
**THE REFUGEE
JOURNALISM PROJECT**

ANNUAL REPORT

2020/2021

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OUR PURPOSE

The Refugee Journalism Project works towards social change through creating opportunities that support the authenticity and agency of a group whose experiences and perspectives struggle to find a place in the mainstream media. Since 2016, we have supported displaced and exiled journalists and storytellers to re-connect with their careers. We focus on helping them to become better connected within the UK industry, updating their journalistic skills and finding publishing opportunities, freelance work and jobs.

The project delivers activities that:

1. Prepare participants for work in the UK media industry.
2. Create opportunities for participants to publish their work and build wider networks.
3. Provide opportunities whereby participants can collaborate and innovate with other journalists, artists, technologists or other creative practitioners.
4. Connect participants with practicing journalists and platforms where they can participate in national discussions relating to asylum seeking, representation, human rights and international policy.
5. Engage with new audiences, key policy and opinion-makers in order to debunk negative institutional and public perceptions of refugees.

THE TEAM

Our work is delivered by a small, part-time team which is based at London College of Communication. The delivery of the project is supported through partnerships with media organisations and civic society. Its project management and longer-term strategic decisions are overseen by a steering committee which meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Project Delivery Team:

- Vivienne Francis, Project Director
- Veronica Otero, Project Assistant
- Clara Marks, Digital Intern from Crankstart Internship Programme, University of Oxford
- Hanna Mödder, Digital Intern, London College of Communication

This year's Delivery Partners:

- The Guardian Foundation
- Bloomberg
- Tortoise Media
- journalism.co.uk
- Middle East Eye
- Refugee Council
- Hot Topics
- Media Diversity Institute
- Centre for Investigative Journalism
- Rory Peck Trust

This year's Steering Committee:

- Daniel Trilling, London-based journalist
- Gill Henderson, Cultural and Communities Partnerships Manager, LCC
- Maysa Ismael, Director of Gender Action for Peace and Security
- Imogen Pursch, Head of Programmes at UK Youth

OVERVIEW

The unfolding situation in Afghanistan has reinforced the need for journalism as a purveyor of democracy through delivering stories that are based on truth, equal rights and freedom. When journalists are under threat, there needs to be a concerted, collective effort to provide safe spaces so these voices are not silenced or forgotten.

Over the past year, like other organisations, the Refugee Journalism Project has had to adapt to the changes necessitated by the covid pandemic. Although this unprecedented time has not been without its challenges, it has also presented opportunities to experiment with new forms of delivery and collaborations.

This year, the Project was broken down into two phases. Phase 1 delivered a programme of workshops, mentoring, networking and publishing opportunities to 18 refugee and migrant journalists living in the UK. Phase 2 saw the Project offer paid fellowships to five of the most promising participants from Phase 1.

Phase 1 was delivered using a secure online education platform, supported by London College of Communication. To avoid the possibility of a digital inequality, we offered laptops and portable WIFI dongles to those in need. Working with our partners, we delivered a range of online journalism, employability and well-being sessions.

Online delivery made it easier for our participants to access and attend the sessions as they could be scheduled around work and family commitments. As a result, attendance and engagement were very high. It was also more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable as we avoided the need for travel between multiple locations. This was particularly significant for this year's cohort as we recruited participants as far afield as Glasgow, Bristol and Norwich.

cont'd

OVERVIEW

The participants say they feel a greater sense of belonging and professional worth as a result of attending Phase 1. They also say they have more confidence, are better connected and feel more in tune with the demands of the UK media industry.

For the first time we have been able to offer a six-month Fellowship programme. The successful Fellows were offered paid placements with a UK-based media organisation where they gained intensive, on-the-job experience. One Fellow was offered a full-time, permanent role within three weeks of starting his placement.

The Fellows say they witnessed a significant improvement in their English writing skills and professional confidence. The host companies say they particularly valued the different perspectives that the Fellows brought to their media output and organisations.

This annual report presents some of the notable activities and achievements from 2020/21. I would like to thank all those who have helped make this year possible, particularly our funders Open Society Foundations, Google News Initiative and Unbound Philanthropy.

Vivienne Francis
Project Director

**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**

Google News Initiative

UNBOUND

ual: london college
of communication

APPLICATIONS & RECRUITMENT

In March 2020, the Project team received a total of 42 applications from prospective participants. Of these, 24 were from the Middle East, 12 were from Africa, five from Asia and one from Europe.

The range of experience across the applicants was very broad, but almost all had had at least a year's professional journalism experience, and 60% had worked in journalism for seven or more years. Despite this, 56% were unemployed and 63% had not been paid for journalistic work since moving to the UK.

Following shortlisting interviews, 18 final participants were selected to make up the cohort.

About this year's participants:



Participant's UK Locations:



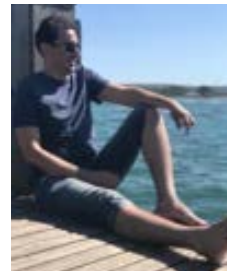
Participants' original countries:



SNAPSHOT OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Abubakr Bashir

Abubakr is a former freelance journalist, producer and interpreter working with a number of international media companies in the Gaza strip, Palestine. He has contributed to a large number of stories, documentaries, and projects in the Gaza between 2009 and 2019. The stories were political, cultural, social, medical, military, and so on. Abubakr helped produce two important and enlightening documentaries: one on refugees and the other on female surfers in conservative communities. He was also the field producer for an extensive and complicated project to rescue wild animals from Gaza's poor zoos including in Israel, Jordan and South Africa. He covered two wars in 2012 and 2014, interviewing militants, displaced people, families of victims, injured people, informers, political leaders and others. He also covered a year-long border protest between Gaza and Israel, as well as covering an internal protest against the government of Gaza in 2019. In addition, he was a high school English teacher between 2006 and 2019.



Hagir Ehadi Eldouma

Hagir is a journalist and program producer. She is the founder of Mojo in Sudan, a charity that aims to spread mobile journalism (Mojo) culture in local newsrooms and community media. She is also the founding member of the Sudan Media Information Literacy project. This initiative aims to spread digital citizenship and to address fake news and misinformation. She is also the founding member of the Sudan Community News project. She has been a trainer in media production, news production, development and political issues. She has been a fellow with Thomson Reuters Foundation.



Noppawan "Ploy" Bunluesilp

"Ploy" is a Thai video journalist, who spent 10 years working for Reuters and NBC in Southeast Asia. She covered major stories including; the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami that ravaged Southeast Asia and killed more than 220,000 people and the "Saffron Revolution" protests in Myanmar in 2007, where she posed as a tourist to film exclusive footage. In 2008 she again travelled to Myanmar to cover the humanitarian disaster caused by Cyclone Nargis, until she was deported. She covered the political violence in Thailand in 2010 where one of her Reuters colleagues was killed. In 2011, she joined NBC News and covered the wedding of Bhutanese King Jigme Wangchuk and the first Myanmar election. She became a global story herself in 2016 when 20 police raided her home in Bangkok and detained her for questioning about breaking Thai Lese Majeste Law.



PHASE 1

Workshops, Mentoring and Publishing Opportunities

We have offered participants the opportunity to take part in a range of activities that have helped them to extend their journalistic knowledge and build their industry networks.

The Workshops: A snapshot



We delivered the following sessions:

1. **Introduction to Journalism in the UK** with Daniel Trilling, Belinda Goldsmith, former Editor in Chief, *Thomson Reuters Foundation*; Marcela Kunova, Editor, *journalism.co.uk*; and Nabeelah Shabbir, freelance journalist
2. **Media Law** with Holly Powell Jones
3. **Entrepreneurial Journalism** with Ismail Einashe, freelance journalist
4. **Pitching and developing ideas** with Daniel Trilling and Elizabeth Pears, Newsdesk Editor, *Financial Times*
5. **Podcasting** with Abdulwahab Tahhan, former RJP participant
6. **Evening Session** with Liliane Landor, Former Head of Foreign News, *Channel 4 News*
7. **Well-being and resilience** with Paul Cilia La Corte, *Refugee Council*



Delivered the following sessions:

1. **Financial Journalism** with Paul Addison, Managing Editor, *Global Training Bloomberg*
2. **Introduction to Bloomberg** with David Merrick, Senior Executive Editor for News in Europe, Middle East and Africa; and Dana El Baltaji, team leader for Foreign Exchange Rates in Europe



Delivered the following sessions:

1. **Data Journalism** with David Pegg, Investigative journalist, *The Guardian*
2. **Digital Journalism & Features**, with Jon Henley, Europe Correspondent, *The Guardian*
3. **Data Journalism** with Mona Chalabi, Data Editor, *Guardian US*
4. **Podcasting** with Danielle Stephens, Audio Producer, *The Guardian*
5. **Documentary Film Making** with Laurence Topham, Video Special Projects Editor, *The Guardian*

25
**WORKSHOPS
DELIVERED**

Work produced by participants

Featured on The Refugee Journalism website: <https://www.refugeejournalismproject.org/>



Featured elsewhere:

the guardian



MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE



Mentoring

Each participant was paired with a mentor who is a journalist within the UK industry. This year's mentors included:

Lynne O'Donnell, freelance journalist
Ian Dunt, politics.co.uk
Naomi O'Leary, Irish Times
Mathilda Mallison, Evening Standard
Chris Creegan, Thomson Reuters
Foundation



PHASE 2

Fellowship Programme

For 2021, we offered a fellowship programme where three selected participants were paid to undertake two placements over a six-month period. All participants were invited to apply and take part in a workshop designed to support the application process. The participating companies and the RJP team were on the recruitment panel. The participating companies were: Thomson Reuters Foundation, Bloomberg, journalism.co.uk, Tortoise Media, Middle East Eye, Hot Topics and Media Diversity Institute.

Osama Gaweesh



Osama Gaweesh is a Egyptian TV presenter and journalist working with Al-Hiwar TV. He was one of the founders of Mekameleen TV station which is considered to be one of the most prominent broadcasters in the Middle East and Egypt. He presented the famous audio leaks about the president of Egypt in 2015, which the BBC and The Guardian covered. As the result of his placements, Osama says he has been able to intensively develop his English writing and advanced research skills. He was introduced to new topics, including cloud technology and data ethics which has allowed him to “explore a new world away from politics”.

Highlight: Hosting and moderated round table discussions at an event that involved 100+ marketing and tech leaders including HSBC and Jaguar. This was the first time he has moderated an event in English .

Osama's fellowship work:

HOT TOPICS.HT

Technology Leaders Meetup: Data Ethics



Business Leaders Meetup: How to Scale Efficiently



Technology Leaders Meetup — Cloud Computing: What Next?



Demand Generation: How the Marketing Community Have Dealt with Changes



Tip: Editor's golden rules for working with freelancers

If you are not going to pursue their ideas, do not palm off their pitches to Twitter

Posted: 14 July 2021 By: **Osama Gaweesh**



Covering climate change: what can journalists learn from the pandemic?

The climate crisis and covid-19 share many similarities - they are scary, intangible, and difficult to explain. Reuters Institute's Wolfgang Iltis talks about best practices to bring environmental stories to your audiences

Posted: 4 June 2021 By: **Osama Gaweesh**



Osama Gaweesh, refugee journalist, on his journey into the UK media industry

As he joins Journalism.co.uk via the Refugee Journalism Project, our apprentice reporter recounts his story of taking part in the 2011 Egyptian uprisings, launching a dissident TV channel in Turkey and being exiled to the UK

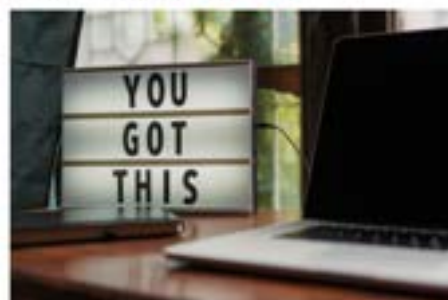
Posted: 2 June 2021 By: **Jacob Granger**



How the Financial Times helped its journalists build resilience during the pandemic

From live-streaming editorial meetings to providing self-management training, the publisher upped its efforts to support its staff through gloom and exhaustion

Posted: 19 July 2021 By: **Osama Gaweesh**



journalism.co.uk

Sophia Sun



Sophia Sun holds a Masters in Media & Communications from London School of Economics. After graduating, she spent two years as a UK correspondent for New Tang Dynasty Television (NTD), an independent media company. Sophia's journalistic work focuses on UK politics, human rights issues, and traditional cultures. During her placements, Sophia learnt about the production cycle, CMS and developed her writing skills. Highlight: Conducting the research for a podcast series about China for Tortoise Media. Sophia's contract was also extended beyond the period of the placement and she will be working within the data team.

Sophia says: "I was not that confident at the beginning of the project but I have now built up my confidence a lot."

Sophia's fellowship work:

COVID-19 exposes 'grim reality' of private renters, says UK housing charity

The Thomson Reuters Foundation
Reporting on the impact of COVID-19



European business travellers say set to fly less after COVID-19

The Thomson Reuters Foundation
Reporting on the impact of COVID-19



TortoiseTHOMSON REUTERS
FOUNDATION

Hossam Sarhan

MEE
MIDDLE EAST EYE

Hossam Sarhan, an Egyptian creative who has produced and directed award-winning films which have been recognised internationally, developed promotional videos for live television airing, and managed all associated activities such as VFX, audio mixing, lighting, colouring, and 2D animation. He has worked for advertising agencies, educational programs, production houses, TV channels and with independent filmmakers. On his Fellowship, he did the following: Co-producing and editing a documentary on Bahrain; Inputting into the design and pitching ideas for new website; Utilising video editing and animation skills; and Managing/ supervising junior members of staff.

Highlight: Within three weeks of his Fellowship, Hossam was offered a job by Middle East Eye.



Fellow*



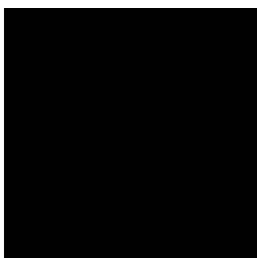
Bloomberg
TELEVISION

They are a journalist, documentary photographer, and public information professional from Afghanistan who worked on a public information operation campaign for the United Nations in the west of Afghanistan focusing on sustainable peace, development, human rights and participation of women in all parts of Afghan society. In their role with the UN, they were the focal point of advocacy campaigns and hundreds of outreach projects to promote peace and human rights in the country. They have covered hundreds of photo, video and web stories about the advocacy campaigns. They have also worked as multimedia journalist with the Associated Press and Agence France Presse (AFP).

Highlight: They have been offered a six month placement with Bloomberg, rather than the standard three month Fellowship term.

**Due to the ongoing situation in Afghanistan we have anonymised this Fellow's identity.*

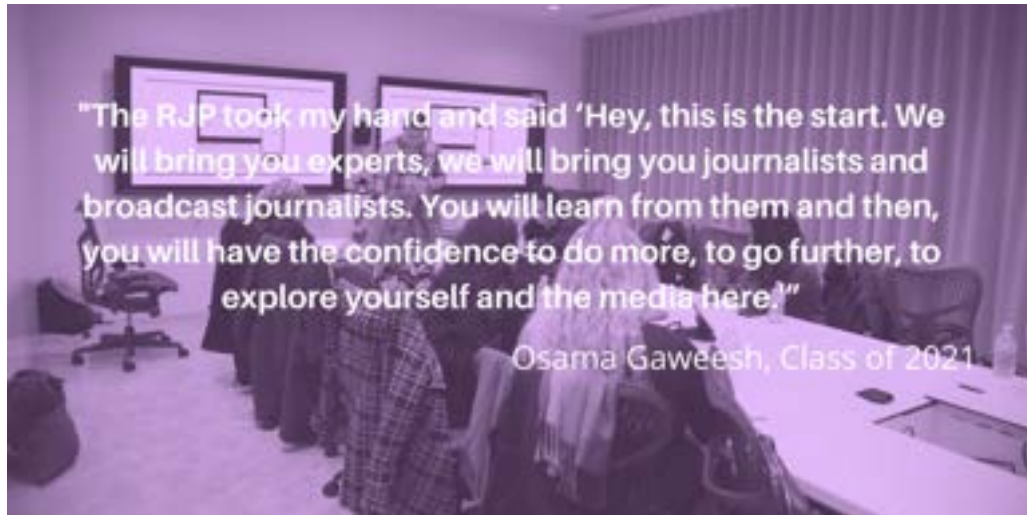
Fellow*



 **MEDIA DIVERSITY**
INSTITUTE

They are a former journalist and media lawyer who aims to support freedom of expression/information and information society. They have worked and consulted for a range of institutions including Internews, Afghanistan Journalists Committee, National Radio-Television, Information Commission and Mitra TV. They have been; a Media Law & Policy Programme Manager at Internews for six years, a journalist at Mitra TV and at Law Weekly. They have authored books on freedom of expression and investigating crime.

**Due to the ongoing situation in Afghanistan we have anonymised this Fellow's identity.*



OTHER ACTIVITIES

1000 Dreams Project

This project, which took place in UK and Greece, seeks to change prevailing refugee narratives through a storytelling project that tells the stories of refugees across Europe. Three RJP participants participated and were trained in visual storytelling. They were paid for their work.



The project is part of the Witness Change project, run by the photographer Robin Hammond and funded by Open Societies.

Hagir Elhadi's story



Hossam Sarham's story



Osama Gaweesh's story



As seen on journalism.co.uk



Home , Jobs , Training , PressGo , PressQ , Freelance , JTweeps , Newsrewired

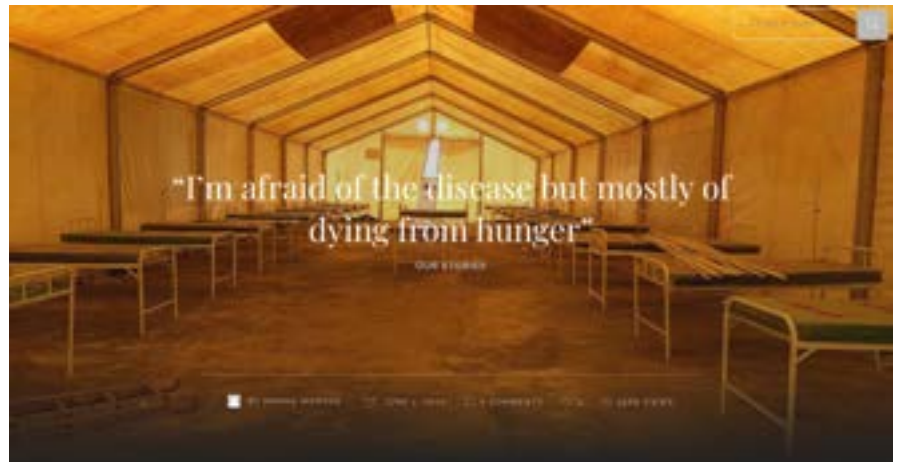
Refugee journalists help 1000 European refugees to tell their stories

The One Thousand Dreams project helps storytellers empower fellow refugees to share their experiences, shattering their stereotypical portrayal as invaders or helpless victims

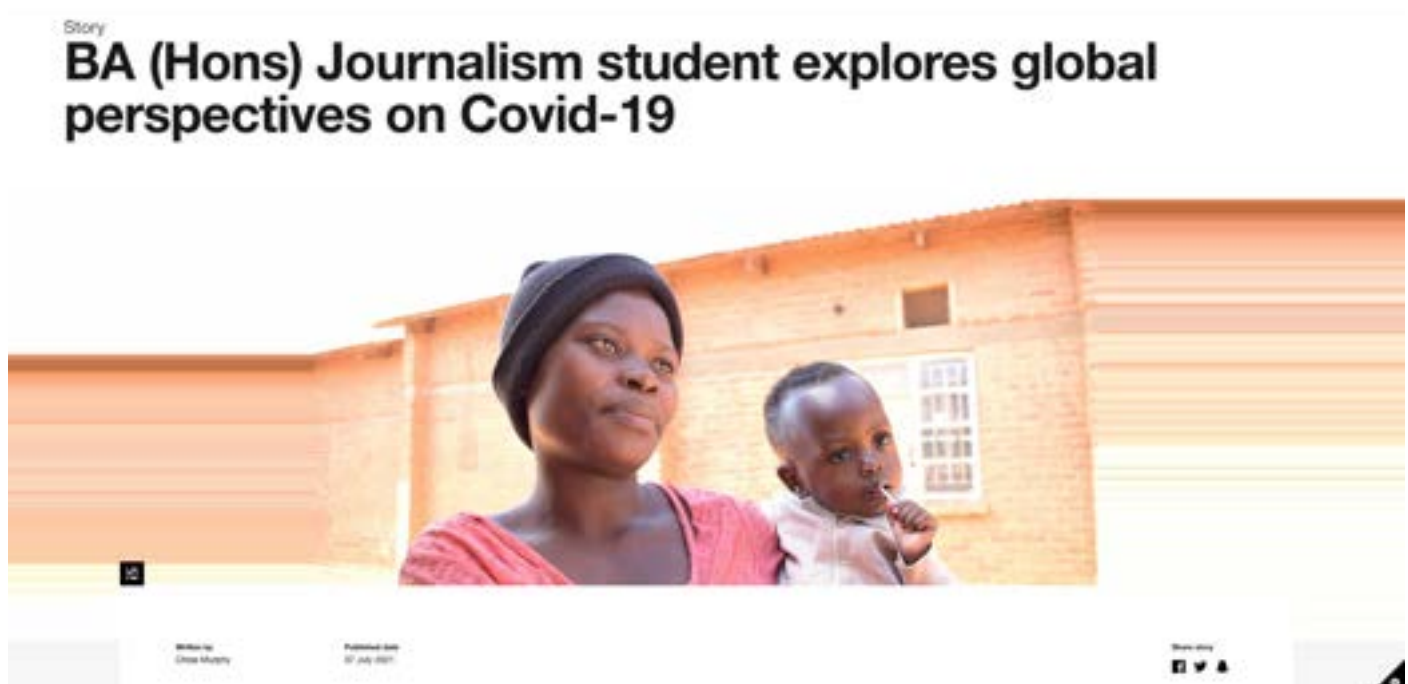
Posted: 6 July 2021 By: [Osama Gaweesh](#)

Covid 19 in Malawi

The Refugee Journalism Project contacted three journalists who live in Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi – one of the poorest countries in the world – and invited them to help tell the grassroots story of how this global pandemic was affecting those living in the margins of society.



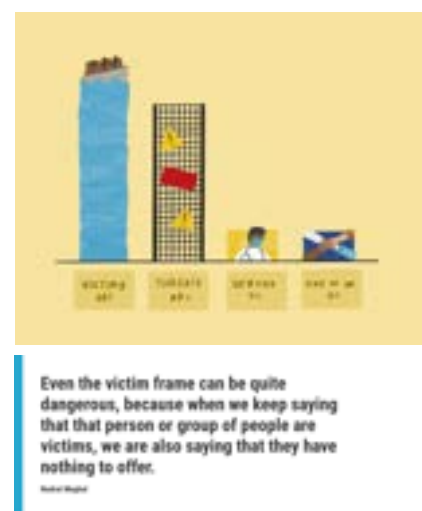
A charity based in Canada got in touch to reuse some content from the article and commissioned new work from the journalists. The project was a finalist in the Amnesty Media Awards in 2021.



Breaking The Frame

Breaking The Frame is a report conducted by the Refugee Journalism Project which analyses the representation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in UK broadcast news. We believe that by breaking from the limited journalistic frames currently in UK TV news and expanding the range, lens and authorship of the stories currently told, fairer representations of migration can be achieved.

This was a collaborative research project based on the idea that by moving away from the limited journalistic frames that are currently used in UK TV news, and expanding the range, lens and authorship of the stories told, fairer representations of migration can be achieved. We started by analysing a year's worth of TV news bulletins, gaining an insight into the editorial decisions made by news producers. We also wanted to deliver a piece of work that was participatory and prioritised researching with rather than researching on our participants. So those with a lived experience of migration were involved in all stages of the project.



Social media report:

As part of the Breaking The Frame report, RJP launched a social media campaign on Twitter and Instagram. The highlights of this campaign were a 43.6% increase in follower count on Instagram; in the time period of the 20 Jul to 30 Aug; a 266.6% increase in New Followers on Twitter in July and a 27.8% increase in New Followers on Twitter in August. On Twitter, our Tweets had a total of 61.5K impressions while on Instagram our posts had a total of 756 impressions.

Hamburg Collaboration

The RJP held a joint workshop with the Hamburg Media School, which is a similar project based in Germany working with exiled film-makers. Two workshops took place whereby both groups discussed the subject of cross border collaborative journalism and potential ideas. Some of these will be taken forward and supported by the project.



In times of staying at home, it is natural to long for connection even more. So in the midst of the current pandemic, the Refugee Journalism Project (London) and the Digital Media for Professionals with Flight History (Hamburg) held their first virtual meeting to explore options of working together.

Both projects work with exiled and displaced journalists who, having fled their home countries, receive tailored training to continue their work in the German and UK media industry. The three-hour-workshop, conducted online, kicked off with an introduction by the project coordinators Hauke Lorenz and Barbara Guggenheim in Hamburg and Vivienne Francis in London, followed by a talk by Tabea Grzeszyk.

Educational Projects

The Crankstart Foundation based at Oxford University invited the Project to participate in their internship scheme. During the summer, Clara Marks, a first year Theology undergraduate student joined the team as a paid intern. Clara says: "My internship with the RJP enabled me to develop professionally and personally. I was pushed to develop hard skills which are the polar opposite of my degree (social media management, graphic design etc.) and continued to develop soft skills like confidence, sensitivity, critical thinking and communication."

Beyond Borders Scholarship

For the past three years, we have offered a scholarship to applicants with a refugee background to support studies for a master's degree at London College of Communication. This includes tuition fees and maintenance support. This year's recipient was Edwige Seri from Ivory Coast.

IMPACT

The Class of 2021 feedback

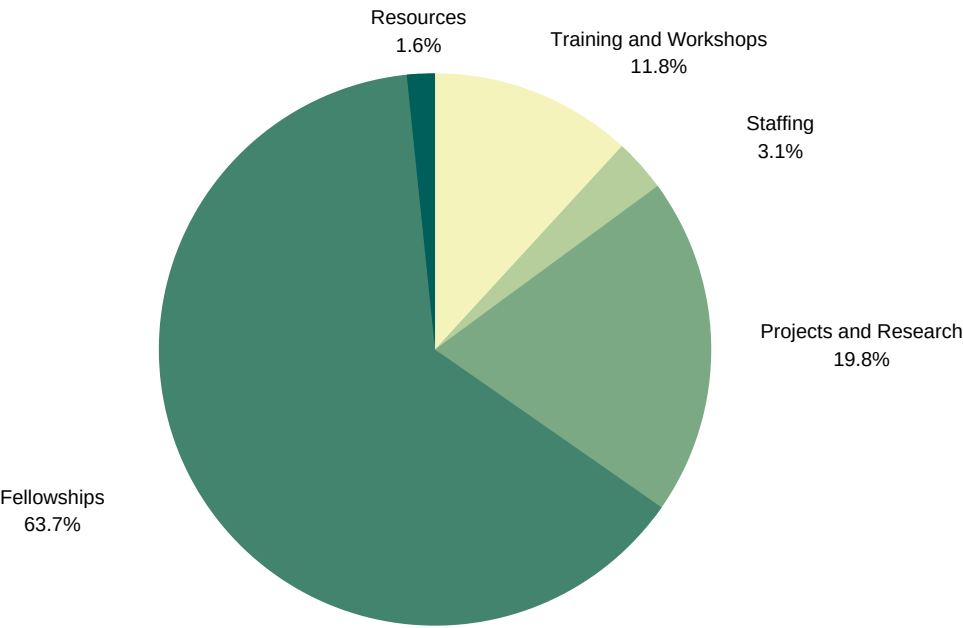
In this short video, recorded via a conference call, the participants talk to project assistant, Veronica Otero, about the difference being involved in the Refugee Journalism Project has made to their professional and personal lives.



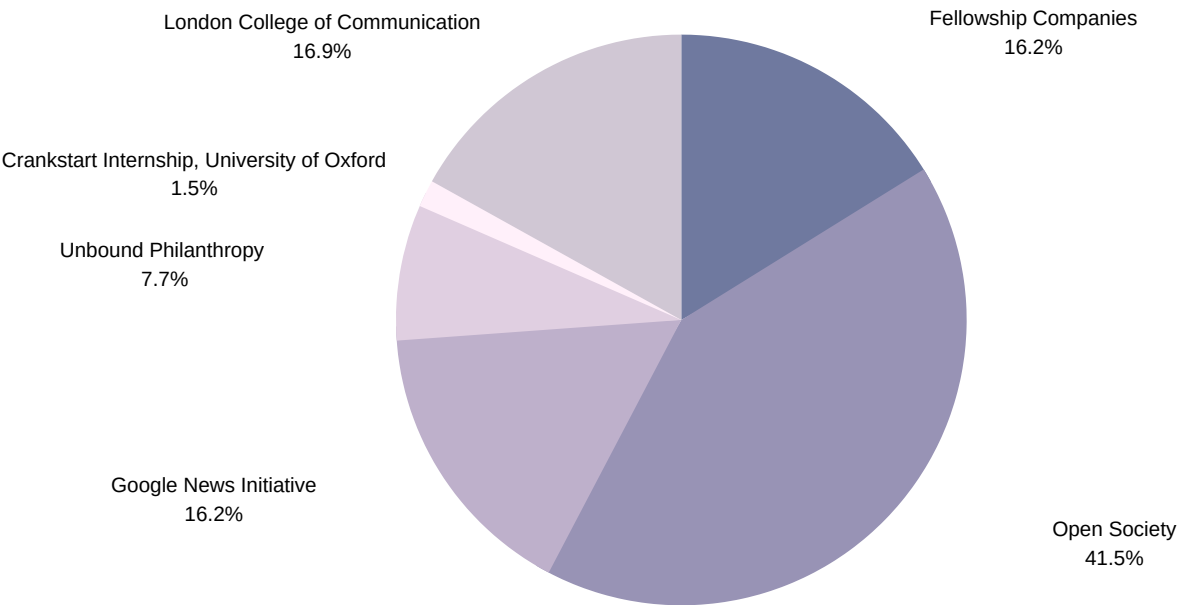
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LyWnWMgTZ2T7v_UeADylstSiCohEtk9/view?usp=sharing

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Overview of Spending



Overview of Income



THE FUTURE

Plans for 2021/22

The Refugee Journalism Project will continue its work by recruiting a new cohort of 15-20 participants in the autumn of 2021. In light of the situation facing Afghan journalists, we will particularly seek to recruit from this group. We will also aim to attract more female journalists in an attempt to address the gender imbalance in our past recruitment.

Building on the advantages of online delivery, we will offer a blended programme combining remote sessions with face to face workshops. We will again create 3-5 Fellowship places for a small group of participants. The project will also seek collaborative opportunities with partners based in the UK and abroad who share our ethos and objectives.

**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**

Google News Initiative

ual: london college
of communication

UNBOUND