

# **Free Press Unlimited study shows: Grant funding necessary for survival fragile independent media**

All across the world media are struggling to survive, and together with media support organisations they are researching new business models. But much of the attention in publications focuses on models from Europe or North America, leaving media in more challenging environments in uncertainty. Free Press Unlimited's new study examines the situation of media in difficult contexts and gives recommendations on how to help them survive.

For the study 84 independent media outlets from 42 different countries were interviewed. These are all independent media organisations that fulfill a public interest mission, that operate in repressive or conflict environments, and/or in exile. These media are highly dependent on funding from foundations and (government) donors.

Evaline Schot, Knowledge & Quality Officer at Free Press Unlimited and research lead: "Media in challenging contexts are fragile, they struggle to sustain themselves financially. In low income countries, and countries with a very bad press freedom status, growth or income diversification are not easy, or even almost impossible, to accomplish."

## **Grant funding is the lifeline**

The study shows that these independent media will remain in need of grant funding, as well as support for business model development. Even media in the comparatively less challenging environments will need to continuously update their business models.

Evaline Schot: "A lot of flexibility and resilience are required to survive while developing a more diverse income model over the course of many years. During this period continuous grant funding is very often indispensable. Providing core funding would allow media to focus on continuing their journalistic work, and professionalising and improving their business model."

## **Gatekeepers of press freedom**

Free Press Unlimited has always been active where independent media need support the most. We know about the struggles they face, being the outnumbered gatekeepers of press freedom in countries where press freedom is suppressed. This also underlines their importance, they are often the only sources of reliable information in their country. It is therefore essential that they will survive the current financial hardships, and this study gives us the guidelines on how to help them do so.

The entire report can be found [here](#).

*Research lead Evaline Schot, and Director of Free Press Unlimited, Leon Willems, are available for further explanation and interviews.*