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# Making headlines

Creating positive change in media around the world in 2015

THOMSON FOUNDATION

# New frontiers in media

The Thomson Foundation's vision is to ensure that all people have an honest, factual account of what is really happening in the world.

For more than half a century, the UK-based charity has worked in more than 100 countries to help make that happen — by improving journalism and also by building strong governance and business practices in media organisations around the world.

The Foundation is independent and non-political. It was set up by the Canadian-born media magnate Lord Thomson of Fleet, notable as a pioneer of commercial television in the United Kingdom and as owner of The Times and The Sunday Times.

[www.thomsonfoundation.org](http://www.thomsonfoundation.org)  
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WELCOME

# Chairman's message



“Communication is surely the spine of civilisation. The needs of developing countries are, above all, education and national integration. For both, mass media are all-important weapons”

Roy Thomson, “Winds of Change” speech, 1963



## INTRODUCTION

The Foundation reached a turning point in 2015. We have undertaken more large-scale projects than ever before, with the hope of reaching more journalists and media organisations in need of training and support than in the past.

Half way through the year, we learned that we had been awarded a four-year project by the European Union to support independent media in 17 of its neighbouring countries. It is the biggest contract ever awarded to the Foundation, and we shall lead a team of seven organisations carrying out the work.

Our media capacity building programme in Sudan has now helped to train 500 journalists and media workers since it was launched in 2013. We continue working with the regional media across Ukraine on a long-term programme to help them report sensitively on the plight of nearly two million internally displaced persons.

The change is not just about the big programmes.



During 2015, the trustees agreed to invest in developing digital training tools to allow the Foundation to reach individual journalists striving to improve their knowledge and skills.

With the growth of media across the world, our work is as important as it was when the Foundation was established by Lord Thomson more than 50 years ago.

Whether through a large, funded programme, or through individual online training, the Foundation remains at the frontier of helping media ensure people have an accurate account of what is happening in the world.

**Lord Tom Chandos, chairman  
Thomson Foundation**

COMMENT: NIGEL BAKER

# World headlines



Helping journalists and media workers to report skilfully and responsibly has never been more complex, challenging or important. Social media and digital platforms mean anyone can have a stake in the media.

In such a crowded media world, it remains essential that journalists continue as the standard bearers for validating an accurate account of what is happening in the world, upholding fairness and balance.

At the same time, with so many communication opportunities, it is also crucial that those we train are able to pass on their skills to others.

During 2015, we kept a sharp focus on ensuring that was the case. A priority in our Sudan programme was training of (local) trainers, so new skills could reach remote parts of the country where previously teaching of journalism

had been non-existent (turn to pages 14-15).

You will read that in South Africa and Zimbabwe there has been a “multiplier effect” of mobile journalism skills (pages 18-19) learned by individual journalists with the Thomson Foundation. They have helped to create whole new ventures for media organisations.

In Ukraine, our support for an internet TV channel is helping to build a national and international profile for an independent voice reporting on the effects of the nation’s conflict with Russia (pages 16-17).

The final part of the year was spent planning a new four-year programme — called Media Hub — supporting independent media in 17 countries neighbouring the EU. An important part of this will be training newsroom managers so skills filter down to others, as well as informing >

“With the EU Media Hub project, we’ll build stories that will inform debate in critical areas like migration, energy and terrorism at a time when revealing the real picture has never been harder or mattered more” — Bettina Peters, director of development, Thomson Foundation



cross-border debate on important topics like migration and terrorism (pages 24-25).

The Foundation’s development team, led by Bettina Peters and David Quin, designed the EU-funded project so media managers and journalists from the “Neighbourhood” countries will also be able to learn new skills by spending time in the newsrooms of their counterparts inside the European community.

The explosion of new platforms has put professional media skills at a premium. We remain committed to finding the best ways to ensure they reach as many as possible.

**Nigel Baker, chief executive  
Thomson Foundation**



## SRI LANKA

# Breaking new ground

For the first time since the end of the 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka, Thomson Foundation trainers have been allowed into Jaffna in the Tamil north of the country. But although the region is slowly opening up to the outside world, journalism remains a very dangerous profession.

“Many reporters still feel they are being watched,” says David Quin, Thomson Foundation’s deputy director of development. “They feel they have to self-censor and limit what, and whom, they cover, both in the Tamil and Sinhalese communities.”

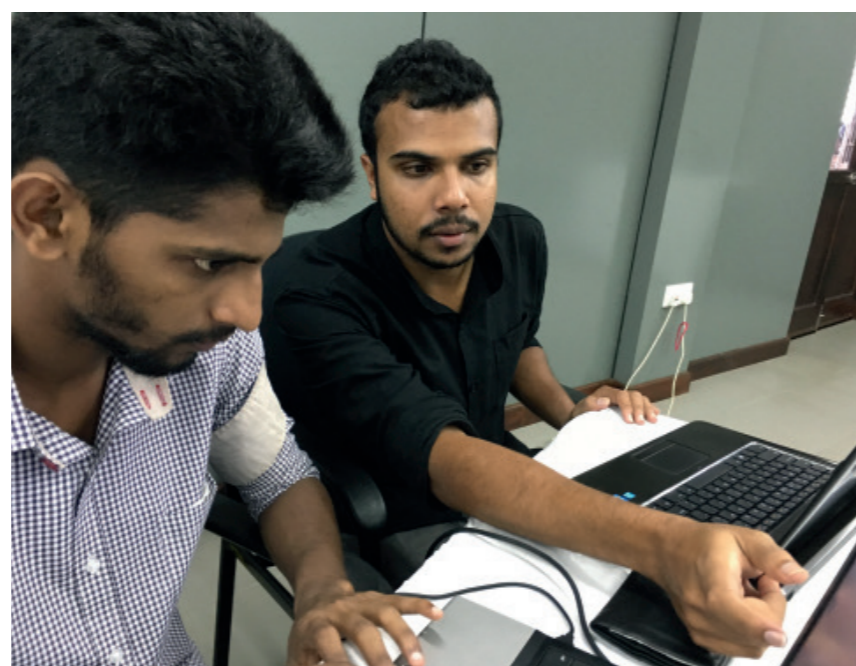
The editor of the Tamil daily newspaper, Uthayan, was more direct. Mr Thevanayagam Premananth says journalists in Jaffna still face danger in making

sure difficult stories are told. The newspaper had been unable to print many stories because of cultural concerns, civil pressures — and because ordinary people were too frightened to verify information uncovered by reporters.

Uthayan has been at the heart of reporting allegations of corruption and war atrocities in the region — which made Mr Premananth a natural choice to speak on investigative reporting at one of Thomson Foundation’s first workshops in Jaffna.

Trainer Deborah Kelly says: “The workshop was aimed at enabling journalists to navigate through the challenges of investigative reporting and then publish their work on any platform.” ▶

“We are here to help reporters push into areas of public concern” — David Quin, deputy director of development, Thomson Foundation



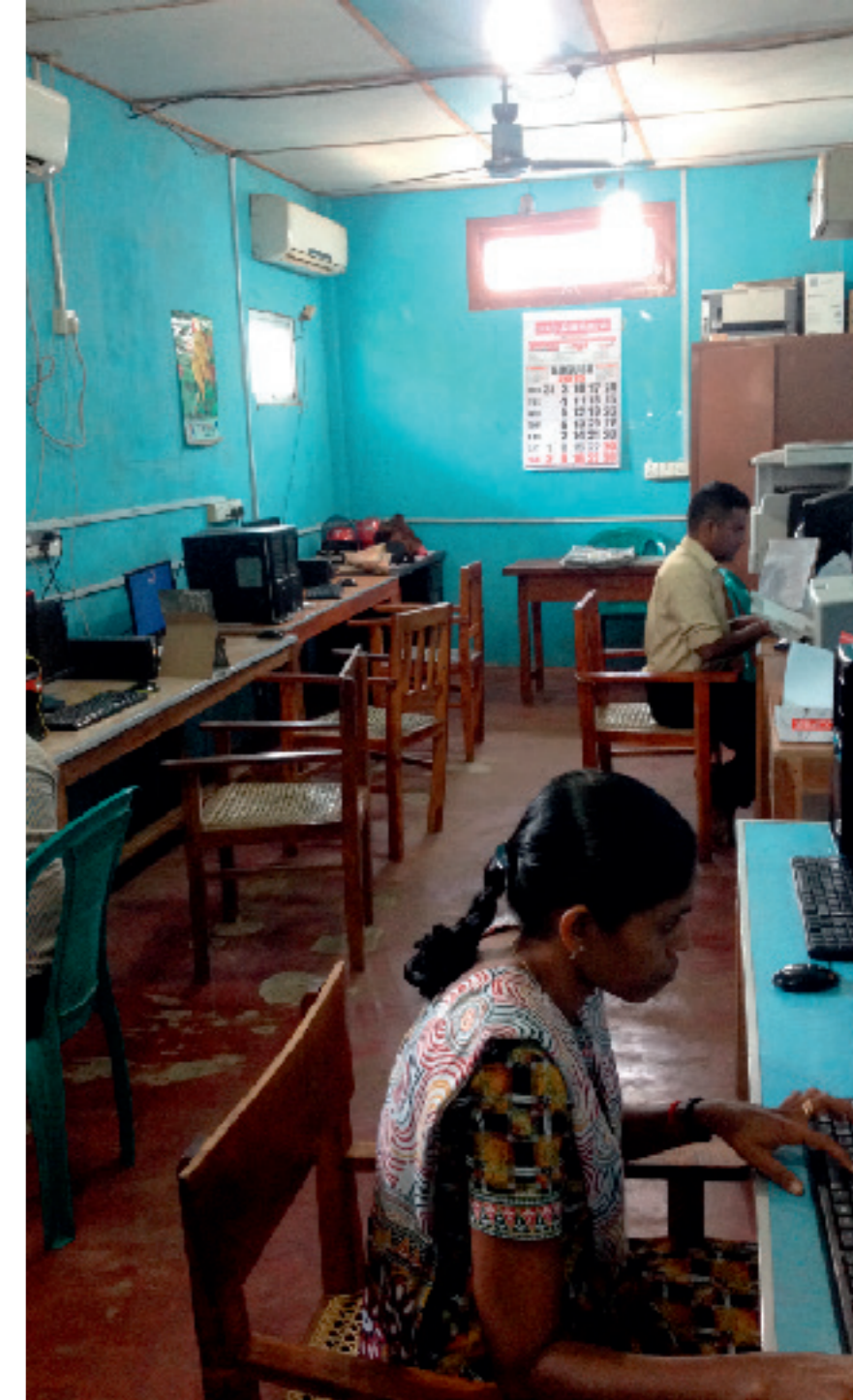
## FUNDER

Our work in Jaffna is part of the Thomson Foundation Inquirer Awards — funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office — which champions investigative journalism in Asia and the Middle East.

During her teaching visits to Jaffna, Deborah discovered that some horrors of the civil war are going unreported because of an acute shortage of women reporters to carry out sensitive interviews. “A lot of heads of families are now women. Their men were killed in the civil war. Only women reporters will ever gain access to these stories of broken families and domestic abuse.

“If we train women, they will be able to give a voice to the women who suffered during the war. We’re looking at ways to fund a project to mentor young women and fill this need.”

David Quin believes the civil war is no longer the only story. “We at the Thomson Foundation are here to encourage a widening of coverage, helping reporters push into areas of public concern such as education, health, consumer rights and everyday abuses of power.”



## BRUNEI

# Supporting new talent

Laughter can go a long way in helping a new generation of broadcasters learn their craft. So it was when four graduate trainees from Radio Television Brunei travelled to the UK for an intensive course in the latest TV and radio production techniques.

During a visit to The One Show at the BBC, they were all dressed in 1970s fluorescent disco wigs and glasses and asked to dance — providing shots to accompany a live interview with DJ Craig Charles. “Going to the BBC was a dream come true,” said Nisa Yakub, “but taking part in the show exceeded all of our expectations. It was great fun, but we also learned a lot from the production team.”

Their intensive six-month course was specially designed by the Thomson Foundation for Radio Television Brunei. The four management trainees were chosen for their potential to lead the next generation of programme makers in Brunei. They studied radio production at Nottingham Trent University and TV production at York University, along with shorter courses from the Thomson Foundation in documentary making, mobile journalism and broadcast leadership skills.

The team’s new-found learning was then put to the test during their work experience at Bradford Community Broadcasting radio station and at the Leeds studios of Britain’s main commercial broadcaster, ITV.

As well as playing extras in The One Show, the Brunei quartet watched ITV’s Good Morning Britain from the studio gallery, met the South East Asia team at BBC World Service and watched as Krishnan Guru-Murthy presented Channel 4 News.

It was a life-changing experience for the four trainees. “Getting to see world-class broadcasting has inspired us,” said Kuni Rahman. “We’ve learned so much. Now we need to take our new skills home and see how we can apply them.”



“We’ve been amazed at how well connected the Thomson Foundation is”  
— Kuni Rahman

“Working with all the professionals meant the world to me and helped me grow as a person”  
— Nisa Yakub



# Cascading new skills



“I have learned to judge stories by who cares about the issue and who is affected” —  
Entisar Omer

Being a journalist in Sudan doesn't get any easier. “It takes courage,” says Thomson Foundation project leader Helen Scott. “Sudan has strict censorship, with reporters and editors still being jailed. There are regular raids on newspapers by the security services. I am proud of how journalists are still willing to tackle tough subjects.”

Over the last three years, 500 journalists have benefited directly from a Thomson Foundation project to build media capacity in Sudan. It is run in partnership with the British Council and funded by the British Embassy.

Alongside the courage, the Thomson Foundation is supporting the passion which drives Sudanese journalists to persevere with their profession — and pass on what they have learned to others.

Entisar Omer, a news editor at National Radio, emerged as a gifted trainer in her own right, ensuring her knowledge cascades down to other radio journalists. She was one of the first people to join the Thomson Foundation programme — and her potential was spotted early on.

She quickly adapted to the idea that news should be about people and their concerns, rather than reflecting official announcements.

“Being part of the media project has given me a new perspective,” said Entisar. “As a news editor, I have learned to judge stories by who cares about

the issue and who is affected. As a trainer, it is important to be able to pass on my skills to make better radio.”

Since undergoing a “training of trainers” programme, she has worked with students at Khartoum University, delivered training in outlying states to those who have never received any before, and inspires staff at National Radio where she continues with her professional role.

Our ‘scholars’ are already helping transform the media landscape in other ways, with Mohamed Ahmed Ali Abdelbagi and Yousif Aljalal playing a central role in relaunching the daily newspaper Al-Saiha, bringing design, content and coverage up to international standards.

“It means we’ve broadened the benefits of the training,” said Mohamed. “We now have concise news items, instead of the huge articles of the past. We focus on what is important, and on meeting the readers’ needs. We no longer write everything the government says.”

They are rewriting reporters’ stories in the new style, and handing them back, so staff will know how to write in future.

“We believe the project is underpinning a strong, well-educated and informed media which can play a crucial part in building the Sudan of the future,” says Helen Scott.

## 500

journalists directly benefiting from project

## 210

scholars trained in journalism and English

## 60

journalists receive specialist skills

## 24

editors embark on study tours





## UKRAINE

# Helping build audiences

**2m**

number of internally displaced persons

**€2.1m**

total value of EU-funded project

**44.9**

population of Ukraine

**1991**

independence from Soviet Union

For most of the world's media, Ukraine became the forgotten conflict during 2015. But not at Hromadske, a new internet TV news channel which was born during the "Euromaidan" uprising in Kiev.

Hromadske began with a handful of professional journalists shooting video on mobile phones during the Independence Square protests in the winter of 2013-14. Their fact-checking journalism became a trusted source of independent news in the midst of violence and political chaos.

It has now grown into an internet news channel broadcasting in Ukrainian, Russian and English. It is funded by advertising, contributions from volunteers and international grants.

Thomson Foundation has been mentoring Hromadske to encourage sensitive reporting of the plight of Ukraine's internally displaced persons (IDPs) — up to two million people who are effectively refugees in their own country, driven out of their homes by fighting in Crimea and the Donbass region.

Producer Oleksandr Morozis said: "We worked on programmes with the Thomson Foundation from concept stage to final product. The detailed and

practical recommendations made by the experts from the Thomson Foundation gave us a much better understanding of how to tell the stories in ways which engage the audience."

Thomson Foundation trainers are also working with journalists from Ukraine's regional newspapers and TV and radio stations.

"Media outlets need to be asking fundamental questions about where this country goes now and how it copes," says David Quin, Thomson Foundation's deputy director of development.

"The regional media are in the front line in covering IDPs and the conflict more generally. As such, these newspapers and TV stations have to get the story right and have to deliver it with sensitivity, impartiality and an eye to the future.

"That is what we are doing here: helping build stories that matter in an ethical way on an issue that can all too quickly get forgotten."

The Thomson Foundation's work in Ukraine began with the support of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but has now grown into a €2million project sponsored by the European Union.

"Experts from the Thomson Foundation gave us a much better understanding of how to tell the stories in ways which engage the audience" — Oleksandr Morozis, Hromadske.tv



## SOUTHERN AFRICA

# Multiplier effect

Mobile journalism is starting a quiet revolution in African media — thanks in large part to graduates of the annual Thomson Foundation summer convergence course.

“That course literally changed my life,” says Viasen Soobramoney of South Africa’s Independent Media Group. “When I returned, I was able to set up Africa’s first wide-scale *mojo* (mobile journalism) internship within the company. Since then, I have trained every single newsroom in our group — that is over 18 titles — and produced multimedia content that is shared across the group on a daily basis. Africa has seen tremendous growth in smartphone usage, so it just made sense to set up a mobile journalism department at Independent Media.”

Then the multiplier effect kicked in, cascading *mojo* and online journalism skills to a new generation of young journalists. Viasen became mentor to an award-winning young reporter at

the Cape Argus, Chelsea Geach (pictured left), who discovered her own gift for *mojo* at the 2015 Thomson Foundation summer course.

“I head up the Cape Town unit of our mobile journalism team,” says Chelsea. “I am taking back skills I learned at Thomson Foundation to share with my colleagues and better lead this exciting new department.”

Another graduate of the 2015 summer course is Boldwill Hungwe (pictured below). He had worked as a photojournalist, but returned home to Zimbabwe after his *mojo* training to become a pioneer of digital journalism there.

“I am currently working for a mobile news-related start-up. The idea is still in its infancy but I do believe mobile is the future. My training at Thomson Foundation has given me the much-needed momentum to face the future of a ‘mobile first’ approach to news.”

“I do believe mobile is the future. My training at Thomson Foundation has given me the much-needed momentum to face the future of a ‘mobile first’ approach to news” — Boldwill Hungwe, Zimbabwe



Watch summer course participant, Chelsea Geach, during her placement at The Guardian: <http://tinyurl.com/qdzfyk>

# And the winner is...



“Encouraging journalists to strive for awards like this improves the quality of stories” —  
Caroline Ariba,  
Uganda

In a remote island called Tisai in eastern Uganda, expectant mothers faced horrific conditions giving birth to their babies. With no road or ferry links to the mainland, and no health clinic of any kind, babies were often born in the open — sometimes prey to attack by wild pigs. Many children were born without any record of their existence.

When award-winning reporter Caroline Ariba uncovered the story, things changed immediately. Political leaders speeded up plans for a bridge link to the mainland. And a privately-funded motor boat now ferries medical staff to the island and takes expectant mothers to hospital.

This exclusive report helped Caroline become Thomson Foundation's Young Journalist of the Year for 2015 at the UK's Foreign Press Association Awards.

Along with the two other finalists — from Nigeria and India — she shares a professional passion for giving a voice to poor and forgotten people on the margins of society.

“It's tough being a journalist in circumstances like that,” said Caroline. “So when you receive international acclaim with an award like this, it makes you feel it's worth it. Encouraging journalists to strive for awards like this improves the quality of stories.” ▶



Fisayo Soyombo, editor of The Cable newspaper in Nigeria, made the Young Journalist awards shortlist with two reports on the plight of poor families in Liberia who lost everything in the Ebola outbreak.

Journalism is not just a profession, he believes, but a “vital instrument for enhancing and propagating democracy, as well as serving humanity, particularly the downtrodden.”

And the third finalist, Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava, of the Hindustan Times, wrote about the suicide of hundreds of poor farmers in the western state of Maharashtra.

He also investigated the plight of indigenous communities fighting for natural resources in India's north-east.

“I have never filmed anything before but I was led here by the Thomson Foundation mobile journalism competition and it has been an eye-opening experience” —  
Torera Idowu,  
Nigeria



Perhaps the most surprised award winner in 2015 was Nigerian journalist Torera Idowu. She won the Thomson Foundation/RTÉ MojoCon award in Dublin with the first mobile journalism report she had ever produced.

“This competition led me on a life-defining journey to the slums of Makoko in Lagos, Nigeria”, she says. “Armed with nothing but an old iPad 3, I captured the lives of a few children in this community and their fight for education. I have never filmed anything before but I was led here by the Thomson Foundation mobile journalism competition and it has been an eye-opening experience.”



Watch the Thomson Foundation Young Journalist winner's acceptance speech:  
<http://tinyurl.com/zlsreyo>



Watch the Thomson Foundation MojoCon mobile journalism competition winner as she receives her award:  
<http://tinyurl.com/zexe5ek>

OMAN

# A modern state media

Thomson Foundation is playing a key role in an ambitious reform project designed to modernise all sectors of state media in Oman. It has involved training news agency and newspaper journalists, broadcasters, online specialists and government communications advisers.

“Oman is constantly changing within a fast developing world,” says Bader Al Kiyumi, deputy managing editor of the Oman Daily Observer. “This is largely due to social media networks which focus more on instant news about what is happening in the country.”

Bader believes expanding the Observer’s digital platforms is essential to give the newspaper the edge over rivals in the internet world.

Managers from the Oman News Agency undertook an intensive course in London to learn the needs of new digital platforms, and to see how the skills were put into effect at national and international news agencies like The Press Association, Reuters

and Associated Press. In the social age, they discovered, change is fast and constant and needs to be managed with agility and with an openness to new ideas.

In the latest chapter of the reform programme, a new generation of advisers from the Oman Ministry of Information travelled to London to study best practice in government communications.

The government of Oman has put on record its desire to invest in training for the media at all levels — and says it wants more information flowing to the country’s citizens.

“Their aim is to make government communications more relevant and accessible to the public,” says Hosam El Nagar, operations director of the Thomson Foundation. “There is a desire within ministries to communicate more effectively and widely with the public and the media. But there’s also an awareness that you can’t change a big organisation overnight.”



EU MEDIA HUB

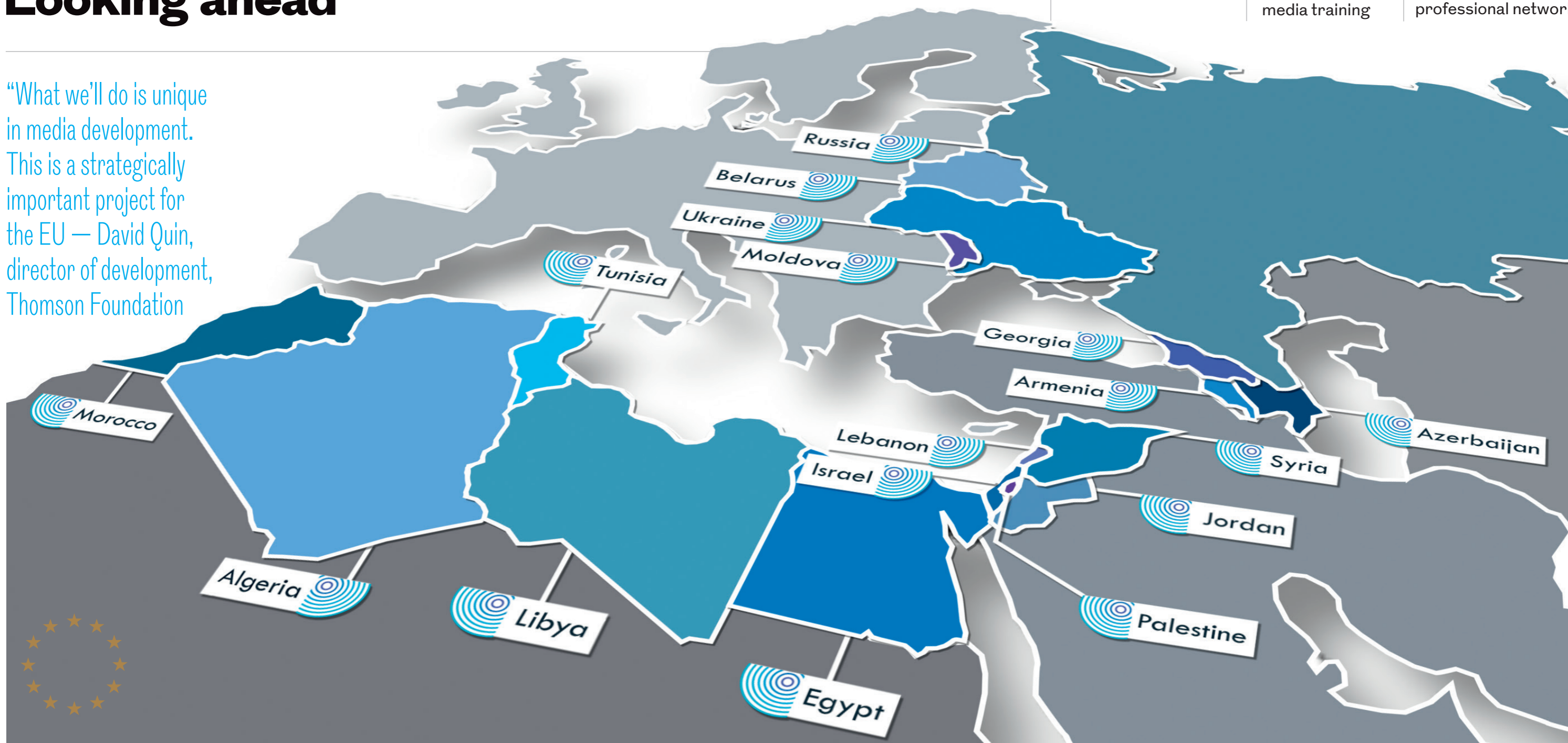
# Looking ahead

1,100

200+  
cases of in-depth  
media training

2,000+  
members of a vibrant  
professional network

“What we’ll do is unique in media development. This is a strategically important project for the EU — David Quin, director of development, Thomson Foundation



A tidal wave of refugees pouring into Europe from North Africa and the Middle East underlined an urgent need for accurate and sensitive reporting about the EU’s immediate neighbours.

This is why the EU has asked the Thomson Foundation to lead a four-year project to support and train independent media in North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Caucuses, as well as Russia.

It’s the biggest single contract in the history of

the Thomson Foundation, worth nearly €8million over the life of the programme.

“What we’ll do is unique in media development,” says David Quin, the Foundation’s deputy director of development. “This is a strategically important project for the EU. We in Europe need to understand more about the real situation of neighbourhood countries.”

Seventeen of the EU’s immediate neighbours will take part: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,

Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

A key part of the project is to build a video -sharing platform for broadcasters in these countries — a media hub — so they can share their work with each other and with channels inside the European Union.

“We will encourage good content if reporters on the borderlands of Europe know their work is

available for use by mainstream EU broadcasters and national and international news channels,” says David Quin.

At the heart of the project sits the idea that good journalism at its best can improve understanding and ease tensions in times of great international conflict and war.

The Thomson Foundation’s previous work with the European Neighbourhood Journalism Network (ENJN) showed that individual

journalists from hostile nations can work together — Israelis collaborating with Arabs, Georgians and Russians, Azeris and Armenians.

The final report of the ENJN said these potential enemies often became friends and contacts across conflict borders, creating completely new networks and sources.

This media hub project — run by a consortium of seven organisations — takes this principle to a completely new level of potential impact.

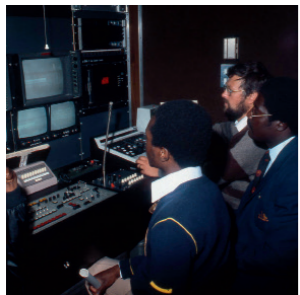
This is how David Quin sums up the core idea: “We need an information stream from the EU Neighbourhood that is not tainted by the biases we all have. We want to get the picture from people at the sharp end of conflict — accurate reporting that is switched on and audience friendly.”

**Find out more about this project:**  
Contact David Quin, deputy director of development, Thomson Foundation  
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THOMSON FOUNDATION

# Our history



Journalists are still working all over the world to secure simple but important freedoms...



In a landmark speech in 1963, Lord Thomson said he believed “communication is surely the spine of civilisation”. As he travelled the world to build up his media empire, he became convinced that all journalists — wherever they lived — should have access to good training in how to report fairly, incisively and freely.

When Nigel Baker took over as chief executive in 2012, he realised this was clearly still work in progress. “The last few years have been humbling,” he said, “hearing the frustrations of journalists in restrictive regimes.

“I discovered that in many parts of the world when they ask for a course in investigative journalism, their definition of ‘investigative’ is not of a relentless campaign to uncover grave misdoings. It is simply the ability to ask questions. In other words, basic journalism as we know it — rather than being a conduit for official state announcements.”

This annual report for 2015 once again demonstrates how courageously journalists are still working all over the world to secure this simple but important freedom.

The Thomson Foundation has played a quiet part in the international media revolution over the past 50 years, sending expert practitioners across the globe to set up TV stations and newspapers, and now to advise on digital and social media.

“As the world becomes more connected, and media more prevalent,” says Nigel Baker, “the need for good communication skills grows.”

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