

© Free Press Unlimited/Digital Rights Foundation, Journalism in Pakistan during Covid



Annual Plan

Free Press Unlimited

2022

**FREE
PRESS
UNLIMITED**

People deserve to know

Colophon

Text

Free Press Unlimited

DTP and design

Babette Hilhorst

Free Press Unlimited
Weesperstraat 3
1018 DN Amsterdam
The Netherlands

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Foreword **Annual Plan 2022**

In last year's annual plan, we mentioned how difficult it is to predict what the world will look like given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. And that is still valid sadly. Many countries are once again in long term lock downs. On top of that, the world had to deal with 4 major Press Freedom crises this year. It started with the military coup d'état in Myanmar. This was followed by the outrageous hijack of an airplane by the government of Belarus, in order to arrest one of their press dissidents: Roman Protasevich. This was all topped by the chaotic evacuation from Afghanistan, a crisis that is still ongoing. And very recently, on October 25, 2021, the two year old citizen revolution in Sudan was put to a halt, after the military forced a coup and smashed hopes for a democratic future.

These crises however, also showed how relevant our work is and how important independent news on different topics is.

Dabanga, our decade-long partner and one of the few independent news and information broadcasters in Sudan, provides lifesaving news and information to citizens. Sudan is now again a complete media dark area. The only independent news comes from the few resisting outlets or those reporting from exile, including Radio Dabanga. It's shows both the relevance and importance of independent media outlets.

So, we are certainly not ready to quit the fight for Press Freedom, even if it is an uphill battle. Let's hold our heads high and focus on the good news too.

First of all, the world is opening up again, we are learning to cope and live with the Covid-19 pandemic. Slowly but surely, we adapt our travel, meet our partners and colleagues in new and creative ways and start to feel a bit normal again. Secondly, when it comes to media freedom, more initiatives and ideas than ever are springing up from the side of NGO's, citizen initiatives, media and even governments. A growing number of actors understand the crucial importance and need for media freedom. The good news is, it is increasingly becoming a political priority.

As Free Press Unlimited, we are part of many new ideas, and ride the wave of trends and opportunities with our partners. One positive outcome of the pandemic is that we were able to adapt quickly and learned to work remotely and much more in digital proximity with our partners. This inspired us to review our successes and failures and develop an updated multi-annual strategy plan. The first step to do so was to create thematic discussions to identify and enhance our strengths and come up with ideas for working on our weaknesses. We are well aware that we cannot face all the challenges in the domain of Press Freedom and Media Development on our own. Like the country we live in - the Netherlands - we are too small to really make a difference on our own. It is crucial for us to cooperate and look for allies and build coalitions. That's how we book results, in strong association with our courageous partners and allies.

Our motto in all this difficult work is: getting things done.

This annual plan looks different from previous plans. Instead of going into great detail about all our projects, we give you an overview of our thematic focuses. The program outlook for our activities in the coming year aims to give you more insight in our thematic strategies. What's also new is our focus on environmental sustainability.

We sincerely hope you'll enjoy reading the annual plan. We thank all of you for your support, ideas, comments and input and we're looking forward to seeing you face to face again in the coming year.

Leon Willems
Ruth Kronenburg



A man holds a placard during a solidarity protest next to the embassy of Belarus in Warsaw, Poland. © Aleksander Kalka/ZUMA Wire

A. **Why we do** what we do

1. **Our vision**

Free Press Unlimited strongly believes that everyone is entitled to have access to unbiased, reliable and relevant information. This enables them to assess their own living conditions, influence these and make the right decision.

This vision is captured in our slogan:

‘People deserve to know.’

2. **Our mission**

Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Information are vital for gathering and spreading reliable, unbiased information. The media play a crucial role in providing people with free and unrestricted access to information that can help them develop and monitor the authorities. Free Press Unlimited wants to make and keep objective news and information available to everyone, especially to people in countries with limited or no (press) freedom.

By supporting local media professionals and journalists, Free Press Unlimited wants to help people gain and keep access to the information they need to survive and develop. Our core values are expressed by the following keywords: Independent, Inspiring, Inventive, Dedicated and Tailored Approach.

3. **Our objective**

Free Press Unlimited has defined the following common long-term objective for all of our projects and activities:

**Media and journalists,
as independent players in
civil society, constitute a
diverse and professional
information landscape
and function as catalysts
for change**

We believe that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can only perform their role as advocates for inclusive and sustainable growth and development if they operate in an enabling environment. Access to information, independent media, and Freedom of Expression are essential in this context. Therefore, our activities and projects to promote access to information also serve to support any development policy that aims to foster the strength of civil society and increase people's participation in achieving poverty reduction and more equitable societies.

B. Making change happen

4. Our strategy

To reach this long-term objective, we have developed several intervention strategies which together form our overall strategy. Of course, the effectiveness of any strategy depends on the context of a country or area. For that reason, Free Press Unlimited always develops its intervention strategies in close consultation with our partners or local actors. After all, they understand the local context better than we do. Their insights enable us to come up with the best strategy based on our expertise and experience.

All of our projects contribute to one or more of the three intermediate outcomes that ultimately lead to our long-term objective. The three intermediate outcomes are interlinked. However, we've learned that it's difficult to explain our work through these outcomes. As such, we have clustered our projects in six thematic focus areas, all linked to an intermediate outcome.

These are:

Media and journalists, as independent players in civil society, constitute a diverse and professional information landscape and function as catalysts for change	
Intermediate Outcome	Thematic focus area
1 The establishment of an enabling environment for the media	1 Advocating for an Enabling Environment 2 Safety 3 Equality & Inclusion
2 Media serve the interests of the public and act as a watchdog on their behalf	1 Media fostering Accountability 2 Safety 3 Equality & Inclusion
3 Journalists and media experts work professionally and are effective and sustainable	1 Media Viability 2 Media and Conflict 3 Safety 4 Equality & Inclusion

C. Our thematic strategies



1. Safety of Journalists

Safety of journalists is a key focus area and a cross-border theme for Free Press Unlimited, one in which we have been active on for over 10 years through programming and advocacy efforts. Together with more than 140 trusted partner organisations around the world, we strive towards creating safer working conditions for journalists. Free Press Unlimited is active in several international networks and coalitions, such as the Journalists in Distress (JID) Network, the International Civil Society Coalition on the Safety of Journalists and the Safety of Journalists Platform of the Council of Europe, and the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFFR) consortium.

In recent years, the global rise of authoritarian governments, political polarisation, and the dissemination of misinformation, have led to an increasingly dangerous working environment for journalists. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the hostile conditions under which media workers do their job. This goes for all journalists, but we see that women journalists are at more risk, purely because of their gender. They are disproportionately targeted by gender-based violence and sexual harassment, both in the workplace, in the field while reporting, and online. Therefore, there will be a strong focus on reaching women journalists and journalists from rural areas with limited access to support mechanisms. To reach women journalists in particular, in 2022, trainers from different regions will be trained to adapt the holistic safety training curriculum that was developed, to the context of their country and region and to offer it to women journalists.

These are the trends for journalists in the failing environment:

- 1 In recent demonstrations around the world, we have witnessed excessive state violence against journalists covering the demonstrations, resulting in a dramatic increase of press freedom incidents.
- 2 Data also shows that individual journalists working as freelancers are exposed to increased risks and

that the majority of cases of abuse and violence against journalists happen in poor, vulnerable and repressive societies.

- 3 The increased number of journalists forced to flee their place of residence to escape threats because they have carried out their journalistic duties to report the truth and to impart information of public interest. In countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, hundreds of journalists are currently in need of a safe shelter.

Reporters Respond

Our emergency fund, Reporters Respond, is one of the leaders in emergency support worldwide. Thanks to our limited bureaucracy, large network, and close collaboration with local partners, Free Press Unlimited is often the first to assist in crisis situations. This means being able to deliver lifesaving emergency and legal support worldwide, in the most urgent cases within 24 hours. Our network on the ground enables us to make a quick decision about what is needed and act on it. Moreover, Free Press Unlimited endeavours to bridge the gap between our local partners and international organisations and networks.

Plans for 2022

In 2022, we aim to change the way we approach the theme of safety for journalists. Up until now, we built our approach on four, very activity-based, pillars, namely emergency support, training, tools and advocacy. In 2022, we plan to take a more strategic approach and look at safety through the 3 Ps (prevention, protection and prosecution).

Most physical attacks and killings of journalists do not come out of the blue. Almost all incidents of violence against journalists, and in the most extreme cases murder, are known to have been preceded by threats or online or legal harassment. Therefore, Free Press Unlimited focusses on the prevention of violence and harassment. We started the process of improving the workflow of our emergency fund and legal fund. In



El Salvadorean journalist Brenda Arévalo practises self-defence during the basic course of the Riesgo Cruzado programme, taught in El Salvador. © E. Romero

2022, we plan to streamline the process that starts with incoming applications and ends with providing support. This will give us more detailed information, which we can use to monitor and analyse threats and violations against journalists worldwide.

In addition, we aim to build upon the research that has been carried out by CFOM, University of Sheffield, into the monitoring of violations against journalists. In the next phase, we aim to build a more uniform method of data gathering for local civil society actors through the use of an easily to implement system for monitoring violations. We aim to do this in collaboration with a number of our local partner organisations already active in monitoring violations. Further developing the monitoring toolkit developed by Sheffield University and associated methodologies, testing them in the field and adapting them in cooperation with Free Press Unlimited's local monitoring partners, will strengthen their monitoring capacity. The reporting mechanism inherent to SDG indicator 16.10.1 will gain more legitimacy, and the data generated by local civil society actors can perform a key function as shadow reporting mechanisms.

However, it is not always possible to prevent violence against journalists. So, it is crucial that if journalists

become victims of violence, they receive protection and emergency and legal support as soon as possible, regardless of the circumstances. This will be provided through our Reporters Respond Fund.

Furthermore, it is essential that all perpetrators of crimes against journalists are promptly brought to justice. Bringing all crimes against journalists to justice, gives off a clear message that violence or intimidation will not be tolerated, and that perpetrators will be immediately prosecuted for their actions.

Lastly, we have planned the release of six investigative reports into the murder of journalists, through our Safer World for the Truth programme. Following the 'People's Tribunal on the Murder of Journalists' Opening Hearing on November 2, three in-depth case hearings, on Sri Lanka, Syria, and Mexico, will be held. In May 2022, the People's Tribunal will close with a large ceremony, during which the judges will hand out the final verdict. There will also be the release of a short-form documentary on the endemic problem of murders of journalists, two long-form documentaries on the murders of Indian journalist Gauri Lankesh and Mexican journalist Javier Valdez, and four podcast episodes on the murders of four specific journalists.

2. Equality and Inclusion in the Media (formerly known as Gender Equality)



Free Press Unlimited believes that equal access to information for everyone is the basis for democratic and human rights development. Guided by the principle of intersectionality, FPU promotes equal access to opportunities and resources for persons who wish to work in the media industry. Furthermore, Free Press Unlimited supports media to fulfil their role as informative gatekeepers to responsively shape powerful local or global narratives, and to commit to inclusion by revealing a multitude of lives and experiences.

Outside of FPU's efforts to mainstream gender across all programmes, and its gender-focused activities to improve the position of women in the media and representation through the media, other efforts at promoting inclusion have been scattered experiences focused on youth and rural communities. The intersectional approach, (i.e.: the conscious acknowledgment that (minority) groups and (disadvantaged) individuals do experience different degrees of exclusion and therefore require tailored strategies for engagement) is rather new as an overarching idea for creating more awareness for equality and inclusion in the media. Nevertheless, numerous FPU programmes have already contributed to a track-record of unconscious intersectional methods and perspectives.

Plans for 2022

We will review all ongoing programmes with the intersectional lens. Where can we break open gender-binary approaches towards more widespread gender inclusiveness? Subsequently, we will develop an Equality and Inclusion guide, clarifying language, tools and priorities for FPU. We will recommend the use of the intersectional lens for all future programmes with a specific focus on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in the media as an added value for FPU and its partners and donors. This will be supported by reviewing project procedures and templates in order to highlight what is being done to make their programme more inclusive. And last but not least, we will organize more talks and

training sessions on the theme, to ensure that it is understood, mainstreamed and embedded in all staff members as core value/principle.

Planned project activities related to the theme in 2022:

- **Ethiopia:** The project addresses a number of pillars needed to promote freedom of speech, critical debate and Rule of Law in society. The academic staff of partner universities gained knowledge and skills in how to teach unbiased journalism to future media sector employees. The project strengthens the position of the local community radio stations (CRS) by providing technical equipment and training and plans to strengthen their capacity to produce and broadcast inclusive programmes on current affairs, allowing local communities, including marginalised groups, to make informed decisions.
- **Mali:** Journalists will be trained to produce inclusive content and bloggers will be supported to give a voice to the youth. Information on human rights violations is being collected and reported, with a special focus on minorities, journalists, gender-based violence and ethical conflicts.
- **Radio Tamazuj, South Sudan:** Specific programmes will be produced focusing on youth, women, internally displaced persons, and refugees. In addition, Radio Tamazuj will develop a Women's Experts Handbook, aimed at increasing the voices of female experts in their content and making their content more attractive and relevant to female audiences.
- **VIMES, Central America:** Partnering media outlets will be supported to report on under-represented topics on identity, sexuality, gender, discrimination, migration and youth, including support for media productions in indigenous languages and use of participatory methods to include the voice of children in the media landscape.



© Paul Enkelaar, Community Radio in Bangladesh.

- **Venezuela:** Journalists, especially from outside the capital, will be trained and supported to ensure that information is available across the countries, and is particularly accessible to under-represented groups and communities, in traditional media coverages. Gender equality will also be a central component of the project, ensuring its representation in newsrooms, and news, intersecting with rurality, ethnic origin and socio-economic background.
- **Nigeria:** Media outlets will be trained (and their content will be monitored) to pay specific attention to how women and men are portrayed in conflict and humanitarian reporting.
- **PRIMED, Bangladesh:** FPU takes the lead on gender programming in this large consortium project with BBC Media Action, ensuring that gender is mainstreamed throughout the global programme. In Bangladesh, FPU will organise gender content monitoring with a local partner (South Asia Centre for Media in Development) to assess gender representation in the media. FPU, together with Article 19 and SACMID, will form a gender coalition to advocate for a more gender-inclusive media environment in Bangladesh.
- **Mind the Children, Europe:** Publications will focus on young migrants, including girls who are subjected to forms of (sexual) exploitation or human trafficking.
- **MENA:** Together with IMS, FPU will implement a programme focusing on the recruitment and specific training of female journalists, preferably from remote areas.
- **Bangladesh:** Special focus is on the safety of journalists from marginalised communities and female journalists.
- **Somalia:** Creation of national DRM mechanisms based on multi-stakeholder strategy management, involving the media as producers of life-saving and inclusive information.
- FPU will develop a short **training course on gender equality and gender-inclusive media**. It will cover modules on media monitoring tools, gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive language, concepts of equity and intersectionality as well as other critical issues.



3. Media foster accountability

In April 2016, over one hundred media outlets from all corners of the world, uncovered stories based on exposing financial chicanery and political corruption by wealthy individuals and public officials, who used offshore entities to evade tax. The stories were based on leaked documents called The Panama Papers. Citizens took to the streets in protest. Governments fell; authorities launched multiple tax probes and criminal investigations. As a direct result, five years later, governments have retrieved more than \$1.36 billion in back taxes and penalties. More recently, The Pandora Papers and other publications have led to further waves of public outcry for accountability.

Media fostering accountability is about the purpose of professional, independent journalism in society: to build a society in which media influence power holders to respond to the needs of the public, and in which the public is empowered to make informed choices.

Governments and businesses have the power to make decisions that impact citizens, which is why society must have ways to hold them accountable for their policies and actions. Independent and professional media and journalists play a crucial watchdog role. They promote transparency and investigate the consequences of decisions. At the same time, media outlets committed to the public interest should themselves be held accountable. If they are to serve the public at large in a meaningful way, they need to represent the full diversity of their audience and provide that audience with accessible, relevant and verified information.

FPU's efforts to support media to foster accountability

Since its establishment, Free Press Unlimited has worked on supporting professional, critical and independent journalism. That is the core of our work. We support investigative reporting and professional public interest journalism in many parts of the world, in authoritarian regimes and conflict areas, as well as in democratic societies. We do so by strengthening

the capacity of media and journalists through training, networking, innovations and funding.

While we have witnessed a global decrease in trust in media, due in part to the denouncement by powerful individuals of independent media as fake news, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the urgent need for reliable information. In the past two years, we have engaged in media literacy projects for young people and developed a proven methodology for increased capacity of young people to better distinguish between reliable and unreliable information. In Sub Saharan Africa, FPU and partners support independent media in a project that aims to promote transparency from authorities and regulations in relation to the COVID-19 crisis and urge them to publish reliable data. FPU worked with fact checking organisations such as Africa Check and Congo Check and trained journalists in recognising false information and identifying sources that can be trusted.

As the world becomes increasingly complicated, we see an opportunity for journalists to investigate and make sense of all the available information, for instance when it comes to climate change. We also welcome the increased collaboration between journalists, in collectives that investigate and publish stories (often cross border) together. In recent years, FPU engaged in multiple ways with some of these collectives, supporting secure file sharing, helping to set up whistleblowing facilities and providing funding and networking opportunities. Many of the resources we produced and the lessons we learned from our experiences over the years, have been brought together in a 'Media Fostering Accountability Resource Guide', which is available to interested professional audiences.

The impact of FPU's work on accountability

The impact of stories is not always as clear cut as the example of The Panama Papers and The Pandora Papers. On the basis of our successful experiences, we believe that there are many untapped opportunities

for journalists to work more closely with CSOs on investigations. Not only do CSOs have a lot of data and multiple sources, including victims of wrongdoings, on specific issues, they are also in a position to advocate for change once stories have been published. We have facilitated these types of collaboration successfully in places as diverse as Indonesia and Pakistan.

We also noticed that journalists and media operating as watchdogs are increasingly coming under attack, with power holders attempting to suppress their ability to hold them to account. FPU published a study on strategies for independent journalists to continue to publish critical content and achieve societal impact in contexts of dwindling civic space. Recommendations from this study were presented to the Media Working Group at the European Parliament and shared with relevant practitioners.

FPU's plans for 2022 to foster accountability through the media

In 2022, FPU will focus on creating awareness for the power of (investigative) journalism. Internally, we will look more into how we can measure the impact of stories and make sure internal knowledge on this is improved. Externally, we have planned a campaign in the Netherlands to raise awareness on the importance of investigative journalism and the need to protect journalists who hold powers to account.

FPU will continue with a pilot that started in 2021 in six Central and Eastern European countries, linking independent media and science experts and also audience specialists to ensure responsible and reliable reporting on public health and other medical topics. In Mali, a collection of media productions highlighting corruption and human rights violations is planned as part of the OCCIPRE project. As part of the VIMES project in Central America, investigative journalism on corruption, human rights violations, and government activities, as well as joint regional investigations to hold power holders to account, are planned.

In Syria, where FPU has supported the sector with ethical journalism in the past years, FPU will help strengthen accountability of the Syrian media sector



© Paul Enkelaar, At the gas station in Sofia, Bulgaria a lady reads in the newspaper 'Work'. The title says: 'Asen Vassilev, minister in the Bulgarian government accused of corruption scandal with offshore companies'.

and advocate for its improvement across all segments of society. This will be achieved by promoting cross-sectoral professional collaborations between media and CSOs to produce investigative journalism and solution journalism that result in impactful stories (important here is the continuation of the co-production fund) to develop effective accountability mechanisms, promote and practice ethical journalism (an important example is the Ethical Charter for Syrian Media self-regulatory complaints mechanism), and work towards inclusive solutions for Syrian society.

4. Advocating for an enabling environment for independent media and journalists



An enabling environment is conducive to freedom of expression and press freedom, allowing journalists and media to work professionally and sustainably. An enabling environment is essential for independent media and journalists to function as the fourth estate in society, and serve the interest of the public. Only then can they fulfil their vital societal role of bringing reliable and timely information to people and of holding decision makers and powerholders to account.

A functioning rule of law and legislation that guarantees freedom of expression and press freedom are crucial. Journalists and independent media should be able to function without fear of retaliation, free from prosecution and in a societal environment that supports the role of independent media and journalists in society. However, this is unfortunately far from reality at the moment.

We have seen a steady increase in attacks, intimidation and prosecution in recent years. The amount of repressive legislation worldwide is increasing, for example, in the past year laws were introduced in 91 countries worldwide that significantly restrict the freedom of movement of journalists. And although access to public information is crucial for journalists to be able to hold their powerholders to account and to inform the public, this right is under unprecedented pressure. We are increasingly witnessing open hostility towards journalists, ranging from anti-media rhetoric by politicians towards journalists who dare to be critical, to the disproportionate targeting of female journalists with online harassment. The continued impunity for killings of journalists is alarming.

Of equal importance is a favourable economic environment in which journalists earn a decent income and can function independently and in which media ownership is divided among several players and there is no political interference.

However, quality journalism and independent media houses around the world are currently struggling to financially survive. Loss of advertising revenues, and economic and political pressure have changed the media environment, making it harder for journalists to earn a decent living. This threatens the future of independent journalism.

How can we promote an enabling environment?

Free Press Unlimited is committed to establishing an enabling environment for independent media and journalists. Advocacy is crucial to creating the legislative and policy environments necessary for a safe and viable work environment for journalists and for press freedom to thrive. We promote physical safety for journalists, advocate against arbitrary detention and improper prosecution of journalists and campaign for the improvement of the current negative political climate towards journalists.

Our goal is to safeguard the access to reliable information and independent, timely news for people. For that reason, we advocate for press freedom, contribute to the development of relevant policies and international standards and raise awareness about threats or opportunities. We do this on a national, European and international level by engaging with policy makers and by working in partnerships.

Plans for 2022

We plan to develop a toolbox for successful advocacy for 2022. This will hopefully be finalized in the first half of 2022 and can be used as a resource for colleagues when developing advocacy actions to improve the enabling environment for journalists and independent media. For instance, this toolbox takes into consideration that for advocacy on the local level to be effective, in most cases you should be constructive rather than aggressive. That entails forging coalitions, drawing up concrete (policy/legislative) proposals and engaging with power holders.



A street newspaper vendor arranges a stone at his stall where local newspapers' covers depict photos of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and leaders of the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF) in a downtown area of the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
© EDUARDO SOTERAS / AFP

With the Policy & Advocacy team we aim to continue our policy and advocacy work to counter the previously mentioned trends and to promote an enabling environment for independent media and journalists. Our main focus areas will still be to advocate for the safety of journalists and to incentivize the prosecution of violence against them and to address the persistent impunity in the cases of murdered journalists. The chairmanship of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2022 will create opportunities for direct engagement with the Media Freedom Coalition to improve the safety of journalists across the globe. Another platform for our advocacy on this issue is our role in the Media Freedom Rapid Response Mechanism, to raise awareness on media freedom issues in the EU and to advocate for improvements in policy, practice and legislation.

We will also continue our advocacy work to raise awareness about the online harassment female journalists face. We will also engage with the Coalition on Online Abuse to join forces in this endeavour. We

plan to inform the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, Irene Khan, and support her efforts to create international norms on this issue; we also plan to engage with relevant decision makers at EU level.

We will continue to advocate actively against legal intimidation of journalists and raise awareness on the issue of SLAPPs (Strategic Litigation against Public Participation) against journalists. In 2022, we will provide inputs to the EU Directive on this issue, currently in development. We will cooperate with our legal team to advocate on the outcomes of strategic litigation supported by FPU in countries across the world.

Finally, in 2022 we aim to develop a policy position on the potential of government regulation to promote the survival of independent public interest journalism. Part of this endeavour will be advocacy towards the EU Media Freedom Act, which will strengthen the independence of media.



5. Media Viability

Independent media around the world are struggling to continue to exist and remain independent. The theme 'Media viability' refers to all factors that influence the durable existence of independent media outlets. There are many different definitions of media viability, but FPU uses the following definition:

Media viability encompasses all of the conditions that need to be fulfilled for media to be able to exist and flourish fully independently (on their own). These include factors that media outlets can – to some extent – influence themselves (e.g. job positions created in the organisation, a culture that stimulates innovation), but also factors an individual outlet cannot influence (e.g. the legal framework, economic conditions in the country, the advertisement market).

From its beginnings, FPU has been involved in different types of media viability but the theme itself has been on the agenda since 2018 due to the start of an internal working group called Business Models Community of Practice. With this working group, FPU's K&Q department looked more into the theme and

developed research, a coaching method and organised a Summer School. Since 2021 this has come together under the theme Media Viability.

There are multiple threats to the survival of independent media. For example, the changing media market, government interference in the working of media, and the fact that media are often in the hands of conglomerates. They all affect the ability of independent media outlets to earn revenue and conduct independent reporting. The economic impact of COVID-19, where many journalists have lost their job, has also intensified the financial pressure.

All these issues affecting the viability of media are complex, and require different interventions. These range from supporting media outlets directly, to advocating at government level to educating the public about the importance of reliable information. If at all possible, FPU does this with local partners and occasionally on its own (especially advocacy) in different spheres of influence.

Our focus is always on building independence. What can media (outlets) do themselves to boost their viability? Media outlets do have an influence. Free Press Unlimited distinguishes between four different elements that media can influence, and which together can have a positive impact:

- 1 A conducive operating model**– this includes the structure of the organisation, the capacity, roles and responsibilities of staff members, the workflow and systems in place.
- 2 A coherent business model**– how the medium creates value (this can be monetary, but also social).
- 3 The relationship with their audiences**– understanding and engaging with the audience, and building a loyal audience base.



© Paul Enkelaar, Course participant Sakariye Barre exercising his camera skills by Media Ink, Hargeisa Somaliland.

- 4 Delivering **quality content**– bringing reliable information that is relevant to the audience and inclusive in nature.

Planned project activities in 2022:

When we examined the project plans for 2022 more closely, it became clear that the activities could be grouped into two approaches:

- Programme-oriented support to media outlets to strengthen their institutional capacity and their research and encourage them try out different viability strategies (this component is found in the VIMES, Serbia, Burundi, Syria, Mali, Eastern Europe RLNE, MENA, Venezuela, Central America, South Sudan - programmes)
- Research and document strategies on different aspects of media viability, for example, improving women's position in the workplace and analysing whether this leads to improved viability and resilience in the PRIMED-project, and media market studies in the VIMES project.



6. Media, Conflict & Peace

What makes Free Press Unlimited unique is the focus on the intersection of media and conflict, be it repression or conflict-prone countries, open conflict, or post conflict contexts, and on the media's role to serve also where the public's rights are under strain, while playing a 'cohesive' role. Free Press Unlimited has a valuable track record and continues to prioritize working in contexts where the professionalism and security of media is the most vulnerable and the need is greatest. FPU invests in the resilience of all actors involved, focuses on the ethics of their work and considers the media to be a rebuilding actor. Under the principle of do-no-harm, FPU promotes ethical and inclusive journalism and facilitates processes of building credible media that can serve audiences in their information needs. Media alone cannot prevent or solve conflict, however they can play a significant role in building social cohesion, and countering further polarization and conflict.

Along with very diverse interventions in many of the countries identified as fragile / failed states and prone to conflict, FPU's track record goes back as far as the former Yugoslavia conflict in the 90s. Sadly, conflict-affected areas and protracted post-conflict contexts have only increased since. FPU has maintained relationships with partners during old conflicts, while taking quick initiatives to engage with media workers and individuals in new conflict contexts. In more recent years, FPU has built meaningful media & conflict/peace programmes in Central America, Great Lakes Region including Central African republic, the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan the Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger), Iraq, and Syria.

The work of Free Press Unlimited in media & conflict/peace programmes is always done through local, trusted and credible (media) partners. Through these partnerships, we have developed several interventions strategies:

- Focus on editorial codes that include voices of all people no matter if they are on the same side or not through sensitive and secure coaching and training.

- Provide tools to fully understand the role, and responsibility media has in covering news in highly volatile and polarizing contexts.
- Develop methodology on how to analyse contextual developments and draw tailor made and local scenarios.
- Adopt best practices in adaptive management so that (media) partners can anticipate changes (fast), while keeping the journalists' work and material secure and protected.
- Train, and back the influence of, many women working for media in a conflict context, to facilitate more secure and meaningful work and more participation. Support women to play the best role they can in conflict areas, and protect them where they it need most.
- Coach facilitators and mediators in conflict contexts, to help them prevent tensions and conduct dialogue and work to solve tensions within their work and beyond, including those with audiences.
- FPU has promoted and transferred knowledge and good practices for producing conflict sensitive reporting, stories and visual material that portray realities in non-offensive, non-sensational and respectful ways. FPU has also developed tailored safety and security systems and policies for the media & journalists.

Plans for 2022

For 2022 we plan to develop basic working tools like SWOT, stakeholders analysis, definitions etc. We plan to gather success stories, work further on our track record but also on less successful stories to source from. We also plan to increase contacts with humanitarian partners, development partners and media partners to build meaningful and relevant partnership aimed at impactful cooperation for local media. All these efforts



© Hollandse Hoogte/Rahmatullah Alizadah Xinhua /ey, A journalist runs away from the site of a bomb attack in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan.

are expected to result in a media and conflict/peace guide. Under this theme, FPU contributes to SDG 16: Promote peaceful societies.

For **Central America**, the contexts are rising and repressive. This is expected to become even worse in 2022. All of FPU's support to partners is in the areas of safety (offering psychosocial support, digital and physical safety arrangements for staff), advocacy (set up conversations with different influence spheres such as EU, OAS etc.) and media viability (helping media to stay relevant and in contact with their audiences, ensuring they have diverse sources of funding etc.). Working on vigilance, such as setting up legal and administrative support for media outlets in El Salvador, where a law on Foreign Agents is pending.

The project in **Nigeria** aims to contribute to a more professional, unbiased media that functions as a change catalyst in Nigerian society. Twenty journalists will be awarded small grants to write stories on conflict and humanitarian issues. In addition, other resources on Nigeria's conflict and humanitarian crises (including research, policy briefs, articles etc.) will be collected,

developed, and published through an online platform for journalists, students, researchers, and other professionals.

Mali. To counter local extremism, the project will support youth to produce weekly online videos and radio shows, aired in the inaccessible regions of the North and Centre of the country. In Niger, collaboration will be continued with AïrInfo, based in Agadez in the middle of the Sahara desert, to report on violence committed by extremist Jihadist groups, on drug and arms trafficking, and on illegal migration. The West African network of investigative journalists, CENOZO, will receive support to report on corruption, poor governance and organised crime.

Radio Tamazuj in **South Sudan** aims to give South Sudanese citizens access to reliable media content and to educational programmes (radio/online). It also aims to stimulate dialogue between citizens and politicians, local leaders and other stakeholders, on the development of South Sudan. This will contribute to a more stable democracy, with informed citizens who can hold the government to account. The project will

continue to inform and sensitize citizens for topics like peace-building, women's health, and elections.

After intense collaboration, a new project will start in **Somalia**, in partnership with VNG, Care and Somaliland-based Media Ink. The project aims to create national Disaster Risk Management mechanisms based on inclusive strategy management, involving the media as producers of life saving information.

Radio Dabanga in **Sudan** is a national, independent news and information broadcaster. Following a military coup in Sudan in October 2021, which could potentially permanently derail Sudan's democratic transition, Dabanga is working to meet the information needs of the geographically and culturally diverse population. Operating in exile, Dabanga is able to continue broadcasting independently into Sudan via internationally transmitted shortwave radio, satellite television, and online & social media channels, with minimum risk of interference or shutdown. FPU will continue to support Dabanga's work, as well as advocate on behalf of local Sudanese media and journalists who are once again under increasing threat.

To prevent conflict and restore social cohesion in the **Central African Republic**, six community radio stations have been rehabilitated in former Lord Resistance rebel areas in the South Eastern section of the country. These radio stations play an extremely important role in providing relevant information to people living in these conflict-prone areas. Community radio stations are trained in conflict-sensitive reporting including dealing with and avoiding hate speech. The radios will produce programmes to reduce tensions between and within communities, and to reinforce mutual support and solidarity.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, a project is in development for the war-affected provinces Ituri and North Kivu. The two provinces are actually under Etat de Siege. The atrocities, killings and the talk of possible genocide against the Nande community in this part of the world, are heart breaking. Through media the programme hopes to prevent conflict, and restore social cohesion, transitional justice and finally get to the truth and start on the reconciliation phase.

Syria. Free Press Unlimited's follow-up programme, '*Cohesion through Independent and Inclusive Syrian Media (CIISM)*' (2021 - 2024), will build on foundations laid over the last 10 years. As this is the only programme that has deployed an integrated approach towards the development of the media sector - across geographies and within geographies - we have been able to plant seeds and pave the way towards credible, quality media and cohesion. The CIISM aims to support "Independent media outlets / professionals, civil society organisations, and youth to work inclusively and collaboratively towards solution-driven initiatives to foster cohesion among their audiences".

Independent media lead and engage in dialogue in the EJFSP project with the objective to *create a constructive environment for sustainable peace by strengthening media, enhancing media dialogue, and by supporting a narrative-shaping process led by Syrian media, by Syrian voices in and on Syria for Syrians and non-Syrians in Europe*. This project focuses on dialogue and the engagement of Syrian media practitioners based in Europe, as well as inside Syria, with the goal of creating constructive and solution-driven narratives on and for Syria. Some pillars of this project focus on: European advocacy and exchange of information between local and diaspora Syrian actors, collaboration of CSOs and media, and the inclusion of women as audiences.

Iraq. Together with UNESCO (Baghdad) we supported the establishment of a national committee on safety of journalists, with civil society representation, that could take on the state's obligation to report on crimes committed against journalists (DG UNESCO report on journalists killings and judicial follow-up). FPU's aim is to connect civil society and media actors in this official process. In conflict situations, FPU keeps an eye on the most vulnerable groups such as ethnic/religious minorities and women. In that context, we have established a programme to set-up a help-line structure in support of female journalists (starts in 2022).

Libya. In the context of a larger EU consortium (Open Media Hub), FPU provided digital safety trainings to local Libyan journalists, as a way of enabling them to maximise their safety when reporting in conflict areas.



© Yusuf Ghraibi, Reporter Ali Haj Suleiman during the documentation of the Russian aircraft on the town of Marzita in the history of May 11.

D. How is **Free Press Unlimited** organised?

7. **Governance**

In 2020, the terms of 2 members of the Supervisory Board concluded: in June 2020, Mrs Corine de Vries left the board, and by the end of December 2020, Mr Joop Daalmeijer had also left. The recruitment process to replace the 2 members was successfully completed by the beginning of 2021. The Supervisory Board as of 2021 consists of:

Monica Bremer - chair

Paul Hofstra - chair of Financial Advisory Committee

Ronald Gijssbertsen - on the recommendation of the works council

Nani Jansen Reventlow - member

Ellen Soerjatin - member (and member of Financial Advisory Committee)

Hennah Draaibaar - member

Our organization is governed as follows:

- **Supervisory Board** – oversees and approves the general strategy of Free Press Unlimited as well as the Board, approves on annual budget and annual reporting
- **Board** – responsible for daily management including strategy, policy, finance, human resources, etc.
- **Works Council** – representation of all staff
- **Confidential Counsellor** – external person, in keeping with our Code of Conduct

8. **Internal organisation**

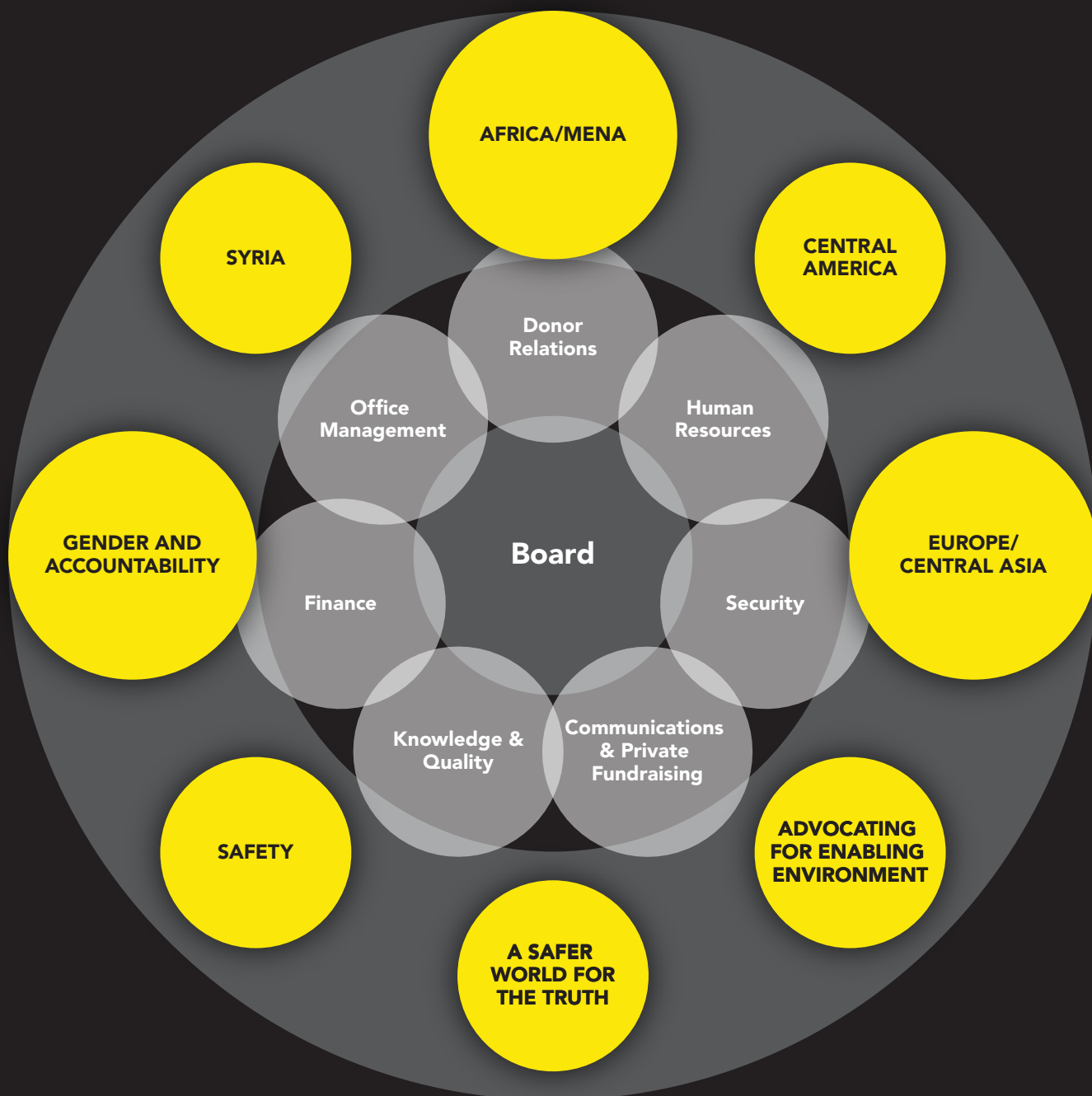
Free Press Unlimited does not believe in having too hierarchical a structure. We want to enable all teams and departments to learn from each other, and therefore encourage mutual exchange of information, experience and expertise. To illustrate this we have opted for an unconventional organisational chart that expresses the way we view each other both internally and externally.

8.1 Human Resources

It is important to us that our employees feel appreciated, rewarded and supported in their professional development. Specific attention is also essential for creating connections, interaction and collegiality. How do you keep employees engaged and how can you maintain your organisational culture? To professionalise this important aspect of Free Press Unlimited, we intend to expand the unit with a (part time) Human Resource professional.

In 2022, HR will focus on:

- 1 HR vision 2022 – 2023
- 2 Introduction to an appreciative Inquiry approach and building a culture of responsiveness to strengthen the performance management system
- 3 Well-being & happiness at work (preventive medical examination)
- 4 Diversity & inclusion as part of the work-culture environment
- 5 Digitalisation of HR processes



8.2 Safeguarding quality

8.2.1 Audits

Free Press Unlimited strives to have a solid quality system in place to ensure that all projects, and also the cooperation with the numerous partners, proceed according to the Free Press Unlimited and international quality standards (ISO). Within the Netherlands, Free Press Unlimited follows the standards prescribed by organisations such as 'Goede Doelen Nederland' and 'CBF'. Both supervisory organisations monitor charitable institutions on financial, social and governance elements. Both institutions conduct a yearly audit to determine whether a charitable organisation is operating according to their guidelines. The following instruments and/or institutions will audit the quality of Free Press Unlimited in 2022:

ISO - (instrument/methodology to monitor quality system) performed by an external auditor

CBF - organisation with specific guidelines on governance, finance, donor relations and communications. Audit is carried out through the annual report of the organisation as well as an annual survey.

Annual Report - audited and approved by an external auditor, mainly based on financial capacity.

8.2.2 Knowledge and Quality

In 2022, the main focus of the Knowledge and Quality (K&Q) team will be knowledge management and project, partner, and organisational support. Concretely, this will involve monitoring, evaluation, learning, training, knowledge management, research, quality management, and fundraising. The team will consist of 4.5 FTE (6 team members of which 3 will work part-time).

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

The K&Q team will continue to support FPU's projects and partners to raise the quality of M&E. For 2022, we plan to extend this type of support notably to the Eurasia, Africa, and Syria teams. K&Q will conduct

various internal evaluations, e.g. for the Mind the Children project in Europe and for the COVID project in Africa Together for Reliable Information. In addition to these project-specific activities, we will continue to support all FPU staff in working with our project management system (PROMIS) and, when applicable, reporting in IATI.

Learning

We will organise 2 organisation-wide learning days (FPU days) in 2022. In addition, we will organise, and enable our colleagues to organise, Food for Thought presentations throughout the year. We will also organise specific demand-based online and face-to-face M&E trainings for colleagues and partners.

Knowledge Management

In order to advance collaborative knowledge management in media development with and between partner organisations and coalitions, we will maintain and expand our existing website for collaboration (<https://collaboration.freepressunlimited.org/>)

We will update our existing thematic resource guides and develop new ones on themes including 'media in conflict' and 'inclusive media', accessible on <https://kq.freepressunlimited.org/>. We will support the six thematic task forces (TTFs) and ensure knowledge exchange so that each taskforce can benefit from experiences and knowledge from across the organisation. We will also ensure that knowledge produced and lessons learned across the organisation and its programmes is collected together in a central space and made accessible to all.

Research

K&Q will conduct research on Equality & Inclusion in the Workplace and on Enabling Economic Environment as part of FPU's role in the PRIMED coalition. In addition, we will work together with students from several universities to facilitate research that addresses our thematic knowledge needs. We also continue to conduct our ongoing research on Youth and Media, together with Wadada News for Kids and UNICEF.

8.2.3 Safety & Security Policy

We anticipate that in 2022 cyber-attacks against journalists and media organisations will increase, as increasingly sophisticated and more intrusive digital weapons are sold to and tailored for the needs of the highest bidder, whether criminal groups and organisations or governments. In 2022, Free Press Unlimited will focus its Safety & Security Policy on raising the awareness of media workers about the dangers of cyber weapons, increasing their capacity to defend against them, highlighting the threats posed by the export of such tools to the most ruthless adversaries of press freedom.

Internally, Free Press Unlimited has updated its security policy, taking stock of the new and emerging cyber threats, focusing on training its staff, securing its processes and reinforcing its IT infrastructure. For 2022, we also predict less COVID-19 restrictions and more traveling abroad. This means extra focus on briefing on security training for traveling staff and closely monitoring the political and security developments in our project countries globally.

8.2.4 Integrity

The reliability of Free Press Unlimited's activities and the good name and reputation of the organisation are of utmost importance to the Supervisory Board, the Board of Director(s) and the staff of Free Press Unlimited. We therefore believe it is essential to develop an Integrity Policy which sets out the standards for ethical behaviour of all Free Press Unlimited's representatives. The culture at Free Press Unlimited is based on trust, mutual respect, open communication and high standards of professional conduct. These key words play an essential role in achieving our mission. We have faith in the common sense of our staff and all representatives and trust that they will act within the bounds of the law, with integrity, act ethically and will do everything in their power to ensure that the name and good reputation of Free Press Unlimited is never questioned. In 2022, we will improve our complaints procedure to make it even clearer and more accessible. New staff, and also existing staff, will be informed about the the procedures, to make sure everyone knows what to expect and how act when submitting and/or receiving an official complaint.

8.3 Communications

For the coming year, we plan to focus our marketing on private fundraising since we are in need of increased core funding. If we are to be successful in this area we need greater brand awareness. Since we do not have the availability of large, un-earmarked budgets to promote our visibility via mass media, we need to be creative and piggyback on our projects.

The main theme for the external communication will be focused on the safety of journalists. As a press freedom organisation, this is the foundation of our work.

Our intention for 2022 is to be present via mass media every quarter, accompanied with a social media campaign to reinforce our communication on tv, radio, outdoor and print. In addition, our channels will be used to promote activities like Free Press Live and the awards for Newcomer & Most Resilient Journalist of the year. The primary target group is the 40+ higher educated demographic in The Netherlands.

Campaign planning

- Q1 The impact of investigative journalism
- Q2 Socutera (TV) & video + display STER online
- Q3 TV commercial STER + display STER online
- Q4 Radio

Private Fundraising

The goal for 2022 is to increase the amount of un-earmarked funding on the total FPU balance sheet to 125,000 Euro.

Our strategy to increase these un-earmarked funds has several focus points:

- 1 Donors, Friends and Ambassadors
- 2 Corporate Sponsors
- 3 Private Foundations
- 4 New initiatives such as a photo auction event or telemarketing

8.4 The Works Council

The Works Council will continue to be a partner for the staff and the Board of Director(s), serving Free Press Unlimited in the best possible way in order to create a fair, healthy and safe working environment.

In 2022, the Works Council's priorities will be:

- 1** Following and assisting the development of the new HR policy
- 2** Monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on our organisation
- 3** Contributing to the PMO survey (preventive medical examination) to assess & improve a healthy hybrid work environment
- 4** Monitoring smooth transition towards the new digital work environment when technological changes are implemented
- 5** Continuous attention to diversity and inclusion
- 6** Working towards a more environment-friendly organisation

FPEE

Since 2016, a Prague based Free Press for Eastern Europe (FPEE) has been running our European and Central Asian projects. Set up by media development specialists from the region, it promotes a collaborative approach to journalism and media. FPEE partners with Free Press Unlimited in projects that address gaps in media literacy, collaborative journalism, audience engagement and media viability, both in the EU, on its Eastern borders and beyond. Journalists, human rights defenders and civil society actors can also gain hands-on knowledge from FPEE's media practitioners at Prague Media School (<http://pragueschool.media>)

Environmental Sustainability

Free Press Unlimited believes it has a responsibility to reduce and prevent any possible negative impact on our natural environment. While remaining focused on our key objectives in support of press freedom and safety of journalists all over the world, we accept the challenge of adopting a more systematic approach to further reduce our collective carbon footprint and investigate how Free Press Unlimited can become a net-zero organization before 2030. For this challenge, it is important for us to engage with all our partners and relevant stakeholders to realize our sustainability goals in a fair manner. Our ambition for 2022 is to establish a CO₂ emissions baseline including a number of key short-term and long-term measurable goals to reduce our organisation's impact on the environment. Together they will form a Sustainability Action Plan, which will be our main guideline in the coming years.

Building on efforts of previous years, Free Press Unlimited will continue to encourage staff to work from home and to increase awareness of environmentally friendly transport options both for commuting as well as for contact with (foreign) partners. If flying is necessary, we offset emissions via the Climate Neutral Group. In addition, Free Press Unlimited endorses a paperless office where possible, and uses environmentally-friendly suppliers, cleaning products, sustainable energy sources and organic products for lunch and events.

E. Budget

The budget is drawn up in accordance with the in 2017 revised Dutch Accounting Standards for Fundraising Institutions, Richtlijn 650.

In general the budget of 2022 shows an increase versus 2021. Since the discontinuation of the programme “No News is Bad News” we were confronted with a significant change in our funding structure which we apparently have overcome due to our efforts in gaining new funding. Nevertheless we still budget a deficit for 2022 but significant less negative than in 2021. The

reason for that is that we continue to cover costs for international advocacy for press freedom and the safety of journalists. Due to the fact that this part for 2022, as was the case in 2021, is not fully financial covered. The organization is therefore again as much as possible maintained in terms of capacity and knowledge in order to be able to find alternative funding for the remaining deficit. The portion of Dutch MFA in our total funding gained 10% compared to the budget of 2021 but is with 44% still reasonable in terms of dependency.

Ratios	2022	2021
Objective expenditure / total income	94,5%	94,1%
Objective expenditure / total expenses	94,1%	92,5%
Fundraising costs / fundraising income	3,3%	4,4%
Management & administration / total expenses	2,6%	3,2%

INCOME (in €)	2022	2021	variance
Various governments - Radio Tamazuj	1.425.000	1.550.000	-125.000
Various governments - Radio Dabanga	2.065.000	1.900.000	165.000
Various governments - Eurasia	2.215.000	1.925.000	290.000
Various governments - Ethical Journalism Syria	2.370.000	2.250.000	120.000
European Union/ Belgium Embassy - Mali	160.000	370.000	-210.000
European Union - IMS/ Near South	440.000	0	440.000
European Union - Africa	585.000	900.000	-315.000
European Union - CAR	85.000	250.000	-165.000
Dutch MFA / EU - Safety for Media Professionals	2.220.000	460.000	1.760.000
Dutch MFA - Western Balkan	720.000	350.000	370.000
Dutch MFA - VIMES	565.000	1.050.000	-485.000
Dutch MFA - Somalia	440.000	385.000	55.000
Dutch MFA - HRF - Knowledge & Advocacy	1.000.000	0	1.000.000
Dutch Embassy/ GIZ - Great Lakes	760.000	210.000	550.000
Dutch Embassy/ European Union - Venezuela	375.000	510.000	-135.000
Dutch Embassy - Pakistan	405.000	400.000	5.000
Dutch Embassy - Costa Rica	200.000	190.000	10.000
Dutch Embassy - Congo-Kinshasa	0	235.000	-235.000
DRL - TOTEM 2.0	265.000	250.000	15.000
DFID/ BBC Media Action - PRIMED	175.000	275.000	-100.000
Anonymous donor - Central America	315.000	450.000	-135.000
Other	685.000	410.000	275.000
Income from government subsidies	17.470.000	14.320.000	3.150.000

INCOME (in €)	2022	2021	variance
Dutch Postcode Lottery - Structural	900.000	900.000	0
Dutch Postcode Lottery - A Safer World for the Truth	1.295.000	1.000.000	295.000
Dutch Postcode Lottery - Mind the Children	450.000	600.000	-150.000
Dutch Postcode Lottery - Oxfam Novib - Money Trail	0	100.000	-100.000
Other	0	150.000	-150.000
Income from Lottery organizations	2.645.000	2.750.000	-105.000

UNESCO / UNICEF	45.000	0	45.000
Other	180.000	75.000	105.000
Income from other non profit organizations	225.000	75.000	150.000

Various contributions	15.000	35.000	-20.000
Other (unearmarked)	0	100.000	-100.000
Income from companies	15.000	135.000	-120.000

Contributions from various private donors	125.000	100.000	25.000
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TOTAL INCOME	20.480.000	17.380.000	3.100.000
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EXPENSES	2022	2021	variance
Programme costs	19.362.066	16.349.960	3.012.106
Fundraising	680.932	755.469	-74.537
Management & administration	530.002	562.196	-32.194

TOTAL EXPENSES	20.573.000	17.667.625	2.905.375
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Result before financial gains and losses	-93.000	-287.625	194.625
Financial gains and losses	-35.000	-25.000	-10.000
Balance income and expenses	-128.000	-312.625	184.625

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People deserve to know