



## **Media Sector Development Working Group**

Abstracts of papers accepted for presentation at the annual conference of the  
**International Association for Media and Communication Research<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>These are the abstracts of the papers accepted by the IAMCR section or working group named above for presentation at the 2019 annual conference. This publication will be updated prior to the conference to include the papers that are actually included in the final programme. To be included in the programme, authors must confirm their participation to the heads of the section or working group by 11 April 2019 and register for the conference. Your place at the conference is not guaranteed until you have registered and paid the registration fee.

**Id:** 23696

**Title:** [Panel] Big Tech, Media Development and Journalism Philanthropy: Friend or Foe'  
[Presentation] Panel description

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

**Authors:**

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**Abstract:** Facebook recently announced it would donate \$US 300 million to support quality journalism. Google has made a similar commitment of \$US 300 million through its Google News Initiative. The Mozilla Foundation, Omidyar Network, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: many new foundations funded with profits from technological industries in Silicon Valley are offering philanthropy to help alleviate the financial crisis in news journalism. Such initiatives, however, are a subject of considerable controversy. Are these new funders using their philanthropy to shape the news agenda? Do these arrangements compromise journalistic autonomy and independence? Are these philanthropic efforts merely tokenistic, given the broader impact these firms are having on news media around the globe? The panel will explore the conceptual and research challenge posed by these questions, as well as the practical aspects of concern to activists, media actors, and others who are considering whether to engage with these funders.

Session Organizer: Susan Abbott, University of Westminster, susanabbott1@gmail.com

Chair: Dr. Victor Pickard, Associate Professor at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

Respondent: Dr. Melanie Bunce, Senior Lecturer in Journalism, and the founding director of the Humanitarian News Research Network based at City, University of London.

**Id:** 23697

**Title:** [Panel] Big Tech, Media Development and Journalism Philanthropy: Friend or Foe'  
[Presentation] The key philanthropies funding journalism and media: How and why they do it

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

**Authors:**

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**Abstract:** This paper is based on an ongoing research project on media and power run by the Center for Media, Data and Society (CMDs) at CEU. It aims to identify the key philanthropies funding media and journalism and to describe the mechanisms and principles used by them when making funding decisions. The paper will attempt to explain some of the key changes in media development funding during the past decade.

The paper aims to also shortly describe the context in which philanthropies operate, particularly the role played by other key groups in funding media and journalism. The role of governments, which have become a major player in the media market, is going to be analyzed, as funding disbursed by governments has a massive direct influence on journalism and media.

Specifically, Dragomir will present original research from Media Influence Matrix is a global research and advocacy project run by the Media & Power Consortium, a group of experts led by the Center for Media, Data & Society (CMDs) at CEU in Budapest. Part of the Matrix's chapter on journalism funding covers philanthropy funding. Marius Dragomir will speak about the main trends in philanthropy funding. Using data and information gathered in the project, he will aim to answer the following questions: Who are the key philanthropy funders in journalism? Are they mostly international/western foundations or governments? Are local industry groups and individuals funding journalism in their countries? What are the key initiatives philanthropies are funding? How does philanthropy funding in journalism compare with government funding or commercial revenues?

**Id:** 23698

**Title:** [Panel] Big Tech, Media Development and Journalism Philanthropy: Friend or Foe'  
[Presentation] What are the options for funding public interest media in an age of big tech'

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

**Authors:**

Name: James Deane

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**Abstract:** Business models available to support public interest media are disappearing. They are least available where advertising markets are small, political cooption of the media most intense and media freedoms most under threat. Migration of advertising markets online is just one set of challenges in these contexts. BBC Media Action has proposed the formation of a Global Fund for Free and Independent Media together with a revitalized debate around public subsidy for independent media with a specific focus on resource poor and fragile contexts. James Deane will explain the thinking behind the Fund and invite perspectives to feed into a feasibility study for it.

**Id:** 23699

**Title:** [Panel] Big Tech, Media Development and Journalism Philanthropy: Friend or Foe'  
[Presentation] Big Tech, independent media, and international aid in the context of a Brazil ruled by the far right

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** In the time of Big Tech, Brazil has seen a growing number of independent media projects supported by international aid and circulating only on digital social networks. In the largest country in Latin America, independent journalism focused on social development seeks alternatives to the news circulated on Facebook or Google News, with more specialized news agencies (human rights, gender issues, environment and anti-racism) and the expansion of independent newspapers and magazines on line.

On the other hand, the influence of the companies of Big Tech grows in private universities and traditional newspapers. This panel reflects on this paradox —about strategies and success stories, where international aid collaborates for independent journalism to offer different voices to the population, in a country that has recently elected an extreme right-wing president and where freedom of information and expression is now at risk.

**Id:** 23700

**Title:** [Panel] Big Tech, Media Development and Journalism Philanthropy: Friend or Foe'  
[Presentation] Philanthropy-driven data journalism and implications for journalistic practices in Africa

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** Over the past decade, philanthropic organizations have poured millions of dollars into different specialized forms of journalism in Africa. These include health journalism, economics/business journalism, science journalism, data journalism, and more recently fact-checking journalism. Support for these specialized forms has come in the form of grants, paid-for trainings, overseas fellowships, seed funds for data journalism projects, and running of data journalism awards. In a context where newsrooms are shrinking and media organizations have less resources to sustain good journalism, this funding has in many places provided much needed relief to media houses facing closure. In some cases, this has led to the burgeoning of new reporting desks for these specific niche areas. While these new specialized forms of journalism are, on the face of it, aimed at addressing existing gaps in news reporting on the continent, not much scholarly work has sought to establish the motives/interests of the various philanthropic organizations involved, the choice of particular journalistic forms they support, and the general impact that such interventions have on the practice of journalism in general. This study explores the rise in philanthropy-driven data journalism and analyses its broader implications for the practice of journalism in Africa. Data journalism has gained significant visibility on the continent, popularized by organizations such as Code for Africa, HecksHackers and others, with support from leading foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Omidyar Foundation, the Open Society Foundation and others. What implications does this have for journalism on the continent? How is data journalism perceived in African newsrooms? Do newsrooms find it useful, or do they just do it because it attracts funding?

**Id:** 23702

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the "Development' in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] Panel description

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

**Authors:**

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**Abstract:** IAMCR's newest working group, tentatively entitled the "Media Development Working Group," considers the efforts of actors around the globe to promote freedom of expression, strengthen the independence of the news media, and foster an enabling institutional environment for pluralism and diversity in the media sector. These efforts, however, are carried out under a staggering array of justifications, and are often influenced by radically different assumptions and ideologies pertaining to democracy and development. Equity of information access, communication power, cultural flows, good governance, poverty eradication, and citizenship are all variously posited as being at stake in efforts to build a better media system, with implications to how this work is approached. As part of the working group's effort to foster a more coherent scholarly dialogue connected to this field of practice, this panel explores some of the diversity implicit in the "development" of media development.

Chair: Susan Abbott, University of Westminster, London

Discussant: Dr. Jairo Lugo-Ocando, Director of Executive & Graduate Education, Professor in Residence, Northwestern University in Qatar

**Id:** 23703

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the 'Development' in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] What do the figures reveal' Reflecting on CIMA's analysis of aid flows to media

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** Research done with CIMA and AidData last year revealed that roughly \$450 million per year is being spent on media assistance to developing countries worldwide (Myers and Juma, 2018). This represents mainly bilateral donor contributions by OECD country governments, between 2010 and 2015, as well as some non-OECD countries – including China, and includes the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation contributions to the sector. This paper reflects on what the CIMA/AidData research reveals about the way donor money is spent on media assistance, and perhaps more importantly, what it does not reveal and the questions that it begs.

Thanks to detail available through the efforts of AidData researchers at the College of William and Mary (USA), our CIMA team were been able to reflect a truer picture of media support than previously: for example, we separated grants to support media development from loans for information and communications infrastructure and telecommunications (e.g., fiber optic networks), and we have also distinguished media development from projects that can be construed as public diplomacy or strategic communications: interventions that involve producing and disseminating content to achieve donors' diplomatic goals – for example the lion's share of the German government's 'media development' funding goes on Deutsche Welle radio and TV. This, arguably, projects Germany's soft power to the world and has little to do with meeting the SDGs. The data from China was also revealing and shows a massive investment in this sector, although this is not "media development" as a western liberal definition would have it. China tends to support ICT infrastructure and government media rather than freedom of the press, journalist and media outlet independence, or media that hold governments to account. China also delivers its support to the sector primarily through loans, frequently tied to Chinese corporations, with loan terms that may not be concessional enough to qualify as development assistance at all (the OECD requires that loans offer at least a 25 percent concession to be considered foreign aid).

Other findings posed more questions than they elucidated. One of the biggest questions the research raises is who, if anyone, is scrutinising how this huge sum is being spent every year and with what impact? For example, who knew that the UAE government spent most of its media assistance budget on Afghanistan (almost \$4billion in 2010-2015)? What could be behind three large grants (together worth over \$183 million) to the governments of Sri Lanka and Indonesia (from Japan and France, respectively) to digitalize and improve terrestrial TV infrastructure? And, if OECD countries' really are interested in promoting media freedom, why do countries with the lowest press freedom rankings (like North Korea, Eritrea and Turkmenistan) receive some of the smallest sums of money?

Deeper questions also arise about whether larger sums of money actually mean ‘more’ media development, and what and how is media being ‘developed’ anyway? For instance, are the biggest donors like USA, Germany and Japan, also the ‘better’ donors? Some of the smallest grants appear to comprise the most recognisably ‘developmental’ projects e.g. journalist training, media reform, running of media organizations, promoting policies that underpin independent media ecosystems etc.. So does the media development community really have grounds for asking Western donors for more money for media assistance (on the grounds that only about 0.3 percent of total aid is spent on media), if the most effective projects are the small ones?

The paper, in summarising the research, will help to frame the debate about the link between media assistance and advancing development outcomes, by giving an overview of the aid-money figures and giving us the facts on which to build approaches, as well as giving context to some of the fundamental questions in the media assistance field.

**Id:** 23704

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the "Development" in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] Measuring, monitoring, mapping and modelling a sustainable global media ecosystem: A pilot study

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** UNESCO and others concerned with the sustainability of the news media worldwide recognise that if this issue is to be managed, it needs to be measured and monitored (Schneider, Hollifield, & Lublinski, 2016). Several frameworks for media viability indicators have been proposed over the past three years (UNESCO-IPDC, 2015; Schneider, Hollifield, & Lublinski, 2015). However, calls for their implementation have not been answered - until now.

This paper reports on the creation of an ongoing, broad-based, quantitative tool to measure, monitor, map and model the forces shaping media sustainability globally. Data on 264 countries and terrestrial regions, from a range of global databases including the World Bank, Transparency International, OECD etc. and from panel data, were used to create a Media Sustainability Barometer (MSB). Structural equation modelling was used to estimate relationships between MSB factors (political, economic, social, technological, legal and media-specific indicators) and those United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals which constitute the focus for 2019 .

Testing the model using data on G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) blocs, it was established that media sustainability was predicted by a number of UN SDGs, especially SDG No.16 (peace, justice and the right to information).

We anticipate that media leaders, policy makers and other development actors will draw on the MSB into their evidence-based strategic planning. Furthermore, the study will contribute to scholarly discourse into the changing news media ecosystem and the future of global media policy.

**Id:** 23705

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the "Development' in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] Voice, audience and the 'storytelling turn' in media (for) development

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** As the funding landscapes for media, journalism and development shift towards an increasing presence of private and philanthropic funding a chief concern regards the consequences for programming (Scott, Bunce, & Wright 2019; Schiffrin 2017). One of the identified shifts is the increasing blurring in practice between what scholars distinguish as 'media development' (strengthening media institutions and capacities) and 'media for development' (focus on educational messages and content) (Manyozo 2012; Scott 2014). In particular, many philanthropies interested in direct support to build local capacities for the production of content on specific themes (Kalathil 2017). Indeed, the broader wave of interest in 'instrumental storytelling' – or the 'storytelling turn' - has been argued as being driven by philanthropic foundations (Fernandes 2017). Additionally, direct support for journalism on specific themes is now also beginning to be placed in the context of 'fake news' and of combatting misinformation, as was highlighted in a recent op-ed by UK Foreign Secretary in his announcement of his focus on supporting press freedom (Hunt 2018).

The paper reflects on these trends in the broader landscape of media (for) development with reference to a recent audience research project undertaken with International Media Support (IMS), a media development organisation based in Denmark. The research project, including content analysis and audience focus groups, was undertaken in the context of one of IMS's programmes (funded by the Ford Foundation) supporting journalists to produce stories about local migration in four migration hubs in Africa (Noske-Turner, Twigt & Sajir 2018). The focus was on amplifying the voices of African migrants

The paper engages with Fernandes's (2017) concept of 'curated storytelling' first as a way of attending to some of the problems identified in the findings of the report in terms of a programmatic focus on 'voice' of migrants. In keeping with existing literature (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud

2015), the report found that the focus on individual migrant voices primarily through human interest frames, while intended to evoke sympathy, could also have the effect of reproducing representations of migrants as helpless victims, under-interrogating structural and systemic factors. Equally, 'positive' stories of uplift could, in keeping with Fernandes' neoliberal critique, have the effect of responsabilising migrants to be successful, integrated entrepreneurs. Second, Fernandes' concept of curated storytelling is used to understand the audience responses to stories. While most stories elicited the intended sense of sympathy and understanding among focus group participants, some stories were dismissed as misinformation or with a distancing response, and still others with quite profound levels of empathy and enriched understanding. The latter can be analysed to understand the how important authenticity, complexity and 'thickness' are for breaking through the malaise of curated stories and provoking change through media (for) development.

**Id:** 23706

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the "Development" in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] From media sustainability to vibrant information: Measuring the complex information systems we inhabit

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** Now in its 17th year, the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) studies the health of the media sector in 21 countries in Europe and Eurasia. International non-profit IREX, in collaboration with USAID, created the MSI as a tool to assess the development of media systems over time and across countries. It is different from other measurements and indexes in that it looks beyond free speech or press freedom; the MSI measures how effectively traditional and non-traditional sources of news serve their audiences. The primary source for the MSI score is a panel of local experts drawn from each country's media outlets, NGOs, professional associations, and academic institutions in each country. This approach is innovative and participatory; most international indexes are scored by a limited group of experts in global North countries.

While the MSI has yielded a significant depth of knowledge, the type of information it provides is still limited. In the two decades since the MSI was designed, the world has changed profoundly.

Digital transformation, the blurring of lines between media producers and audience, the near collapse of the advertising-based media business model, and backsliding among countries that appeared to be moving toward democratization, are among the confounding challenges.

Additionally, while the MSI was always intended to yield practical recommendations for the global development, it largely unable to either provide root cause analysis for many of the problems it identifies, or adequately map the connections among different forces that determine the health of a media sector.

This paper analyzes the complex pathways that have been necessary to design a new index to replace the MSI: an Index that measures not just the media but the complex information systems which enmesh today's world. The new index, called the Vibrant Information Barometer (VIBE) looks at both traditional and non-traditional producers of information; analyzes power inequalities; and attempts to better understand the relationships between people, information, decision-making, and action. The VIBE framework has four 'principles:' 1) meaningful content; 2) accessible channels that facilitate information flow; 3) citizens who are dynamically engaged with information; and 4) citizens who ultimately use that information to take action for transformative positive change. VIBE measurement draws on mixed methods, preliminarily including open source data, expert opinion, surveys, content analysis and web mapping. The index is being tested throughout 2019

using an MVP (minimum viable product) “agile” approach in 2-3 countries. By the time of the IAMCR we will be able to report on at least one VIBE pilot, especially vis a vis the extent to which VIBE can usefully measure complex information systems and the challenges in operationalizing the framework. Importantly, we will have a good read on how practical the VIBE analysis is to inform governments, civil society, donors, media and tech companies, and global development organizations, about how best to increase the vibrancy of information systems. The presentation at IAMCR will include a description of the journey to design VIBE, an analysis of the prototype testing, as well as designs for the way forward.

**Id:** 23707

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the "Development' in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] De-westernising media development in Africa

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** Historically media development has carried on as if it is an ideologically free enterprise yet it is conflicted by interests of the “developers”. Technical equipment, funding as well as training come with hidden agendas and values. Colonialism revealed that media development was offered in the service of power, especially to buttress systems of exploitation and to uphold power of colonisers. The colonising Western nations left in place media systems that are still constrained by colonial frameworks. The media development approach to postcolonial media systems will need to be rethought as over the years this has not created viable communication for Africans. De-Westernising media development entails decoloniality, to help undo the remnants of colonial frameworks, and to realign media development needs with contemporary needs in the Africans contexts. The digital media initiatives can succeed if their conceptualisation and policy frameworks avoid colonial tropes and incorporate African thinking. The paper evaluates literature and cases of media development in Southern Africa with a view to De-Westernising and rethink the media development efforts in Africa.

**Id:** 23708

**Title:** [Panel] Where's the 'Development' in Media Development: A Critical Reflection on the Contributions and Outcomes of Media Assistance [Presentation] Reflections on media development interventions and capacity strengthening: A case study of Zambia

**Session Type:** Panel Submission

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**Abstract:** Building on from the work outlined in briefing 'an evaluation of media capacity strengthening', <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research/capacity-strengthening-report.pdf>, this presentation will highlight new learnings from work in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. In particular it will draw on an extensive evaluation that BBC Media Action has carried out on a five-year intervention to support community radio stations in Zambia. This work has evaluated effectiveness of mentoring of stations at an organisation, practitioner and audience level to determine whether programming has led to increase in accountability at a local level. Key findings from a national survey, depth interviews and focus groups with radio listeners and members of the community, content analysis of output and depth interviews with station staff will be presented. It will show amongst others the importance of community journalists and the use of audience feedback as a mechanism to ensure interactivity, engagement and relevance at an audience level.