

Seminar International Media Platform



Report 20&21 October 2014

Transnational Investigative Journalism Programme

‘One day, the twain will meet....’

In their research report ‘White spots on the map’, commissioned by Oxfam Novib Bob van der Winden and Kees Schaeapman conclude that (European) media express a felt need for deeper and more balanced reporting from and about Africa. They also see a trend toward more collective investigations by (free lance) journalists. Although there is a host of African Investigative journalists, they are mostly working more isolated and less supported by media houses than their colleagues from other continents. But also here the trend is towards growing organisation (like in FAIR, AIPC etc.).

Seminar 20 and 21 October

During the seminar ‘International Media Platform’ (21 en 22 October 2014, Amsterdam) these conclusions were shared by most participants. The proposition to stimulate investigative journalism in and about Africa was acclaimed. Participants understood the focus on African Journalists, but questioned the limitation to cooperation with Dutch counterparts. Why – for instance – no European – African projects?

Representatives of organisations, active in support to (African) media in training, accompaniment and other forms of support (FPU, ZAM, AIPC) wondered whether we were not witnessing yet another re-invention of the wheel. Does the proposal right to the existing experience and knowledge? Also the risk is immanent that the new fund would cannibalize existing initiatives. This could be prevented by for example looking for funding that at the moment is not spent on media.

Journalists and representatives of media organisations from Africa, het UK, US and Netherlands participating in the seminar stated that they would be willing and able to participate in a future initiative. The distrust between media and journalists on the one hand and NGOs on the other (as described by Schaeapman and Van der Winden in their paper) were quite explicitly addressed by the audience.

The conclusion was drawn, that without guaranties for journalistic independence a program to further investigative journalism would be doomed and would probably even increase distrust. But we believe that ‘one day the twain will meet...’

Despite the critical reactions the initiative of Oxfam Novib was explicitly appreciated. There were little or no doubts about the importance of such a programme, only about the limitation of the cooperation to African and Dutch journalists as well as about the pace of the process.

Participants expressed in different ways that first more time was needed to start the programme on a modest base and gather more experience in order to be able to adjust the program to the actual needs. The programme is not developed enough to start with projects of several millions of Euros, but should start rather slowly and modestly in order to grow organically and prevent a 'sudden infant death syndrome'.

Conclusions

A **modest start** will offer the opportunity to explore problems in practice while supporting international cooperation and networks of investigative journalists. That's why the best way to start would be a relatively small fund of around 100.000 Euros for, let's say, 10 projects, used for research-costs including training and coaching where necessary.

Those organisations participating in the project (with knowledge, expertise or funding) will all be represented in a **steering committee**, accompanying the project in its first year. The steering group will formulate a policy for the first phase and will adapt that in broad lines where necessary during the year.

The steering committee appoints a '**trailblazer**' (e.g. for 0,6 ftu), preferably an investigative

journalist with some management experience. The trailblazer is responsible for the implementation of the policy plan and reports to the steering committee.

The grant fund (that is part of the program) is open for applications of African and European investigative journalists; joint applications have priority. Applications will be discussed based on the established policy plan, including broad themes. Suggestions can be found in the research reports of Schaepman and Van der Winden. An independent advisory board of at least 5 investigative journalists or editors (receiving a modest attendance) will judge the applications.

The advisory board is appointed by the steering group, based on nomination by the trailblazer. The trailblazer reports before the end of the first year on the journalistic projects funded and other experiences and presents an elaborated proposal for continuation of the project. In its turn the steering committee formulates a **new programme proposal**, based on which new donors can be attracted.

Discussion, training and coaching is integral part of the program. The trailblazer will organize a **face to face meeting** of interested journalists as well as integrate **community building tools** (platform, discussion, peer to peer training, etc.) in the program.

November 2014,
Kees Schaepman, Bob van der Winden



Mini-interviews

‘I think that every initiative stimulating cooperation of journalists is important.’

Idris Akinbajo (32), investigative journalist, AIPC.
Working mostly from Nigeria, now studying in Denmark.

You’re already almost a veteran in investigative journalism and have a lot of experience with international cooperation. Did you hear anything new today?

‘Yes, definitely, it was a very educational afternoon. I didn’t know for example that *The Guardian* works with funding from NGO’s, like with their project on modern slavery. My newspaper *Premium Times* also works with NGO funding, but I didn’t think that such big news organizations like *The Guardian* do the same. If such an established and esteemed media platform does it, and can maintain it’s independence at the same time, this means that smaller media, for example in African countries, can also use this way of funding without losing independency. Another new thing that I just realized today, is that NGO’s like Oxfam Novib face budget cuts and have to think more carefully about their money.’

In your speech and the following discussion, you said that NGO’s shed water down the drain.

‘Yes, I’m very critical on how NGO’s spend their money, and of course on how corrupt governments put this money into their own pockets. As a journalist, I will always be following and investigating this subject. But of course NGO’s like Oxfam Novib also want to change the world for the better, and I think that today we could clearly see these positive intentions.’

During the lunch discussion the need of international cooperation of journalists was

questioned. You said very clearly: this new initiative could be very important. Why?

‘Well, I think that every initiative that stimulates the cooperation of journalists is important. If I hadn’t received funding and the support of the ICIJ, I wouldn’t have been able to report on the role of companies like Shell in Nigeria. And I think that NGO’s should help people in Africa to hold their governments accountable - and that is only possible with good, investigative journalism. And with international publications; our governments are more susceptible to the pressure of what media in other countries publish. So, the fact that Oxfam Novib wants to stimulate investigative journalism and for journalists of different continents to team up, is a good development.’



‘We have to look at new ways to fund investigative stories’

Fleur Launspach (25),
freelance journalist

What brings you to this seminar?

‘I’m one of the 15 journalists that did a pilot project. Via the foundation Medio I received funds from Oxfam Novib to work in the Central African Republic. I work for the Dutch broadcasting organization VPRO and also for the news program *Nieuwsuur*. In the Central African Republic I have been working on a story – filming, reporting and writing – on why the two main rebellion groups over there started fighting. I was looking for the roots of the conflict, so to say.’

There has been some discussion on whether journalists can accept money from NGO’s and still keep their integrity. What’s your opinion on this?

‘I think it’s a very old fashioned way of thinking to say: no, I cannot accept funding from NGO’s, or companies. We have to look at new ways to fund investigative stories and I think it is totally up to

Mini-interviews

the individual journalists to stay independent and tell their stories the way they see it. The productions I do abroad – I have been in several African countries, and also in Latin America – couldn't have been realized without funding. This time it was Oxfam Novib, and other times it came out of special funds for journalists, which of course are subsidized by the government. Frankly, I don't see the difference between advertisement in for example newspapers –

which make the existence of this newspaper possible - and me, or better said my freelance company, being funded by organizations.

I think this will happen more and more in journalism. Take the multimedia platform Vice: they have branded content on their website. With this money, they can do other high profile stories, like filming during a week in the Islamic State in Syria.



'Anas knew exactly who I could or could not trust in the police department or in the justice department'

Sanne Terlingen (29), journalist One World

For your price winning production on child sex tourism in Ghana, you worked together with the Ghanaian investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas. The first time you were supposed to meet him – somewhere in a dark alley – you kind of chickened out, so I heard.
 'Well, yes. I didn't know Anas yet, and I didn't know he does all he can to prevent that he is recognized. He wears a mask in public. And meets in dark alleys, because he can't just sit down in a bar: his investigative work as a journalist for *New Crusading Guide*, has made him a target, for

criminals for example. Just before I was supposed to meet him, a local drugs dealer told me that he worked together with Anas, so all of a sudden I was afraid this meeting was a set up. So I didn't go. Later on I understood that this drugs dealer was trying to sabotage him – he had broken in to Anas' mail account, and that's how he knew we were supposed to meet.'

But you got together later on, and started a fruitful cooperation.

'It was Evelien Groenink – who was still working for Fair at the time – who advised me to get in contact with him. By then, I was already working for a year on the story of a Dutch businessman who was arrested for abusing minors in Ghana. Anas turned

out to be a very reliable colleague. Anas knew exactly who I could or could not trust in the police department or in the justice department. Later on, when I was back in the Netherlands, he followed up on new developments and helped me get court documents – something which would have been impossible to get not being in Ghana.

What did Anas gain by it? Did he get a byline in the Dutch media?

'No, the article was really my story. He published news stories on the same subject, and I could help him out with that. For example by translating questions that were asked in the Dutch parliament about this case. For me, it was interesting to see what he found newsworthy; I was really looking for the bigger story of sex tourism behind this case, but Anas was more into "hard news": rulings, evidence. I think this different approach would have made it hard to actually write a story together, but by helping each other out and passing on information, I think this cooperation was very successful.'

Cooperation doesn't come easy but it pays in the end

Lunch table discussions on the first day of the International Media Platform seminar

Teaming up with a journalist from another continent is not easy. Who can you trust, and which colleague is good at his work? The lunch discussion at Monday's seminar made it clear there is a need for a program where journalists from Africa and the Netherlands can meet and match. One important reason: 'Publishing internationally makes the impact of the story much bigger.'

Idris Akinbanjo (Premium Times, Nigeria) notices it far too often: Nigerian journalists want to work together with somebody from Europe or the United States, but 'the attitude of the "western journalist" gets in the way'. The attitude being: 'We can get the information without you', or 'we don't need a journalist, we need a fixer.' This is short sighted, thinks Akinbanjo: 'A stringer who doesn't feel appreciated, will not always give you his best sources. A journalist who knows his name will be mentioned in the byline will do his utmost to get the story.'

To be able to team up, journalists first need to find each other. This is hard because of the trust issue: which journalists are good at their work and are not corrupted by 'brown envelope journalism'? This phenomenon where poorly paid

journalists take money from companies and government officials, and in exchange do not make critical, or investigative items, is widespread in African countries, says Akinbanjo. But that shouldn't stop western journalists from working together with their African colleagues: 'There are also a lot of good, solid and reliable African journalists. The problem is that there is no linkage between journalists from different countries, nobody who breaches the gap. That's why I think this transnational program is a very good idea.'

Ruken Baris, from Free Press Unlimited (FPU) wonders if there is really a demand among journalists for an initiative like this. FPU started a pilot with which they tried to match Dutch and African journalists and offered funding for productions. 'We had few applicants, and most of them were from African countries, not from the Netherlands. Also, I didn't see the Dutch journalists try very hard to sell their stories to mainstream media, like national newspapers.' The other participants at Rukens lunchtable suggested that the FPU-project probably isn't very well known among Dutch journalists; none of the journalists at the table had heard of it.

Which journalist can you trust?

That question was also central in the discussion at the table of host

Dick van Eyk (*NRC Handelsblad*). 'The problem is that people don't know each other. Even a journalist from Belgium generally has a different opinion about when a story is "fit to publish", so when you team up with journalists from Africa, you can expect they will work in a different way. What I heard at this table, is that the most important thing, is to look each other in the eye first. So, if this initiative makes it possible for journalists from Africa and the Netherlands to meet, for example at special conferences, it will definitely help journalists to find each other and team up.' Journalist Arne Doornebal, who worked for years in Uganda, also thinks it is very important to know the journalist you want to work with. Together with a Ugandan journalist he did the research for a profile of the Ugandan ambassador in The Hague (a Dutch woman, who has the Ugandan nationality). The fact that Doornebal knew his colleague before they started working together, made things much easier.

At another table the Nigerian journalist Tobore Ovuorie told how she receives death threats and – because of their safety - can't live with her family anymore. She made a production about Nigerian girls who come to work in European brothels. The



Lunch Table Discussions



idea for the story came up when her colleague Akibanjo was – together with a Dutch journalist - working on an article about Nigerian immigrants in the Netherlands. The assumption that Nigerian girls get tricked into prostitution by human traffickers, turned out not to be true. The girls know they go to Europe to work in the sex industry. What they do not know is how harsh the traffickers are. Ovuorie went undercover, witnessed two homicides and now lives as a refugee. But she did tell the story she wanted to tell. It was published in Nigeria and in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw* and international media picked it up. After the publication in foreign media, the subject was also taken more seriously in Nigeria. This makes Ovuories production an example of how a story that is published in another country as well, has a bigger impact. Also at the other tables there was consensus that if an investigative project is also published in 'western' media, the impact is much bigger. 'Our governments give a lot more about what western governments think about them, than about what their own people think,' as one of the participants puts it. The Kenyan journalist Kassim Mohamed, who did stories about

pirates, pointed out that international publications can protect an African journalist. 'After a story is published by a newspaper

abroad, it is safer to write about it in my own country, as a kind of follow-up. When a story is already out there, it is less threatening when we also start to publish about it.'

Maggie O'Kane sat at the same table as Ovuorie and explained how funding by NGO's makes it possible for *The Guardian* to investigate important issues like female circumcision or modern slavery. She pleads that journalists shouldn't be afraid to work together with NGO's, as long as they can make their productions independently. At another table the discussion took a different turn. Journalist Huub Floor said he shivered just by the idea that a NGO like Oxfam Novib would be funding one of his stories. Table host Erik van Os, from Oxfam Novib,

noticed a lot of fear that publications will be influenced. 'I think it is very important that we will be communicating very well to journalists that we have no intentions to influence their projects at all.' Os also stressed the fact that a lot of stories are transnational, but that journalists don't always pick it up as 'international'. For example the subject of sexual abuse by staff of UN peacekeeping missions: why hasn't anyone looked into that with an international eye?

Of course, when this transnational investigative journalism program will start, looking at stories with the question 'is this interesting for international media?' in the back of the head, is crucial. Here is also a lot to gain. Arne Doornebal, who lived in Uganda for six years, noticed that journalists in this region don't always see that an issue has international potential. For example the discovery of mass graves, which was a clear indication that Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army was covering its tracks. A lot of local journalists didn't think this story would be interesting for an

international public. Doornebals table host Bob van der Winden: 'This is one more reason to make good matches, and help to set up interesting and important investigative projects.'



‘Working dinner’ 20 October

At 6 tables we discussed the different introductions made. A walkabout along the dining guests provided us with quite a few valuable insights:

- Why is the grant fund only designed for Dutch-African cooperation? At the very least it should be open for all great European journalists: it will allow them to get off the roster and publish better work. And why not for individual journalists?
- There is more beyond the grant fund in another sense as well: through media houses training and ‘infrastructure’ can be created, e.g. linking up media houses with the efforts of freedom of media organizations working on more transparency in Africa. Example; there is no access whatsoever to company records in African countries. It would be great if all journalists could have access to them. Data mining in Africa is possible, and some Africans do such, but we need to broaden knowledge and access.
- There are more possibilities than bilateral cooperation of journalists: e.g. cooperation through VVOJ on joint projects by several journalists from different media, African and European (like ICIJ is sometimes doing): everybody can then publish in their own media outlets.
- Why not broaden the program in order to make insurance for travelling journalists (especially in conflict countries) cheaper? If the fund could work on this with NVJ, that would be very welcome.
- Different existing platforms fear ‘cannibalizing’ effects of a new program. We should not want to copy what already exists and cooperate with the existing (sometimes quite well functioning) platforms
- Matching is a serious problem: many journalists do not easily work together: we need to find forms to attract others than the



‘usual suspects’ as well.

- News agencies and media houses’ needs should be taken account in one way or another: e.g. NRC does not need more correspondents, but would like to broaden their scope in investigations

‘Lessons learned’

Morning introductions 21 October

‘Journalism is nowadays as much about entrepreneurship as about the typical journalistic skills’, **Jeroen Smit** (professor journalism from Groningen, NL) starts the discussion. And we need to pay more attention to on-line journalism: if we can contribute to developing of forms of story-telling on-line that would be great! It is at the moment virtually non-existent. Finally another missing link is legal support; more and more journalists are taken on by lawyers, and we really need support in this respect. ‘That may be the case for Dutch investigative journalists’ both **Diana Senghor** (PIWA, Senegal) and **Idris Akinbajo** (AIPC, Nigeria) add to the discussion: ‘investigative Journalism is marginal in (West) Africa: no more than 65 of investigative reports world wide come from the whole of Africa! So a fund through which African journalists can join this rather exclusive group is warmly welcomed, both by AIPC and PIWA. The way it should be organized should be discussed still: why only cooperation with Dutch Journalists? And why can African journalists not get grants in their own right, but only in teams?’ ‘The actual budgets are very small’ adds **Diana Senghor**: all together we are probably speaking about

10 million USD in the whole of Africa, so everything we can do more is welcome. **Bart Luijck** does not see it that pessimistic: 'There is a variety of stories that comes through in several media, many correspondents do good work. The point is sometimes that this is above all the case for newspapers, or news items on TV. New media are much less used in African stories, and in all stories 'dominant narratives' prevail. We should work on a more integrated approach, based on thorough context analysis and allow a variety of expressions, not just the 'hard-core' investigations. And above all: 'don't reinvent the wheel and start with identifying local existing networks! Believe me; there are more of them than we can even imagine right now!' **Leon Willems** sums up the lesson learned thus far: 'First of all there are willing and able journalists, both in Africa as in Europe. Partnerships will certainly have a good influence and increase attraction for media houses, especially if they deal with transnational issues. This way publishing these stories will bring about more accountability if only because advocacy actions (e.g. by NGOs) can be based on good stories finally... Thus far we are on the right way. Nevertheless we do have quite a few tough points to tackle still if we look at the pilot projects:

- We will need a lot of 'matching' facilitation: combining efforts by journalists from different background is less easy than it seems; Dutch journalists for instance will always want 'to see and verify themselves'
- In the thematic objectives there is a lot to do still. We did not get applications for real transnational topics, although some good new ideas emerged.
- There were little or no 'new players' applying: we knew most of the applicants from other grants
- Journalists still perceive being funded as vulnerability
- The keys to the mainstream media have not been found yet: we need more work done on the relationship with media houses (as in Maggie's story)
- 'Hanging money in the tree above the market, does not necessarily change the market': the media market is still not intrinsically interested in Africa.

Overall conclusion:

We need to put in more **design efforts**, we need to pay more attention to the **media market** and we need to do **better matchmaking** and facilitation. But we will continue.



Participants in the Seminar

Organisation	Name
AIPC	Idris Akinbajo
AIPC	Kassim Mohamed
ZAM	Tobore Ovuorie
ICJ	Gerard Ryle
PTWA	Diana Sengor
Guardian	Maggie O' Kane
EF	Ides Debruyne
Adessium	Sahar Yadehari
Oxfam Novib	Enk van Os
Oxfam Novib	Carin Boesma
Oxfam Novib	Tom van der Lee
Oxfam Novib	Wim Stoffers
Oxfam Novib	Ahmed Kulane
Oxfam Novib	Marco de Swart
FFU:	Leon Willems
FFU:	Teun Gautier
FFU:	Rakem Paris
ZAM:	Bart Luijck
ZAM:	Evelien Groenink
ZAM:	Christina Mansson
Universiteit (RUG)	Jeroen Smit
Media (VN):	Max van Wezel
Media (NRC):	Dick van Eijk
Stimuleringsfonds	Rene van Zanten
Pilot ZAM:	Seada Nourhussen
Pilot ZAM:	Bjense Dankert
Pilot ZAM:	Marnix de Bruyne
Pilot Zam:	Huib Floor
Pilot Zam:	Andrea Dijkstra
Pilote:	Fleur Launspach
Pilote:	Arne Doornebal
Pilot ZAM:	Sanne Terlingen
Pilote FPU:	Janneke Donkerlo,
Pilote: FPU	Maria Groot
Pilote: FPU	Anneke Verbraecken
Medio:	Kees Schaepman
Medio:	Bert Frerika
Medio:	Bob van der Winden
Pilot ZAM	Pieter van der Houwen

Partners' discussion

After the closing session of the seminar by Wim Stoffers prospective partners in the program worked on recommendations in two different groups (one on the Grant Fund and one on Training and Research in the framework of this program). The training and research group developed a model for the program by distinguishing 5 steps in the process of investigative journalism:

1. Issues are generally identified in the public sphere (communities, civil society)
2. Journalists take the issue on and start an investigation (or in case of this program apply for a grant, even the steering group can address journalists and ask them to apply)
3. Research is done by journalist (or team)
4. Journalists take care of coverage and publishing in cooperation with media houses
5. The published story can be followed up by organization in the public sphere (e.g. NGOs)
6. Journalists can even pick these actions up and publish about them, etc.

The group cautions that the different mandates of the actors need to be respected: content (story) is above all mandate of the journalist! Even if the network plays an active role in publishing, the content should be left to the journalists.

ZAM is an example: ZAM-Chronicle is specialized in getting stories from African journalists. Their work is support in editing and linking up with media abroad. Other possibilities mentioned:

- An addition could very well be the *mapping* of existing networks and journalists (database), as well as training somewhere in the chain. If training takes place in the chain it should always be tailor made. You could even think of joint training for African and European journalists.
- Protection and security is another addition to the program
- Crating meeting opportunities will facilitate joint investigations
- International linking for larger investigations (such as ICIJ does)
- More thinking and development should be given to publication possibilities, e.g. the 'allafrica.com model': there the content is paid for, but published for free
- Attention could also be paid to actively broker (by the grant fund committee!) of interesting issues to different journalists.
- NGOs could build on the program by actively taking forward issues that have been published (information brokers inside NGOs)
- A platform of cooperating journalists (with mutual help-forum etc.)

The group furthermore calls on the prospective partners of the program to take the effort to look for funding, that at the moment is not (yet) spent to journalism: we should avoid the danger of fighting for the same 'pot'.

Participants in the Grant Fund group were unanimous in saying that it is too early now to approach donors with a proposal. First more experience will have to be gained. Rushing things now brings to many risks that the whole project will collapse. Also questions were raised about the choice for the Netherlands, why no European-African cooperation? And shouldn't it be possible to support (inter) African project too?

All group members agreed that journalistic independence is a key word. Nonetheless at the same time the question was raised if the proposed project shouldn't have a sharper focus on specific themes.

It was decided that on the short term Dutch organisations participating in the seminar (FPU, ZAM, Oxfam Novib) will come together and formulate a roadmap for the further development of the project proposal.



Maggie O’Kane:

‘No, I did not sell my soul to the devil’

There is nothing wrong with a partnership between NGO’s and media organizations, stated Maggie O’Kane in her presentation on the first day of the International Media Platform seminar. But one condition has to be absolutely clear: ‘We work completely independent.’



terms of time and money. Local journalists bring deeper, better and completer stories to our media.’ For *The Guardian* O’Kane wanted to make a documentary about modern slavery on fishing boats in Asia, where immigrants work for weeks on end, get abused and sometimes even killed. The

Maggie O’Kane has done a great deal of reporting. She was a war correspondent in Bosnia, Rwanda, Iraq and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan she saw two colleagues in the car in front of her shot dead by the Taliban. She went back to the UK, and is now a multimedia investigations editor at *The Guardian*. She believes that working with ‘local’ journalists becomes more and more important. ‘In countries like Syria or Iraq it has become impossible for western journalists to get the full picture: it has become too dangerous. That is why *The Guardian* prefers to train local journalist, invest in them – in

prawns they fish, are sold in supermarkets in the UK. For the story *The Guardian* would have to collaborate with Thai journalists, and it would be an expensive investigative project. ‘I knew that if I would need 60.000 pounds to look into prawns, he would not be very enthusiastic.’

The NGO Humanity United on the other hand, was enthusiastic. The organization wanted more attention for modern slavery and was willing to finance the project. So there was a mutual interest, but O’Kane made one thing very clear from the beginning: ‘Humanity United wouldn’t have anything to say about the content of the production. We would work completely independent.’

Apart from slavery among prawn fishers, *The Guardian* also brought stories about slavery in Qatar and child slaves in Brazil. ‘And no, I didn’t sell my soul to the devil by taking money from an NGO. My soul is still intact, I can assure you. With this funding we were able to produce stories we otherwise wouldn’t have.’

After her speech the question was raised whether it is really possible to be totally independent when you are financed by an NGO. ‘What if the story turns out to be totally different from the NGO’s aims, can you still publish and take the money?’ a participant asked. ‘Of course,’ O’Kane answered: ‘The NGO never sees anything until it is published, so even if the story isn’t what they hoped for, they have nothing to say about it.’



Tom van der Lee:

‘NGO’s and journalists want the same thing’

Tom van der Lee, Oxfam Novib director of advocacy and campaigns, faced a tough crowd when he spoke at the seminar. ‘We don’t want to transform journalists in propagandists.’

NGO’s and journalists have the same interests, thinks Tom van der Lee. ‘Oxfam Novib sees the current information gap as a threat to democracy, and we recognize the value of good and independent information. As do journalists. So why does it so often seem we are on opposite sides?’

Maybe, Van der Lee says, it has something to do with the fact that investigative journalists protect their independence like hawks and that they, apart from maybe their partner and children, don’t trust anyone. But Oxfam Novib wants to make one thing clear: ‘We don’t want to transform journalists in propagandists.’ Occasionally Oxfam Novib finances travel

expenses for journalist, as it recently did for the Dutch television program *Teegenlicht*. ‘They wanted to visit the Tax Justice Network Africa, an organization we support. So, yes, we liked the idea that their voice would be heard in *Teegenlicht*. But the way they wanted

to bring the story, was totally up to them.’

The journalists in the audience are a bit suspicious. ‘What if I would discover that a project of Oxfam Novib isn’t effective at all. Can I still publish

that, when I am also financed by your organization?’ one journalist wanted to know. Van der Lee: ‘Yes, of course. We want to be transparent about our projects’.

Journalist Janneke Donkerlo stated that she would be much more at ease if Oxfam Novib would finance journalists through a special fund, which would form a buffer. ‘As a freelancer that would also help me to sell the story. I think it has more credibility if you can state it was co-financed by a special fund than “by Oxfam Novib”.

Idris Akinbajo wanted to know why African journalists have to find a Dutch journalist to work together with if they want apply for the proposed fund. ‘There are a lot of stories worth to be told, that maybe aren’t interesting for the Dutch audience. Why can’t we just get money for good African investigative stories?’ Van der Lee replied: ‘When you publish internationally, the impact of the story is bigger. That’s what we want to stimulate.’



Program Seminar Monday 20 October

12.00: Welcome by Wim Stoffers (Oxfam, Novib)

12.15: Presentation of a short **video**

12.30: Working Lunch: During the lunch different aspects of the proposed project were discussed. Eight (couples of) participants in pilot projects gave a short presentation of their experiences.

14.30: Plenary session led by Cees Grimbergen (Dutch television discussion presenter):

Introduction 1: Idris Akinbajo (AIPC) about the potential of investigative journalism in African countries. Are there possibilities for cooperation with European colleagues?

Introduction 2: Kees Schaepman (freelance journalist) about the need felt by European media to find new, reliable and independent sources in Africa.

Introduction 3: Gerard Ryle (ICIJ) about the growing need for investigative journalists to cooperate.

Introduction 4: Maggie O’Kane (The Guardian) about relations between NGOs and media/journalists and some examples of guaranteeing editorial independence.

Introduction 5: Tom van der Lee (Oxfam Novib) about the mutual benefit of cooperation for media/investigative journalists as well as for NGOs.

18.30: Working dinner, 8 tables discussed the input of the key note speakers and its meaning for the practical project.

Program Seminar Tuesday 21 October

Day Chair: Teun Gautier (FPU)

9.30: How journalism training in the Netherlands can benefit from this program by Prof. Jeroen Smit, University of Groningen.

10.00: Presentation on objectives of the program and pilot projects of Free Press Unlimited by Leon Willems (FPU).

10.30: Training for Investigative Journalism (Diana Senghor, PIWA)

11.30: Presentation of plans by AIPC for a network of investigative African journalists by Idris Akinbajo (AIPC)

12.00: Presentation of the pilot project for a forum group for African and European investigative journalists, as well as ZAM’s input for the future program by Bart Luirink (Zam).

12.30 Concluding remarks by Kees Schaepman

12.45: Closure of the seminar by Wim Stoffers (Oxfam Novib).

14.00: Program discussion by partners in the program



Oxfam Novib

Global Link

Wim Stoffers
Carin Boersma
Ahmed Kulane

With support from
Kees Schaepman
Bob van der Winden

Discussion host:
Cees Grimbergen

Report
Mensje Melchior