



Nepal: Participants underwent a Covid-19 test before the start of the workshop

Myanmar: Deputy Minister of Information U Aung Hla Tun (3. ftl) received Werner Eggert, Interlink Academy, for talks on media development and press freedom

Message from the Director



Werner Eggert

Since its very inception, Interlink Academy has seen digitization as the heart of its training courses - both as a training topic and as a teaching method. For more than a decade now, we have been one of its leading pioneers worldwide.

In the challenging times of the coronavirus pandemic, this has given us a big advantage, because our trainers were already proficient in teaching online. I am proud to say that they pushed the boundaries regarding interactivity, visualization, group work and practical exercises even further. Interlink Academy has made a huge leap forward.

Nevertheless, we still believe in the advantages of the blended-learning approach – a mix of face-to-face trainings and e-learning modules. Journalists want to meet each other in person. Whenever possible and with the support of our partners abroad, we carried out this model even in the midst of the pandemic. You will read in this newsletter, how we did this.

I would like to thank all our trainers, administrators, participating journalists and last but not least our sponsors who have gone more than an extra mile to make our work possible.

I wish you all a happy and successful new year 2021!

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Webinar for Our Alumni on Data Visualization in Times of the Coronavirus Pandemic

The spread of the coronavirus is a challenge for all journalists worldwide. Many face the same challenges: to present the development of the pandemic to their readers in a simple and clear way. During the hot phase of the first wave, the Interlink Academy offered a webinar for alumni to cope with the new challenges.

Interlink Trainer Claus Hesseling works as a freelance data journalist and experiences the same challenges. So why not share them with other journalists from all around the world? Without further ado, the Interlink Academy invited its alumni to a 90-minute webinar. Claus explained how to utilize Google Sheets to enter the latest Corona figures, such as for specific regions or countries. He further introduced the free program Datawrapper which can be used to build interactive maps and also can be embedded into websites.



Svetlana Gudenko, Ukraine

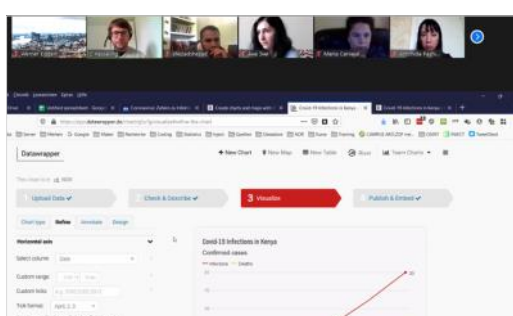
„Great thanks! It's so important when someone directs you and demonstrates how you can deliver the current information to the audience in an appealing way. Your team at the Interlink Academy is smart, professional and efficient.“

Antonida Pashinan, Russia

„Thank you very much for this webinar on data visualization. It was my first Zoom webinar and it was perfect! I am highly impressed. Claus is a great tutor.“

Mandla Tshuma, Zimbabwe

„While some journalists faced challenges during the lockdown over accreditation, authorities attended to the issue and scribes carry out their duties with minimum interruptions from the state security agents. More coverage is being directed at the pandemic. The media give daily updates on it. Worth mentioning is that news organisations such as CITE, have been fact-checking news on the pandemic to counter disinformation at a time when readers etc. require accurate and reliable information. Thanks for the webinar, which helped me a lot.“



Implementation of Datawrapper in Sri Lanka

Shanika Jayasekara first attended a training in Hamburg and is an Interlink alumna since 2013. Today, she works as an English editor for the online publication *Sri Lanka Mirror*. Shanika participated in Interlink's webinar on Data Visualization and reports here how she could already make use of the tools introduced by the trainer.

In 2013, I faced a turning point in my career as a digital journalist when I was offered a 12-month course in Germany. It was a fantastic experience that set my mark as a digital journalist and set me on a new path that I truly enjoy until this day - mobile photography. I was pleasantly surprised to receive an email in May during lockdown from my previous program coordinators. The online webinar was on data mapping, using the German start-up software - Datawrapper. This was super exciting because with the parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka scheduled for August, data mapping was something that we could definitely use in our coverage work. Data journalism is also not one of my strong points.



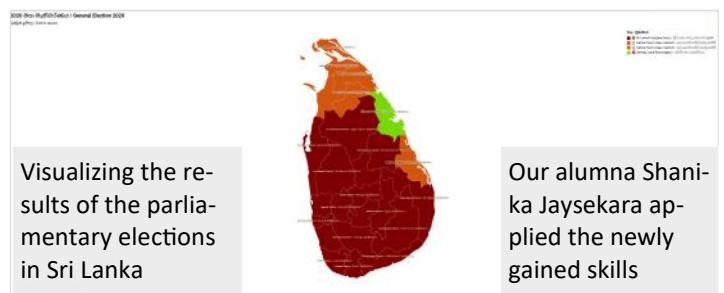
Shanika Jayasekara, Interlink Alumna and English editor at *Sri Lanka Mirror* in Colombo



When the webinar started, it was lovely to see several of my old friends online. After Werner Eggert did the basic introductions, Claus Hesselning took over, capable, patient and totally chilled as always. The webinar was a breeze, with every minute a flurry of activity to get screenshots, take careful notes and follow Claus' clear instructions. It was exciting to see new options. It was such an amazing experience and I felt like a kid with a shiny new toy. I was so absorbed with it, I barely noticed that the time had raced by. My only concern was whether I would be able to work bilingually. But I felt that was something I needed to experiment first before asking. And I knew that Interlink would always be open to help.

Immediately after the Zoom webinar session, I contacted my co-editor and told him there was a possibility for us to do something new during the 2020 parliamentary election coverage on our online news portal www.srilankamirror.com and he was delighted. The map would be "my baby". With three days left for the election, I started on the map. Going through the screenshots, the notes, I was pleasantly surprised how much I remembered from the webinar. I was worried though. Editing a live map under my sole care was a lot of responsibility and results would be coming up very rapidly towards the end. After a few ups and downs, many cups of tea, much teeth grinding and muttering, it was finally presentable. I finally sent

the link to Werner and Claus. Claus immediately said to let him know if I did come across any technical issues, which thankfully did not happen. Phew. Just like the election, it was a smooth flow. As the night wore on, the colours slowly started to creep into the map and finally it was done. A bilingual map with district level results, winners, and more details inserted as labels in the map. The coverage was highly successful and we received extremely positive feedback from our readers, friends and supporters.



I am highly grateful for the webinar on data visualization which enabled us to truly up our coverage by doing something new. Something so simple, yet so compact and infinitely powerful helped a relatively small online portal such as ours, to make our mark among the media moguls of the country who are equipped with more human and technical resources. That is the beauty of the whole experience. It just says that you don't necessarily need to have flashy toys. You just need to have the right ones. Therefore, a huge shoutout to Interlink for their attempts to stay true to their cause even amid a pandemic by empowering journalists around the world.

Laboratory of Exposure with Bihus.Info and Book 14: Coaching Ukrainian Investigative Journalists from the Regions

Laboratory of Exposure aimed at increasing the capacity of regional journalism, this time training eight investigative journalists from different regions of Ukraine. According to Ukrainian journalists, the further from the capital, the more dangerous it is for journalists, and the less access to knowledge and resources they have.

The Mentees



Pavlo Novyk
Kharkiv



Alla Maksymchuk
Rivne



Vadym Korshenko
Zaporizhzhia



Liliia Stativko
Zaporizhzhia



Kseniia Omelchenko
Poltava



Bohdan Krasovskiy
Sloviansk



Anastasia Zubova
Kropyvnytskyi



Maryana Sych
Lviv

The mentorship of Bihus.Info gives the mentees new and improved skills, leading them to expose new schemes, and learn to work with new sources. They are assisted by lawyers from the legal projects *Tysny* and *Point People*, two initiatives founded by Bihus.Info, to further increase their professional capacity and ensure their protection.

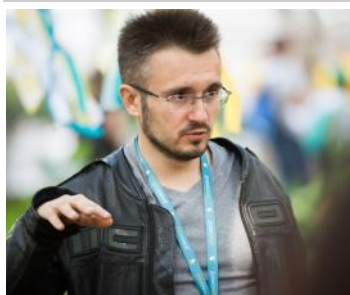
The Project Team of Bihus.Info and Book.14

Denys Bihus
Chief Editor of Bihus.Info

Oksana Bizenkova
Project Manager

Lesya Ivanova
Project Editor and Mentor

Maksym Opanasenko,
Project Editor



Achievements of the Mentees of *Laboratory of Exposure*

Eight investigative journalists from different regions of Ukraine have been working for nine months under the mentorship of the Bihus.Info team, one of the countries most impactful journalistic teams. Despite the pandemic, they improve their skills in searching across registers and social networks, continue to expose corruption in the regions, and achieve impact for their investigation by cooperating with lawyers.

According to local journalists, the further from Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, the more dangerous the investigations become. However, with the support and mentorship of their colleagues from Bihus.Info and Book.14, they not only gain courage but also learn and improve to work with new sources, improve skills and expose new schemes.

We asked participants of the project *Laboratory of Exposure* about their progress and the intermediate results of their training.



Liliia Stativko is recording a comment from a member of the Zaporizhzhia City Council

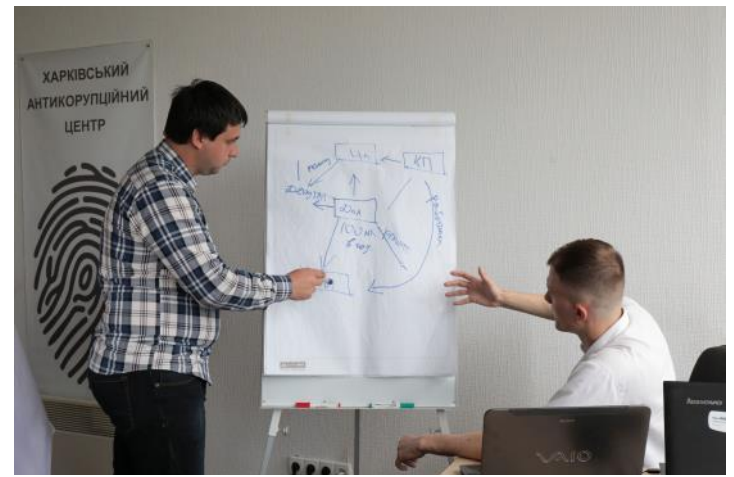
Vadym Korshenko from Zaporizhzhia managed to find proof for an old story: "We found evidence of the scheme, which our team had known about, but which we haven't been able to prove for several years, due to the fact that mentor Lesya Ivanova advised monitoring the persons of



Anastasiya Zubova (red hair) is shooting photos at a tape-cutting event in Kropyvnytskyi

interest's social media every day. And soon, this investigation will finally be published in different Ukrainian media. Also, thanks to the lawyers of Bihus.Info, several of my materials triggered inspections by the Anti-Monopoly Committee."

"I learned to check texts thoroughly and work with huge amounts of data," says Anastasiya Zubova from Kropyvnytskyi. "When I sat down to analyze the materials on anti-coronavirus procurements, I thought that I would



Pavlo Novyk, left, is discussing his investigating research with an employee of the Kharkiv Anti-Corruption Centre

never go through so much information. But I was lucky with my editor, Maxym Opanasenko from Bihus.Info. Together with him, I not only sorted through that sea of facts but also learned how to make it an interesting story written in accessible language."

"Before the Laboratory, my texts came out long and dry, but thanks to the training on storytelling from the editors of Bihus.Info and its mentorship during the training, they became more interesting and clear," says Pavlo Novyk from the Kharkiv Anti-Corruption Center. "Another achievement is that I learned to get out of my comfort zone, as thanks to the project I had to face new tasks, including filming." Alla Maksymchuk from Rivne adds: "As it turned out, knowing your registers is not enough! You need to know where and what to look for. With the Bihus.Info team and its helpful support during the *Laboratory of Exposure*, I was able to practice working with different sources and realized that I knew almost nothing about investigations before the training."

Investigative Journalism in Ukraine: „Cooperation with Lawyers Is Self-Defense“

The mentees of the training program *Laboratory Exposure* are assisted by lawyers from the *Tysny* and the *Point People* projects, two legal initiatives founded by the Bihus.Info team. Anastasiya Borema, communications officer at Bihus.Info, summarizes why the cooperation with lawyers is important.

What are the results of cooperation between lawyers and journalists in the regions? Why is it dangerous for whistleblowers to work without legal support? We asked the participants of the project.

“Why do journalists need lawyers? Because it is thanks to their support and the continuation of investigations in the form of criminal proceedings that journalists do not give up,” said Anastasiya from Kremenchuk. “With legal support, we have a chance for justice, especially when the person of interest threatens to sue us. After all, thanks to lawyers, you understand whether there are grounds for this and how to defend your work.”

“Legal screening is an important factor for a journalist, especially for an investigative journalist,” emphasizes Pavlo from Kharkiv. “After all, cooperation with a lawyer allows you to avoid mistakes and minimizes the risk of receiving a lawsuit. First of all, that's the protection of the journalist. And another opportunity to achieve an impact.”

“We have to ‘fight’ the bureaucrats using bureaucratic methods and rules,” says Bohdan from Slovyansk. “Therefore, the lawyer is the best friend and ally of the journalist, who will help to break down the exposed schemes and crimes in terms of the articles of the Criminal Code. And, importantly, will keep track of the case.”

Alla from Rivne says that lawyers are experts in investigations who help to avoid accidents: “They check the facts and the presentation of the material so that we don't violate anything. Most importantly, they protect us. Because often professional journalists have several open cases on obstruction of journalistic activity. You can't do that without lawyers.”

“Journalists may sometimes go into the hothead mode and write excessive things in their materials, or something they don't understand. Lawyers, in this case, act as a failsafe and do not allow us to make mistakes,” adds Vadym from Zaporizhzhia. “Lawyers can provide a legal assessment of a case and add some zest to the material that journalists, due to their lack of special knowledge, may not have any idea about. Also, lawyers' appeals to the authorities based on the information exposed by journalists don't let our work be done in vain, because it often triggers various inspections.”

Kseniya from Kremenchuk agrees that lawyers protect journalists from mistakes: “A journalist cannot devote as much time to studying case law as a lawyer. You can look

at the Criminal Code and think that you have found a blatant violation, and a lawyer will show you a court decision, according to which such actions have been the norm for two years already.”

“Investigative journalists need lawyers at all stages of their work,” says Liliya from Zaporizhzhia. “At the stage of gathering information, in order to make sure that the logic of violations is correct, the lawyer acts as a consultant and fact-checker. After writing or recording the material, the lawyer checks the correctness of the information, its objectivity, and compliance with the interpretation of documents. After the publication of the investigation, the



Vadym Korshenko, right, and his colleague are discussing with police men, why they were banned from a court hearing

lawyer is the person who helps to turn the exposed violations or schemes into criminal cases.”

As a result of the cooperation of Bihus.Info lawyers and journalists from different regions, only in 9 months of 2020, it was possible to:

- save UAH 67,491,448 from embezzlement
- get fraudsters fined for UAH 2,117,000
- achieve the opening of 11 criminal proceedings, 1 suspicion, 1 indictment submitted to the court, and even the 1st sentence (a fine of UAH 3,091,220)
- and to ensure 2 full checks of the declarations and 1 lifestyle monitoring for the persons of interest



Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions in Myanmar, more online meetings than planned took place

Strengthening Capacities for Mobile Video Journalism, Digital Research and Management in Myanmar

Dawei Watch is the only independent news publisher in the region of Tanintharyi in the South of Myanmar. It publishes a weekly newspaper and runs a news website and a news agency. However, digital change in the news industry affects Dawei Watch and threatens its sustainability. The Interlink Academy supports Dawei Watch by strengthening its capacities in digital journalism and marketing.

The Dawei Watch media house was founded by Ko Myo Aung, Ko Thu Rein Hlaing und Ma Aye Aye Zin in 2012. Today, it publishes the weekly newspaper Tanintharyi Weekly and the news website DaweiWatch.com, and runs a local news agency under the name of Dawei Watch. Almost 20 staff members report news which are not covered by the government media, including investigative stories.

Two years ago, Dawei Watch made headlines after it had published a satirical article on the head of the regional government in Tanintharyi. The politician sued Dawei Watch and the media house had to pay a fine of 300 Euro. But ironically, the politician lost her job some months later due to corruption charges which had been the topic of the satirical article. Despite its successful journalism, Dawei Watch faces severe difficulties following the digitization of the news industry which also takes its toll on media houses in Myanmar. The online publications are not state of the art, the audience flock to social media and revenues from advertising melt away.

Against this background, Dawei Watch and the Interlink Academy agreed on a joint capacity building project for the media house. One module were training courses for staff reporters and contributing freelancers in mobile video journalism and in online research. Other modules tackled the modernization of the website and the need to uplift the administration and marketing skills, in particular generating a steady income flow from digital publishing.

The project was hard hit by the travel restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic. The international airports of Myanmar were closed throughout the year, and for several months it was difficult to travel within the country. Even the Editor-in-Chief of Dawei Watch, Ko Myo Aung, was stuck for several weeks in Yangon, and he had to run the newsroom remotely. Interlink Academy's trainers and consultants also had to adopt and work mostly online.





Participants in the training *Mobile Video Journalism* are experimenting with new shooting techniques in the classroom in Dawei

„In the future, I will be prepared and ready to do the news stories by mobile phone.“



Kyaw Thu Soe, Course Participant

„I joined this training on mobile video journalism to get the video editing knowledge and skill for mobile phones and to know how to create interesting broadcast news stories.

I learned all those important topics during the training, such as the basic rules for shooting and editing mobile video stories, how to do live streaming, what we have to prepare before shooting (checking phone storage, battery, microphone), shooting angles and much more relevant and useful tools.

Within a few days, I knew how to use the smart phone for different styles of reporting and technical knowledge and I could improve my stories and use my mobile phone in a professional way.“

„I will use those techniques in my work.“

Ye Htut Win, Course Participant

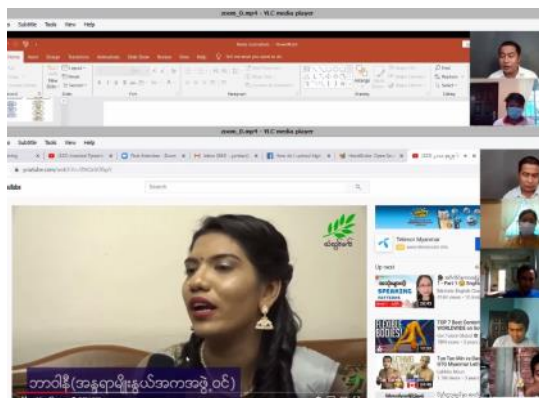
“Mobile technology is developing everywhere in the world. It has a lot of functions and is used everywhere in the world in various sectors, also in the field of journalism. Nowadays all reporting processes can be done by smart phones which helps a lot because it is not necessary to use and carry around heavy equipment.

Therefore it is important that we learn the techniques and tools how we can use the smart phones in the best way and use its different functions.

That was the reason why I have decided to attend this training on mobile video journalism. I learned many new things in the training such as how to make video news stories by mobile phone and how to do stand reporting.”



Participants are trying new video functions and discuss the results



Mobile Video Journalism - Hybrid training due to the pandemic



Course participants are playing with new shooting and filming tools

Visiting Myanmar's Deputy Minister of Information



From the left: Managing Director News and Periodical Enterprises U They Swe, Werner Eggert, Deputy Minister of Information U Aung Hla Tun, Managing Director Myanmar Radio and Television U Myint Kyaw

Werner Eggert, the Founder and Managing Director of the Interlink Academy, has followed the development of the media in Myanmar ever since the political changes started taking root in the Southeast Asian country in 2011.

Last year, he called on the Deputy Minister of Information, U Aung Hla Tun, in the capital city of Naypyidaw to discuss freedom of the press and media development.

U Aung Hla Tun emphasized that the Myanmar government appreciates the work and support for journalists done by international media development organizations and the need for more assistance. The Interlink Academy will continue to work in Myanmar in the years to come.

Myanmar's Pioneer in E-Learning: Chit Aein Thu Founded the Software Company CCEducare Myanmar

Chit Aein Thu is a pioneer in e-learning in Myanmar, and has been mentored by Interlink Academy's Werner Eggert for the last two years. Chit Aein Thu founded her own company CCEducare Myanmar to market international e-learning software solutions in Myanmar.

Very soon she found out that solutions from abroad do not fit the needs of the Myanmar customers, and she started to adapt the products according to the technical and pedagogical needs of her local customers. For the last two years, her business has been growing tremendously, and with the increasing need for e-learning in the Coronavirus pandemic, her services are in even higher demand.

In June 2020, she was awarded the South-East Asian "Women of the Future 2020 Social Entrepreneur Award". The mentorship program which put Chit Aein Thu and Werner Eggert in touch is organized by the German Myanmar Chamber of Commerce in Yangon.



Chit Aein Thu and Werner Eggert





Nepali journalists celebrating the successful completion of the Data Driven Journalism training in Kathmandu

Media in Nepal: Strengthening Data Journalism and Creating Local Training Capacities

Twelve journalists from Nepal participated in the blended-learning course on data-driven journalism. The participants were taught by German trainer Claus Hesseling via Zoom from Hamburg with support from two local trainers in Kathmandu. Tilak Pathak, Executive Director of CMR-Nepal, explains the need for the training for Nepali journalists and its concept.

Nepal's mediascape is quickly moving towards digital journalism yet there are only rare opportunities for the journalists to learn skills required for digital journalism. CMR-Nepal identified that data-driven journalism could greatly enhance the quality of digital journalism and also help to tell stories not told before or from different perspectives serving the public. There was not only a lack of training opportunities but also local trainers, so we approached the Interlink Academy for support to conduct practical based skill developing training on data-driven journalism.

After a few rounds of discussions on the need, objective, and content, the Interlink Academy agreed to support us deliver the training with the effective blended-learning methods where participants attend face-to-face training at the start and conclusion and participate in online training in-between.

The first attendance phase of the first of two batches of Nepali journalists was held in September 2020 with safety measures in place to reduce risks of coronavirus infection. The second and final phase was conducted in November 2020.

The data, working with spreadsheets, various types of visualizations and fundamental Python programming to extract and visualize data from various sources of the internet. The local trainers from Nepal under the supervision of Interlink Academy will deliver the same training modules to 12 more journalists in 2021.



Tilak Pathak, Executive Director of CMR-Nepal

Ensuring Safety amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

„While planning for the Data-Driven Journalism training in Nepal, we were aware of the risk of coronavirus.“ Bikash Karki, coordinator from CMR Nepal, describes the precautionary measures for the course.



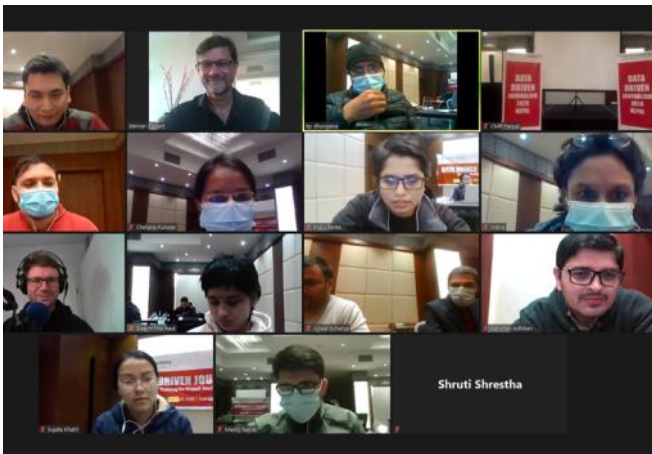
Bikash Karki, Coordinator CMR-Nepal

Although at the time of the training, most of the restrictions in Kathmandu were lifted, we wanted to ensure the safety of all participants. We had hired a government-authorized private lab to conduct PCR tests for all participants and hotel staff, who will serve us while staying at the hotel. During the tests, all maintained social distance with everyone wearing masks.

After the test, all the participants picked up the packed lunch and went to the room - we provided everyone with single rooms. Everyone remained in the room until the next day, and the hotel provided a packed dinner at the door. The next morning, the first day of training, the results came out and everyone was tested negative. Throughout the training, all participants were asked to

remain within the hotel and not to have any contact with people outside.

The tests allowed all participants to engage with each other during training without much fear. We had asked the hotel to provide us food and service separately by the staff who had tested negative and stayed at the hotel. The service was scaled down but the participants were open and engaged throughout the training. This also allowed us to conduct informal experience sharing sessions every evening before dinner where all participants shared their expertise or knowledge or experience as journalists which helped participants to bond more.



The closing ceremony took place online to ensure the attendance of the German team as well



All participants received a certificate



Despite the Covid-19 circumstances, the participants enjoyed the training

„The training has increased my hunger for data journalism.“



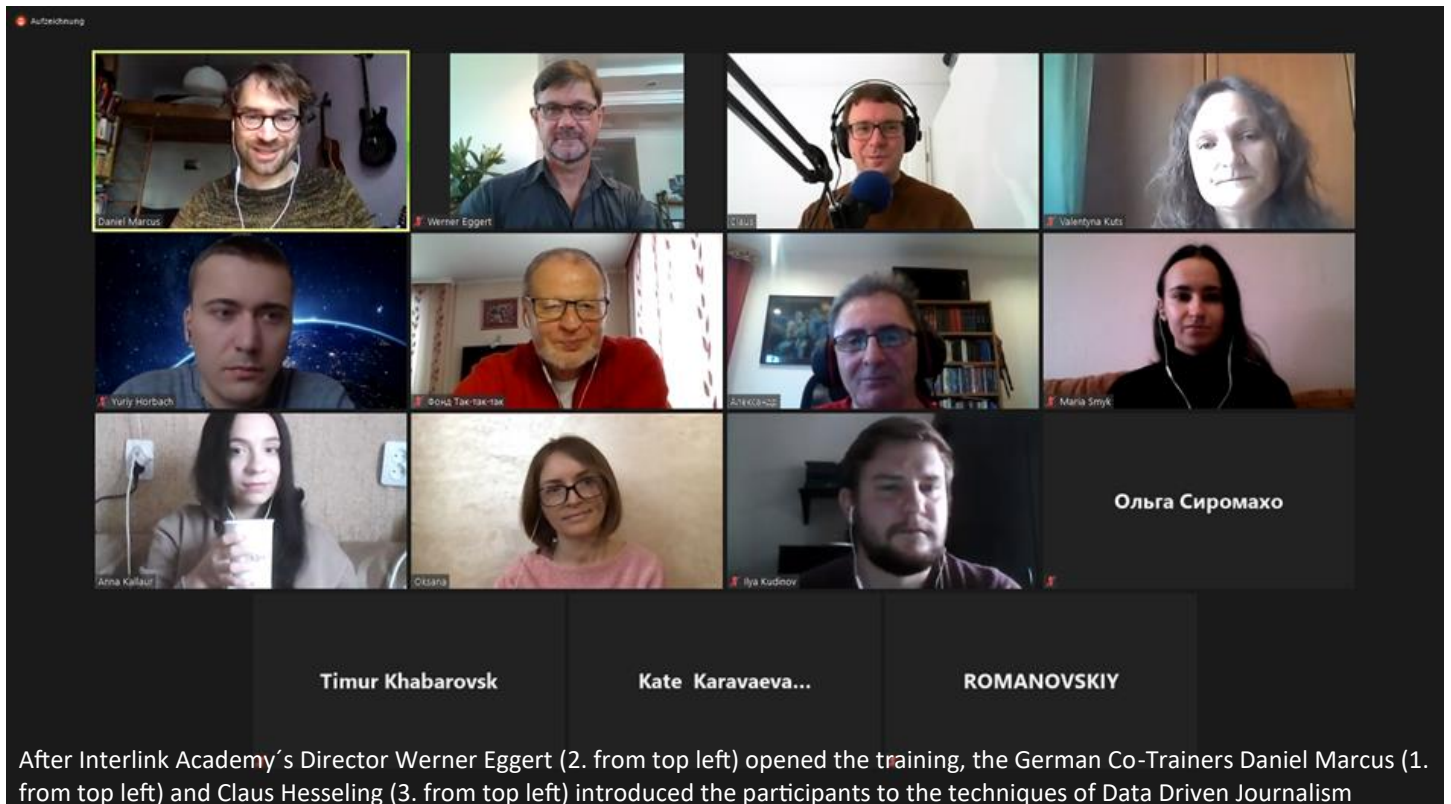
Praju Panta, Course Participant

„I thank CMR-Nepal and Interlink Academy for selecting me to participate in the three-month training. I am confident that this training will provide me knowledge and skills to present data in more readable way.

I learned how to find data, how to present that data in maps and charts and how to use online tools such as Google Sheets to analyse data. I have written news based on data for Nepallive.com but now I will be able to present that data in an easily understandable way. However, I think my understanding is fundamental and just a start, but I will learn as I go. I am also thankful to trainer Claus for his relentless effort from Hamburg to

teach us in Kathmandu, Nepal. His training skills and knowledge of subject matter was exceptional.

During training, teaching and learning is important but it is equally important in how we spend the time bonding with each other. The evening talk, where each of the participants shared their knowledge and tips, and personal stories, also taught me a lot. Thank you organizers for those sessions.“



Russia and Ukraine: Data Driven Journalism and Networking for Investigative Reporters

Data journalism is a craft in itself - a group of journalists from Russia and Ukraine joined this online workshop to improve their skills in this craft. In addition, the participating journalists have strengthened their cross-border ties.

On behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office, the Interlink Academy conducted a blended learning workshop on data driven journalism in which supported the networking of journalists from East-Europe and Germany.

The workshop was almost a global event: the two co-trainers Claus Hesseling from Hamburg and Daniel Marcus from Berlin led the training from Germany while a group of Ukrainian and Russian journalists took part from their homes. The Ukrainian partner organization The Power of Truth is located in Luzk, and the Russian partner organization Tak-Tak-Tak is based in Novosibirsk, Siberia.

The participants exchanged their experiences about the possibilities and limits of data journalism. During the online workshop they also learned very practical tricks and tools for handling data in their working life. They also researched small projects themselves in group works.

Средняя зарплата в России

Октябрь 2019-го

252.60 555.43 2333.52

Самая большая средняя зарплата в стране



Map: Maria Smyk • Source: Росстат • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

One of the outcomes of the workshop: a map of the income distribution in Russia

“The Project Is Over. Cooperation Continues!”

Victor Yukechev, Director of the Tak-Tak-Tak Human Rights Foundation based in Novosibirsk, Sibiria, explains the cross-border cooperation and the fruits of the project.



In August 2019, the Tak-Tak-Tak Foundation received an invitation from the German Embassy in Russia to participate in a program to expand the cooperation with the civil societies in countries of the Eastern partnership and Russia. We submitted a draft of the *School of Investigative Journalism* for the competition, which was devised as a joint project with colleagues from Germany and Ukraine. Based on the recommendations of colleagues from the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN), Interlink Academy and the Ukrainian Center for Investigative Journalism The Power of Truth expressed their desire to cooperate with us in this project.

On the Russian side, five journalists and media activists from several regions of Russia - from Kaliningrad to Khabarovsk - participated in the project. Initially, the project, of which the Interlink Academy was the main executor, was planned as an offline workshop and an exchange of experience in Germany and Ukraine. But the Covid-19 pandemic has made its own adjustments: we had been waiting for several months when we could make our trips. At the end of summer, we decided: waiting for the end of the pandemic is pointless, we need to resort to an online learning format to continue with the project.

And here, our colleagues from Interlink surpassed all our expectations: they offered a very interesting, rich and useful online program. We all gained, apart from our professional knowledge in Data Journalism, invaluable skills of collaborative work in our distributed teams.

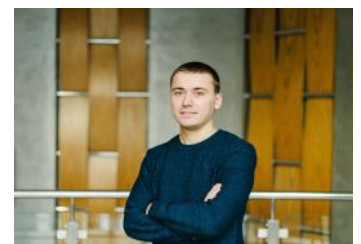
Much of this knowledge and skills are already in demand. In particular, we have new ideas on how to present the results of the large interregional investigation *Public procurement during the pandemic* to the public. At the very end of the project, together with The Power of Truth Center, we prepared an electronic brochure *Data Journalism for “Dummies”: How to Turn Numbers into a Story* based on the materials of these trainings.

The project has ended. But we hope very much to continue the program in 2021 with the same participants.

„Data Management Tools Make Our Work More Efficient.“

Yuriy Horbach, Director of the Center of Investigative Reporting The Power of Truth, located in Lutsk, Ukraine, emphasizes the importance of Data Driven Journalism techniques for their daily work.

The participation of our investigative centre in the *Data Driven Journalism* project is a new experience for all participants, which they are already applying in their daily activities. Until the last moment, we had hoped that the project would take place in the offline format, and the project participants would be able to meet in Hamburg and Lutsk and to work together deeper in the declared direction. But due to Covid-19 we had to adjust the program. Nevertheless, we managed to develop a training format that was best suited for all of us and, at the same time, did not interfere with the execution of daily duties and tasks during this difficult period.



The professional approach of trainers Claus Hesseling and Daniel Marcus did not leave any participants indifferent to the studied tools and topics. The experience gained will be especially useful when working with data on public procurement, on state property management, on topics of ecology and mineral resources, as well as elections in Ukraine.

Moreover, already during the course, some participants tried to work with actual data, not the ones designed for training purposes. For example, we managed to create a map covering the results of the elections for the Mayor of Lutsk with breakdown to polling stations. While working on the topic of local elections financing, which the Center’s journalists are currently investigating, they are already putting their knowledge into practice. The data management tools they have mastered make this work much faster and more efficient.

We at The Power of Truth would like to express our gratitude to all those involved in the implementation of the Data Journalism project. We look forward to continuing cooperation with our partners - the Interlink Academy and the Tak-Tak-Tak Foundation - in order to raise the professional level of Ukrainian journalists, to develop democracy, increase importance and effectiveness of journalistic investigations, both in our country and on the international level.



Zambian's participants with the Trainers Joan Chirwa (4. f.r.) and Joseph Mwenda (6.f.r.) from News Diggers in early February

Zambia and Zimbabwe: Strengthening Investigative Research of Independent African Journalists

Interlink's training for journalists improves networks and cross-border cooperation between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Joan Chirwa, media trainer with Interlink's partner News Diggers, Zambia, shared her views on the course.



Joan Chirwa, Trainer at News Diggers, Founder and Coordinator of the Free Press Initiative Zambia

"The twelve participants drawn from different media organizations (radio, television, print) across Zambia got into the program highly expectant of its content. The training program emphasizes some key components in basics in journalism which require journalists to fact-check their work as much as possible and investigate extensively to attain quality work.

The training spoke to the demands of industry today, with the advent of social media posing new challenges that raise the need for fact checking in the journalists' daily practice. Additionally, the digital age has brought about new techniques in investigations as participants were taken through different digital investigation tools that are relevant to today's work and help journalists tell their stories with a lot of precision.

The demand for more of similar workshops in Zambia shows just how much journalists in our country lack the skills to utilize the available digital tools to carry out their work. The curriculum at tertiary level is still heavily tilted towards textbook journalism which is obviously not relevant in the practice of journalism. The local trainers have been inundated with requests from individual journalists and media institutions for another fact checking and investigative research training workshop because they believe all practicing journalists require such skills today to survive the fast changing demands of industry."



Before the pandemic: Zimbabwean's participants together with Zenzele Ndebele (1. f.l.) and Helder Nkomo (2.f.l.) from CITE

Interlink Academy's Training for Journalists Reinforces Zimbabwean and Zambian Media in the Digital World

Lesley Moyo, media trainer with Interlink's partner Center for Innovation and Technology (CITE) from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, illuminates the impacts of the training program for journalists from the Zimbabwean point of view.



Lesley Moyo, Trainer at Center for Innovation and Technology (CITE)

"This is my second year being part of the Fact-checking and Investigative Research program which is co-organised by the Interlink Academy and the Center for Innovation and Technology (CITE). The collaboration between Interlink and CITE takes place at a time when the media industry world is going through significant changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The media landscape in Zimbabwe has not been left behind, as media houses are grappling with the changes and trying to play catch up to the ever changing digital world. The digital world has forced media houses to adopt multi-platform strategies to push their content. It is no longer just about the newspapers, radio and television stations. The digital world has unveiled vast opportunities that media houses can use to expand their audience.

While CITE, as an online-based media organisation, has managed to locate its space in the digital world, there is need to upscale the skill sets of its journalists. There is a general need for Zimbabwean journalists to extricate themselves from the old-school journalism and adopt new digital skills that will enhance their work. This is where Interlink has been helpful to local journalists, by providing them with critical digital skills. The fact-checking and investigative research programme is of great importance to local journalists at a time when disinformation is on the rise in the country. "

Zambian and Zimbabwe: „The Training Helps My Career.“

Brighton Ncube, Zimbabwe

“Fact-checking is an integral skill for news reporters and investigative journalists in the 21st century. This is an important skill that every news reporter should have in this modern era of fake news and disinformation.

Taking part in the fact-checking workshop hosted by Interlink Academy in partnership with Centre For Innovation and Technology (CITE), Bulawayo, has been eye opening. As a news reporter I was taught how to use various google operators to fact-check as well as be informed. The training was helpful as many people across the world are facing the problem of misinformation, disinformation as well as the spread of fake news.”



Sharon Sibindi, Zimbabwe

„In an era where people can now manipulate data, videos, pictures among others using various e-applications, it is of importance for one to fact-check before publishing a story.

I learned about how Google works, where to look at when searching the web for news articles and verifying facts. In news gathering and reporting, especially during elections, politicians tend to bribe some journalists or some information is not told correct to the people.

So I feel newsrooms in Zimbabwe and other African countries should apply fact-checking skills before publishing them to avoid issues of retractions and losing their credibility as organizations or individuals.”

Michael Kaluba, Zambia

“I feel the workshop on fact-checking and digital research was a thorough combination of important tools that are necessary for a Zambian journalist to be acquainted with in this digital era marred with a lot of misinformation. It was even more insightful that the facilitators of the training are personal role models whose works speak for themselves.

I have gained insight into how I can amicably combine all different tools we have learned during the training such as media ethics, journalism basics, fact-checking and verification to come up with compelling, factual and well articulated stories. The training once implemented, will help my career to stand out.”



Julia Malungo, Zambia

“The training has been very insightful for me. I was amazed by the many tools I learned which I didn't know so far that they existed. The tools will also help me to fact-check my stories before I submit to my editors for publishing and also to retrieve what has been deleted in an event that it is newsworthy.

Not also forgetting the Jeffrey Metadata which to me was the most amazing tool. Not to take away anything from the other tools as Google etc., they were equally amazing.

I am confident that I will not be part of the journalists that indulge in fake news. Thank you for the opportunity.”



Participants are studying and sharing their experiences in Zimbabwe (left and center) and Zambia during the training



Participants and trainers at Sumy State University
Right: online planning workshop with Ukrainian and German team members

Media Literacy Training in the Eastern Regions of Ukraine: Flexibility Required in Times of Covid-19

The training is an international project conducted in the Zaporizhzhia, Sumy and Dnipro oblasts of Ukraine by Interlink Academy in cooperation with Ukrainian partners – universities and local NGOs.

The purpose and objectives of the project were to train media literacy trainers in villages and small cities in the Eastern regions of Ukraine, to improve their knowledge and skills in media literacy, conduct trainings, and promote critical thinking in the local communities of Ukraine.

As most people in the world, due to Covid-19 we also had to face many challenges while organizing and implementing the training.

Instead of a face-to-face training with Interlinks German trainer and the Ukrainian local trainers, the Covid-19 restrictions and lock downs taught us to be flexible and creative. We changed the concept and switched over to a hybrid version: The German trainer was attending via Zoom, while the Ukrainian partners could participate in person.

The project included three stages: a face-to-face phase with local trainers in Ukraine, online studying with the German trainer and practice of their own trainings in their villages and towns.

The project participants were university and secondary school teachers, local journalists, and public activists who are eager to be trainers in media literacy and develop civic cooperation in their communities.



Katerina Sirinyok-Dolgaryova, Local Trainer in Zaporizhzhia

„I like my new role as a trainer in media literacy.“**Liydmyla Garaschenko**, Course Participant, Zaporizhzhya Oblast

„I am very delighted that I participated in the project „Media Literacy in regions of Ukraine“. During four days of face-to-face trainings, I broadened my horizons in media literacy and acquired useful skills in methods and forms of trainer work. I will definitely use them in my position as a school teacher too.

Our trainers created a productive atmosphere and shared their professionalism, kindness, tolerance and experience in media literacy. This contributed to the fact that time flew by so fast and brought so many positive emotions, while providing rigorous knowledge and improving our skills in media literacy. I also really enjoyed the online sessions with our German trainer Erik. In

his manner of presenting, there was a deep respect to each participant's opinion. He always imperceptibly corrected and showed us the right direction. In addition, we gained useful experience in conducting online trainings, which in our current quarantine reality is very relevant and extremely important.

No doubts, this project positively changed my life. First, I increased my level of media literacy and now feel more confident in the daily information flow, being able to fact-check it. Secondly, I like my new social role as a media literacy trainer! Thank you very much to the organizers! I look forward to new creative projects with Interlink Academy.“

„I can confidently apply the skills which I have got during the training in my own life.“**Svitlana Ninko**, Course Participant, Sumy Oblast

„In October 2020, I had such a wonderful opportunity to take part in the project "Media Literacy in the Regions of Ukraine", which was organized by the German NGO Interlink Academy.

During the training I got very useful knowledge about modern media, skills of critical thinking about the media product, propaganda and manipulation methods, training methods, the role of a coach, content rules, amongst others I would like to express my gratitude to the trainers for making it so interesting, with all practical tasks and examples. The information was interesting and detailed, presented in an accessible form, the tasks and exercises allowed us to understand deeply the seriousness and importance of this topic. As a practical psychologist in an educational institution, the role of a coach is familiar to me, but it is especially a pleasure to work with it when this topic is not only of interest for the coach, but also for the participants.

In the not so distant past, the school used to be the children main source of information about the world, people, society and nature, however, today the Internet is a significant factor in shaping children's picture of the world, and it is not always reliable. Information is often random and needs verification. I can say with confidence that the knowledge, which I have got, allowed me to critically analyze my attitude to media coverage before the training, and after, as a result, I have now become more critical to the information I see.“

**„The Ukrainian youth must learn to be sensitive for freedom of speech.“****Valentina Chirva**, Course Participant, Dnipro Oblast

„I am a history teacher from the small town of Kamyanske in Ukraine. I always teach my students to think critically and check information. There is a lot of information, so the problem of its analysis and critical perception to determine the truth has become acute. I was lucky to become an active participant in the Ukrainian-German project "Media Literacy for the Regions of Ukraine".

Now I have gained knowledge and skills in media literacy, which I am happy to pass on to my students in my own trainings. Because it is the Ukrainian youth who must learn to think critically, to be responsible for freedom of speech and to be ready for life in a European society where

media literacy is a vital skill. After all, media literacy is a practical skill, a feature of a lifestyle.

This project was an impetus for me to develop my own media literacy, to get acquainted with new online tools and technologies, which is especially relevant in the pandemic. It was a new step towards professional growth for me and I hope to have become a better media literacy coach for my students and colleagues.“

The German Embassy Visits Our Project Partner in Sumy

On September 7, 2020, our long-term project partner at the State University Sumy, MediaKompas, was visited by Annette Pölking, Head of Press and Public Relation at the German embassy in Kiev and, among others, discussed with her our projects on Media Literacy and the media industry in Sumy, as well as exchanged ideas.



Annette Pölking, right, talking to Julia Bondarenko, Project Coordinator MediaKompas



Julia Bondarenko, Annette Pölking, Olena Tkachenko, Director MediaKompas (f.l.t.r.)

Sumy, Zaporizhzhya and Dnipro



Participants in Dnipro are reflecting and discussing new ideas



Katerina Sirinyok-Dolgaryova (2. ftr), Local Trainer, is giving advices



Participants in Sumy are preparing their group presentation



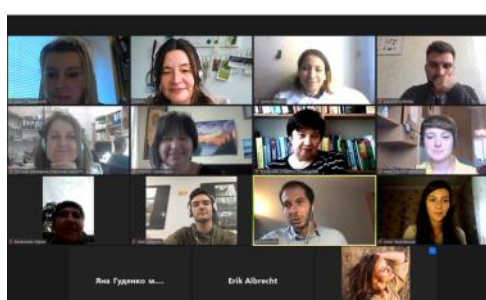
Participants and local trainers are posing with masks in Sumy



Anton Prosenko, Local Trainer, is visualizing the methods



Group work, here in Sumy, is always an important part of the training



Online opening by Interlink's Trainer Erik Albrecht and Coordinator Andrea Kamberg



Group picture with participants and trainers in Zaporizhzhya

From INJECT to JECT.AI: A Project Becomes a Non-Profit Business

Big news for the INJECT project: A company was created to push forward digital creativity tools for journalists.

Three years ago, Interlink Academy participated in the EU-funded project INJECT. This project is about the development of digital tools for journalists to increase creativity and competitiveness.

In the summer 2020 INJECT opened a new chapter: with JECT.AI a company was founded and incorporated in the United Kingdom. The goal is to develop the whole thing into a sustainable non-profit business. Interlink Academy's Director Werner Eggert is happy about the progress: „This is a big step for the project! JECT.AI's consortium leader Neil Maiden, Professor at City, University of London, has done a great job in making this happen. While at the same time, the lead developer Kos Zachos has constantly pushed forward the product development of the JECT.AI tools.”

The next step is to co-evolve the project with media houses and content creators. The JECT.AI team created digital tools for journalists to help them to develop new ideas for stories, identify these topics where only a few journalists have written about and to show who are the leading journalists in the field. Other partners in the project are WAN-IFRA and DigitalCatapult.

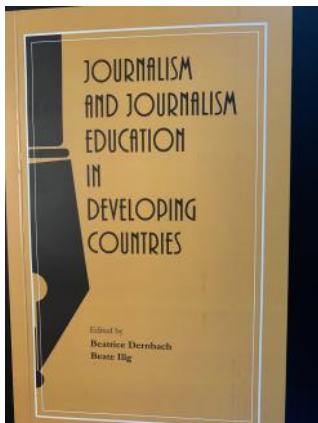
JECT.AI



Neil Maiden, Strategic Lead at JECT.AI,
Professor at City, University of London

Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries: Interlink Academy's Blended-Learning Approach

A book on Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries has been published last year. It includes a chapter by Interlink's Director Werner Eggert on the benefits of e-learning and blended-learning in media trainings.



The essay collection *Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries* was edited by university professors Beatrice Dernbach and Beate Illg and it contains 18 in-depth articles on 250 pages altogether. Not concentrating on specific countries, selected contributions in the book reflect on the developments of media and journalism education across different countries.

Introducing the book with an overview about the state-of-the-art of journalism education and the research on a meta-level, the book moves on to talk about media studies in the Asian countries, the Middle East, the African States and Brazil. The aim of the publication is to “compare the similarities and differences in terms of roles of the media, journalism and journalists, and their training”, it says in the foreword.

Werner Eggert's contribution examines the benefits of e-learning in international journalism trainings, and explains Interlink's blended-learning approach, a mix of face-to-face workshops and e-learning modules. The book was published by the Indian Manipal Universal Press and it can be ordered on the webpage of the publishing house. <https://mup.manipal.edu/product/journalism-and-journalism-education-in-developing-countries/>. It's available on platforms such as Amazon, too.

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