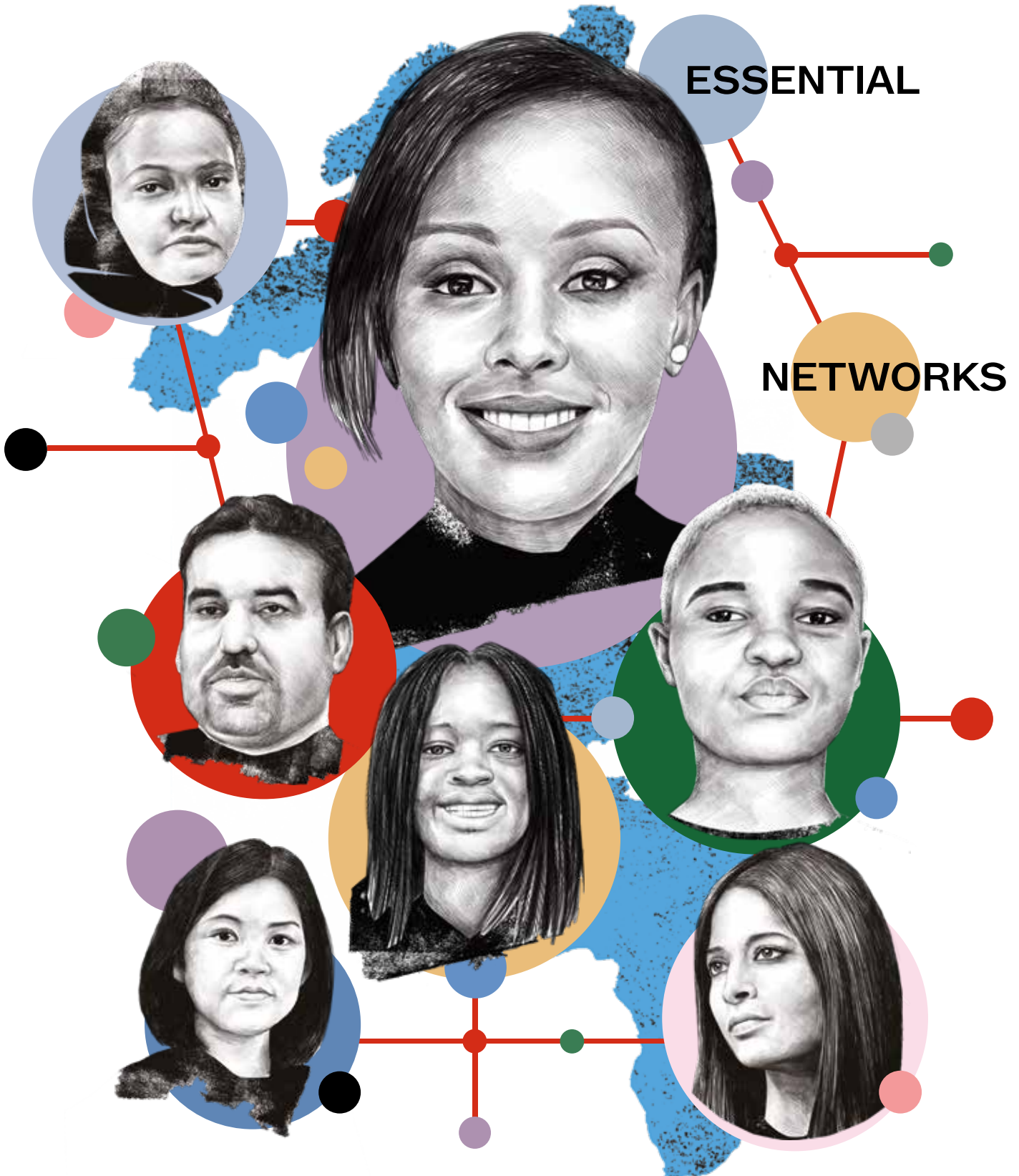
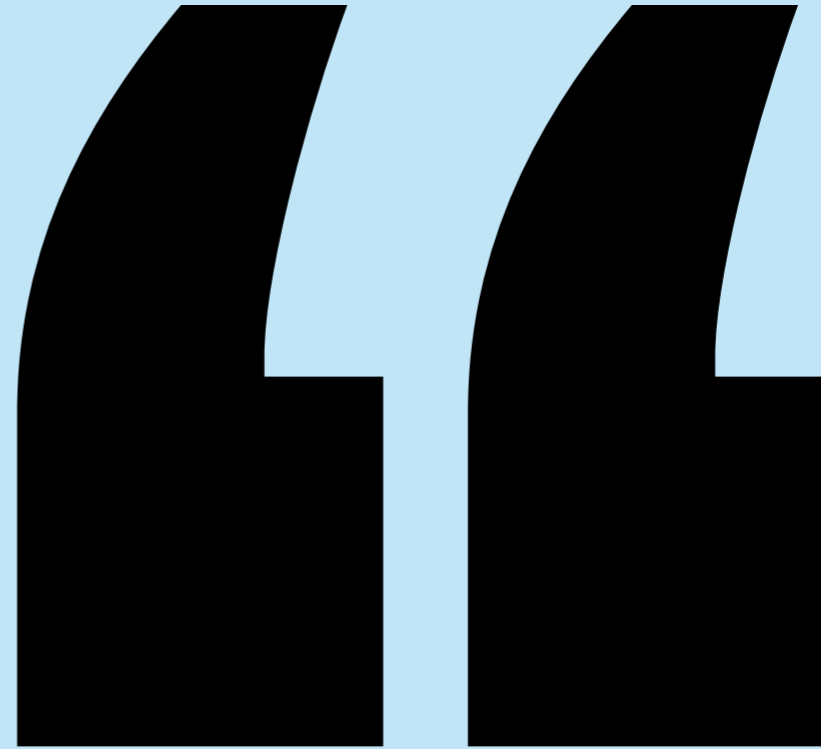




# Thomson Foundation

Annual review 2021





**Nearly six  
decades of  
championing  
journalistic  
integrity**

---

1962 – 2021  
**Thomson Foundation**

# Contents

## 06

**FOREWORD**  
Taking learnings from one part of the world to another is part of our mission and our strength.



Cover portraits:  
**PAUL RYDING**

Design:  
**SARA LOANE**

Registered charity:  
313750

Published:  
MARCH 2022

© Thomson Foundation

## 08

**THE BETTINA FUND**  
This pioneering project in Kenya aims to build networks among women journalists and give them the confidence to go for senior roles.



**CORRECTING THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN MEDIA**  
There is an urgent need to address gender discrimination against women in Central Europe.



**BUILDING CITIZENS' TRUST**  
A project in the Western Balkans seeks to equip journalists with the latest in mobile journalism skills.

## 12



## 14

**CROSS BORDERS**  
Every year, thousands of refugees flee economic turmoil and political uncertainty in Nicaragua, leading to anti-migrant and racist rhetoric.

**CHANGE MAKERS**  
A pioneering band of creatives in Sudan capture the beauty of photography with Thomson Media.

## 16



## 24

**BREAKING BIASES**  
Valley Voices aims to address the under-representation of Pakistani women in local media in the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## 27

**SECURING THE FUTURE OF LOCAL JOURNALISM**  
A look at the Media4All programme in the Western Balkans.

## 28

**WE'RE ALL EARS**  
Responding to a global boom in podcasts, we developed a comprehensive learning guide.



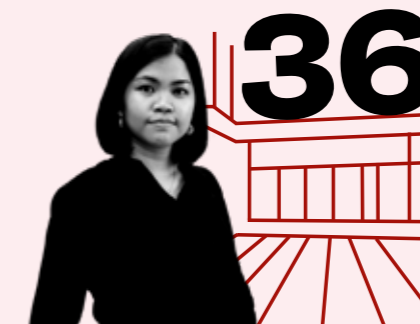
## 30

**HUMANISING REFUGEES**  
Documenting the complex realities that influence the migration decisions of young Afghans fleeing conflict.

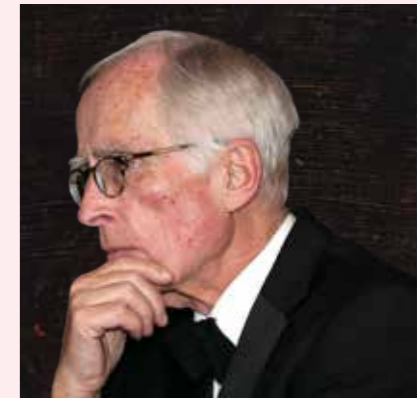


## 34

**THE NEED OF THE HOUR**  
Environmental issues that threaten the health of our planet are now part of every journalist's beat.



**YOUNG JOURNALIST AWARD WINNER**  
It was Malaysian journalist Kai Hui Wong's "persistence in her investigations" which convinced the judges that she should win.



## 37

**PARTING WAYS**  
After more than a 25-year association with the foundation, Mark Knight has stood down as a trustee.

## 38

**WHY JOURNALISM MATTERS**  
We have worked in nearly 100 countries, providing expertise for journalists by journalists.

## 40

**TURNING 60**  
In 2022, we celebrate six decades of championing journalistic integrity.



**“The foundation delivered major projects, even when geo-political events, like a coup in Sudan made work difficult”**

**One of the highlights of the year for me, every year, is seeing the Thomson Foundation’s work celebrated at the Foreign Press Association awards in London.**

Even though the winner of this year’s Thomson Foundation Young Journalist Award, Kai Hui Wong from Malaysia, and Monika Mondal from India (both pictured below) who won the best environment story award, could not attend in person because of the pandemic, their impactful journalism was loudly applauded, again reminding us of the importance of championing bold and balanced journalism.

I am pleased to report that Thomson Foundation has weathered the global pandemic well. The foundation delivered major projects, even when geo-political events, like a coup in Sudan, made work difficult.

Online learning courses are now 177 in number and popular in combination with online webinars and workshops with trainers.

Towards the end of the year, the focus was firmly on Glasgow, where leaders met at the COP26

conference. Thomson Foundation’s commitment to helping journalists tell the story of climate change was illustrated by the publication of our three online courses on environmental reporting.

We were delighted to launch The Bettina Fund with our partner Baraza Media Lab in Kenya to build a network of women journalists who support each other. The project was set up in memory of our late director of development, Bettina Peters, who was a tireless advocate for women taking leading roles in the media.

I would like to thank all our donors for their support this year as well as our dedicated teams in London and in Berlin where Thomson Media is based. Mark Knight, Thomson Foundation stalwart and our longest serving trustee, retired from the board after 25 years of service. We owe Mark a great deal of thanks for his enduring wisdom and dedication to the foundation.

**Lord Tom Chandos, chairman,  
Thomson Foundation**



**he thing that struck me from the first moment I joined Thomson Foundation in June 2021, was the passion and commitment of its people, partners and network to the cause of reporting fairly and in a balanced way.**

This is an organisation that champions ethical reporting by journalists, and has a deep commitment to working with them and their media organisations to find sustainable business solutions to the challenges posed by the changes in how people consume news. After all, what is the point of producing fantastic journalism if it doesn’t reach an audience. Having a network to draw on for support, knowledge and expertise is vital along this journey – as more than 20 years in the news business taught me.

Taking learnings from one part of the world to another, is part of our mission and our strength. We can start the day working on story composition with women video-journalists on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border – and end with a webinar on how to handle mis- and disinformation hosted in the Western Balkans.

How Thomson Foundation does this work is ever-evolving – just as what it means to be a journalist and the business of publishing, changes. Our training offering is wide and varied with our ‘blended’ learning model of online courses and workshops – still mainly virtual – now firmly established. We are seeing more requests for face-to-face training – it is great to reacquire with previous connections, and make new friends for our network, post-pandemic.

Our challenge going forward is to stay close to our mission and grow – championing journalistic integrity and supporting journalists and journalism – because *journalism matters*. It has been a delight to join the team and I am grateful for their generous welcome and endless patience as I got to grips with the new brief.

Our network is growing and, as we go in to our 60th birthday year, we are excited about the opportunities ahead.

**Caro Kriel, chief executive,  
Thomson Foundation**

**“Having a network to draw on for support, knowledge and expertise is vital along this journey – as more than 20 years in the news business taught me”**



**“This pioneering project in Kenya aims to build networks among women journalists, address gender disparities within the media and give women journalists the confidence to go for senior roles”**

women journalists with the right skills to take up senior positions,” she says. “Through the Bettina Fund mentorship programme, we hope our colleagues will take the lessons we learned and avoid our mistakes, to get to the top faster and better prepared.”

One of her mentees was Hellen Shikanda, a health and science reporter with the Nation Media Group.

“Now I believe that leaders can be shaped,” she says. “I have realised that sometimes it takes close interaction with a leader to be one.”

**Bettina Fund core aims:**

- ✦ Empower women to attain senior media management positions
- ✦ Raise awareness of gender disparities in Kenyan media management
- ✦ Create mentors to help other women journalists to senior roles
- ✦ Build a sustainable network of women journalists

Women remain under-represented in media organisations in Kenya – especially in leadership roles, with only eight per cent of media houses led by women. Women make up 61 per cent of Kenya’s journalism graduates but comprise only 42 per cent of journalists in newsrooms.

The women participating in the programmes were drawn from different areas of Kenyan media; the traditional legacy platforms of print and broadcast to digital start-ups.

Its virtual nature caused by restrictions due to the pandemic benefitted journalists based outside the capital, Nairobi. Travel costs and time often prohibit people travelling for face-to-face training but because every activity had to be done

online, Thomson Foundation was able to recruit participants from across Kenya with all women enjoying access to the same benefits.

The mentoring was supplemented with webinars led by high-profile women from the media industry and a full programme of online courses on our Journalism Now e-learning platform.

Florence Chepkorir, news editor from Nakuru – a city north-west of Nairobi in the Great Rift Valley was a mentee.

“Getting to interact with other women journalists helped me to appreciate the fact that I am not the only one facing challenges specific to women,” she says.

The aim going forward is to extend the programme to other countries in East Africa and then to replicate it in other parts of the world.

**The Bettina Fund**

There could be no better way to celebrate the memory of our colleague and director of development, Bettina Peters, than in this project to build confidence in a community of talented women journalists in Kenya. It goes to the heart of what she fought for tirelessly during her lifetime – a strong, fearless and effective media where talent is recognised and rewarded regardless of gender.

**Networks make the dream work**

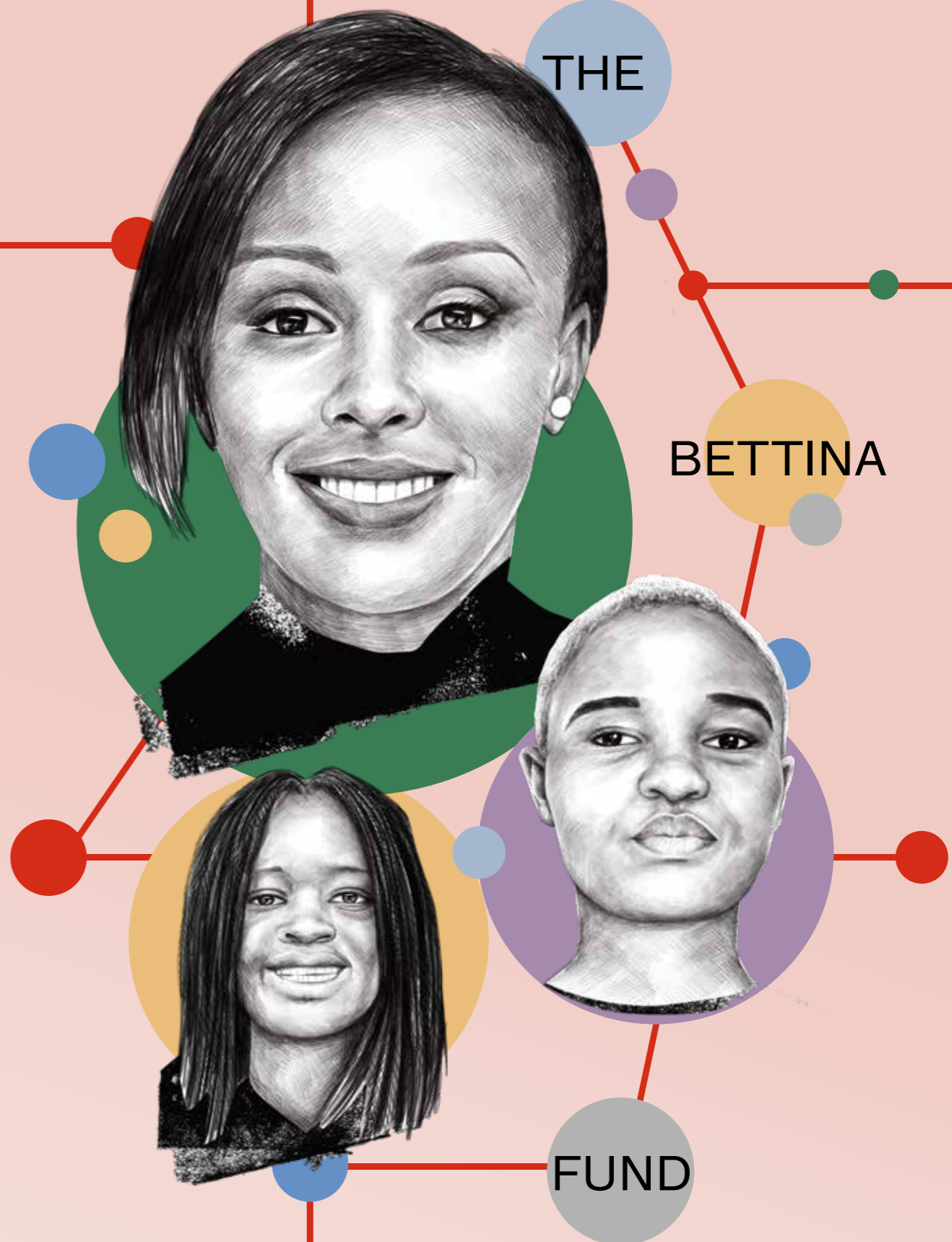
**T**his pioneering project with the Kenyan media aims to build networks among women journalists, address conspicuous gender disparities within the media and give aspiring women journalists the confidence to go for senior roles with the active support of women in journalism who have already made their mark.

In collaboration with our Kenyan partner – Baraza Media Lab – eleven talented women journalists joined the Bettina Fund programme working with a team of mentors, all high-profile women managers, entrepreneurs or senior journalists.

In their evaluation of the programme, mentees and mentors rated it extremely highly with both saying they had gained from the relationships. Their only significant criticism was that they would have liked it to be longer!

Pamela Makotsi Sittoni, the first woman to become executive and managing editor of the Daily Nation at the Nation Media Group was one of the mentors.

“The only way to challenge the gender disparity in media leadership is by creating a pipeline of





# Correcting the gender imbalance in media



# T

here is an urgent need to address gender discrimination against women in Central Europe and more fairly reflect women's interests and priorities in the media, a report commissioned by Thomson Foundation has found.

The report focuses on Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia and explores the underrepresentation of women across the media – especially in senior positions – and the misogyny and sexual harassment which women are still finding on a regular basis within the industry. Analysis of media content is a growing field of research for Thomson Foundation as we seek to use our expertise and insight of the global media landscape to foster a better understanding of sensitive and, often, controversial issues.

The gender analysis of the media landscape in Central Europe was commissioned to create a framework to help media outlets build strategies that put gender equality at the core of their thinking – not only with regard to how they

manage their staff, but also about how these topics influence their content and businesses.

The research should help them develop a more coherent approach to gender-related issues and women's rights.

It will also contribute to the project goal of making local media more sustainable as it taps into an underserved audience with relevant content.

As a measure of what needs to be addressed, one anonymous interviewee for the report said: "My boss was giving massages to female colleagues during a discussion about their reports. He tried once with me. I told him I do not want that. He responded by asking me why I was so sensitive and also asked if I was a lesbian."

One of the report's observations is that sexual harassment experienced in the workplace is often seen as acceptable at a societal level as women have also reported being verbally abused by sources and interview subjects, particularly by high-profile public figures.

### Recommendations:

- Better childcare facilities in media houses to enable women to return to work
- More equal distribution of maternity and paternity leave for employees
- Adequate digital safety training
- Protection for whistle-blowers
- Content and subject-related media monitoring with regular audits of gender-sensitive content
- Further research into gender-related issues

Women journalists also reported an increase in online abuse, which included threats of both physical and sexual violence, gendered hate speech, bullying, trolling and the sharing of private information and synthetically generated videos.

**"Many journalists still don't think of approaching female experts on stories about politics"**

The lack of women's voices in the media was cited as a negative in particular in relation to reporting on serious topics which require specific expertise like politics.

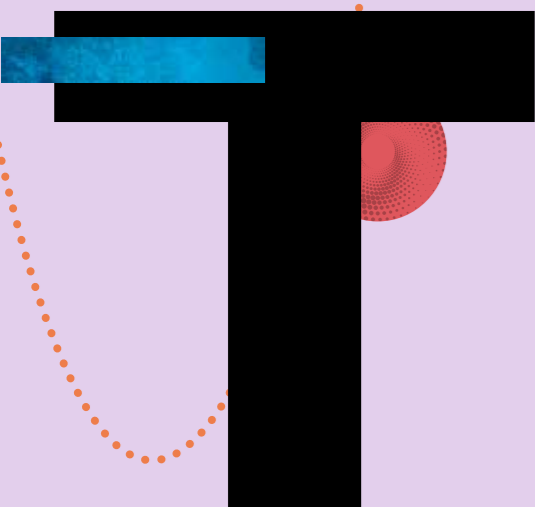
"Many journalists still don't think of approaching female experts on stories about politics, security, technology or the economy and some media still consider certain sections to be more stereotyped – such as lifestyle, cars and tech or business," said one journalist and activist.

This report concludes that it is very challenging for media outlets to serve the interests of their female audience effectively, without addressing the gender and cultural issues in their own newsrooms, in the way that they cover topics, use sources and experts.

By acting on these recommendations, they will positively address gender imbalance in their midst, and see the benefits in their audience growth.



## Building citizens'



Success in our training programmes is measured in many ways but one of the most rewarding is reading or watching powerful stories produced by young journalists who have benefitted from our courses.

Building 'Citizen's Trust' in the Western Balkans media was a project aimed at young and mid-career journalists that introduced them to the latest techniques in multiplatform storytelling and mobile journalism.

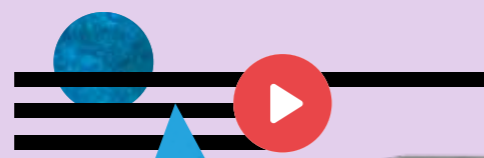
Designed for local and regional media where resources can be scarce, the training encouraged journalists to broaden their skills to produce varied content, engaging and growing the audience for their organisations' news content as a result.

Restrictions resulting from the pandemic meant the programme was delivered virtually through online workshops and 12 online self-paced courses – six for mobile journalism and six on adapting content for multiple platforms produced in three Balkan languages.

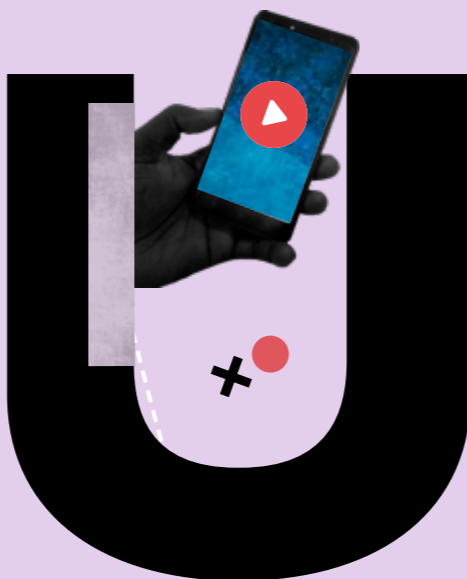


Trainer Aleksander Manasiev provided mentoring and support: "Personally, I think the project will have a long-lasting effect," he says. "We have tried and succeeded to a great extent in changing the way of thinking of many individuals."

"By changing the mindset and creatively pushing them out of their comfort zone, we managed to strengthen the self-confidence of many journalists."



"By changing the mindset and creatively pushing them out of their comfort zone, we managed to strengthen the self-confidence of many journalists"



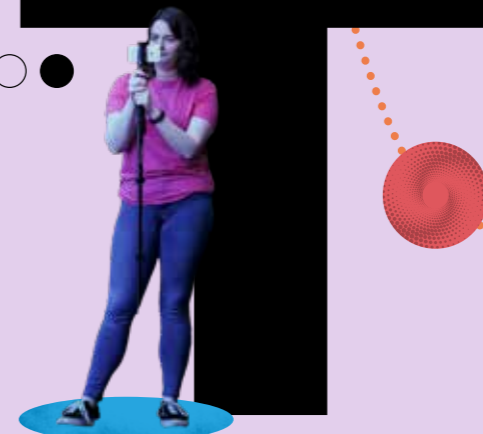
## Success stories

**Darko Bulatovic** works for the radio and television station RTCG, Montenegro. One of the stories he produced following the training turned into an online hit, viewed 1.6 million times in a country with a population of 630,000.

It features a six-year-old Roma girl who was given a home along with her older sister and two brothers by Slobodan Stanojevic. They had met at a centre for human trafficking in Niksic in Montenegro where 55-year-old Slobodan was working as a security guard. The children's father had been jailed for forcing them to beg on the streets. Slobodan has since fostered them and they have become a family.

According to Darko, the story has had an overwhelmingly positive impact by opening discussions about positive values in a society free of prejudice.

After attending the mobile journalism workshop, Darko became the first journalist at his television station to start filming stories on his smartphone. In May 2021, he took part in a course for adapting content for multiple platforms which improved the visual quality of his stories as well as increasing his audience reach.



After completing the courses, he is now editor of the correspondents' department and in that role has been able to pass on the skills he had learnt to other journalists who are now encouraged to film stories on their phones and engage with their audience through social media channels and the news website.

Serbian journalist **Sofija Babovic** produced a remarkable story on her smartphone after completing the workshop and course on mobile journalism. She chronicled the huge challenges faced by a pregnant woman with disabilities. Her report was seen by viewers across Poland and had such an impact that it led to an agreement with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to finance specialist medical equipment to make it easier for expectant mothers with disabilities to be examined.

Sofija works in Krusevac as a correspondent for Novosti, a media company based in Belgrade that publishes a high-circulation daily newspaper – Vecernje Novosti – and a range of periodicals.

She focuses predominantly on trauma-related stories and social issues which feature vulnerable groups. She has received a number of awards for her work on discrimination issues affecting minorities including the "Milan Pantic" National Award for Journalistic Courage, named after a Serbian journalist killed in 2001.



**“The media still maintains a powerful position in our society and there’s so much that can be done by journalists to present a fair, humane perspective of migration and migrants” – Eileen Truax**

**Every year, thousands of refugees flee economic turmoil and political uncertainty in Nicaragua to find a better life in neighbouring Costa Rica. Local experts say this has led to a growing volume of anti-migrant, racist and nationalist rhetoric, stigmatising the new arrivals.**

challenge the anti-migrant rhetoric and generate a better understanding of the economic and political reasons driving migration.

**“Complexities must be taken into account in order to be the bearers of real information”**

That is why it was so important for the Thomson Foundation to try to forge a community of journalists from both countries to encourage more nuanced, human-centric reporting of the plight of refugees in Costa Rica.

Participants said the training programme, which included some migrant Nicaraguan journalists, had opened their eyes to the complexities of the issue: “The training was very useful to get a full grasp of how to comprehensively cover migration from a humanised and a human rights perspective,” said Costa Rican freelance journalist, Sebastian Vargas.

In a project titled “Moving Stories,” a series of three online training programmes funded by the British Embassy in San José, fostered a data-driven but human-first approach to coverage of the issue.

Miguel Valverde from Costa Rica’s Canal Altavisión adds: “From a journalistic point of view, it helps us a lot to be able to deal with such a broad topic as migration, which has complexities that must be taken into account in order to be the bearers of real information.”

Although there has been a steady influx of migrants from other countries including Haiti, Cuba and Venezuela, three quarters of all migrants living in Costa Rica started their journey in Nicaragua.

Thomson Foundation data journalism trainer Ximena Villagran says including some women who were themselves Nicaraguan journalists living in Costa Rica enriched the conversations during the course and helped participants find new angles and different approaches to the migration story.

With the support of a local publication in Costa Rica – La Voz de Guanacaste – journalists and civil society representatives worked together to find new tools and resources to try to change the “them versus us” migration narrative coming from the political arena.

Lead trainer Eileen Truax who specialises in reporting on migrant issues writes: “The media still maintains a powerful position in our society and there’s so much that can be done by journalists to present a fair, humane perspective of migration and migrants.”

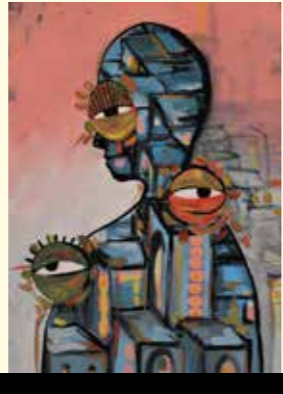
She also called on the international media – especially those based in Costa Rica – to



**Cross**

**borders**





# R

Reem Al Jeally, a 23-year-old Khartoum-based visual artist and curator, is one of a pioneering band of creatives in Sudan promoting social change through art. Her stunning street images can be seen across the capital city.

She joined a Thomson Media training session for digital media entrepreneurs, led by photography trainer Glenn Edwards and social media trainer Derek Ivens. There were two groups – one in Khartoum and the other in Darfur and formed part of NEW SPACES Media Lab, funded by the German government and run by Goethe-Institut in Sudan.

Reem, who originally trained as an architect, produced street art depicting women's bravery during the revolution in 2019. She has since been enriching the art scene not just with her own vividly painted canvases but by supporting other emerging female creatives through her art platform, Bait Al Nisa ('House of Females'), which she set up in July 2020.

"The art scene, while changing, is still mostly made up of men," she says.

"So I wanted to create a space for prospective, self-taught female artists to grow together, for their talents to be showcased and for the arts to be truly open to all.

"The events of 25th October [when the country's armed forces launched a military coup] have definitely slowed down the momentum of the booming cultural scene we witnessed in Khartoum during the transitional period. However, we are more persistent now than ever to keep working and try to build a foundation to the country we imagine."

Reem chose to join the training to learn how to promote her art on social media platforms and help others to do the same, and learn new skills in photography.

"Led by Glenn, the training has offered me a chance to pursue a short photography and storytelling project about Sudanese toub designers," says Reem. "A method and lessons that I have recently used to form a story around another part of the Sudanese female community that will be part of a book.

"Female characters are important to my work, so I have chosen to work with Sudanese women who are toub designers and who are modernising and reimagining the traditional garment using paint and colour. I want to capture these young designers in their own environment and add another dimension to my creative work. I also want to continue showcasing the intensity of women and what they are capable of."



"Female characters are important to my work"

"These are my musings into identity and belonging"

Reem Al Jeally  
"I want to showcase the intensity of women"

"Eyes are a portal to a person's mind"

"I want to create a space for female artists to grow"

# Change makers



**“In her home studio in Khartoum, visual artist Maab Tajualdin creates paintings through which she advocates for women’s empowerment, justice and the right for freedom of speech”**

—Reem Al Jeally

Trainer Glenn set the trainees the challenge of producing images around social change in Sudan and Reem chose to do a series of portraits of a fellow artist and social activist, Maab Tajualdin, who creates new designs for the traditional toub dress as well as pursuing her own painting.

“My time with the Thomson Media sessions has allowed me to explore the world of photos in a way that is new to me. I have always been connected to visual elements in almost everything that I do, but never have I thought I would be the one to pick up a camera and take a photo.

“Maab is trying to discover a new means to support females in Sudan as she delves into fashion while offering other women an opportunity to create and make a living from their passions,” says Reem. “Maab also creates paintings through which she advocates for women’s empowerment, justice and the right for freedom of speech.”

Glenn says: “Reem Al Jeally’s portrait of Maab Tajualdin is to me stunning and informative at the same time. Reem has used her own artistic skills in creating a simple but well composed image but its strength is in its lighting. She’s thought clearly about how to seat the subject and position the light to make this atmospheric.

“This is a pose of strength and confidence showing women in Sudan that everything is possible. It is a portrait that would sit well on the page of any magazine in the world and I really hope Reem continues with this as a portrait project in the future.”

**“Rawia’s picture of wall art in Khartoum literally bounced off the screen with its colour and vibrancy. I see a group of women strong and together yet standing behind a person struggling to eke out a living selling tea and coffee” – Glenn Edwards**



## **Mohammed Zakaria captures a traditional show of a Kunin (Twareg) tribe.**

**Rawia Alhaj** is a director, screenwriter, editor and graffiti designer who is active in women’s issues. She wants to harness the training to use social media to change young people’s perceptions, influence their thinking on social issues, and hopes to cascade her skills.

Glenn says: “Rawia’s picture of wall art in Khartoum literally bounced off the screen with its colour and vibrancy. It is from a series of wall art images and this was the only one that included people. This is a street cafe but I could have chosen any of her other images with wall art becoming a political tool.

“We can all read an image in different ways but I see a group of women strong and together yet standing behind a person struggling to eke out a living selling tea and coffee. I like this image because it is telling a story to me, and storytelling is the beauty of photography.”

**Mohammed Zakaria** is a founding partner of Dar Media for artistic production, a photographer and film director. He is interested in creating and publishing content around issues like peace and racism. He’s currently working on a video series “Darfur in 3 Minutes” and will use his training to enhance his skills.

Glenn says: “A Kunin Twareg tribal dance was the subject for Mohamed Zakaria. The culture of the nomads was shown in an all-action picture with the colour of the background emphasised by the plain white costume of the dancer.

“It again creates a story but it is challenging and asks questions I don’t know the answer to – I like that. Why is the crowd only women and children? A very well taken image.”



**Hassan Mohamed** is an engineering graduate turned graphic editor who dreams of becoming a social media influencer one day to promote the diverse cultures of Sudan. His images were around the inauguration of the Governor General of the region.

Glenn says: "We have seen portrait, social and cultural documentary in the other pictures but this image by Hassan Mohamed is of a more political nature. The crowd is moving to an inauguration of a regional Governor General.

"When this was taken, Sudan was in a more stable political situation but it has again become dangerous. I wonder if this would be allowed in these times. The beauty of photography is capturing history and showing what could be. Let's hope."



**"What is interesting is it's man versus woman with the woman throwing the man. An unusual situation of mixed-sex combat but becoming more common in judo in Sudan and more evidence that culture is slowly changing with women's empowerment becoming stronger"** – Glenn Edwards

**Wadj** joined the training to learn how to use social media to promote her online platforms which celebrate judo in Sudan. She qualified as a pharmacist but is now concentrating on becoming an online entrepreneur. She produced a set of striking images of mixed-sex judo – breaking new frontiers in Sudan where women are not encouraged to participate in sport.

Glenn says: "Using studio lights, she created a striking action picture. What is interesting is it's man versus woman with the woman throwing the man. An unusual situation of mixed-sex combat but becoming more common in judo in Sudan and more evidence that culture is slowly changing with women's empowerment becoming stronger."





## Pakistan Breaking biases

**Helping media organisations become financially sustainable, reaching new audiences and monetising content, are key aims of the Thomson Foundation. In two very different programmes – one in the Western Balkans and one in a remote area of Pakistan – we are working to achieve both these goals.**

Valley Voices brings together a group of women from five districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, to train them in broadcast and digital journalism. The aim is to address the under-representation of women in local media thereby increasing coverage of issues which would be of interest to women in the community and consequently, to grow revenue and ensure long-term sustainability.

Working with Tribal News Network (TNN), a pioneering radio and online news platform based in Peshawar, trainers from the Thomson Foundation have encouraged a group of women to take up a job that, for social and cultural reasons, they can find challenging to achieve. TNN now says they have a much greater and more inclusive workforce and audience.

The second project in the Western Balkans (see page 27) is designed to help media organisations become financially secure by exploiting access to social media and new revenue streams. This is particularly important for independent media so they could promote accurate and unbiased reporting in a media landscape dominated by money and politics.

**Said Nazir, executive director of the Tribal News Network, Peshawar**

**What was the initial inspiration for the programme?**

We work in a male-dominated society where media is male orientated and women are ignored by local and national media in their day-to-day coverage. Women were also reluctant to take up journalism because local culture discourages them mixing with men and their families often oppose the idea of women going into journalism.

**How well did it work in practice?**

Engaging women was a challenging task. Most of them were students of journalism at universities where they had greater freedom of movement. In the beginning, they were reluctant to work in the field but with the motivation and support of TNN women editors and the Thomson Foundation, they were able to engage.

**How did you ensure sustainability?**

During my own training with Thomson, I realised that as well as increasing diversity in local media, we could reach a new audience of women and so increase our revenue from online and radio. TNN's audience is growing fast on both but we're now also earning income from Facebook.

**Did it help build a community?**

We now have far more engaging and inclusive content that covers issues of interest to men and women. We also have female reporters in districts where before there were none. That gives us access to women and their stories – half the population who were previously ignored.

**Can you quantify the change?**

TNN's online audience especially on Facebook increased by 400 per cent in six months from June to December 2021. The number of women following us on Facebook has increased from five to eight per cent in the same period.

**How has that helped your sustainability?**

Our Facebook page was monetised for the first time in November 2021 and is among the few pages which have been monetised in Pakistan because we have created and shared original and engaging content. Our staff also have an understanding about community guidelines and monetisation having had different training programmes covering online revenue generation.

**What are the lasting benefits of the programme?**

The most successful aspect of the project is that retention rates are high and those women journalists are inspiring other women to take up journalism. We are receiving more and more applications from women and it has really built our credibility and reputation for engaging and training female journalists.

*This project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office through ifa (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations), as part of the zivik funding programme.*

**“We now have female reporters in districts where before there were none”**



**Sidra Ayan is from a conservative Pashtun family in the Mardan district of northwest Pakistan and she faced considerable barriers in her bid to become a journalist from inside and outside her community. She has now achieved her ambition.**

“Opting for journalism was my own decision,” says Sidra. “My motivation was to serve people – especially women – with the power of my pen and journalism. My parents wanted me to become a doctor. However, despite all the differences, I chose journalism because journalism was no longer a hobby but a necessity.”

As the first girl in her family and village to go into the media, she believes she was criticised behind her back though no one said anything to her face. Nonetheless, she met many difficulties enrolling in the school of journalism. Objections came from teachers and college friends who thought she shouldn't go into a male-dominated profession.

“I endured so much that my mental health was affected but I did not give up,” Sidra says defiantly. “I thought now I had stepped into this field I could not go back as this was my future. Some people even said that my father was so strict I couldn't leave the house without a burqa, but here I am wondering what a burqa has to do with my field. Can't a journalist wear a burqa?”

She says that she is increasingly accepted in her role and has been highly praised for her work at TNN. The organisation has encouraged her work highlighting issues of oppressed and marginalised groups – especially women. She says even her strict brother supports her work.

“I like the quote that behind every successful man there is a woman and behind every successful woman there is a supportive father or husband. In my case it's a bit different,” she concludes. “I would say that behind my success is TNN, my father and my fiancé, without whom all this would not have been possible.”

**“Here I am wondering what a burqa has to do with my field. Can't a journalist wear a burqa?”**

## Western Balkans **Building a secure future for local journalism**

**“What motivates us the most and the reason we are happy to be part of this project is the dedication of the people,” says Suzana Nikolikj, editor in chief of KumanovoNews.**

The independent news outlet in North Macedonia is a beneficiary of our Media4All programme in the Western Balkans, which runs until June 2022.

Operating across six countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia – it aims to strengthen the business capacity and audience engagement of independent media organisations.

Focusing exclusively on local and regional media organisations that have limited resources, there is evidence that the programme has persuaded them to become more market and business-oriented and significantly enhanced their skills and capacity to operate sustainably.

It has proved transformational for KumanovoNews. This small news portal has managed to increase and expand its media production and grown its multimedia content. In 2021, it produced 1,800 short news stories, 1,900 photographs and 11 video stories. It also increased revenue by working on 64 commercials and 17 local advertising campaigns.

Editor in chief Suzana cites the growing audience for multimedia stories as a big achievement.

“The latest story about a talented kid who is only six-years-old and is already a national champion in gymnastics has had more than 26,000 views on our Facebook page,” she says. “That makes us happy and motivates us to work even more in the future.”

With the support of Thomson Foundation mentors, she says they have developed fresh content, created a marketing strategy, developed a new website and hired new staff. As a result, daily readership has increased by 20 per cent. “I wish all small media outlets could get into this situation,” says Suzana. “So they can feel how it is to work with the support of true professionals and experts who really know their job.”

Implemented by a consortium consisting of the British Council, Thomson Foundation, the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) and the UK management consultancy INTRAC, the Media4All programme is working with 170 media outlets, of which 85 receive grants overseen by the foundation.

Magiostac is an all-female media outlet based in Subotica, Serbia. Established by two journalists in 2015, it specialises in well-researched, fact-based stories not covered by other news media organisations locally. With the support of the programme, it recruited two more women who bring an expanded set of skills and knowledge to the team.

Magiostac project co-ordinator Natalija Jakovljevic explains: “We were founded because there was a need for free media in Subotica. There was no space where people could articulate their needs in a free, independent way – a free media away from local authorities, political parties and other figures.”

“We try not to publish news pieces which only scratch the surface, she adds. “Instead, we try to go deeper to find the reasons, to have multiple sources and to analyse an issue from several different angles. We need readers but not at the expense of quality.”

**80%**

of supported media increased their digital presence

**76%**

of supported media grew their audience

**63%**

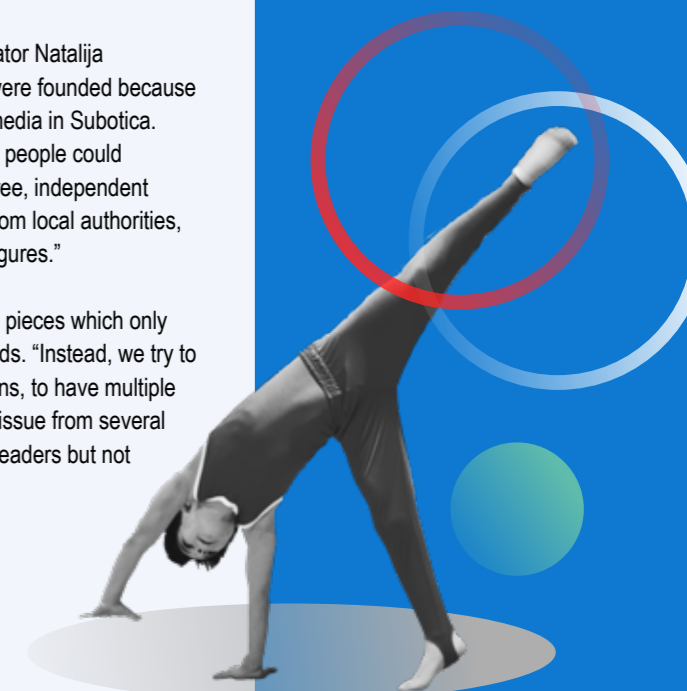
increased their multimedia production

**58%**

employed more staff members

**54%**

introduced new products and services



“Through the magic of audio, I entered new worlds”

## ALL

“In the weeks spent writing this guide, I entered Dolly Parton’s Tennessee cabin, I drove around the streets of Johannesburg and I walked inside a prison cell in California, and yet I never left home,” says Cath Mackie, Thomson Foundation editorial associate and course leader. “Through the magic of audio, I entered new worlds. Podcasting enables storytelling like no other medium and hopefully now more journalists will learn how to create the perfect podcast.”

In the first course, “Prepping the Big Idea” we explain the critical role of proper planning. Without proper preparation you will struggle to get through a commissioning editor’s door. Using a mixture of interactive exercises, video inserts from our experts and best practice guidance, those taking the course learn how best to present their “Big Idea”, how to identify the right audience and how to choose the right podcast format.

The second course “Making It” is a down to earth practical guide covering many of the challenges facing a would-be podcaster. It includes advice on how to understand audio and how to record, edit and promote your podcast.

The BBC’s north of England correspondent Nick Garnett shares tips on getting the best out of your smartphone when recording audio. Award-winning podcaster Paul McNally, who co-founded South African podcast production company Volume, gives ideas on monetising output.

## WE’RE

**Responding to a global boom in podcasts with more than two million worldwide, we developed a comprehensive online learning guide to make sure the best podcasts really connect with their audience and their creators get noticed.**

Working with award-winning podcasters and journalists from the UK, India, Kenya, Australia and South Africa, Thomson Foundation created a truly global and expert-led guide to best practice.

Consisting of two courses, the guide uses examples from some of the best podcasts currently available along with tips and advice from senior journalists around the world on how to make your podcast truly outstanding.

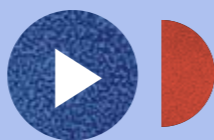
## EARS

Other experts include John Shields who launched Checks and Balance, a weekly podcast on American politics for the Economist magazine and Padma Priya, editorial lead at Suno India podcasting house.

Both courses were created with guidance from former BBC journalist Dr Louisa Lim who is now senior lecturer at the Centre for Advancing Journalism at the University of Melbourne in Australia. It has already been included in reading lists at UK universities and as part of the curriculum for journalists in Argentina.

“Hopefully, using this course you will be able to develop your voice, find it, get it out there,” said Dr Lim. “I think it can be incredibly powerful... the opportunity to really find your own voice.”

The Guide has been adapted to include relevant and language-specific case studies and has been translated into Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Polish with more to follow.





**The crisis in Ukraine has again focused world attention on the plight of refugees and mass migration. It has also challenged journalists to report on the issue in a way that reflects the nuances of the situation and the importance of humanising and contextualising the story.**

Few Journalists have shown a greater insight or determination to give an accurate representation of the reality of life as a displaced person than **Preethi Nallu**. Her documentary "Norway's Afghan Sons" was co-funded by the Thomson Foundation and broadcast on Al Jazeera.

In it, she documents the complex realities that influence the migration decisions of young Afghans who are fleeing conflict, instability, destitution and persecution. It is a story she followed over a number of years and says that since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August 2021, migration flows have surged.

"Without the grant from Thomson Foundation, I would not have been able to start working on this film which started as only four minutes but gradually transformed into a 40 minute documentary spanning four countries – Norway, Spain, France and Afghanistan – over a period of 18 months," says Preethi. "For independent journalists like me, grants and recognition such as the Migration Media Award provide crucial incentives to continue building thematic storytelling with greater depth and wider reach."

Preethi feels a personal commitment to the issue as someone born in Iran, raised in India and educated in the USA and Europe. She says a core purpose of her reporting has been to counter the mainstream media narratives that portray migration as a deviation from the norm.

She was one of a number of journalists whose work on the issue of refugees was recognised through the OPEN Media Hub (OMH) – an EU-funded initiative for which the Thomson Foundation was the leading implementer.

David Quin, managing director – development for

the foundation says: "We have acknowledged the best and often bravest in migration coverage from across the spectrum. Journalists covering not just crisis but context, human faces behind statistics, challenges to communities."

**Jumana Saadeh**, a Palestinian living in Jordan, was another of the 41 journalists recognised by OMH for their outstanding contributions.

In her latest piece entitled "No Kids Land, No Mothers Either" she highlights the huge obstacles faced by refugee families trying to reunite.

Her film features a Syrian mother who had to leave her two children behind in Lebanon without a guardian to seek asylum in Sweden. Because her eldest turned 18 during the process, he was denied the right to be reunited with his mother.

"If you're fortunate enough not to be part of the oppressed population, then you need to be part of those that defend them," says Jumana. "We need to feel engaged and not disconnected from the people around us."

Jumana's work was featured as part of our coverage for World Refugee Day in 2021 alongside that of **Raqib Naik**, a Kashmir-based multimedia journalist.

He hopes his work will help to increase understanding about mass migration and widen the conversation about what it is to be a refugee. Using careful questioning to avoid causing people further trauma is important, he says, as well as the need to be sensitive to the terminology journalists use so as not to reinforce stereotypes.

"A refugee story requires a more sensitive treatment to other stories," says Raqib. "When I go out to report on them, I try to imagine how I would cover them if they were my own family."

In a report on Rohingya refugees in India, he charts the rise of negative sentiment and violence towards the minority group. While he believes true sanctuary is still only a remote prospect, he hopes his reporting will go some way to countering hostility towards them.

**"A core purpose of my storytelling is to counter the mainstream media narratives that portray migration as a deviation from the norm" –**

**Preethi Nallu**

# Inv's'ble



# Stories from Afghanistan

Preethi documents the complex realities that influence the migration decisions of young Afghans who are fleeing conflict, instability, destitution and persecution. It's a story she has followed over a number of years.

Images: Preethi Nallu



"I have used my film as an educational tool to look at the current situation in Afghanistan – and how all of us should be aiding the short and long-term recovery of Afghans"



"I highlight the importance of the bonds that are forged between hosts and asylum seekers early into their arrival in a country"





Climate change dominated the news agenda at the end of 2021 as political leaders and delegates descended on Glasgow for COP26.

But it was the recognition that the environmental issues that threaten the health of our planet are now part of every journalist's beat that led to the development of our package of online courses on reporting on the environment.

"It's becoming clearer every day that environmental journalism is no longer a specialism," says Thomson Foundation's editorial associate Cath Mackie. "From sports reporting to fashion, the environment touches every corner of the newsroom."

**"It's becoming clearer every day that environmental journalism is no longer a specialism. From sports reporting to fashion, the environment touches every corner of the newsroom"**

**"We're all environmental journalists now"**

"Understanding that is key for journalists who want to help their audience understand the biggest issues facing the planet," she adds.

Whilst working as a BBC correspondent Cath had become aware of the more extreme changes in the world's weather. The region she covered in the west of the UK was flooded and she realised that what was once an occurrence once in a century was now becoming routine.

The three courses sit under the shared title of Environmental Reporting, Why Local Matters and cover: how to identify reliable sources of information, how to tell the story in an engaging and informed way and how to stay safe when covering environmental issues. Reporting on the environment is considered one of the most

dangerous areas for a journalist to work in. There are often economic and political drivers behind the stories and powerful people have a great deal at stake.

"It is very important that journalists learn how best to tell the story to avoid audience fatigue and disinterest," says Hosam El Nagar, director of innovation and learning at the Thomson Foundation. "They also need to report these stories with authority and in safety."

The courses have been included on a number of university reading lists.

The first, Sources, has been adapted and customised in Spanish for journalists in Latin America. All three will be available in Arabic.



**"It's the need of the hour"**

**"On a cold morning in the early winter of 2019, Shekhar Chauhan reached his small sugarcane farm, only to find it flooded."**

This is the opening sentence of a thoroughly researched and beautifully written piece of journalism that won novice journalist **Monika Mondal** Thomson Foundation's Young Journalist Award (environment) at the annual Foreign Press Association awards.

The 28-year-old grew up in what she describes as one of the poorest, least educated and most unhygienic parts of the Indian capital, New Delhi, and only began her new career as a journalist during the pandemic.

To research her story about the hidden water crisis caused by Indian sugar mills, she travelled to the town of Khatauli in Uttar Pradesh. There she spent two days talking to villagers who said they had become sick because of wastewater released by the largest sugar mill in Asia.

She returned to collect groundwater samples,

check the quality of household supplies and interview company officials and health experts. She describes the results as "shocking" and "stark" and explains how those responsible with protecting the environment and health of the people were turning a blind eye.

"Villagers living in the Uttar Pradesh sugar belt have been bearing the brunt of poorly implemented environmental regulations and water scarcity," she wrote.

Monika's powerful investigation has now formed the basis for a legal case in India's environmental court and officials are carrying out their own independent groundwater testing in Khatauli.

"It's not only the best time to be an environmental journalist, it's also very critical," she says. "It's the need of the hour. The environment needs all of us because we need the environment."

The environmental category of the Young Journalist Award was a one-off award presented to coincide with the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26.

**“I wanted to document what is happening in society in a more contextualised form”**

It was Malaysian journalist Kai Hui Wong's "persistence in her investigations" which led her to reveal abuses of power which convinced the judges that she should win the 2021 Thomson Foundation Young Journalist Award.

Her outstanding portfolio included two stories exploring the damaging impact on the environment of mining projects and uncovered links to Malaysian royalty. The reports relied heavily on data journalism. Her third story looked at transgender healthcare rights in Malaysia and how this community is being "pushed towards the black market" by the Malaysian health system.

Kai Hui was among 200 young journalists under the age of 30 from 55 countries who submitted entries for this prestigious annual competition.

The daughter of a Malaysian migrant worker who travelled to Singapore every day for work, Kai Hui was educated in the minority Chinese school system in Malaysia. As her school qualifications were not recognised in Malaysia, she went to

study communications and philosophy in Taiwan.

Her first love was documentary filmmaking but finding it difficult to get work as a filmmaker she took the chance to work as a journalist with the independent online news portal – Malaysiakini.

There she was delighted to find that environmental issues were not treated as an isolated or specialist subject but as a core topic to be placed in its social and political context.

As she puts it: "No matter if it is documentary filmmaking or journalism, I think what I have always wanted to pursue is documenting what is happening in our society in a more contextualised form."

Though she says she is instinctively an introvert, she forced herself to go into journalism to "step outside, explore and understand more about our lived reality."

The 2021 Young Journalist Award runners up were Tatiana Pardo Ibarra from Colombia and Mahima Jain from India.

**Kai Hui Wong**



**Mark Knight**

After more than a 25-year association with Thomson Foundation, Mark Knight has stood down as a trustee. During his time, he brought his insight, support and expertise to the foundation and leaves it stronger and better resourced than when he first became, as he put it, an "accidental trustee."

Reflecting on the changes he has seen during his tenure he says: "The biggest change has been the technology and that has changed massively during the pandemic years. Before that, sterling efforts were made but it was the pandemic which supercharged things."

The other great challenge has been that the foundation now faces stiff competition from other organisations – both charitable and commercial. He is confident that the core values remain unchanged and Thomson would continue to stand out for its independence, reputation and track record over 60 years.

He also saluted its ability to respond quickly

and flexibly. "It's a people organisation and the consultants are what the foundation is all about – without them we'd be nothing".

Nigel Baker, who was chief executive for 10 years until 2021, says: "Mark has always cared passionately about the foundation's mission and never stinted in giving his time and wisdom to help it succeed."

"As chief executive, you knew you could always plug into his boundless wisdom gained from a lifetime as a lawyer dealing with complex legal, business and moral issues. But more than that he was a delight to work for – generous of spirit, impish, always open to new ideas but quick to provide the challenging questions which made you think harder and smarter."

Although he was sorry to leave, at 78 he felt it time to leave it to others to take the foundation forward on what he was certain would be a highly productive and creative future, bringing lasting benefits to media around the globe.





Set up by Canadian-born media magnate Lord Thomson in 1962, we have worked in nearly 100 countries since then providing expertise for journalists by journalists with training and digital solutions for business growth.



Through Journalism Now we have developed an online community of more than 24,000 journalists who can share their work and experiences and follow our latest innovations in online learning.

Low bandwidth is a challenge for journalists in many of the countries where we work. It's crucial our courses are available to all, so a recent innovation in our e-learning offering has been the use of messenger apps. We have developed 32 courses on WhatsApp and Telegram translated into English, Arabic and Russian with more coming online in 2022 and new languages added.

Illustrations: Eleanor Shakespeare

## High quality skills-based training has been at the core of what we do.

We have trained more than 11,000 journalists in the past five years alone. We value our continued connections with our alumni. Many have gone on to take leading roles in media organisations, others have won awards for their investigations, some have become trainers and teachers of media and most are innovators.



Our network is our strength. We link media organisations creating a dynamic community to share solutions when and where it matters. Many of the media outlets within this network have been beneficiaries of the 1,000 grants we have administered over the past five years.

Much has changed since the foundation was established in an era of typewriters and printed newspapers. Now, as it was 60 years ago, our work remains critical to support quality, independent journalism that tells stories vital to the public interest.

*Because journalism matters.*

# Why journalism matters

In 2022, we celebrate 60 years of championing journalistic integrity.



## The arrival of the Information Age enabled us to strengthen and grow our network.

We have been able to reach journalists living in isolated regions, are time-poor or want to learn at their own pace through training courses on our digital platforms.

We offer 177 courses on our e-learning platform Journalism Now in 17 languages.



# Turning



## 2022 marks 60 years since Canadian-born media magnate Lord Thomson of Fleet set up the Thomson Foundation.

Six decades of championing journalistic integrity supporting both individual journalists and media organisations built on fair, independent and trusted journalism.

Originally focusing on emerging economies, we have worked in over 100 countries and now embrace a blended approach to our training, with face-to-face training combined with our innovative online courses, even delivered over messaging apps. Over 60 years, the business of journalism has changed dramatically – and so have we. We are now firmly focused on working with media organisations to navigate the challenges of the digital world.

The network of journalists we have trained grows and strengthens and many now support us with programmes in their regions.

This year, we celebrate ten years working in Sudan with our latest project designed to support journalists and civil society organisations (CSOs) covering the Sudanese transition to democracy. Our network elsewhere in Africa is supporting other programmes, such as The Bettina Fund that aims to address the lack of women in leading roles in the media and courses that look to change the narrative in the news media to a more African-used approach.

Our programme in the Western Balkans gives fantastic business support to media organisations to survive and thrive in the digital world – learning to understand and grow their audiences with relevant content. We continue to support our

network of journalists in Ukraine – in the recent past we have trained more than 1,500 journalists working in cities and towns across the country. Local media is playing a crucial role providing not only real-time life-saving information for their communities in times of crisis but also telling the story to the world.

We look forward to the next 60 years of doing this work – because *journalism matters*.

**“Communication is surely the spine of civilisation”**

– Lord (Roy) Thomson, 1963

**© Thomson Foundation**  
Registered charity: 313750  
46 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1JE  
T +44 (0)20 3440 2440  
[enquiries@thomsonfoundation.org](mailto:enquiries@thomsonfoundation.org)  
[thomsonfoundation.org](http://thomsonfoundation.org)

**© Thomson Media**  
Registriert HBB 188547 B Amtsgericht  
Charlottenburg Berlin  
Brunnenstrasse 3, Mitte, Berlin 10119  
T +49 30 91 47 10 28  
[thomsonmedia.de](http://thomsonmedia.de)