IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Impact Report

April to September 2026



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Who we are and why we do what we do

The IJ Hub was born of a realisation that although investigative journalists in Southern Africa may face substantial challenges individually, collectively they hold huge potential to change their societies for the better.

Investigative journalists and journalism centres are a prospect worth networking and nurturing in order to increase their impact and to multiply their force. The IJ Hub, a non-profit based in South Africa, has set out to perform this important task by raising philanthropic funding for its member investigative journalism centres, by networking them, and by building editorial and organisational capacity among them and beyond.

This report offers a sense of what the centres have been busy with over the six months from April to September 2026. It also highlights how they punch above their weight.

The IJ Hub currently has **eight** member investigative journalism centres, all of them in the SADC region of Southern Africa.

A Membership Code and an Editorial Charter guide their conduct.

The IJ Hub raises philanthropic funds and offers editorial as well as organisational support to six member centres. The amaBhungane and Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism member centres do not require IJ Hub funding and support, but collaborate with the IJ Hub and other member centres on cross-border investigations, fellowships and skills development.



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Our Partners

The IJ Hub's members are the leading non-profit investigative journalism centres in each of their countries. Some may be small, but they pack a big punch. Collectively, they are a high-impact investigative force.

Together with the IJ Hub, our partners have done great things.

7 Countries

40 Journalists

63 Contributors



BLANTYRE
MALAWI

Platform for Investigative Journalism

Founded in 2019 to address a gap in investigative reporting in Malawi's media landscape, the Platform for Investigative Journalism (PIJ) has become a leading voice in exposing wrongdoing and promoting transparency and accountability.

- Journalists: 5 / Contributors: 14



WINDHOEK
NAMIBIA

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

The investigative unit, founded in 2015, has undertaken and published major investigations into corruption and the abuse of power. Its series on the Fishrot scandal culminated in the resignation and prosecution of senior officials and politicians.

- Journalists: 3 / Contributors: 1



HARARE
ZIMBABWE

Pachena Public Interest and Data Journalism Centre

Pachena is a Zimbabwean non-profit investigative journalism initiative that began operating in June 2026. It focuses on holding power to account; exposing corruption and social injustice; investigating the extractive sector; bringing to light human rights violations as well as amplifying land, environmental and climate justice issues in Zimbabwe and the southern African region, through collaborations with like-minded organisations.

- Journalists: 4 / Contributors: 7



MBOMBELA,
DURBAN AND
CAPE TOWN
SOUTH AFRICA

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

Founded in 2012, Oxpeckers is Africa's first investigative journalism unit focusing on environmental issues. It combines traditional investigative reporting with data analysis and geo-mapping tools to expose eco-offences and track organised criminal syndicates.

- Journalists: 12 / Contributors: 14



LUSAKA
ZAMBIA

MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism

MakanDay was established in 2016. It is geared towards investigative journalism that serves the interests of the public. From small beginnings, it has made a name for itself with its combination of grassroots investigations and strong analysis.

- Journalists: 4 / Contributors: 20



JOHANNESBURG,
DURBAN AND
CAPE TOWN
SOUTH AFRICA

amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism

AmaBhungane (isiZulu for "the dungbeetles") launched as an independent, non-profit newsroom in 2010 with the aim of developing investigative journalism to promote free, capable media and an open, accountable, just democracy. Its hard-hitting exposés have earned it international acclaim.

The IJ Hub was spun off from amaBhungane in 2019. AmaBhungane now acts as a partner that collaborates with other member centres on stories, presents some workshops, and hosts fellows.

- Journalists: 6



MBABANE
ESWATINI

Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism

Inhlase ("spark" in siSwati) registered as a non-profit in 2017. In Africa's last absolute monarchy, a country where few dare take on the powers that be, the centre has been hard at work uncovering corruption and making it public. It aims to ignite positive change in the country.

- Journalists: 2 / Contributors: 3



MASERU
LESOTHO

MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism

Founded in 2016, MNN is strongly living up to its vision to be the leading investigative journalism organisation in the Mountain Kingdom, promoting accountability and transparency; exposing corruption and wrongdoing; and promoting an open and democratic society.

- Journalists: 4 / Contributors: 4

IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Journalism

Journalists at the IJ Hub supported centres produce many impactful stories enabled by IJ Hub funding and editorial support.

On the right is a selection of 20 standout stories published from April to September 2026

Boast:
Oxpeckers has been named a top-three finalist in the 2026 GRC & FinCrime Awards for investigative reporting on accountability, corruption and financial crime.

Data centres and human rights

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

The minerals powering the world's digital infrastructure are extracted from communities where many young people still lack reliable internet access. Oxpeckers investigates the divide between South Africa's role in the global digital economy and the connectivity challenges faced by communities near its mineral wealth.

Read more | Watch Video | Watch Video

Watch Video

Impact: Featured as top story in Financial Mail and prompted follow-up coverage by other news outlets.

Read more 1 | Read more 2 | Read more 3

Fatal ferry crossing: The warnings Zimbabwe ignored

Pachena

Pachena's investigation into the sinking of the Mbuya Nehanda ferry, which killed 97 people on Lake Kariba, revealed that government officials ignored repeated warnings about the vessel's safety. The ferry was also overloaded. The government initially blamed the captain, who died in the disaster. Follow-up reporting exposed the toll on children, 45 of whom died, and prompted scrutiny of the official investigations.

Read more 1 | Read more 2 | Read more 3

Impact: The reporting successfully challenged the government's account of the disaster. This led to dismissals and a judge-led inquiry.

Gas boom shrouded in secrecy

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

Botswana is betting on gas to revive its economy, but a lack of transparency around a flagship project has raised concerns among industry experts and environmental watchdogs. The investigation exposes the potential risks to surrounding communities, wildlife and ecosystems.

Read more | Watch Video

Impact: After months of negotiations with authorities, Oxpeckers was granted access to the environmental impact assessment for Botala Energy's coalbed methane project near Serowe. The report had previously been restricted. Securing access was a significant transparency gain.

The arms pipeline to Sudan: Malawi's military under investigation

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The investigation uncovers an alleged trafficking ring in which senior Malawi Defence Force officers helped smuggle heavy weapons to rebels in Sudan through a covert international arms pipeline. The investigation exposed the alleged role of military officials in the operation and raised serious questions about how weapons moving across borders fuel a foreign conflict.

Read more

Impact: Former Malawi Defence Force commander General Paul Valentino Phiri was arrested over allegations that he facilitated illegal arms trafficking linked to rebels in Sudan.

Read more

Lesotho bets US$6.2 billion on Convalt. Does its track record stack up?

MNN

Lesotho's proposed M98 billion (US$6.2 billion) Project Kobong promises to deliver 1,200 megawatts of hydropower and an AI data centre, potentially making it the country's largest-ever foreign direct investment. But an investigation by MNN raises questions about the track record of New York-based Convalt Energy, the company selected to develop the project, and the government's due diligence before signing a binding agreement.

Read more 1 | Read more 2



IJHub
SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Journalism

... continued

Boast:

Oxpeckers featured by the International Press Institute for its #PowerTracker investigations into South Africa's stalled coal transition and its impact on communities.

Eswatini's online betting boom outpaces regulation

Inhlase

Eswatini's online betting boom is growing faster than the systems meant to regulate it, leaving underage children at risk of gambling addiction. The investigation exposes weak government oversight, inadequate age checks by betting companies and the failure to fund the Gaming Fund, established under the Gaming Act to help people recover from gambling addiction.

Read more



Inside the United States deportation project

Inhlase

A three-part investigation exposes the human cost and lack of transparency surrounding a US$5.1 million deal under which Eswatini agreed to accept up to 160 people deported from the United States. It traces the fate of five men sent to Eswatini in July 2025, rather than returned to their home countries, and raises questions about the legality of their detention and the terms of the agreement. The investigation formed part of a cross-border project led by Forbidden Stories examining the Trump administration's use of third countries to deport people.

Read more 1 | Read more 2 | Read more 3



Salmonella: The wrong people blamed?

MNN

The story exposes a salmonella outbreak that affected 133 workers at the Polihali Dam construction camp. It challenges the contractor's suggestion that outside food vendors were the likely source of the outbreak, revealing that the vendors were never tested, while 14 food handlers in the camp kitchen tested positive for salmonella.

Read more | Watch Video

Impact: The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority now requires workers from different contractors at Polihali camp to sign non-disclosure agreements.

Farmers pay to sell their maize

MakanDay

The story uncovers an unlisted maize-buying point in eastern Zambia where farmers said they had to pay to sell their crops. The investigation linked Deputy Permanent Secretary Dr Lewis Mwape to the establishment of the operation, which used Food Reserve Agency equipment and official receipts.

Read more

Impact: A month after publication, Mwape was dismissed, but the government has not disclosed why.

Read more



Bankrupt and barred: The legal question that derailed presidential hopeful's bid

MakanDay

A MakanDay investigation revealed how Zambian opposition leader Charles Chanda had been declared bankrupt by the High Court in July 2025, raising questions about his eligibility to contest the 2026 presidential election. After Chanda continued his political activities and reportedly paid the K100,000 nomination fee, MakanDay sought clarification from the Judiciary on whether the bankruptcy order remained in force.

Read more

Impact: The Electoral Commission disqualified him.

IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Journalism

... continued

Boast:

Pachena was runner-up in the Investigative Journalism category at Zimbabwe's 2026 National Journalism and Media Awards for its Mbuya Nehanda ferry disaster investigation.

Cold play

Oxpeckers Investigative Environmental Journalism

An undercover Oxpeckers investigation reveals how informal dealers, weak enforcement and gaps in the supply chain are undermining regulation of South Africa's climate-control industry and the trade in refrigerant gases.

Read more | Watch Video

Impact: Investigating environmental crime means testing the institutions responsible for stopping it. Oxpeckers submitted formal access-to-information requests to SARS, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and the International Trade Administration Commission for records on refrigerant supply chains from 2019 to 2026. These included import and export permits, recommendations, approvals, seizure logs, quantities authorised, importer and distributor names, countries of origin, handling locations, ports of entry, and correspondence between ITAC and the DFFE. The months-long effort to obtain this information was documented in a news blog.

Read more

The great greenbelt heist

Platform for Investigative Journalism

PIJ Malawi exposed allegations that K39 billion (US$22.5 million) was siphoned from the Greenbelt Authority in less than four months, with politically connected networks allegedly benefiting. The investigation revealed how an agency set up to expand irrigation, boost agricultural production and strengthen food security was allegedly exploited for private gain.

Read more

Impact: Former Finance Minister and parliamentary opposition leader Simplex Chithyola was arrested and charged with money laundering and abuse of office.

Read more



Copper mine trades roadworks for millions in unpaid rates

MakanDay

Zambia's biggest copper and gold producer, Kansanshi Mine, settled K74.36 million (US$3.6 million) of its property-rate bill to Solwezi Municipal Council between 2021 and 2025 through road construction rather than cash. The arrangement more than trebled in value over this time, but the council have not provided key documents needed to verify its terms and costs.



N$17 million in fuel never delivered

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

An investigation by The Namibian revealed that the state-owned Roads Contractor Company paid N$30 million (US$1.83 million) to two fuel suppliers over two years, but N$17 million worth of fuel was never delivered. The suppliers were linked to people implicated in the Namcor corruption case and businessman Victor Malima, who was the subject of an arrest warrant. Documents showed that acting chief executive Dasius Nelumbu personally approved the payments.

Read more

Impact: The RCC cited the investigation when announcing an internal inquiry, and Nelumbu was placed on leave.

Lesotho's flagship water project, a sanitation crisis in its shadow

MNN

Masakong residents living near Lesotho's Polihali dam construction site have been forced back to open defecation after the 13 shared pit latrines provided by the project's development authority became full and unusable. The crisis exposes the stark contrast between the M454 million (US$27.6 million) Polihali village for projects workers and visitors, and the lack of basic sanitation for a neighbouring community whose traditional toilet areas were taken over for the development.

Read more

Impact: The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, which oversees the construction, acknowledged that some sanitation facilities had deteriorated but no action has been taken.

IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Journalism

... continued

Boast:

Journalists at the Investigative Unit of The Namibian won top honours at the 2026 Namibian Journalism Awards, including business and finance reporting for an investigation into N$18 million stolen from SME Bank, and agriculture reporting for its air pollution investigation.

Boast:

A year after a PIJ investigation exposed an alleged human-trafficking network operating through a refugee camp in Malawi, fugitive Adnew Bashaw Wudamo has been arrested.

US$9.64 billion spent with no approval: Will Parliament rubber stamp?

Pachena

Zimbabwe's government is asking Parliament to retrospectively approve US$9.64 billion in spending that lacked legal authorisation, more than a decade after the money was spent. There is no explanation about where the money went, and the Finance Adjustments Bill setting out the request proposes that the spending be allocated to the Finance Ministry, making it harder to trace the spending. The investigation raises questions about transparency and Parliament's ability to hold the government accountable for public money.

Read more

Bulldozing the masterplan

Platform for Investigative Journalism

The investigation shows how Lilongwe City Council allowed plans for a shopping complex on protected wetland in Area 10, despite a High Court ruling safeguarding the land for conservation and recreation. The development threatened an important water catchment and drainage area, while the council's reversal of its earlier position brought it into conflict with the Ministry of Lands and raised questions about the enforcement of court orders and environmental protections.

Read more 1 | Read more 2

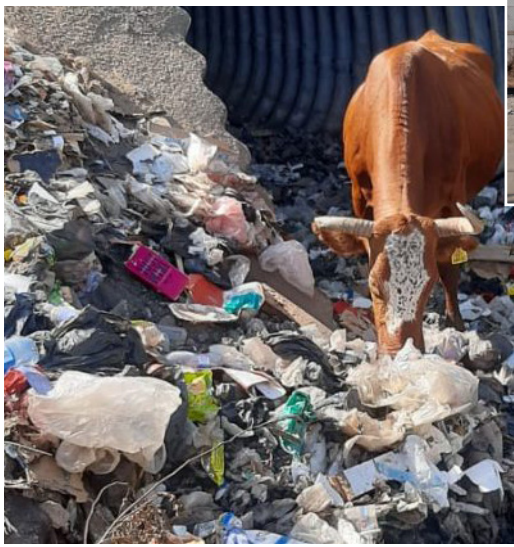
Impact: The government launched High Court proceedings to recover the disputed Area 10 plot from the developer. The wider audit of urban land allocations that followed uncovered missing records, questionable allocations and suspected fraud.

Glittering diamond promises turn to dust

Pachena

Chiadzwa's diamond wealth was meant to bring jobs and prosperity, but retrenchments and broken promises have left families struggling. Poverty is driving villagers and former mine workers to produce charcoal, stripping forests bare and sending silt into the Save River. The investigation raises questions about how charcoal leaves the heavily guarded mining area undetected and why authorities have failed to stop the destruction.

Read more



US health data deal

Investigative Unit of The Namibian

As the United States and Namibia negotiated a deal affecting about N$730 million (US$44.3 million) in annual HIV funding, the investigation revealed how President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah had told Cabinet that she opposed sharing patients' health information with the US. The investigation exposed the lack of transparency surrounding the negotiations and found that the government was considering a N$700 million contingency budget if talks failed.

Read more

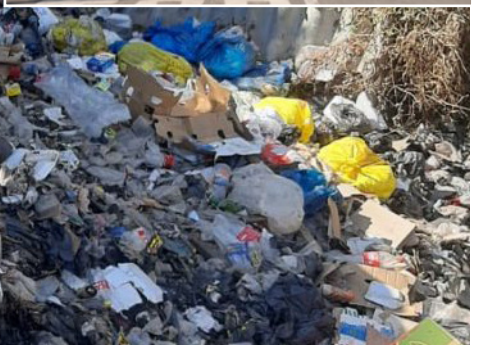
Drowning in rubbish

Inhlase

Eswatini aims to generate SZL2 billion (US$125.6 million) in tourism revenue, yet rubbish lines key tourist routes. The investigation exposes the gap between the country's tourism ambitions and the basic services needed to attract visitors.

Read more





IJHub
SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Workshops

To strengthen the field of investigative journalism in the region, the IJ Hub and its member centres also plough back

7
Workshops

169
Participants

IJ Hub workshops

We arrange and host workshops on topics that are relevant to investigative journalism and tailored to the needs of our member centres. The aim is to inspire and transfer skills to member centres and other journalists – and in so doing, facilitate the generation of high-quality stories that hold the powerful to account and increase overall accountability in the region.

Election reporting

Date: 22–23 June and 9–10 July 2026
Participants: 24
Host: MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism

The workshop trained community radio journalists from across Zambia to strengthen their election reporting ahead of the 2026 General Election. It was supported by Sida and the Deepening Democracy Facility (DDF) under the British Embassy.

Information manipulation and interference

Date: 26 June 2026
Participants: 10
Host: MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism, in partnership with Free Press Initiative

The workshop equipped journalists from private and public media with practical skills to identify, investigate, verify and report on foreign information manipulation and interference ahead of Zambia's 2026 General Election. Supported by the European Union.

Digital hygiene

Date: May 2026
Participants: 9
Host: PIJ Malawi

Strengthening institutional governance, operational effectiveness, digital security and staff well-being.

Investigative journalism tools

Date: May 2026
Participants: 9
Host: PIJ Malawi

Training in forensic research, open-source intelligence, gender inclusivity, legal protections and risk assessment in a complex digital environment.

Unpacking climate financing

Date: June 2026
Participants: 60
Host: PIJ Malawi and Trócaire

Journalists learned how to follow the money by investigating how climate funds are allocated and spent, whether they reach their intended communities, and who benefits.

Investigative ethics and techniques

Date: September 2026
Participants: 35
Host: PIJ Malawi

Building practical skills in advanced investigative techniques, fact-checking, ethical reporting and source protection.

Advanced investigative journalism

Date: September 2026
Participants: 22
Host: PIJ Malawi

Developing practical skills in advanced investigative techniques, fact-checking, ethical reporting and source protection.



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Fellowships

We arrange and fund three to six-month fellowships at member centres and other investigative newsrooms.

The aim is to enhance investigative skills at member centres and in the region generally (as talented journalists outside of member centres also qualify). Some member centres also host fellows independently of IJ Hub

5

In-country



Nishi Felton

December 2025 - August 2026

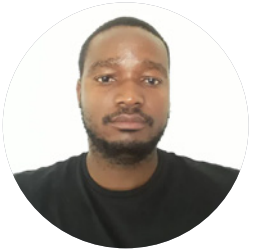
IJ Hub funded and hosted by the Investigative Unit of The Namibian in Namibia



Clara Chisanga

May - July 2026

NED fellow hosted by MakanDay in Zambia



Dr Henri-Count Evans

February - August 2026

IJ Hub fellow hosted by Inhlase in Eswatini



Chris Kaukemua

December 2025 - August 2026

IJ Hub funded and hosted by the Investigative Unit of The Namibian in Namibia



Mazombwe Banda

May - July 2026

NED fellow hosted by MakanDay in Zambia

IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Editorial support and syndication system

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

Boast:

An ongoing PIJ investigation helped secure prison sentences for Jason and Lacey Carney: 16 years for Jason and three for Lacey. They used more than US$2 million raised to feed malnourished and orphaned children to fund their luxury lifestyle.

In September 2022, after protracted consultation and planning with member centres, the IJ Hub kicked off a syndication service. This means working more closely with journalists from member centres to prepare and circulate important stories to the rest of the network for publication. The benefits are clear: If member centres regularly publish each other's stories, each gets a bigger, region-wide audience, and each has more material with which to make its own website more valuable to readers.

Read more 1 | Read more 2 | Read more 3

Read more 4 | Read more 5 | Read more 6

Read more 7 | Read more 8 | Read more 9

Read more 10 | Read more 11

24

Stories supported with editing

11

Stories syndicated







Get involved

IJ Hub member centres do not have a paywall or advertising. They rely on charitable funds to uncover the stories that the powerful and crooked want to keep secret. You can help by donating to the IJ Hub for disbursement or to the centres directly.

To find out more, contact the IJ Hub's managing partners:

Troye Lund: troye_ijhub@icloud.com

Carina Pillay: pillaycarina4@gmail.com



IJHub

SERVING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

www.ijhub.org

amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism

MNN

PLATFORM FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Inhlase CENTRE FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM



THE NAMIBIAN INVESTIGATIVE UNIT



OXPECKERS Investigative Environmental Journalism

MAKANDAY Center for Investigative Journalism

Pachena