out advertisement.”

She continues to portray a rather challenging environment for investigative journalists to work in, citing lack of protection for investigative journalists in Kenya. Amina has personally

received threatening calls, and at one time was stalked while walking around the city. That, she says, was her most frightening moment.

**Amina wishes there** was an organisation to protect journalists, especially freelancers, and to even represent others in court when need be.

“Looking back, I wanted to be a journalist and write top stories on front pages of newspapers. But now in 2019, I have done all that. It is the story that I did for A4T, that got me the job I am currently working in”, says Amina.

TEXT: ABRAHAM MARIITA  
PHOTO: CYRUS KITHUVA

#### ACTION FOR TRANSPARENCY



■ The Action for Transparency (A4T) Project is implemented by Transparency International Kenya and Fojo Media Institute with support from the Swedish Embassy in Kenya.

■ For the first time a combination of media and technology is used to empower citizens to monitor the use of public resources in the Education and Health sectors in Kenya.

■ Using the A4T mobile app anyone can check the amount of government money pledged to each school and health clinic, the amount actually spent and even report suspected corruption anonymously.

# Inspiring the future journalists of Rwanda

There is a first time for everything. On September 17, 2015 newly employed Programme Manager Anki Wood was going through a double first. She had never attended a Fojo inauguration before and - naturally - never hosted one. The project she was about to launch also marked the start of Fojo’s first endeavour in Rwanda, adding to Anki Wood’s mild anxiety.

The Fojo programme was born out of a need to raise the capacity of the School of Journalism and Communication (SJC) at the University of Rwanda. The students were facing a changing media environment and the institution needed support.

Through Fojo, the teachers could get further training, the school would get more resources and the students a greater chance at landing the job they want.

As the launch went on and it became evident just how much the Fojo project was anticipated, Anki Wood’s anxiety subsided.

**Many prominent representatives** from the Rwandan government and academia as well as representatives from the funder, the Swedish Embassy in Kigali, praised the project and when the ribbon was officially cut the event proved to be the perfect blend of long keynotes, voracious handshaking, and traditional Intore dancers that constitutes almost any successful launch in Rwanda.

Viviane Irabizi did not know what the fuss

on campus was about. She had just begun her studies at SJC and had never heard about Fojo or the project before. But as guest lecturers from Sweden turned up in class she began to realise that something big was afoot.

“At that time, I felt happy and I remember thinking ‘wow, so this is what university is like’. I felt proud and told my friends [outside the school] that we had lecturing volunteers coming all the way from Sweden,” Viviane says.

**She wanted to know more** and get involved somehow. As the East African Communication Association (EACA) turned to Rwanda for its annual conference in 2017 and Fojo was looking for Rwandan volunteers to help out, Viviane was first in line.

Hosting the conference was a big opportunity for SJC. It was a way for the faculty staff to present their research in front of peers on home turf, which is both a matter of academic prestige and national pride. As researchers, industry experts and grassroots media from around the globe travelled to the small East African country



to participate, Viviane could see the buzz grow on social media.

“Meeting and greeting the professors from abroad really made me feel responsible. I had to learn a lot about time management and at times I really felt like a champion when I solved tricky situations,” she says.

With the lessons learned after EACA, Viviane signed up as editor-in-chief at the school newspaper, the Kaminuza Star. The paper is a revamped version of one that had laid dormant for years, but with a common effort by the Rwandan newspaper New Times, Fojo, and SJC it was revived. But as Viviane was about to find out, running a paper is never easy.

“I did not reach the goals I set up, and that was tough. But I learned so much about myself. I really think I am a good person when it comes to... like... ruling,” she says with an ear-to-ear smile.

**Now, more than five years** after the ribbon was cut, both Viviane and Fojo’s presence in Rwanda are moving into new phases. Viviane graduated from SJC in November 2019 and found herself facing a tough job market. She found a path outside mainstream media and is now an editor for Impuhwe TV, a Kinyarwanda language YouTube-channel that focuses on social and economic development in Rwanda. When thinking back she recalls her time at the Kaminuza Star:

“That was the best training I could have gotten! I am sure that Fojo’s contribution to SJC helped me and the other graduates to better compete on the job market,” says Viviane.

Viviane’s smile and positive energy have melted many hearts of Fojo volunteers over the years and she has, together with her fellow



*Producing The Kaminuza Star has been a great way for students to get practical experience - especially for those in charge like Viviane Irabizi.*

students, undoubtedly helped shape the Fojo project. Now she embarks on the long journey, along with her fellow students, to shape the future of journalism in Rwanda.

**Fojo, on the other hand**, has grown to become a viable source of inspiration for professional journalism and freedom of expression in the country, and partnerships now include other Rwandan universities, institutions, and development organisations as well as SJC. In addition, programme manager Anki Wood is now a seasoned launch veteran.

**TEXT: BJÖRN WIDMARK**



*Viviane Irabizi's (left) journey with the SJC and Fojo has been long and rewarding. After graduating in November 2019, she is now an editor for Impuhwe TV, a Kinyarwanda language YouTube-channel. Top: Björn Widmark and the editorial team of the student newspaper Kaminuza Star. Below: "The K-torians" - the first group of students participating in the SJC initiative KTOR, an incubator aiming to inspire and guide students to enroll in the school newspaper.*



# ZimFact: Trying to promote accountability without electricity

It has been two years since we launched ZimFact as Zimbabwe's first fact-checking service. We have been flying, but there are professional and operational problems to overcome.

With the platform, we are trying to promote a culture of accountability in the dissemination of information, and working around sectors unused to being questioned.

The biggest challenge is working in a highly political and hyper-partisan environment where disregarding facts and the dissemination of crude propaganda, false news and information is justified on political grounds.

**Judging from Zimbabwe's vibrant** Twitter community, a long-running political and economic crisis has transformed part of the population from a gentle and generous people into angry political combatants.

These Zimbabwean "cyber warriors" are mostly committed to either the governing ZANU-PF party or the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance and dominate the Twitter space, debating both mundane and grave national issues. The "debates" between the political rivals are hardly built around facts but opinions, and invariably degenerate into vitriolic attacks and personal insults.

**When we established ZimFact** in 2018, with main funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) through Fojo and support from the European Union, we set out to fact-check public officials and media to help minimise the spread of misleading or false information. Our entry point was

*"We have to accept that our core ZimFact staff of four must take turns, many hours at a time, to look for fuel and water, and lately for the staple maize meal which is also in short supply."*

the run up to Zimbabwe's general elections in July 2018 and so far we have been able to fact-check the major political leaders.

We have published over 200 articles on the website and broadcast our work on social media platforms. We have made presentations on fact-checking a highly polarised political environment at international conferences, including the last Global Fact-Checking Summit in Cape Town in 2019.

Besides the challenge of fact-checking in a highly polarised environment, the other big problem that we are facing — like many other Zimbabweans — is working around a deteriorating economy.

**We have to accept that our** core ZimFact staff of four must take turns, many hours at a time, to look for fuel and water, and lately for the staple maize meal which is also in short supply.

Zimbabwe has struggled with shortages of fuel since September 2018 and the Harare municipality has not been able to provide water to many housing districts for years due to aged infrastructure.

Motorists spend long hours in fuel queues to fill up — if they are lucky, otherwise they are rationed to 30 litres when the shortages are severe.

Business operational problems are worsened by power cuts that sometimes stretch for 18 hours each day, often taking internet connectivity down as well.

When the services are unavailable and you have urgent work, you look for squatting space from friends who have the services at the time. Alternatively, you wait for services to be restored, and you answer your urgent emails late at night.

**Our major focus at ZimFact** is strengthening our fact-checking work. This involves looking at various models and trying to adapt them into our Zimbabwean context.

One of the hard decisions we have put on hold is publishing names of Twitter and online accounts notorious for disinformation.

The entire project and struggle is to get onto the public agenda the fact that false news and information pose a serious danger and are potentially harmful to people and to democracy.

**TEXT: CRIS CHINAKA**

ZimFact, Editor-In-Chief [zimfact.org](http://zimfact.org)





# Southeast Asia still struggling

## CAMBODIA



■ Since late 2017, following the dissolution of the opposition party and the shutdown of some media houses and NGOs, the media situation in Cambodia has been uncertain and unsafe. Cambodia's political landscape is getting fragile. With the Prime Minister Hun Sen's command, the members of the oppositional Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), its exiled leader Sam Rainsy, and those assumed supportive towards the opposition are being openly attacked or arrested.

On the other hand, there is a glimpse of hope

as the Ministry of Information has approved the registration of Cambodia Journalists Association (CamboJA), the 42nd press association, which is committed to media freedom, freedom of expression, and supporting professional journalists in the country.

Fojo's partner Cambodia Center for Independent Media (CCIM) has been working persistently in pursuit of quality news. Staff from CCIM joined project partner Myanmar Journalism Institute (MJI) in Myanmar to learn and observe how they have been conducting their multimedia courses.

## MYANMAR



■ With the prospect of general elections in November 2020, the media in Myanmar have been preparing for that important moment. With the continuous conflicts escalating across the country, reporting news from conflict areas comes with high safety risks and limits access to information and freedom of movement, especially for field reporters. In June 2019, Myanmar's Ministry of Transport and Communications shut down internet access in nine townships of Rakhine and Chin States.

Harsh laws against journalists and other

freedom of expression activists remain unchanged. Under this overall situation, Myanmar Journalism Institute (MJI), Fojo's partner in the country, has continued their various journalism courses to support quality independent journalism. Kyaw Min Swe, MJI's executive director, takes every chance to improve the quality of MJI's existing courses and is looking for ways for the institute to become self-sustaining. In the current courses, he has included knowledge of the complex sociopolitical dimensions of the country, which is vital in the current crisis.

# towards professional journalism

## VIETNAM



■ With the introduction of the Cyber Security Law in 2019 to curb what people can say and share on social media and hold them responsible for the content, the Vietnamese Government has tightened its grip on freedom of speech, with serious consequences. People have lost their jobs for speaking up on Facebook, and activists complain that content on their feeds is being cut or removed.

In April 2019, the Government plan on press development and management, was approved by the Prime Minister. The Ministry

of Information and Communication is in charge of facilitating the process and has already begun to take actions leading to reduction in number of media houses and reporters.

With Fojo's support, the Vietnamese Journalists' Training Centre is intensively working on reviewing and upgrading their twenty journalism courses to respond to the current developments inside the country. Also, Fojo is supporting an initiative to translate, print, and launch WAN-IFRA's guide "Sexual harassment in the media - A practical guide for employers & employees" into Vietnamese.

## LAOS



■ Recently, media consumption in Laos has rapidly shifted from traditional to online platforms. In March 2019, the Government set up the Laos Computer Emergency Response Team to monitor, inspect, combat, suppress and eliminate cyber-crimes, as well as to detect dissemination of fake news and disinformation. All social media news platforms are now required to register.

Laos has severe laws curtailing media freedom, such as 15 years of jail term for journalists who fail to file 'constructive reports' about the work of the Government.

In Laos, Fojo provides journalism related support for the Institute of Mass Media, Communication, and Tourism (IMCT).

With support from Fojo, IMCT is able to run their in-house trainings with better communication, especially when the trainees need to do their research or cross-check facts online.

Importantly, by being part of the project IMCT trainers can tap into the the knowledge of other project partners and gain wider regional perspectives and skills.



# Ethiopia looking for the balance between rights and responsibilities

When the democratisation process of the Ethiopian media sector started, most journalists did not know how to involve in the process.

It was a bit difficult to find media owners, practicing journalists, or editors who would freely discuss the media situation. Most of them were sceptical and scared of consequences if they spoke the truth with a foreign media development organisation.

This was mainly because 2016 and 2017 were the most intense moments of demonstrations all over the country, with internet shutdowns and less access to phone services. However, from those willing to speak, the requests were clear - the country needs freedom of expression and the media should exercise accordingly as stated in the constitution.

The decision to take the project forward ushered and provided Ethiopian media stakeholders yet another opportunity to try and turn aspirations for a free and professional press into reality. In an effort to build robust, vibrant, professional and responsible media institutions that inform and enlighten the public,

The project, based on an extensive feasibility study conducted by Fojo, financed by the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa, provided inputs for the ongoing media reform in the country. Topics

covered included 'strengthening access to information', 'how to cope with disinformation, destructive use of social media and how to make use of it for business', 'constructive journalism in times of change', 'kick-starting the Ethiopian media council and self-regulation', 'gender and media, and 'election reporting' among others.

**In April 2019, the Swedish Embassy** in Addis Ababa and Fojo in collaboration with local partner Nubia Media and Communications, hosted a regional conference under the title "Promoting Journalism and Democracy in Practice - Media Reform in a Time of Change" at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa.

The conference formed part of the series of media development seminars that have been organised for a year since September 2018.

The conference, attended by almost 200 delegates, featured a number of guest speakers and panellists on topics ranging from the challenges to media freedom in Africa and a global digital world; the need for more women to be represented in media as journalists and



*The conference "Promoting Journalism and Democracy in Practice - Media Reform in a Time of Change" in April was attended by almost 200 delegates in Addis Ababa.*

sources; how to use the tools of constructive journalism to cover elections; new media business models; media literacy and the need for self-regulation; professional journalist organisations and media reform in times of political transition.

**The conference also highlighted** the responsibility of the government to make sure that the right legal and policy framework is in place to enable the nascent media sector in Ethiopia to grow and mature.

At the same time, exhaustive discussions on the responsibility of media professionals and owners to seize the opportunity and invest in the future of the sector, recruit and hire new and capable

journalists, come together, form an association to uphold the professional ethics and standards of the profession, work in cooperation with the government in the formulation of policies and laws that regulate the sector were held.

The conference predicted that the relative openness that the media enjoys today with regard to press freedom and freedom of expression cannot be sustained, unless it is exercised within the framework of laws that balance rights with responsibilities. Issues related to ethnicity and media were discussed and considered one of the main obstacles in the media landscape.

In addition, Fojo in association with Nubia Media compiled a handbook to stimulate







The Fake ≠ Fact Info Lab was translated and printed in English and Amharic, and showcased at three occasions during the spring and early summer of 2019 in Addis Ababa. In May, the handbook: “Ethiopia: Reflections on Media Reform” was published in both English and Amharic. Photo by Marika Griehsel.

discussion and debate within Ethiopian journalism and media about contemporary challenges in the local, African and global media landscape, press freedom and media reform. Various chapters and sections in the booklet were written by professionals, experts and journalists from Ethiopia, Africa and other parts of the globe.



provide information about why media reform is an important part of transitional government reform by providing case studies from other countries, particularly African countries which have gone through similar reform processes.

As the first independently organised media conference since the new administration took over, the conference was a timely contribution to the ongoing efforts

of reforming the media sector in Ethiopia.

The handbook and the conference aimed to stimulate discussion on the role of press freedom in the democratic and media reform process, to

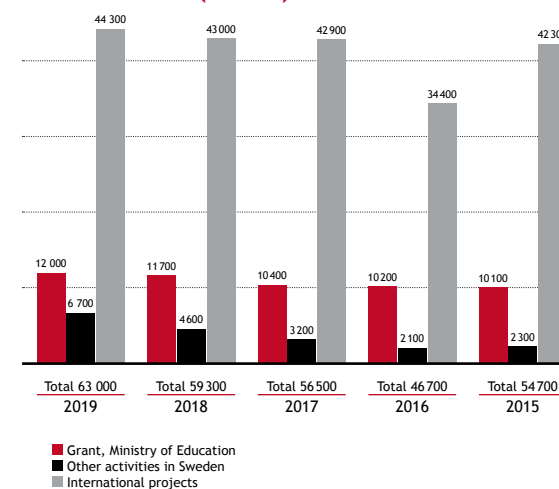
TEXT: HADRA AHMED

## WHAT WE DID IN 2019

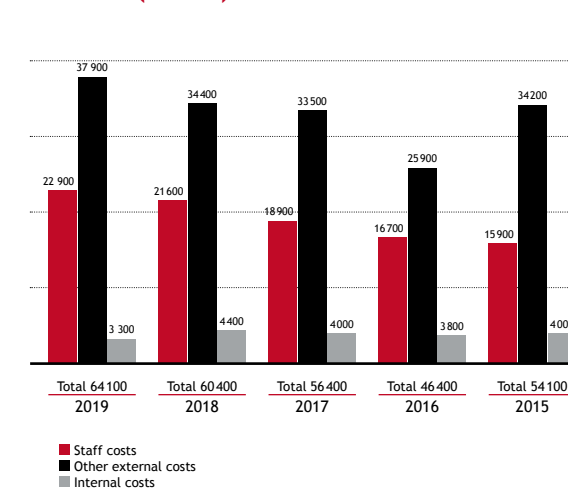
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Providing support and mentorship on investigative Journalism
<b>ECER</b>	Supporting the establishment of strategic alliances and strengthened resilience of regional non-state media actors in Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine, Armenia and Sweden
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Supporting the media reform process, promoting Journalism and Democracy
<b>Kenya</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye on Corruption Global Network, phase III</li> <li>• Action for Transparency (A4T) Kenya</li> </ul>
<b>Myanmar</b>	Media Development to Support Democratic Engagement in Myanmar
<b>Rwanda</b>	Capacity Building and trainings at the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Rwanda
<b>Somalia</b>	Strengthening Somali media: Promoting peace, reconciliation, accountability and citizen participation in democratic processes
<b>Southeast Asia</b>	Strengthening the capacity of mid-career journalism training institutions in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam
<b>Sub Saharan Africa</b>	Consortium to Promote Human Rights, Civic Freedoms and Media Development
<b>Sweden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses - competence development of professional journalists</li> <li>• Demokratijouren - prevention of hate and harassment</li> <li>• EU - trainings, seminars, online resources and field trips on the topic of the European Union</li> <li>• Faktajouren - fact-checking trainings, conferences and online resources</li> <li>• Frilansakuten - training and online resources for freelance journalists</li> <li>• Offentlighetsjouren - in-house trainings, helpdesk and online resources on RTI</li> </ul>
<b>Ukraine</b>	Journalism Education for Democracy in Ukraine: Developing Standards, Integrity and Professionalism
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	Strengthening citizen engagement in marginalised rural and urban communities through innovative media and communication platforms in Zimbabwe
<b>Worldwide</b>	ITP - development of self-regulatory frameworks for the media sector, strengthening the institutional and organisational capacities among relevant media sector stakeholders and contributing to national reform and change processes in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Moldova, Armenia, Ukraine, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras
<b>Online</b>	Media Helping Media - free training resources for journalists and managers

## IN THE BOOKS

### TURNOVER (TSEK)



### COSTS (TSEK)







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