

S M F

RE: MAKING THE MEDIA



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

**9 January
2020**

World Health Organisation (WHO) was notified of the novel coronavirus, then known as 2019-nCoV, in Wuhan, China.

**11 January
2020**

China recorded its first Covid-19 death.

**11 March
2020**

WHO announced Covid-19 outbreak as a pandemic.

**5 March
2020**

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases confirmed that the first suspected case of Covid-19 has tested positive in South Africa.

**10 April
2020**

Collins Khosa died after allegedly being assaulted by South African National Defence Force soldiers.

**26 March
2020**

The South African Government announced the implementation of level 5 lockdown.

**19 March
2020**

The South African Government enacted new regulations criminalizing statements intended to deceive any person about Covid-19 or the government's response to the pandemic. The regulations were published in the Government Gazette under the 2002 Disaster Management Act.

**15 March
2020**

Super Rugby league paused due to Covid-19.

**15 March
2020**

South African Government declared a National State of Disaster.

**30 April
2020**

Associated Magazine Publishing CEO, Julia Raphaely, announced that the company will cease trading and publishing its magazine titles from Friday, 1 May 2020.

**1 May
2020**

Lockdown level 4 implemented by the South African Government.

**5 May
2020**

Board of directors of Caxton announced withdrawal from magazine publishing. This marked the closure of magazines like *Bona*, *Country Life*, *Essentials*, *Food & Home*, *Garden & Home*, *People*, *Rooi Rose*, *Vrouekeur*, *Woman & Home*, *Your Family*.

**1 June
2020**

South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) released interim report on Covid-19's impact on journalism.

IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. COVID-19 JUST MADE IT HAPPEN FASTER.

COVID-19 HET ONGELYKHEID IN SO 'N MATE IN DIE KOLLIG GEPLAAS
DAT SELFS DIE HOOFSTROOMMEDIA DIT NIE MEER KON IGNOREER NIE.

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT, AND WILL BE FOR A WHILE.

I think fundamentally, [Covid-19] has highlighted both the importance of communication as a fundamental right and need, but also the importance of credible journalism.

**VIR SOLANK 'N PUBLIKASIE NIE SY REDAKSIE IN EEN
PLEK KAN HÊ NIE, GAAN JOERNALISTIEK ARMER WEES.**

I think Covid-19 and the lockdown may have been a wake-up call to some journalists who couldn't go a weekend without getting wasted.

THE HARD LOCKDOWN IN SOUTH AFRICA MADE IT MORE IMPORTANT FOR
JOURNALISTS TO BE OUT THERE, TELLING THE STORIES THAT PEOPLE NEEDED TO KNOW.

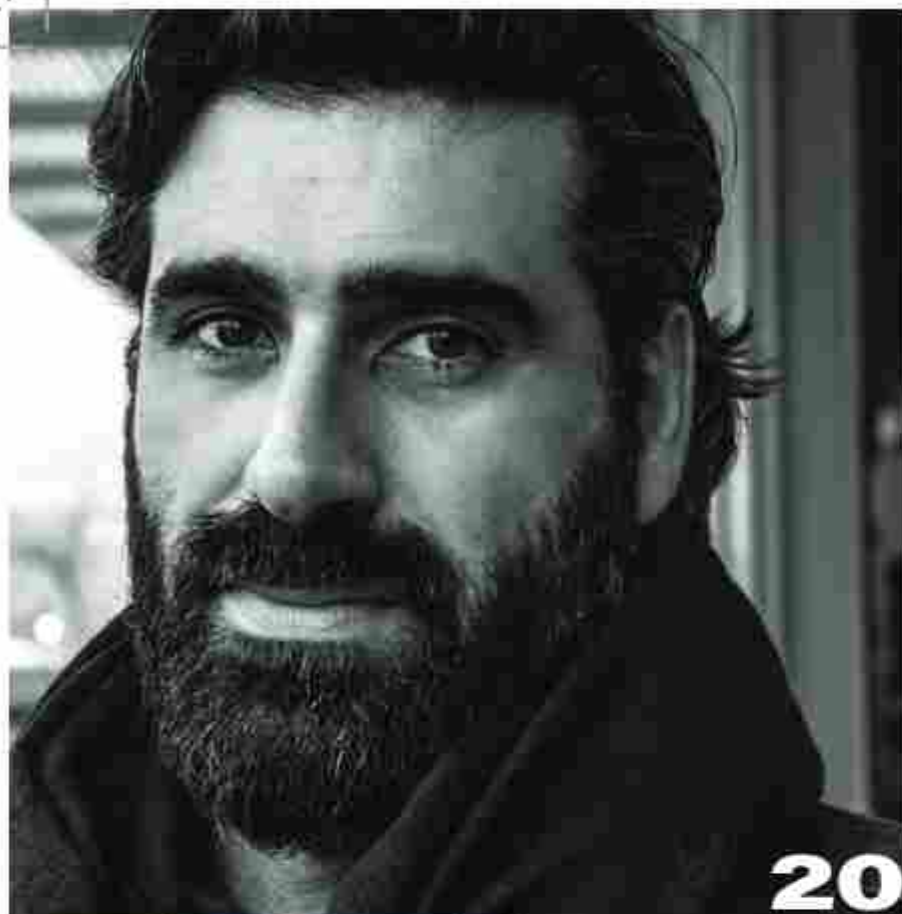
THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT CHANGED... OVERNIGHT.

*I can only afford to print so many because the
advertisers haven't come back from their Covid shock yet.*

It is the best time to be a journalist. It's the most important time to be a journalist. But, it is also the most unsafe time to be doing this.

**I SEE FIRST-HAND HOW COVID-19
HAS DESTROYED PEOPLE'S LIVES.**

[Covid-19] has changed the way we are going to work forever.



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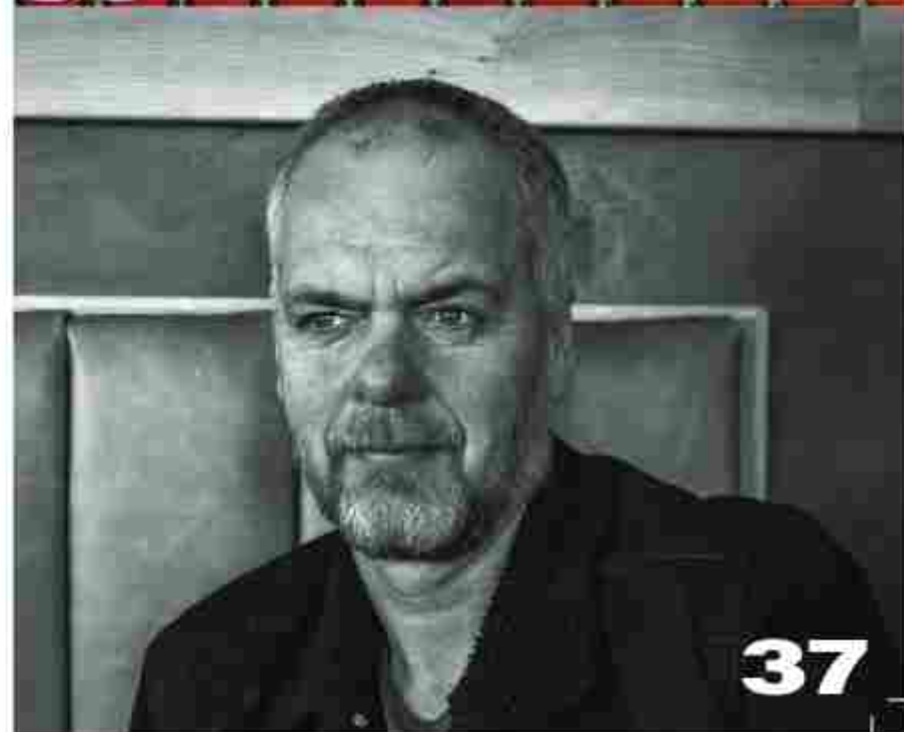
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EDITORIAL TEAM



SINCERELY, THE EDITOR



When David Bowie wrote the song Changes in 1971, I doubt he had foreseen that the chorus lyrics, "Turn and face the strange" would be fitting 49 years later, during a global pandemic. Almost every sector has faced changes due to Covid-19, and the media industry is no different.

The bleak reality is that hundreds of South African journalists have lost their jobs, and many publications have been forced to adjust their business models to adapt to the new environment.

Whilst some well-known magazines and newspapers have shut down, other publications revelled in their innovative ideas and grew from strength to strength.

This edition of *SMF* focuses on how Covid-19 is "remaking" the media, by taking a look at the past, present and future of the media industry.

Journalists have been rightfully referred to as "frontline workers" this year. Whilst putting themselves in danger of contracting the virus, many journalists have sifted through the jargon and falsehoods to bring us the important information we need to protect ourselves from Covid-19.

At the same time, journalists have covered issues of social justice that have accompanied the pandemic. Although this year has been defined by Covid-19, we would be remiss if this edition of *SMF* didn't make mention of the trials that journalists faced in covering these justice-related issues.

Moreover, this edition delves into the minds of journalists under lockdown and the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of journalists, as they transitioned from bustling newsrooms to quiet solitude.

In light of the transformative nature of 2020, the *SMF* editorial team has decided to break the mould and bring our print magazine into the digital world. With our in-magazine QR codes, which lead you to our new website and Spotify playlist, we hope that your experience of *SMF* 2020 will be a thrilling one.

As 2020 comes to a close and publications continue to piece themselves back together, one sentiment remains a motivational constant: The media industry lives to write another day.

Kirithana Pillay

2020



LISTEN

TO THE *SMF 2020* SOUNDTRACK.

READ

WHAT THE *SMF* CONTRIBUTORS
HAVE BEEN REPORTING ON
MATIEMEDIA ALL YEAR.



EXPERIENCE

SMF 2020: RE: MAKING THE MEDIA ONLINE.
BEHIND THE SCENES, MULTIMEDIA, EDITORS IN CONVERSATION,
ENGLISH/AFRIKAANS TRANSLATIONS, AND **MORE.**



MEDIA- MORPHOSIS

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.

COVID-19 HAS ACCELERATED THE
NEED FOR INNOVATION WITHIN
SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSROOMS.
WHILE SOME PUBLICATIONS
HAVE CLOSED FOR GOOD, OTHERS
ARE REINVENTING THEIR BRANDS.
ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHAT
COMES NEXT FOR THE SOUTH
AFRICAN MEDIA INDUSTRY.

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AN INDUSTRY SHEDDING
ITS SKIN: THE NEW(S)ROOM



A FOOT ON THE GAS OR A POTHOLE IN THE ROAD?

By Byron Latham

It is well-recorded that certain sections of the South African media industry were experiencing challenges for a number of years already. While the Covid-19 pandemic created unique challenges, some experts in the industry say that other crises were merely accelerated.

The Covid-19 pandemic triggered several changes in the South African media landscape. The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) released a special report, on 1 June, in which it tried to make sense of it. At the time, closures had already occurred at Caxton and Associated Media Publishing ceased to exist. The SANEF report also found that more retrenchments were looming, alongside job losses and salary cuts throughout the industry. Media24 published a statement announcing closures, layoffs and various moves from print to digital in specific publications. While certainly not the only industry to be affected, the local media sector is facing a novel situation.

Following the national lockdown, implemented at the end of March, media consumers went online because they couldn't go out to get their newspapers, says SANEF's Reg Rumney, who wrote their interim *Covid-19 Impact on Journalism Report*.

Rumney is a member of SANEF's council as well as director of the South African Reserve Bank Centre for Economics Journalism.

Publications had to somehow work with this audience migration in spite of a decrease in online advertising revenue, Rumney says.

While the first case of Covid-19 was only confirmed in South Africa in March, it had by then already started to spread in Europe, North America and in some Asian countries. By 3 April, financial services company Deloitte released a report on how the virus was impacting the global media landscape. The report's findings are in line with Rumney's assertion that, while the demand for content had grown during lockdown, advertising revenue was evaporating.

The road to 2020

In 2018 there were already indicators that the local media industry was under pressure. In the University of the Witwatersrand Journalism Department's *State of the Newsroom 2018 (SoN)*, editor Alan Finlay noted that there was a "weakening" of what was thought of as a "traditional newsroom". Finlay also noted that several publications looked as though they would not make it.

At the time, Glenda Daniels, a *SoN 2018* contributing author, stated that the industrial age of journalism was shrinking and that the professional journalist workforce was slashed in half over the period of a decade.

Circulation numbers have also been steadily declining. But nothing as pronounced as was seen during the second quarter of 2020, when many print publications could not make it to the shelves.

More recently, in the Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa's (ABC) first quarter statistics for 2020, before the national lockdown was declared, daily, weekly and weekend newspapers all saw declines in circulation numbers by 14%, 14.6% and 17% respectively, on the prior year.

The ABC second quarter (Q2) statistics for 2020 were "plagued by non-submissions", according to an article by Hermon Manson on marklives.com.

No newspapers submitted Q2 circulation numbers, according to the article.

The data for magazines, however, showed that circulation fell from 3 028 784 in total sales, in last year's second quarter, to only 1 938 267 in 2020's Q2 – a 36% point drop.

Looking back to before the pandemic, Rumney says that "what has been happening gradually is that print media has been shifting onto the web".

"The Covid crisis and lockdown obviously shifted a lot more emphasis on to the web. The audiences all went onto the web because they couldn't go out to get newspapers. So even when newspapers were published, people during lockdown couldn't buy them," says Rumney.

A catalyst

Covid-19 catalysed several events which were already in the making, says Finlay.

"It was going to happen. Covid-19 just made it happen faster," says Rumney, referencing several trends and events brought to a head: such as the digitising of several publications.

DRUM (See page 24), *Volksblad* and *Die Burger Ons-Kaap* were turned into digital publications only, while the digital transition for *The Witness* was "accelerated", according to a statement released by Media24 on 7 July, when it announced large-scale restructuring.

"The pressures for looking at different business models had been around for a long time, but the Covid crisis has accelerated that," says Rumney.

Similarly to Finlay and Rumney's opinion, *Daily Maverick's* Sasha Planting believes that the pandemic "exacerbated a trend that was already at play".

Planting does not believe this to be unique to the media industry, although existing financial problems added to the issue. Consolidation and closures have been accompanied by an exploration of differing models, Planting says (See page 16).

Although many publications suffered from the pandemic, editor-in-chief for the *Zululand Observer*, Dave Savides, says that it showed them what they could do without. A physical newsroom, for example, was


Online
2020
Pandemic
Accelerating
Advertising Revenue
COVID-19
Exacerbates
Donor
New
Closure

The Media

Catalyst
Virus
The Web
Digital
Print
Paywall
South Africa
SMF
xacerbate
or Journalism
VSroom
News 24
2020

GRAPHIC: Byron Latham

something they lost. The KwaZulu-Natal publication closed down its office space as a result of Covid-19, but Savides says they now function well remotely.

"Covid made us re-look at how we do everything," Savides says.

The pandemic wrought its own evils

Although media industry professionals say certain trends were accelerated, some issues were unique to the pandemic.

Sports and lifestyle media platforms and publications were hard-hit (See pages 12, 28 and 53).

As editor-in-chief for a community newspaper, Savides says that certain stories disappeared with the lockdown in effect. A lack of business, no public gatherings and less people around in general, meant that national news had to be given a local spin in order to generate content, he says.

Not everything was negative though. Although mergers took place as a result of the pandemic, Rumney mentions that no newspapers had closed and, according to his SANEF report, there was a 72% increase in online traffic for news websites in March in South Africa; but it did bring its own set of challenges, such as the drop in advertising revenue.

Another positive spin on the pandemic was that, although it hurried along industry calamities such as closures, layoffs and salary cuts, it did make space for entrepreneurship, says Finlay.

Driving forward

While addressing the effects of the pandemic on the industry, Finlay says that print media won't die outright. It may shrink to some level of sustainability, he says, but it won't disappear.

He also suggests that the pandemic would "strengthen the importance of donor journalism". Only four major donor funded "non-profit online-only news operations" exist in SA, according to Rumney's SANEF report: *amaBhungane*, *Bhekiswa*, *GroundUp* and *New Frame*.

Nathan Geffen, founder of the publication *GroundUp*, says that, luckily, there was a boost in funding for their niche, donor-based journalism. As a news publication, they were not affected as badly as other models, he says.

It will be hard to predict what will happen in the next six months, Finlay says. According to him, top radio stations are growing.

"One of the things [Covid-19] has done for South African media is it has started to cause publishers to think more seriously about their dependence on advertising revenue. Or it should," Rumney says. ■

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

As Media24 announced its intention to close its Hearst portfolio on 7 July, the South African versions of *Men's Health*, *Women's Health*, *Bicycling*, and *Runner's World* faced an imminent death sentence. But to some, it presents the rare opportunity of rebirth.

Words and photos by Michael Brown



Danielle Weakley had been in a number of meetings throughout her career, but this one was memorable for all the wrong reasons. As she sat behind her computer screen, Weakley was told that her publication, *Women's Health SA*, would play no further role in Media24's future. As the editorial director of *Men's* and *Women's Health SA*, this was something she struggled to manage virtually.

"Hearing that kind of news – knowing that you're not with your team and that each of them [are] sitting independently behind their own computer screens, getting that same piece of news delivered – as a boss, and as a mentor, and as an editor is...shit."

MODERNISE TO ECONOMISE

"The media environment changed – honestly, overnight," says Weakley.

For Weakley, it is not sufficient to run a print magazine as the sole source of revenue in today's environment. Instead, a magazine should look to build its brand and share its content through a range of communication platforms.

"A print magazine is like an album that you buy. It has been curated and put together by somebody in a meaningful way," Weakley begins.

"Digital is buying the single, and print is buying the album. It's not to say that one is better than the other, but they're different content experiences. And, they all have a place."

For Kate Wilson, launch editor of *Women's Health*, magazines are doomed if they rely purely on advertising.

"I could see that the *Women's Health* and *Men's Health* model was flawed," she says. According to Wilson, a steady decline in advertising combined with similar content, which is now freely available on the internet – made Media24's decision unsurprising.

At *Women's Health*, it soon became apparent that an alternate source of revenue would be key to its future, and this came through hosting women's events.

"[*Women's Health*] also did a lot of events and they had a lot of emphasis on events when I was still editing," Wilson reveals.

She was quick to point out the importance of these events to Media24. Wilson claims that although Media24 has stopped publishing *Women's Health*, it

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EDITOR

"All I was responsible for was making sure a 100-page, weekly glossy went to print. [I ensured] it was newsy, glamorous, and commercially viable," says Danielle Weakley, editorial director at *Men's* and *Women's Health SA*, who describes her role as editor of *Grazia* in 2012.

"Now, eight years later, magazines are much more than magazines. They are content brands. My responsibility as editor now is the magazine, the website, social media platforms, newsletters, books, podcasts, a series of experiential events, video content, and affiliate revenue projects. That one magazine has become a whole content speaker system."

Robert Cilliers, editor at *Men's Health*, says the role of an editor at a magazine has changed considerably over the last 10 years.

"10 years ago an editor's role was to edit a magazine. Nowadays, editing a magazine is 30% of your job spectrum, the rest is client relations, coming up with new brand extensions, [and finding] new ways to make money off the brand."

Mike Finch, editor of *Runner's World* and *Bicycling*, remembers the early years of his career when he had to scan physical copies of his photographs for the magazine at a library. Now, he can download all he needs with the click of a button.

"I think it has changed radically over the last two decades, purely from a workflow perspective," says Finch.

still holds the rights to one of their best selling events, 'Fit Night Out'.

THE GOOD OL' DAYS

Robert Cilliers, editor and creative director at *Men's Health*, did not have the opportunity to learn of his publication's fate through a meeting or phone call.

"Sadly, I found out when the rest of the world found out," starts Cilliers. "I was completely thrown by the announcement."

The team at *Men's Health* were made aware that there were going to be changes among Media24's magazine titles. However, Cilliers admits he did not expect the publication to close, but instead be adapted to the current media environment.

"We were making a profit, we were selling well, and we were making more revenue from events. The brand was making money, and we were never told we were in trouble leading up to it," says Cilliers.

He maintains that *Men's Health* still has significant relevance in South Africa, a belief which is also held by former *Men's Health* editor Jason Brown.

"The voice of the magazine is especially important. The voice is empowering and conversational," says Brown.

He continues to recall how the spirit of the

brand was palpable during his time as editor of the publication. Often, he would receive letters from men discussing personal problems they would not dare to share with their psychologists, doctors, or wives.

Brown, who started working for *Men's Health* in 1998, also remembers how it was a different environment compared to what it is today.

"We were growing year-on-year, and literally doubled our circulation in that matter of three to four years," he says.

Brown fondly remembers the thickness of the magazines *Men's Health* used to produce. In particular, he remembers one issue which was around 340 pages long and weighed over a kilogram.

"We had problems with the post office because we couldn't mail something that was so thick. It is unbelievable to think a magazine was too thick to fit between the letterboxes," Brown remembers with immense pride.

Although the magazine industry may not return to the height of those "heydays", Cilliers believes there remains a market for *Men's Health*, and he is willing to put his money where his mouth is.

"I am actually pursuing [to attain] the licensing myself," admits Cilliers. "Discussions are quite far, I had my first initial interview which I thought

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

'Fit Night Out' is one of *Women's Health*'s most successful events. According to an article on the *Women's Health* website, this event invites various trainers, dance instructors, yogis, and the *Women's Health* team to lead fitness exercises to a crowd of women through the early afternoon and late evening. "We started off with 'Fit Night Out' as a single event and it ended up selling out. Now we've done 12 or so, we launched in three cities, and they all sell out," says Danielle Weakley, editorial director at Men's and Women's Health SA.

"What we were trying to do was create diverse revenue opportunities, which is maybe something that print purists would say was not a great idea because you should just focus on print as your content and get on with that stuff. I completely disagree. I think that you need to be able to deliver content wherever your audience would like to consume it." However due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 'Fit Night Out' has had to adapt this year to the new environment, and has become 'Fit Night In'. In this event the same workout is delivered, but virtually. According to Weakley, there still remained a large amount of enthusiasm for this event. "It's funny, this whole period of Covid has been quite weird. In the beginning, people were so keen to do virtual events. They just wanted that connection and were bored of being at home."



went quite well."

Currently, he plans to release *Men's Health* on a bi-monthly basis and grow the digital subscription base for the brand.

"If things go according to my proposal, my first issue would come out the first week of December," he says.

STAYIN' ALIVE

Two days prior to Media24's announcement, Mike Finch received a message. It was a message from his general manager who wanted a "catch-up meeting on the Monday morning." At that moment, Finch, editor at *Runner's World SA* and *Bicycling SA*, already knew this was troubling news.

"I guess I kind of knew," recalls Finch. "I could see by the amount of advertising being put into the magazine that the foot was being taken off the pedal."

According to Finch, niche titles like *Runner's*

World and *Bicycling* are known for bringing steady, yet unspectacular income. It is for this reason why he believes such magazine titles do not interest large corporations.

"People see the potential in print as a small business, but not necessarily a big corporate-type of business," elaborates Finch.

As a result, he sees potential in continuing *Runner's World* and *Bicycling* in the South African market and, like Cilliers at *Men's Health*, is pursuing the licensing rights for these titles himself.

At first, Finch admits that it was difficult to get in contact with Hearst, but now says that talks between the two parties are well underway.

"[Hearst is] not going to make a huge amount of money out of us, they know that. But they do want to maintain some presence in Africa, and I think the only way they are going to do it is through South Africa," he says.

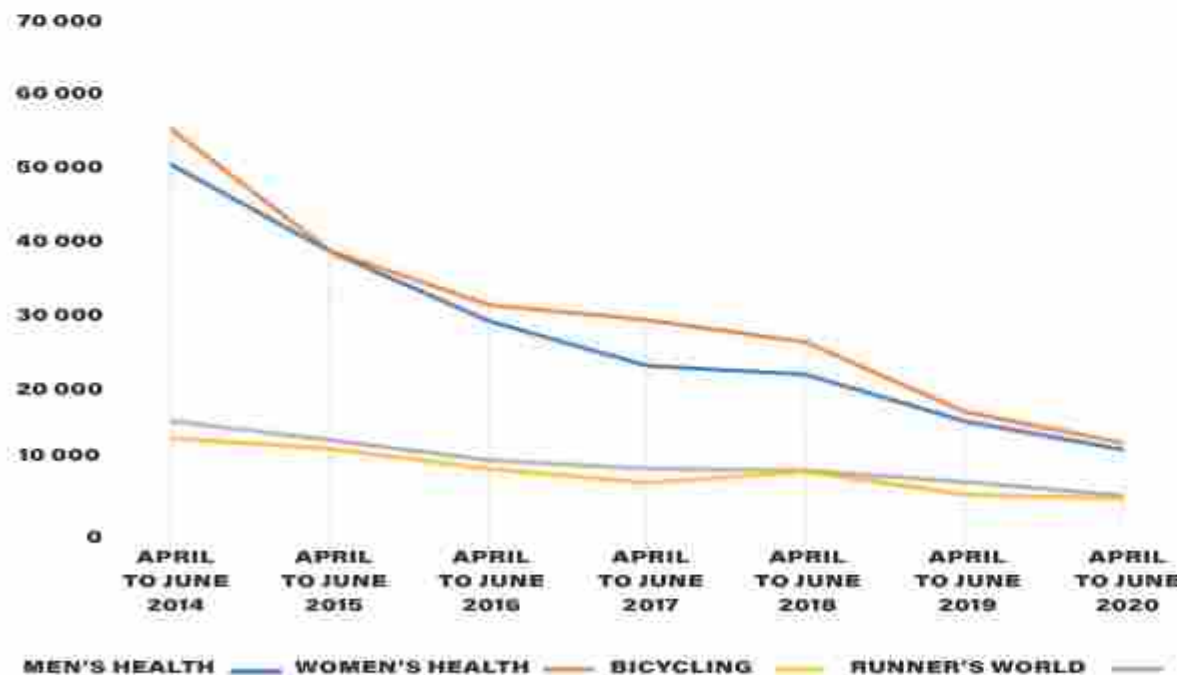
Finch also intends to release six issues of both magazine titles a year and aims to place a greater emphasis on the revenue he will receive through readership.

"We've looked at the models, and I think magazines in South Africa need to become less dependent on advertising," he says.

Entrepreneurship is not a new concept to Finch, who has also started a media content and publishing agency of his own. He believes the key to his success is to inject passion back into these brands—the kind of passion which was lost under corporate control.

"I ride every day, I run. I'm so involved in this market. The people I work with are so involved and passionate [about] what we do. I feel we lost a bit of that with Media24, because of its corporate status. And I think we have the potential to show what is possible with this small bunch of passionate people that actually live and breathe this brand." ■

QUARTER 2 CIRCULATION NUMBERS OF HEARST PORTFOLIO AT MEDIA24: 2014 TO 2020



SOURCE: MEDIA24

CHANGING SEASONS

Hearst announced that it had acquired the family-owned publishers Rodale, in October 2017. At the time, Rodale owned *Men's Health*, *Women's Health*, *Runner's World* and *Bicycling*. Like Hearst, Rodale was also an American publication, which was located in Pennsylvania, according to the *New York Times*:

"Before Hearst took over, Rodales were the publishers and they were really passionate about these brands," says Kate Wilson, former editor at *Women's Health SA*. "When they moved across to Hearst, the lack of attention and care on both sides were obvious. Hearst is a giant in the states, Rodale only had their titles, they could afford to focus on them and show them a lot of love."

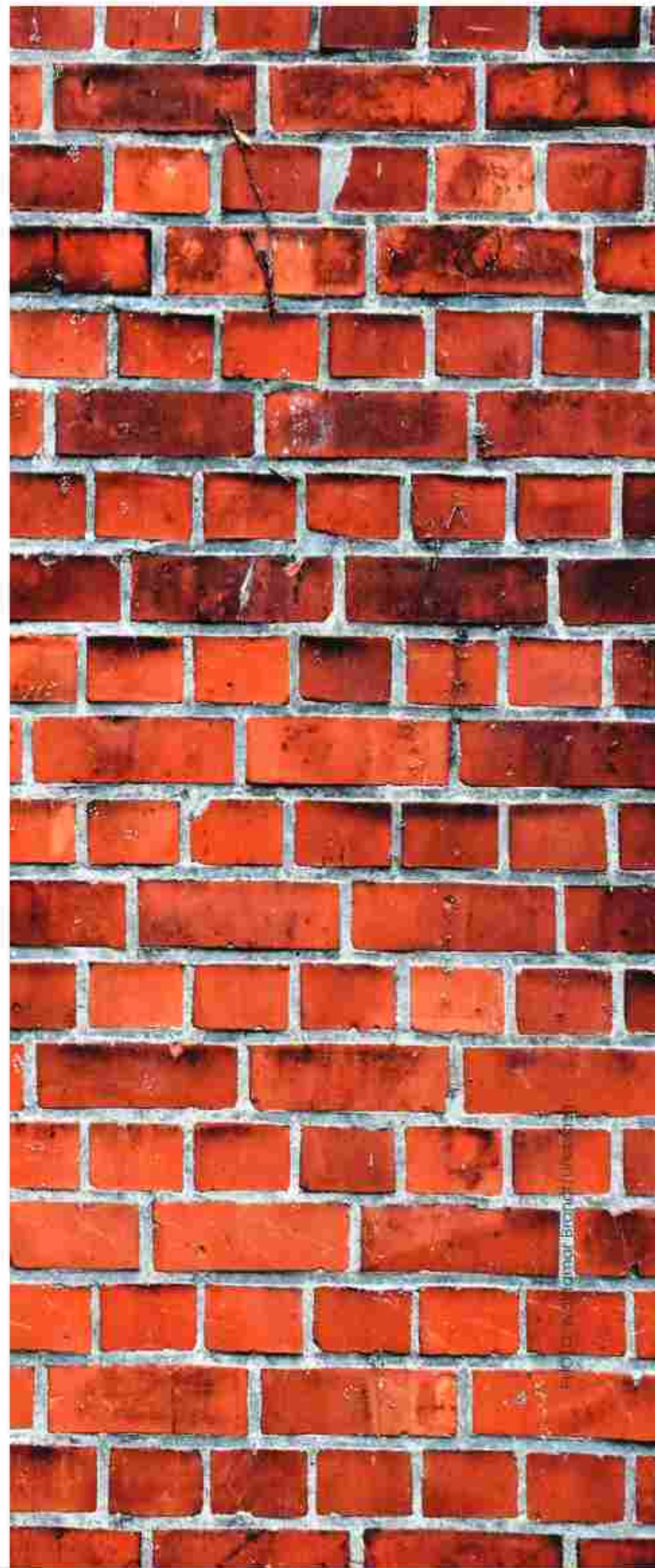
Rob Cilliers, editor of *Men's Health SA*, says that Hearst would not interfere much with his editorial stance. "[This] was a radical shift when we were owned by Rodale. They used to give us a lot more in-depth feedback if they thought we were moving off the brand values."

"Having worked with them for the last five years, Hearst is just a massive, big huge machine," says Mike Finch, editor of *Runner's World* and *Bicycling*.

BREAKING DOWN THE WALL

Publications both locally and globally have adopted news paywalls in an attempt to subsidise journalism, but some media experts believe that paywalls alone could exacerbate information inequality.

By Savannah Bacon



“Digital subscription models are essential both to keep journalists employed altogether and to pay them a fair wage,” says Riaan Wolmarans, head of digital media at Arena Holdings. The pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing and structural flaws in the media model. Some publications have implemented paywalls in an attempt to refurbish this model, while others believe that paywalls could increase the inequality of access to important information.

While publications such as *Business Live* and *Mail & Guardian* already had paywalls in place, *News24* only implemented a paywall on their site on 8 August 2020. This decision formed part of Ishmet Davidson, the CEO of Media24's, announcement in July 2020. On the day of the announcement, the large-scale restructuring of Media24's print division was also confirmed, resulting in hundreds of media employees losing permanent employment.

According to Anton Harber, an adjunct professor in journalism from the University of Witwatersrand, the lack of advertising revenue means that paywalls have become a necessity for many commercial media operations.

A paywall is a feature implemented in digital news sites, whereby some or all content produced by that publication sits behind a monetary wall. Readers will then have to pay or subscribe to access this content. According to Wolmarans, paywall models are aimed at bringing financial stability and growth to news publishers, which then translates into more newsroom resources. This could result in higher quality journalism, he says.

News24 is among those publications that have implemented a paywall, in the form of a “freemium paywall”. According to Pieter du Toit, assistant editor at *News24*, 80% of the content remains free, but more in-depth content will only be available to paying subscribers.

The “freemium” model was motivated by the desire to ensure the survival of quality journalism and to adapt and renew the business model of news, Du Toit elaborates. This model has been under pressure for the better part of the last 15 years he says.

“We believe that a paid-for subscription service will appeal to discerning readers who (a) understand

SA NEWS: MONTHLY DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION COMPARISON



All data is in accordance with the information advertised on each individual website.

the importance and value of journalism, (b) want to support in-depth and quality reportage and (c) see value in paying to use the service," says Du Toit.

According to the 2020 Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, News24 is South Africa's most trusted news brand for two years in a row. Du Toit says the news site's single most important mission is to remain the country's most trusted news source, and to provide the most insightful in-depth news offering in the country.

"To do that, we need to employ the best. And if we want the best, they need to be compensated accordingly," says Du Toit.

Business Live is charging R120,00 per month for their Premium Digital package and *Mall & Guardian* is charging R99,00 per month for their digital subscriptions. News24 is charging R75,00 per month for a digital subscription, which Du Toit says is a price range which makes sense.

According to Wolmarans, finding the right price point to charge for digital content comes down to striking a balance between affordability from a readers' perspective, and a price that would at scale, make the publisher profitable.

According to Justin Cupido, acting publisher of *EikestadNuu* and *Helderberg Media*, a price range between R75,00 and R100,00 per month is apt as content is not merely produced on opinion-based journalism.

"A lot of other factors and resources are to be considered and that comes at a cost to the producers/publishers," says Cupido.

According to Cupido, paywalls will not deter readers if the publication is offering quality journalism.

Consumers are going to have to get used to paying for quality and thorough journalism, but this alone is not enough, says Harber. Paywalls, though, are only part of the possible solutions and cannot in themselves ensure quality content which serves the whole country, Harber explains.

"Paywalls may exacerbate inequality of access to important and valuable information, and prevent mass access to information of public interest. We will need other solutions, such as public or philanthropic funding to close these gaps," Harber says.



ILLUSTRATION: Savannah Bacon

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

While some publications such as *News24*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Business Live* have opted for paywalls, other publications have adopted different models.

Daily Maverick does not have any content behind a paywall but rather allows members to choose how much they would like to contribute on a voluntary, monthly, or annual basis, says Francesca Beighton, *Daily Maverick's* Insider community manager. Beighton says that is counterintuitive to keep what is essentially a public service behind a paywall.

"Paywalls don't ultimately work. It's a transactional endeavor that is a grudge purchase for readers," she says. According to Beighton, by forcing a reader to pay for content, it encourages them to leave the site and look elsewhere for the information, often on social media. *Daily Maverick* will never implement a paywall and their journalism should be read by all, regardless of one's financial means, she says.

Stellenbosch Nuis, an online news site launched in May 2020, holds a similar stance, says Danie Keet, editor in chief of the publication.

Stellenbosch Nuis provides hyper local news to the community and feels that paying for news is not supporting their objectives of being a role player in the community, says Keet. In reference to the general R75,00 per month price range, Keet says that this is not always realistic for all publications.

"In a struggling economy, where the majority of consumers earn a lowly income, this is not viable. To make a choice between paying R100,00 for a magazine

and buying food for the family, makes this a clear answer," he says.

According to Harber, a reasonable price for subscriptions depends entirely on the value of what is being delivered.

"For some of our local services, that [the R75,00 price range] is more than it's worth, because the content they are offering is not particularly good. Others who offer really good and useful journalism could be worth much more," says Harber.

The quality of journalism has little to do with paywalls though, says Keet. It is the responsibility of the journalists and editorial staff, and anyone who is serious about real journalism will realise that paywalls are no insurance for good quality copy, he says.

According to Angelo Julius, editor of *Eikestad Nuis*, the question that journalists should ask themselves is whether the quality of journalism is fueled by monetary income, or a passion to deliver factually correct news at a high standard. While paid subscriptions can ensure that some journalists are compensated fairly, wider measures are needed to ensure journalists have the proper role and status in society, says Harber.

"We need not one quick magic bullet, such as paywalls, but a new information architecture of which paid, quality sites are only one element, albeit an important one," Harber says. ■

**Please note that the views of Justin Capido and Angelo Julius are of their own and do not reflect those held by Media24.*

"TRUST IS MERELY BUILT WHEN WE CONSTANTLY AND CONSISTENTLY PRODUCE QUALITY NEWS."

Daily Maverick's pressing issue

By Jenna Lemmer

Some applaud them for launching a print newspaper during a global pandemic – what a bold step forward. Others might criticise it as a bizarre move backwards. Whichever direction their adventure to the printers ends up going, this remains certain: *Daily Maverick* moves.

168. The number of hours in a week and the title of *Daily Maverick's* new weekly newspaper. After a decade of downsizing, juniorisation, political hijacking and talent-draining of South African newsrooms, *Daily Maverick* found themselves having "what could arguably be described as the most experienced newsroom in the history of South African journalism", says Styli Charalambous, the publication's publisher and CEO. So they thought: "Well, they're not going to call a time of death on print unless we've had a crack at the title."

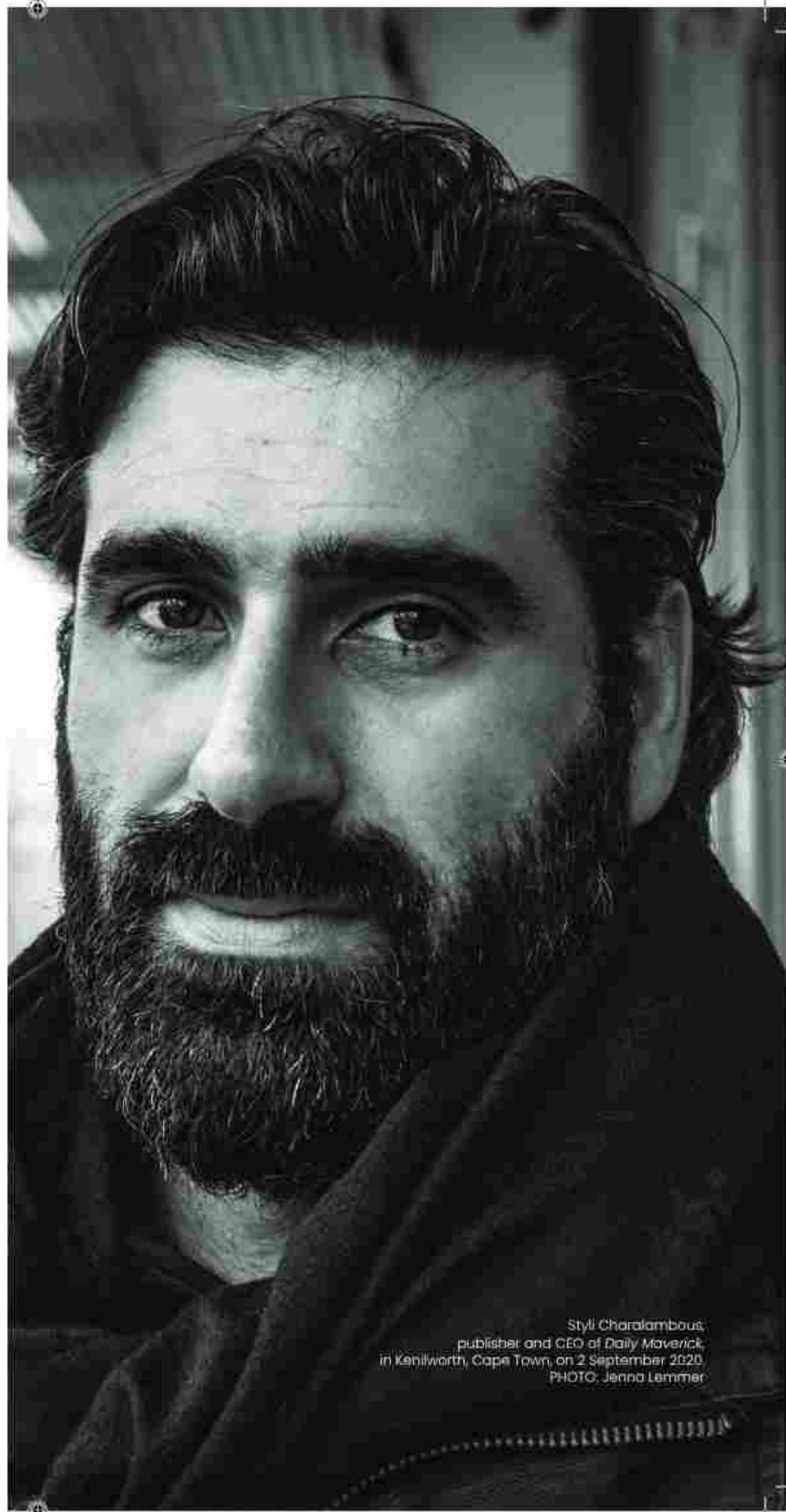
Time of death: Not yet

According to Charalambous, *Daily Maverick* has wanted to print their trademark "quality long-form journalism" for the past few years. But only now has "the deterioration of competition", the strength of the 11-year-old *Daily Maverick* brand, and the size of their team, produced favourable conditions to leverage the grand volume of work they produce as a digital-first publisher to "retrovate" and go analogue. *168* could potentially redeem the economic sustainability of the

"Surthriving"

From a start-up run by **five** people in **2009**, to a renowned multi-platform publication employing over **70** people in **2020**, *Daily Maverick* now has twice as many staff members in their newsroom than there were just two years ago, says Styli Charalambous, publisher and CEO at *Daily Maverick*. According to an editorial on their website, they publish up to **250** feature articles weekly.

"The reason *Daily Maverick* has survived, or '**surthrived**,' is that there was this marriage of two polymaths – being Branko [Brkie, the editor-in-chief of *Daily Maverick*] and myself – who are incredibly stubborn," Charalambous says. They were able to pay attention to both the **art** (everything editorial) and the **science** (everything else), the self-professed "reformed bean counter" says – emphasising the importance of entrepreneurial thinking in making media.



Styli Charalambous,
publisher and CEO of *Daily Maverick*,
in Kenilworth, Cape Town, on 2 September 2020.
PHOTO: Jenna Lemmer



**THIS IS A
PUBLIC
SERVICE.**

**THIS IS NOT THE
WAY TO MAKE
MONEY. THIS IS
ABOUT MAKING
LIFE MEANINGFUL.**

South African newspaper industry by proving to advertisers that quality journalism still captures readers' attention, Charalambous says: "Print isn't dead. Rather, poor quality print that people don't want to pay for, is dead," he declares.

Branko Brkic, the editor-in-chief of *Daily Maverick*, equates a typical Internet-age experience of information to "attacks" and "assaults" from many different sources. A curated, finite source of information that readers can focus all their attention on could help them "try to understand the world without being assaulted all the time", Brkic says. According to him, *168* is "a newspaper that will give people a reason to have time for themselves", away from their mobile devices.

Daily Maverick provides a crucial platform for intellectual content produced by experts who otherwise – aside from *Mail & Guardian* – do not have that kind of exposure, says Prinola Govenden, a media scholar and postdoctoral research fellow at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study.

When an independent digital publisher like *Daily Maverick* starts printing

SMF

a newspaper, the oligopoly in the South African media market is also diluted, says Govenden. "We've had the big four media houses, and *Mail & Guardian* was always the alternative newspaper on the side," she says. According to Govenden, *168* will contribute to the diversity of the shrinking South African newspaper market – which still sets the agenda for discussions online and in broadcast news, she believes.

"The survivors will be publications that constantly innovate and get journalism to their readers, creating a value proposition that people will pay for," says Sipho Kings, the *Mail & Guardian* acting editor-in-chief, who believes that "crisis breeds innovation". He also maintains that, "Tactile products still have a place and as people get overwhelmed by the flood of information, newspapers do have a place in collating news into one place."

Pick n partner

"What initially attracted me to it was that it is entirely crazy. It feels like the whole arc of history is bending against printed newspapers," says John Bradshaw, head of marketing at Pick n Pay, about his company's decision to partner with *Daily Maverick* as the sole distributor of *168*.

168 will exclusively be available in select Pick n Pay stores from the end of September – at a cover price of R20,00, or at no cost to members of Pick n Pay's Smart Shopper loyalty programme. The partnership follows *Daily Maverick*'s ongoing relationship with Pick n Pay as the sponsor of their food and lifestyle email newsletter, *TGHFood*, says Charalambous.

"It's a benefit to our Smart Shoppers who get a high-quality newspaper for free. So we think it could end up bringing those customers to our stores on a Saturday," says Bradshaw.

Granted that some, including Govenden, might be sceptical of the influence that big corporates could have on media, Bradshaw says that if *Daily Maverick* wrote a negative article about Pick n Pay, he "would be reading it to try and understand the truth in it – not angry that [their] partners wrote something like that".

According to Charalambous, *Daily Maverick* "picks up the tab" for printing, publishing and getting the newspaper delivered to Pick n Pay stores. In return, Pick n Pay will provide *Daily Maverick* with "tools and reports" based on Smart Shopper data which will help them gain insight into the people who exit stores with a copy of *168* – insight that they can leverage in their interactions with advertisers, says

Eenie, meenie, m...arket research

Daily Maverick piloted *168* across 20 Pick n Pay stores on 29 August. According to Styli Charalambous, *Daily Maverick*'s publisher and CEO, their print run and geographic distribution were based on the 15 000 votes (and confirmations of demand for their product) they received from *Daily Maverick* readers for their nearest Pick n Pay. They also looked at each store's history of newspaper and magazine sales, he says – including Pick n Pay's *Fresh Living* food magazine – which also used to be available to Smart Shoppers **at no cost**.

Following a debrief with the Pick n Pay team after the pilot issue was launched in late August, Charalambous says that the intended print run of 25 000 now seems modest, but that they "...can only afford to print so many because advertisers haven't come back [from] their **Covid shock** yet".

Insider Information

"Asking readers to pay for, and support, journalism is not new. What *Daily Maverick* has been good at is focusing on paying readers, and in creating hype around their model," says Sipho Kings, the acting editor-in-chief at *Mail & Guardian*. According to Styli Charalambous, *Daily Maverick*'s publisher and CEO, they generate revenue from six diversified streams: Three vertical streams with two main types of revenue under each.

The vertical streams are:

PHILANTHROPY

Support from foundations and individual donors.

COMMERCIAL EFFORTS

Advertising, events, documentaries, and book publishing through their Maverick 451 division.

READERS

Subscribers to the acclaimed *Maverick Insider* membership programme, and once-off contributors.

According to Charalambous, most of the *Daily Maverick* products focus on gaining members for its *Maverick Insider* programme – their recurring revenue generator.

The support of more than 13 500 members (in early September) has enabled them to **innovate** and **experiment**, says Charalambous.

Bradshaw. In addition, Pick n Pay will also market *168* in-store and through direct email or SMS communication with Smart Shoppers who have given them permission to do so, Bradshaw confirmed.

According to Charalambous, for the cost of printing, distribution, and 12 new employees, *Daily Maverick* could access a R1 billion advertising space with *168*. He further elaborated that *168*'s competitors for advertising revenue include English weeklies like *Mail & Guardian*, *Sunday Times* and *City Press*. But they are competing for attention with Netflix, Facebook, Spotify "and everything else... it's a bigger picture", says Charalambous.

It's in the name!

"I'm not sure if we are crazy, or if the world around us has changed, rendering us crazy?" Bekic muses. According to him, *Daily Maverick* has simply remained true to the ideals, ethics and philosophies of journalism in an industry where many simply have not.

According to Bekic, there are better ways to make money than through journalism. "This is a public service. This is not the way to make money. This is about making life meaningful," he declares... and warns:

"Being a small business in South Africa is incredibly difficult," Charalambous admits. "And then being a small business that is a digital publisher, in the Zuma-era fighting Google and Facebook... well it's just stupid."

Charalambous likens *Daily Maverick*'s operations to climbing Mt. Everest with the world on one's shoulders. "I think to take on those challenges, you've got to be a little bit crazy."

Even most, if not all, of *Daily Maverick*'s journalists were opposed to the idea of printing a newspaper at first, Charalambous says. They thought he and the other champions behind it were gambling with the financial progress they have made. To convince them that *168* was "a worthwhile endeavour", Charalambous presented the business case to the *Daily Maverick* staff members as he would to investors, he says.

"Bring the culture that we want to create," he recalls telling Bekic. "But let's bring a little bit of structure and planning and framework around that, and see what happens when we use data, behavioural science, and research to improve this magic that we have."

The *Daily Maverick* tribe may seem radically contrarian, perhaps even reckless, from outside their newsrooms. "Once you put it in the name, you have to be a Maverick," Charalambous says. However, they often cancel out serious risk with serious research. There is just as much thinking as there is dreaming going into the projects that have people believing that they are not just reading the tea leaves differently than others, Charalambous says – but smoking it too. ■

Om dié artikel in Afrikaans te lees, besoek die SMF-webtuiste. Sien bladsy 7.

THE BEAT

GOES ON(LINE)!

DRUM
Africa's leading magazine
MAY 1968 6d.
Registered in U.K. & U.S.A.

PHOTO: Jürgen Schadeberg/Supplied

RIOT AT A F

“That was when black journalism started.”

Journalism has become more diverse, multimedia has become vital and publications are now migrating online. However, Covid-19 has accelerated these changes – and thus, forced many publications to adapt in order to survive. Amongst these publications is *DRUM*, a publication of historical importance that has cultivated a strong online presence over the years, leading to it becoming a digital-only publication.

By Leo Cordom

IT was the 1950s. Robert Crisp, a well-known journalist and broadcaster, just established a publication called *The African Drum*. Jim Bailey, an ex-Royal Air Force pilot who arrived back from London, just set foot in the Mother City, says Len Kalane, author of *The Chapter We Wrote: The City Press Story*. A year later, *The African Drum* got funded by Bailey and thereafter, the publication successfully moved to Johannesburg. At that point, it was renamed to what it's known as now: *DRUM*.

"That was when black journalism started," says Kalane.

Now, nearly seven decades after the publication was founded, the magazine is starting its newest chapter as a digital-only publication.

This announcement was made on 7 July by Ishmet Davidson, CEO of Media24, in a statement that outlined the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Media24. Thereafter, the last print issue was published a week later, on 16 July.

"Covid-19 has accelerated the move to digital, which was already underway," says Charlene Rolis, editorial director of *DRUM*. According to Rolis, the shift to online was the most sensible step forward for the publication, because of *DRUM*'s strong digital presence and growing online audience.

This also allowed the publication to explore other ways of authentic storytelling.

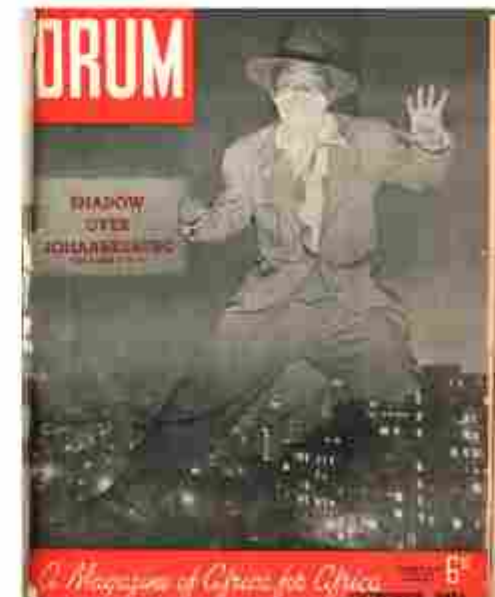
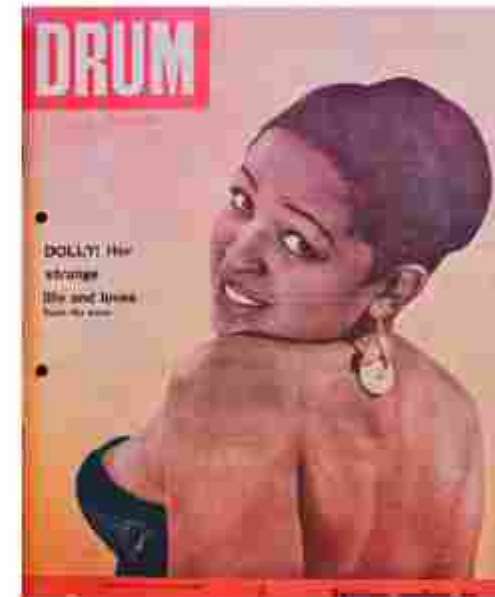
"We've been able to explore new content, including podcasts and videos, that we might not have had capacity for," says Thulani Gqirana, who was appointed as the editor of *DRUM* after Media24's announcement.

According to a statement made by *DRUM*, Gqirana's appointment was to help build a stronger digital presence.

However, migrating online still has the potential to alienate readers. This is according to Lesley Cowling, associate professor at the department of journalism at the University of the Witwatersrand.

"On the other hand, it may be that, not everybody in South Africa has online access and people who are online may not have the data to be able [to] access the magazine," says Cowling.

Yet, Gqirana still believes that readers will remain loyal to the magazine. "We are still providing the same quality content on our digital platform that they had access to in the magazine."



Covers: Jürgen Schadeberg/Supplied

A FEW YEARS AGO....

DRUM is more than a magazine — it shaped the identity of Makhosazana Zwane-Siguqa's generation. "It was the standard by which we measured black progress, moments, disappointments and life," she explains.

Zwane-Siguqa, former editor-in-chief at *DRUM*, left the publication in 2015 in order to expand her skill set and industry knowledge.

During her time as the editor-in-chief, *DRUM* reached one of its highest circulation peaks at 80 807. Zwane-Siguqa kept it at its highest during that time through observing news trends, as well as maintaining momentum with conversations happening online, she says.

"We increasingly had to follow up [on online conversations] and that's when I knew that [the shift] is going to happen," she says.

According to Zwane-Siguqa, *DRUM*'s shift to becoming an online-only publication is due to the emphasis on keeping online conversations relevant, rather than becoming a platform that places the focus on topics of public interest.

She believes that a publication will succeed if it knows what content needs to be covered, she adds.

However, she still firmly maintains that there's hope for *DRUM* to revive as a print publication. She also believes that a lot of businesses, particularly print media, would be smarter when the world recovers from the pandemic.

"There is something special about holding a book or a magazine in one's hand. Even if it is just once a year," adds Zwane-Siguqa.

2015	80 807
2016	53 207
2017	37 200
2019	19 602
2018	27 292
2020	17 138

CIRCULATION



DIGITAL NUMBERS

NEWS24 PAGE VIEWS:	114 711 141
INSTAGRAM:	179 000
FACEBOOK:	567 000
TWITTER:	237 900

THE (RE)PRINT

The internet played a huge role in the decline in print media, Cowling believes. "The internet has taken over some of the key functions of magazines. For example, magazines often rely on visuals and colour," she says.

The internet has also become quicker and faster than magazines at curating the type of content they produce, she elaborates. "I think that for a print magazine to survive, it would really have to be an outlier," says Cowling.

As a magazine that has remained relevant for more than 60 years, *DRUM* has become an outlier of its own calibre.

According to Kalane, the secret to remaining relevant lies in the adaptability of publications as well as in the quality in content and presentation. This resonated in how Bailey built *DRUM* to what it's known as today.

When he set foot in South Africa, he built a strong network of prominent black politicians and businessmen. With the help of Anthony Sampson, a British journalist, Bailey built *DRUM* as the essence of black urban life.

"[Bailey] lived in the communities that he sought to address. He wasn't detached from his audience," says Kalane.

BACK IN TIME

"[*DRUM*] was here before I was born, and the brand will remain long after we are gone," affirms Gqirha.

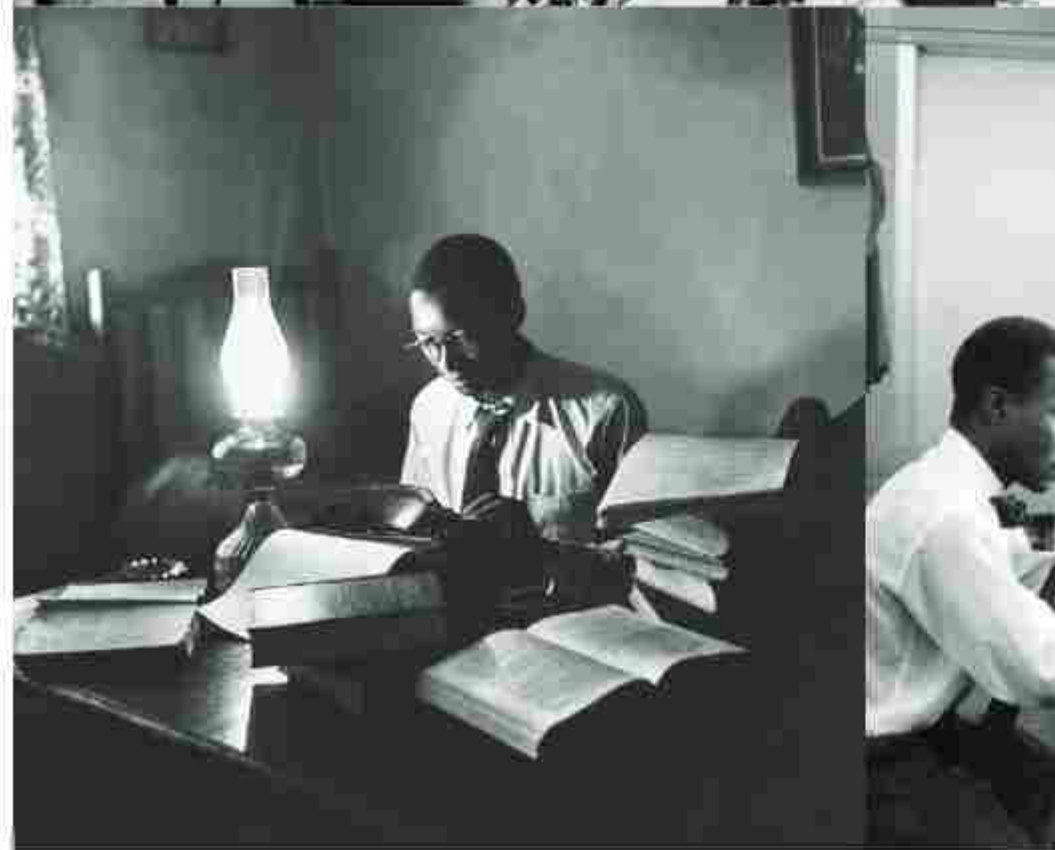
In the 1950s and early 1960s *DRUM* chronicled a growing urban black class. It was telling stories and featuring issues in their lives. Previously, publications had understood black readers to be rural, traditional and gravel, explains Cowling.

The growth of *DRUM* went hand-in-hand with the growth of townships and urbanisation in South Africa.

"So, there were new readers who wanted to see their lives reflected," says Cowling. Therefore, *DRUM* positioned itself to do that — to tell authentic stories.

"When you write about something, you give it life in a sense — you give it importance — and the *DRUM* writers gave everyday life and black urban settings importance." ■

Om dié artikel in Afrikaans te lees, besoek die SMF-webtuiste. Sien bladsy 7.



WHAT A GIRL (DOESN'T) WANT

By Sarah Hook

As Covid-19 began changing the media industry, many South African women's magazines fall victim. With iconic publications such as *Cosmopolitan SA*, *Bona* and *Essentials* no longer on shelves, what does this mean for South African women, and for the journalists who produced them?

**"I'M STILL A
COSMO GIRL"**

**"THE END
OF AN ERA"**

ILLUSTRATION: SARAH HOOK

In less than seven days between April and May, South Africa lost women's magazines that graced coffee tables, hair salons, bedside tables and bookshelves across the country. In one foul swoop, publications that were dear to so many hearts ceased to exist; yet another casualty of the Covid-19 pandemic that has taken the world by storm.

For many journalists, the closure of their magazines in the wake of the pandemic was a shock and although they perhaps knew the industry was in trouble, many didn't expect to be out of a job, says Kwanele Mathebula, the former digital editor at *Bona* magazine.

"All of us were shocked, because we didn't see it coming, you know? It happened so quickly, I didn't get time to process it," Mathebula says.

Bona's success in the South African magazine sector made some journalists believe that they wouldn't feel the effects of the pandemic as badly as other publications.

"Because *Bona* was the top selling magazine at Caxton for a long time, I thought 'yeah, it will hit us, but it won't hit us now'. So when it hit us, we were really, really shocked," says Amanda Mtshali, former features editor at *Bona* magazine.

When Associated Media Publishing (AMP) closed its doors and *Cosmopolitan SA* was shut down, Julia Raphaely, CEO of AMP, called it the "end of an era". But it was not just the end for her company, but for many other companies too.

"The pandemic exposed businesses that were already under a lot of pressure. Publishing was also under a lot of pressure and it was very difficult to sustain it," Raphaely says. "And that's why after we closed, Caxton closed their magazine division."

By July, Media24 had shut down five magazines and two newspapers. For the journalists who worked for these publications, the closures not only took away their jobs but it also meant the end to parts of their lives that they loved.

"I really enjoyed my job, and then the next day there's nothing. You have no idea what you can do next. It was a bit jarring," says Caryn Welby-Solomon, former journalist for *Cosmopolitan*.

WOMEN IN MIND

These closures of women's magazines are a massive loss for South Africa, which is felt by not only the journalists who produced them but by readers who were loyal to the publications that were part of their lives, says Raphaely.

For Mathebula, one reason *Bona* was so successful was that a large part of the staff consisted of black, South African women writing for other black, South African women.

"Everything we did, we always had women in mind. You sit there and think 'if I was reading *Bona*, what would I like to read?'"

"We were the target market, so we made it what we wanted to read about," she explains. *Cosmopolitan* and other AMP magazines' focus on women resulted in most of the staff consisting of women who were passionate about writing on women's issues, says Raphaely.

"We surrounded ourselves with mostly women because our products were geared to women," she says. "We just naturally and authentically created an environment where women could flourish. That's the best part of it; it was so natural," Raphaely explains.

Bona did not only rely on what the staff wanted to write about for content, however, and content often centred around what readers said they wanted to see as well.

One writer for *Bona*, who was also a general practitioner and HIV/AIDS expert, would answer health-related questions from readers in every issue, recalls Mathebula.

"A lot of our content was also driven by people who wrote to us wanting to learn about different things," she says.

Without *Bona*, Mtshali says many South African women no longer have access to information that the magazine was able to share, with a large part of their target audience living without the internet or other resources. "They've definitely lost a wealth of knowledge," Mtshali says.

Bona was also the only South African magazine that published in four languages - English, Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa - which set the magazine apart in the industry, says Mathebula.

"We were a one of a kind publication," says Mtshali. "For once we had a magazine that was talking to people in languages that most people speak."

Mathebula recalls a message from a teacher, and *Bona* reader, on Twitter who said that she used the magazine to teach her students.

"She said she used the magazine to get her [students] to read because it had things that were relevant to them," Mathebula remembers. "You could reach [people] in their own language, and that is so important to them."

For Welby-Solomon, the closure of *Cosmopolitan* means that South African women have lost a magazine that spoke about womanhood, femininity and sexuality in an empowering manner.

"It spoke about sex positively, and it centred [on] women and women's pleasure, and what's important for women," she says. "I felt like they always pushed the boundary."

"*Cosmopolitan* was there for every stage of your life, and now it doesn't exist any more," says Raphaely.

print DEAD, DYING OR SURVIVING?

DESPITE PUBLICATIONS SUCH AS ASSOCIATED MEDIA PUBLISHING AND CAXTON'S MAGAZINE PRODUCTION CLOSING DOWN IN 2020, OPINIONS ARE STILL VARIED REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT PRINT IS TRULY DEAD. FOR SOME, COVID-19 HAS JUST PUT A TEMPORARY STALL ON PRINT, BUT FOR OTHERS, THE PANDEMIC WAS THE FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN FOR THE INDUSTRY.

"One of the things that we always have at the back of our minds is that one day print will cease to exist. I think print still has a future, but it depends on who the audience is."
- Amanda Mtshali, former features editor at *Bona*.

"The print industry is dying, but I don't think the media industry is dying. It's just changing and it's exciting to see what it's going to become next."
- Caryn Welby-Solomon, former journalist at *Cosmopolitan SA*.

"Print will remain but as a very small part of the overall channel ecosystem. Costs of print remain very high and I don't see a future in the news stand."
- Julia Raphaely, former CEO at Associated Media Publishing.

"I don't think it's dead completely. Everything happens in a pendulum swing. So it could be dead now, but I don't think it's dead forever. Just like vintage is cool, it could come back, and maybe the way it's presented will change."
- Martinique Stevens, former beauty editor at *Essentials and Woman & Home*.

PART OF THE FAMILY

These magazines not only impacted the lives of their readers but have a special place in the hearts of those who produced them. Mtuli grew up reading *Bona* with her older sisters, and says the magazine was somewhere she always knew she wanted to work.

"Since I was a little girl, I used to read *Bona* magazine," she says. "It was very important for me to work for a publication that speaks to people like me, and obviously *Bona* was an iconic brand," Mtuli explains.

Woman & Home was another publication that had been loved by readers who followed the magazine from the beginning, says Martinique Stevens, former beauty editor at *Essentials* magazine.

"They were a household brand. My mother...she had been buying the brand since it came out, it became part of the South African woman's home," she says.

Welby-Solomon, who also grew up reading *Cosmopolitan*, says she used to steal the magazine from her older sister. "I've been a reader for as long as I could remember, I loved it," she says. "I still have so many copies of the magazine, I'm still a Cosmo girl!" ■

CIRCULATION

BONA OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2019	50 148
ESSENTIALS OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2019	18 620
WOMAN & HOME OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2019	65 034
COSMOPOLITAN SA JULY - DECEMBER, 2019	34 915

SOURCE: JAMES BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PRINT



(ILLUSTRATION: SARAH HOEK)

Caryn Welby-Solomon was an entertainment and lifestyle journalist for *Cosmopolitan SA*. She is currently freelancing and runs her own pop culture podcast called "Crushing On".

Martinique Stevens was the beauty editor for *Woman & Home* and *Essentials*. She hopes to stay in the beauty industry, but is also exploring more writing and marketing.

Julia Rappasly was the CEO of Associated Media Publishing, where she worked for over 26 years. She has since launched her new media business Paradigm Connect.

Amanda Mtuli is the former features editor at *Bona* magazine, where she worked for over four years. She is currently working on multiple new projects, including a digital magazine.

Kwamele Mathebula is the former digital editor at *Bona* magazine, and worked at the publication from 2019. She is now focussing her attention on digital marketing, which she loves.

DIE (KAY)ER GAAN VOORT ONDANKS PANDEMIE

Deur Heidi-Jane de Wee

Kay Karriem het in 1996 haar loopbaan in die mediabedryf begin as 'n joernalis by *Beeld* in Johannesburg. Ses maande nadat die bekende tydskrif, *Kuier*, in 2009 die lig gesien het, is sy as redaktrise aangestel. Ten spyte van die impak van Covid-19, asook persoonlike mediese uitdagings, vier sy vanjaar 'n dekadere aan die stuur van dié baanbreker-tydskrif.



FOTO: Lavern Maarman

Kay Karriem het joernalistiek gekies omdat daar nie geld was om enige ander beroep na te jaag nie. “Finansiële nood het my gedwing om ’n joernalis te word. Ek het by Media24 ’n beurs gekry om na skool verder te gaan studeer,” sê sy.

“Ek het BA (Regte) met Afrikaans en Nederlands as hoofvak aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad (UK) studeer en die res is geskiedenis.”

Volgens Karriem het *Kuier* as ’n Afrikaanse tydskrif – wat op die bruin gemeenskap gemik is – gesukkel om in die eerste bestaansjaar lesers se aandag te trek omdat hulle teen gevestigde handelsmerke moes meeding.

“Tussen die tweede en derde jaar van ons bestaan, het ons egter ongekende groei ervaar soos ons kernmark begin uitbrei het,” sê sy. “In die jare daarna kon ons daarin slaag om ons sirkulasie relatief stabiel te hou totdat die pandemie toegeslaan het.”

Volgens Anastasia de Vries, dosent in Afrikaans en Nederlands aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland (UWK), is dit belangrik dat daar ’n Afrikaanse tydskrif beskikbaar moet wees wat spesifiek op die bruin gemeenskap gemik is. Daarom is sy dankbaar dat *Kuier* nog, ten spyte van die pandemie, voortbestaan om Afrikaans as ’n mediataal te bevorder. “Tydskrifte soos *Kuier* werk saam met ander publikasies, soos *Sarie* of *Die Burger*, om Afrikaans in mense se harte te hou en om by te dra tot Afrikaans in verskillende variëteite,” meen De Vries.

SIRKULASIE TYDENS DIE PANDEMIE

Karriem vertel dat *Kuier* tydens die pandemie meer druk ervaar het omdat die gepaandgaande inperkings hulle verspreiding na handelaars beïnvloed het.

“Die grootste impak was op ons sirkulasie, want die pandemie het die koopgewoontes van ons lesers beïnvloed. Mense het nie meer so gereeld winkels toe gegaan nie en dus was daar minder kans dat hulle die tydskrif sou koop,” sê sy.

Karriem verduidelik dat die geweldige negatiewe impak op die ekonomie ook hul lesers se inkomste geraak het en sodoende verkope erg belemmer het.

“Gehukkig het ons sirkulasie redelik stabiel gebly en het ons nie heeltemal in die hek-gedruik wat dit betref nie,” voeg sy verder by.

Ernosta Maralack, artikelredakteur by *Kuier*, meen dat die pandemie die publikasie as ’n besigheid hard geslaan het. Sy sê dat dit moeilik was om joernaliste in te lig dat hulle nie meer fisies onderhoude moet voer nie.

“*Kuier*-joernaliste wil mense in die oë kyk en ’n gevoel kry van wie die persoon is wie se storie hulle vertel en

dit dan in die skryfwerk gebruik. Die pandemie het dit egter vir hulle onmoontlik gemaak,” sê sy.

Volgens Maralack moes die joernaliste nuwe maniere vind om stories met dieselfde passie te vertel, al is die onderhoude oor ’n afstand gevoer.

Kuier het ook ’n spesiale plekkie in die harte van hul lesers, met een spesifieke leser wat die tydskrif beskryf as die “verteller van stories wat nie so gereeld gehoor word nie”.

“Vir my het *Kuier* nuwe deure oopgemaak. Die tydskrif het vir my geleer dat elke liewe klein dingetjie in die lewe saak maak, omdat daar altyd ’n moontlikheid is dat dit iemand anders positief kan aanraak,” sê Edward Fortuin, leser van *Kuier*.

KUIER VIR DIE TOEKOMS

Karriem is egter dankbaar dat *Kuier* vroeg genoeg vermoed het dat die land in ’n staat van inperking geplaas sou word, en dus ook vroeg genoeg aanpassings kon maak om te verseker dat die tydskrif steeds op die rakke sal wees.

“Ons het gelukkig vroeg die tekens raakgesien. Ons het reeds die week vóór die nasionale grendelstaat die Media24-gebou verlaat en van die huis af begin werk,” sê sy.

Volgens Karriem kon die impak van die pandemie egter gewees het – sy is net dankbaar dat *Kuier* ’n

WIE IS KAY KARRIEM?

“Ek het ’n aansteeklike lag en borrel oor van positiwiteit. Ek hou van gesels en het die vermoë om enige introvert uit hulle dop te laat kruip,” is Karriem se beskrywing van haarself. Karriem het vanaf haar kinderjare ’n liefde vir lees en dus vanaf ’n jong ouderdom geweet dat sy eendag met woorde wil werk – om ander mense se stories te vertel.

“DIT HET BASIES MY LOOPBAAN TOT STILSTAND GERUK.”

manier gevind het om te oorleef.

"*Kuier* het oorleef, maar word nou op 'n kontrakbasis deur die span vir Media24 gedoen. Twee van ons uitgawes is ook nie onder vlak vyf gedruk nie, maar die uitgawes was wel steeds aanlyn beskikbaar op *Netwerk24*," sê sy.

Karriem vertel dat die stres wat hiermee gepaardgegaan het, het op sy beurt ook haar geestestoestand geaffekteer – net soos dié van baie ander individue.

"Die hele mensdom beleef tans 'n tyd van ongekende onsekerheid en boonop het dit daartoe gelei dat my diens as permanente werknemer van Media24 beëindig is. Dit was nogal 'n skok vir die steluel," sê sy.

GEROER DEUR BEROERTES

Karriem vertel dat in 2008, op die ouderdom van 34, het sy haar eerste beroerte gehad. Dié beroerte het groot skade aan haar brein aangerig en lang rehabilitasie het daarop gevolg. Daarna het sy nog tussen drie of vier kleiner beroertes ervaar, waarvan sy vinniger herstel het.

"Tydens my eerste beroerte het ek nog in Johannesburg gewerk en dit het basies my loopbaan tot stilstand geruk. Ek was vir 'n lang tyd nie seker of ek ten volle sou herstel nie. Die deel van my brein wat geraak is, was die regter frontale lob – wat jou aktiewe geheue affekteer," sê sy.

Daarna het Karriem intensiewe rehabilitasie en terapie ondergaan. Sy is ook vir langer as 'n jaar op beperkte diens geplaas om vas te stel of haar brein genoegsaam sou herstel sodat sy haar take kon hervat.

Die eerste beroerte het ook Karriem se geestestoestand op 'n groot skaal beïnvloed en vir die eerste keer in haar hele lewe het sy getwyfel in haar vermoë om 'n joernalis te wees.

"Ek was nie seker of ek ooit ten volle sou herstel nie," sê sy.

**"EK WAS NIE SEKER OF
EK OOI
TEN VOLLE SOU
HERSTEL NIE."**

KARRIEM AS MENTOR

Dit was uitdagend om deur

Karriem gementor te word, oor hoe

jy vir 'n tydskrif moet skryf. Sy het

my eerste *Kuier*-storie uitmekaar

geruk, maar dit is die vuurdoop

wat ek nodig gehad het om as 'n

tydskrifjoernalis te groei. In alles

wat sy doen, stel Karriem die leser

altyd eerste en alle stories móet 'n

doel hê. Vir haar moet dit nie net

daaroor gaan om verslag te doen

nie – maar om ook deur stories

waarde tot *Kuier*-lesers se lewens

by te voeg.

– Ernusta Maralack

Karriem het teenoor die span by *Kuier* oopgemaak oor haar beroertes en die effek wat dié op haar gehad het.

"Sy het in *Kuier* se 10de gedenkuitgawe verlede jaar openhartig daaroor geskryf. Die span ken haar storie en ons almal kloek om haar wanneer dit lyk asof sy te veel spanning ervaar," sê Maralack.

Karriem erken dat die onvoorspelde Covid-19-pandemie gevoelens van onsekerheid in haar ontlok het. Dié gevoelens het daartoe gelei dat sy gewonder het of sy in staat is om *Kuier* deur die pandemie te dra.

"My geestestoestand tydens die pandemie kan definitief vergelyk word met die emosies wat ek ervaar het terwyl ek nog besig was om van my eerste beroerte te herstel," sê sy.

Vandag is Karriem dankbaar dat sy wel volkome herstel het, 'n suksesvolle tydskrif agter haar naam het, en weer die geleentheid het om ander se stories te vertel. ■

To read this article in English, visit the SMF website. See page 7.



HUSTLE BUSTLE BUSINESS

By Callan Riddles

Media professionals are being forced to become more business-minded and money-savvy than ever. The era of side hustles, or diversified income streams, is not only keeping journalists financially secure during the uncertain times of Covid-19, but is also inspiring a new breed of media entrepreneurs.



PHOTOS: INDIVIDUAL KUSTINIK / DOUGLAS BOGG / GARY JETER / JEAN-LOUIS PAULIN / MISOLOH

AS Covid-19 continues to change the landscape of the media industry, journalists are being pushed to find and rely on multiple income streams for financial security.

The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) released a report in June highlighting the dire situation. With over 700 journalists unemployed, 80 small print publishers closed, major magazine publishing companies out of business, and steep salary cuts to workers in print and online media groups, it means that, for many journalists, a side hustle is no longer just a nice-to-have, but a necessity.

SIDE HUSTLES IN THE MEDIA

Some journalists have been able to build up their side hustles over time by saying yes to the opportunities that came their way. For others, it was a conscious decision to start monetising their marketable skills.

This was the decision Renaldo Schwarp, head of *Jacaranda FM's* digital team, made three years ago when he began to build diverse income streams.

"A skill set that I didn't see as important a few years ago, really became a big chunk of extra income," says Schwarp.

Schwarp's ever-evolving list of side hustles includes radio presenter, video producer, videographer,

column writer and owner of his own video and audio production business.

"At the core of it, it's all storytelling, just on different platforms," says Schwarp.

These diverse income streams have ensured Schwarp's financial security during the national lockdown. He says that he found his side hustles over the years by determining which skill sets he was able to monetise.

"I'm very lucky that I realised that being multi-skilled is the most important thing," he says. According to Schwarp, although he has been successful in building his side hustles, doing the work always stemmed from his passion for what he does.

Schwarp advises that journalists should also pay special attention to their employment contracts, to ensure it will not limit how they diversify their income — something he has encountered in the past.

A LIFELINE DURING COVID-19

For Carla Mackenzie, radio presenter, producer and digital editor also for *Jacaranda FM*, with a side hustle as a TV presenter, having multiple income streams meant that she had a lifeline to fall back on when one of her TV shows, *Fiesta*, had to stop production during the lockdown.

"It is a show that took me to different provinces

and [popular] festivals," says Mackenzie. "That, of course, had to be stopped immediately."

According to Mackenzie, she was lucky enough to be approached by *VLA TV* to present a new TV show of her own, *Musickpaniek*, which was shot during the lockdown and is currently airing.

Mackenzie highlights the importance of journalists upskilling themselves in as many different areas of their industry as possible.

"If you are a radio presenter, know how to present, upload your own podcasts, how to edit audio and know how the business of radio works," she says.

While Mackenzie has been able to fall back on her side hustle, other journalists have not been as fortunate.

"The amount of work I'm getting has dried with the lockdown," says freelance journalist Lesley Stones, who does not have many different income streams. Stones says that at least six magazines she used to write for are now closed and other publications are also unable to pay for articles from freelancers.

"The other whammy comes because the journalists who were employed by publications that folded are now trying to freelance themselves, so there are more of us pitching to fewer outlets," says Stones.

The print media sector has been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic, resulting in the closure of many

“We all need side hustles to gain experience, for creativity and just to pay the bill at the end of the month.”

SIDE

HUSTLE

newspapers and magazines. This not only makes it difficult for freelance journalists like Stones to earn an income, but has left many journalists unemployed.

One publication not immune to the effects of the pandemic was one of the country's oldest magazines, *Bona*.

“[G]iven the industry conditions over the last decade, I wasn't surprised [by the closure],” says Gugulethu Mhlungu, former deputy editor for *Bona* magazine. Mhlungu adds that the pandemic exacerbated the pressure on the sector.

“[The] closure of a print title is devastating, and not just for those working at these titles, but for the whole value chain — for instance, the impact on freelancers, printers, distributors [and] event organisers,” she says.

Mhlungu was also involved in a TV project, *One Day Latiler*, while she was working for *Bona*, which wrapped up filming during level three of the lockdown. After *Bona*'s closure, Mhlungu says she was able to use her broadcasting and writing background to generate new income through producing a podcast series, freelance writing and completing a non-fiction book which she had been writing.

“I think being able to do more than one kind of work, as exhausting as it can be, is the future of media professionals, especially as media companies continue to figure out how to make the business commercially viable and sustainable once again,” she adds.

Meanwhile, with freelance opportunities dwindling, Stones says that she is now considering getting qualified to teach English overseas to diversify her income.

Stones still believes, however, that if journalists are able to, they should not diversify their income outside of the media industry.

“Become a journalist because you love it and do it for that reason,” says Stones, who believes quality journalism is needed more than ever in South Africa.

THE EMERGENCE OF MEDIA ENTREPRENEURS

While some media professionals prefer smaller side hustles, there are those who fully embrace entrepreneurship opportunities.

Someone who has been successful at establishing his own business is *Cape Talk*'s radio host, Kieno Kammies, who is the founder of Kieno Kammies Strategic Business Solutions.

“[Being] on radio all these years, you get to understand what people's feelings are about certain things... you also get to read people,” he says.

“[Your clients] only want to know: What does your product do to make my life easier? What's the value?”

Engaging with and understanding people is key for business, he says. “My advice is to [find] the things you are passionate about, look at the things that inspire you and figure out for yourself where you would fit into it,” Kammies says.

Elsa Fourie, entrepreneurship specialist and business owner, emphasises that building a business requires time and passion. “Give yourself time to develop the what, how and why of your own business,” says Fourie. She believes that the stronger the foundation and research, the quicker a business will grow.

Fourie also believes if one is starting a business now, it is important to consider the current pandemic and its limitations.

While the media industry morphs into a new version of itself, Fourie says the winning formula for embracing side hustles continues to be passion, grit, perfecting balance and finding a niche.

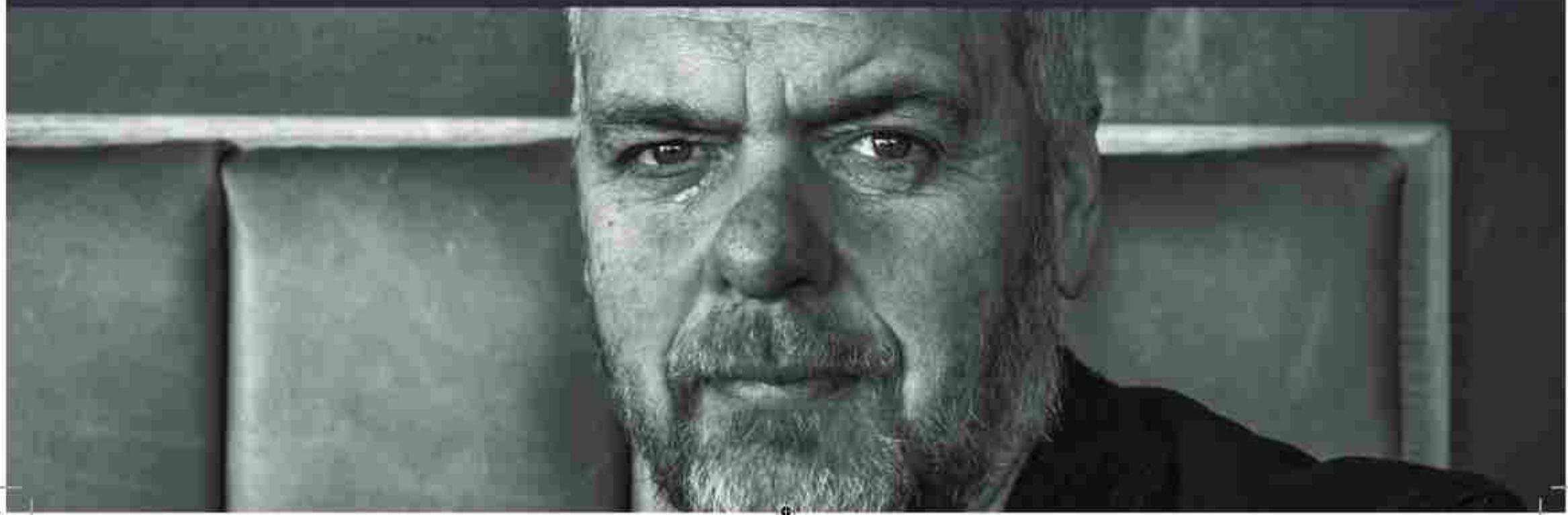
“We all need side hustles to gain experience, for creativity and just to pay the bill at the end of the month,” says Fourie. ■

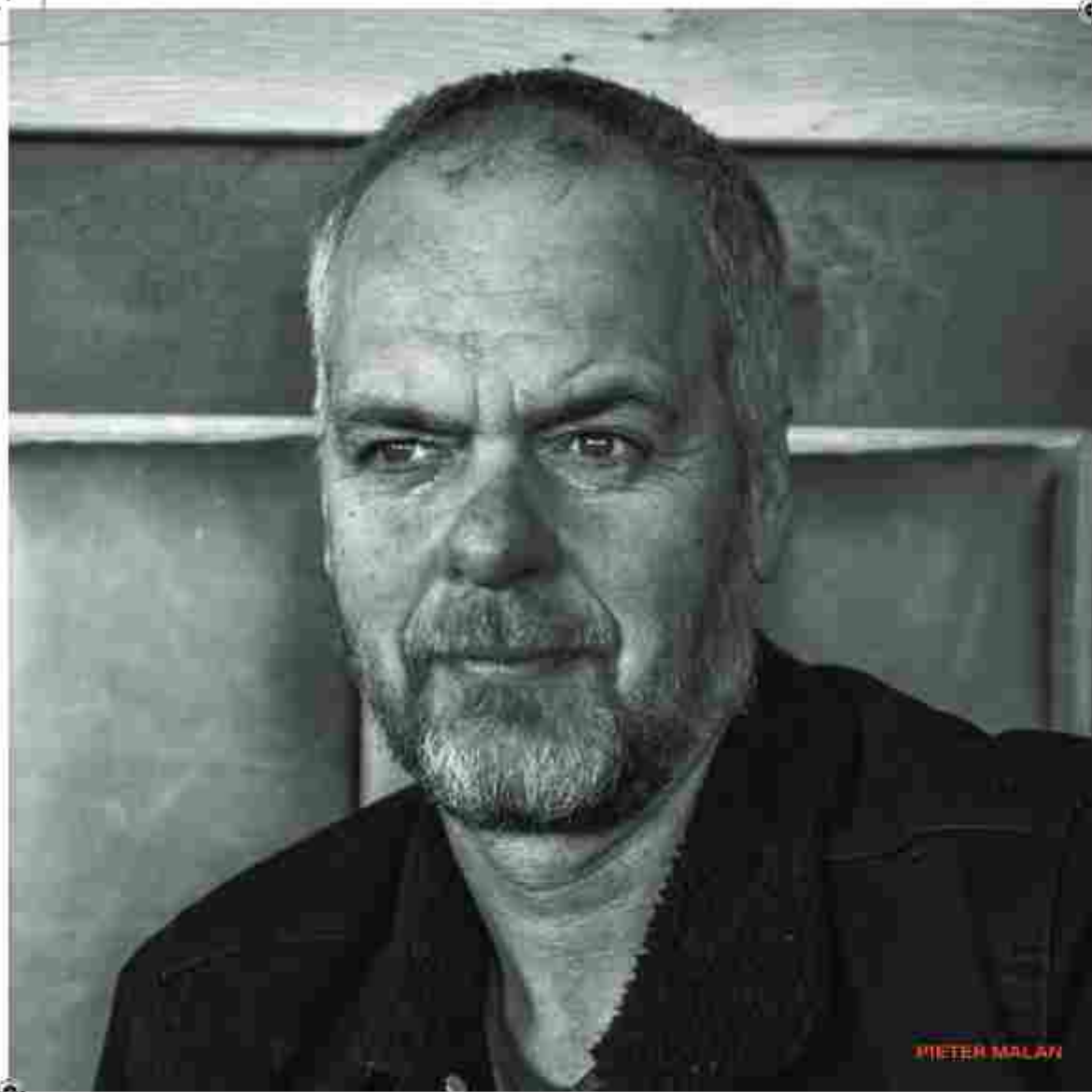


MEDIAMORFOSE: SUID-AFRIKAANSE NUUSKANTORE

Met die uitbreking van die Covid-19-pandemie het verskeie Suid-Afrikaanse nuuskantore drastiese veranderinge ondergaan. Reuse-oopplankantore is verruil vir virtuele ruimtes en verslaggewers moes van die huis af werk. 'n Paar gesoute joernaliste het gesels oor hul ervarings tydens hierdie ongekende tydperk.

Woorde en foto's deur Lezanne Steenkamp





PIETER MALAN

Toe Pieter Malan veertig jaar gelede as student ingestap het by wat destyds nog bekend gestaan het as *The Argus*, was die nuuskantoor tussen 50 en 60 mense sterk. Die algemene redaksie het bestaan uit minstens 10 mense, met meer as 10 fotograwe wat voltyds daar gewerk het. Dit was 'n reuse-oopplanvertrek, gevul met mense – daar was altyd mense op kantoor. Tussen die telefone wat lui, faksmasjiene wat raas en 'n teleksmasjiene wat in die hoek dreun, het joernaliste stories gejaag.

Malan, vandag die redakteur van *Weekliks Rapport* se aktuele nuusbylaag, het 'n gevoel ervaar wat hy nooit sal vergeet nie. "Hiervan wil ek deel wees," het hy gedink.

VERANDERINGE IN DIE NUUSKANTOOR: 'N KULTUURSKUIF

Die kultuur in die nuuskantoor was daardie dae een van baie dissipline. Daar was 'n baas – gewoonlik die nuusredakteur of redakteur – wat voor gesit en vir verslaggewers voorgesê het wat om te doen. Daardie kultuur is verby.

Dit is volgens Max du Preez, 'n uitgewer en mede-redakteur van *Vrye Weekblad*. Die stelsel was nie inklusief in terme van die nuusagenda nie.

Later het die kultuur verander na een waar almal hul menings kon gee en gesprekke oor stories gevoer kon word. Du Preez noem dit 'n kultuur van seggenskap. "Ek beskou dit as 'n ideale nuuskantoor – 'n spasie waar idees uitgeruil word en aktiewe gesprekke gevoer word," sê Du Preez.

Die oomblik wat die nuuskantoor op hierdie manier oopgegooi word, is daar die voordeel van 'n hele klomp diverse menings. "Dit is potensieel 'n geweldige kreatiewe plek en ek dink dit is noodsaaklik," sê Du Preez.

Du Preez meen dat so 'n interaktiewe stelsel 'n nuuskantoor verryk. "Die beste soort joernaliste is mense wat onafhanklik dink, wat sterk idees het en wat diep nadink oor goed. As dit nie by hulle getap word nie, is die nuuskantoor armer," sê Du Preez.

Sedert Malan en Du Preez die bedryf dekades gelede betree het, het nuuskantore se getalle aansienlik afgeneem.

"Vyftien jaar gelede was *Rapport* se Kaapse satellietkantoor groter as wat *Rapport* se totale redaksie nou is. Daar hang 'n foto in die kantoor van die redaksie destyds, met omtrent 70 mense daarop. Die redaksie bestaan nou uit ongeveer 15 mense," sê Malan.

VERANDERINGE IN DIE NUUSKANTOOR: COVID-19

Sedert die uitbreking van die Covid-19-pandemie is redaksies blootgestel aan drastiese veranderinge in die nuuskantoor. Dit het afdankings en die sluiting van verskeie publikasies ingesluit.

"Nes verskeie ander industrieë, moes Suid-Afrikaanse nuuskantore alternatiewe maniere vind om met die Covid-19-pandemie om te gaan," sê Monique Mortlock, 'n verslaggewer by eNCA.

Plastiese skermes verdeel die handjievol joernaliste in die nuuskantoor, alle toerusting word voortdurend ontsmet en die nodige maatreëls wat veiligheid betref, word met elke onderhoud toegepas. "Ons eerste prioriteit is die veiligheid van ons bronne. Met elke onderhoud moet jy heeltyd bewus wees van hoe jy elkeen benader," sê Mortlock.

Selfs al is 'n verskeidenheid van virtuele mediums gebruik om lesers ingelig te hou tydens die grendelstaat, het joernaliste dit uitdagend gevind om die emosies van die onderskeie onderwerpe werklik vas te vang op 'n skerm.

"Dit was moeilik om die gewig van elke onderwerp aan die lesers oor te dra," sê Karabo Ledwaba, 'n verslaggewer by *Source24*.

Ledwaba is van mening dat 'n groot gedeelte van *Source24* se lesers nie toegang tot virtuele mediums het nie. "Dit was 'n reuse-uitdaging omdat dit hulle verhoed om nuus te verbruik," sê sy.

Tydens die grendelstaat is die meeste Suid-Afrikaanse nuuskantore virtueel ingerig en het hulle redaksies van die huis af gewerk, sê Mortlock.

"Dit was uitdagend om onderhoude oor gewigtige temas te voer, juis omdat jy nie



MONIQUE MORTLOCK

UIT DIE ARGIEF: VAN 9/11 TOT DIE SOWETO-OPSTAND

Covid-19 is ongetwyfeld een van die grootste verskuiwings van die 21ste eeu. Twee gesoute joernaliste deel soortgelyke gebeurtenisse wat 'n groot impak op hul loopbane as joernaliste gehad het.

PIETER MALAN was die fotoredakteur by *Beeld* in 2001 toe die nuus breek dat 'n vliegtuig in die World Trade Center vasgevlieg het. "Kry 'n fotograaf daar. Dadelik," was die opdrag. Volgens Malan is daar 'n gebou in Kempton Park genoem World Trade Center, waar sommige van die 1993/'94-onderhandelinge plaasgevind het. "Ek het na 'n fotograaf gehardloop en gesê – 'Klim, sorg dat jy in Kempton Park kom!' Jan Hamman, destydse hooffotograaf en wat sedertien oorlede is, se eerste reaksie was: 'Ek het nog altyd geblêrlêweet dit gaan gebeur.'" Kort daarna het die nuusredakteur laat weet dat die gebeurtenis in New York plaasgevind het en almal het skaam-skaam na hul lessenaars teruggekeer.

Vir **MAX DU PREEZ** was die Soweto-opstand deurslaggewend. Du Preez, toe 22 jaar oud, het pas begin werk as 'n joernalis toe hy Soweto toe gestuur is. Dit was 16 Junie 1976. Dit was een van sy eerste stories. Wat hy daardie dag ervaar het, sou 'n belangrike en vormende impak op sy lewe hê. "Om dit in persoon te ervaar... my hele insig het verander," sê Du Preez. "Ek het gekyk hoe kinders doodgeskiet is en besef ek het nie 'n idee wat in my land aangaan nie. Hoe het ek nie geweet nie? Hoekom is hierdie mense so kwaad? Hoekom het ek nie geweet hulle is so kwaad nie? Hulle lyk soos ek, dalk 2 of 3 jaar jonger, en hulle loop voor koeëls in," sê Du Preez.

aan die persoon kan raak om sodoende jou meegevoel te wys nie," sê Mortlock. Tydens die pandemie was persoonlike risiko dalk 'n kwessie. "Dis egter nie anders as vir polisieleds of verpleegsters nie. As joernalis kies jy om met sekere risiko's saam te leef," sê Malan.

Jy kan nie joernalistiek uit jou kantoor "pleeg" nie, besam Du Preez. Hy meen dit is belangrik om die impak wat Covid-19 op die samekhorigheid in die nuuskantoor het, in ag te neem – veral in gevalle waar almal van die huis af moes werk.

"Vir solank 'n publikasie nie sy redaksie in een plek kan hê nie, gaan joernalistiek armer wees. Ons moet bewus wees daarvan en daarby aanpas," sê Du Preez.

Alhoewel dit as 'n uitdaging beskou word, meen Anika Pieterse, die redaksionele bestuurder van spesiale projekte by *Netwerk24*, dat die nuuskantoor en joernaliste bereid moet wees om aan te pas by dié tye. "As ons vasklou aan 'hoe dinge gedoen word', gaan ons sleg tweede kom," sê sy.

KURATORSKAP IN 'N VIRTUELE WÊRELD

'n Kernrol van gedrukte media, is kuratorskap. Redaksies besluit watter artikels ingesluit en uitgesluit word, maar ook waar in die publikasie dit verskyn. "Die leser weet die voorbladstorie is belangrik en dat die berig onderaan bladsy twee, minder belangrik is," verduidelik Malan.

Malan meen dat digitale publikasies die leser toegang bied tot alle artikels – maar nie noodwendig onderskeid tref tussen 'n voorbladstorie en 'n artikel onderaan bladsy twee nie.

"Dit word dus die leser se verantwoordelikheid," sê Malan.

Die digitalisering van media, volgens Malan, speel 'n rol in die gebrek aan kuratorskap. Dit dra op sy beurt by tot lesers se onkunde.

"In daai opsig is die industrie anders as toe ek begin werk het. Die behoefte vir analitiese kapasiteit is, ironies genoeg, hoër as wat dit al ooit was. Tog is dit minder beskikbaar as wat dit ooit was," sê Malan.

Dié kwessie het egter al voor Covid-19 'n rol gespeel, meen Malan. "Die inligting is daar, alles is aanlyn beskikbaar – maar lesers weet nie hoe om daarmee om te gaan nie," sê Malan.

Du Preez verduidelik dat hy sedert die aanvang van die pandemie elemente van 'n kommunikasiegaping in die nuuskantoor opgemerk het. Virtuele mediums vertraag die gesprek tussen redaksielede, meen Du Preez, en daar is ook die gevaar dat die nuusredakteur of redakteur weer 'n dominante rol speel – soos in die nuuskantore van ouds.

"Die nuusredakteur is die leier van hierdie ding, maar moet nooit dominant wees nie. Jy druk dan oorspronklike denke en nuwe idees dood. Daardie gevaar is met ons, nou," sê hy.

Die nuuskantoor moet, volgens Du Preez, nuwe maniere vind om te kommunikeer en om teen fopnuus op sosiale media mee te ding. Dit moet ook 'n produk aanbied wat lesers nie elders kan kry nie.

"Ons [die nuuskantoor] weet nie altyd mooi hoe om die afhanklikheid wat ons van sosiale media het, te verwerk nie. Ons sal daarmee moet saamleef," sê Du Preez.

Indien joernaliste nie as kurators in die samelewing funksioneer nie, sal mense afhanklik van mekaar wees om inligting te bekom en te verwerk, argumenteer Ledwaba.

"Dit is nou belangriker as ooit vir joernaliste om mense te help om die kaf van die koring te skei. In 'n wêreld vol fopnuus is joernaliste broodnodig," sê Pieterse.

Mortlock glo dat dit steeds belangrik is vir joernaliste om hul eie geloofwaardigheid te beskerm. "Ons moet sin maak van wat aan die gebeur is en dit aan ons lesers verduidelik," sê Mortlock.

Joernalistiek speel 'n kernrol. Dit moet die teenmiddel word vir fopnuus en samesweringsteorieë, meen Du Preez.

"Joernaliste moet minder foute maak en regverdigheid moet gedemonstreer word," sê Du Preez. "Moenie apologie wegsteek nie. Kom hard en duidelik oor en vra om verskoning." ■

To read this article in English, visit the SMF website. See page 7.

30 April 2020. Talle inwoners in die Johannesburgse
middestad het hulle dake bo-op die dakke van ou woonstelle
tydens die grendelstaat deurgebring. FOTO: James Oatway

IN





Om die onsigbare te sien

KAMERA:

Om die onsigbare omstandighede van die Covid-19-pandemie vas te vang, het fotojoernaliste hul kort lense verruil vir lang lense. Vyf gesoute, Suid-Afrikaanse fotojoernaliste het hulle ervarings gedurende die grendelstaat gedeel.

Deur Anke Nothnagel

IN die "rooi sone". Dit is waar die Suid-Afrikaanse fotojoernalis, Felix Dlangamandla – soos talle ander – homself in sy huis bevind het, na nóg 'n "gewone" dag in die leë strate van Johannesburg.

Die sone, ingerig in sy motorhuis, het hy gebruik as 'n ontsmettingskamer om sy daaglikse hazmat-pak en klere uit te trek en sy kamera-toerusting te ontsmet.

"Jy trek al jou klere uit en hardloop stort toe. Dan kom jy terug om jou toerusting en die binnekant van jou kar te ontsmet," sê Dlangamandla. "Dit is wanneer jy uiteindelik voel, 'dalk is ek nou veilig?' ... net om môre weer alles van voor af te begin."

26 MAART – MIDDERNAG

Die Covid-19-pandemie het Suid-Afrika soos 'n vloedgolf getref. Oornag het wemmelende strate en – middestede grafstille geword.

Maar tydens die grendelstaats moes joernaliste en fotografe as essensiële werkers voortgaan om die werklikheid van die pandemie vas te vang en die publiek in te lig. "Johannesburg se strate, die Nelson Mandela-brug – alles was leeg. Jy vra jouself, 'wat het ons getref?'" sê Dlangamandla.

Selfs vir Jerome Delay, 'n fotojoernalis van *Associated Press*, wat voorheen die Ebola-epidemie in die Kongo en Wes-Afrika gedek het, was die Covid-19-pandemie en die inperking iets heeltemal nuuts.

"Jy kan baie makliker siek raak van Covid en dit word makliker oorgedra. Weer eens veg jy 'n vyand wat jy nie kan sien nie," vertel Delay.

As joernalis moet jy altyd paraat en versigtig optree omdat jy met mense moet praat en naby aan hulle moet kom om foto's te neem, sê Delay.

"Dit was skrikwekkend. Ons het nie geweet wat om te verwag en of ons toegelaat sou word om te werk nie – veral nie toe die weermag ontplooi is nie," vertel James Oatway, 'n vryskut-fotojoernalis in Johannesburg.

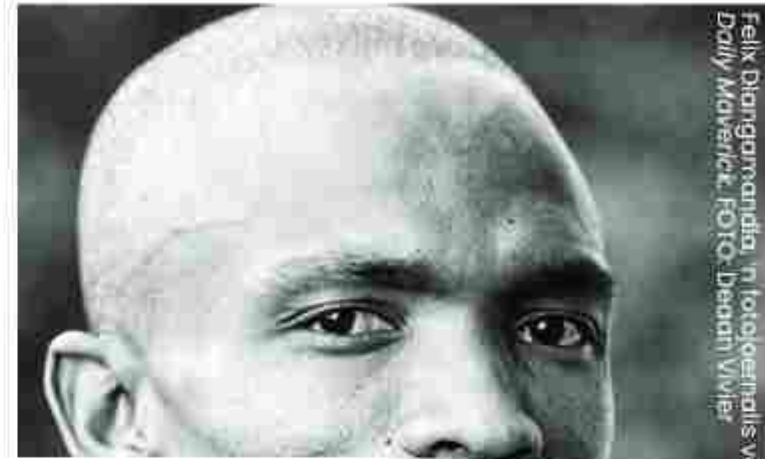
Oatway het 'n koeëlvastebaadjie vir homself aangekaf met die woord "*press*" voor en agterop, sodat hy identificeerbaar kon wees vir die polisie en die weermag wanneer hy in die strate foto's geneem het.

"Natuurlik het ek ook my permit gehad. Ek moes veral tydens die eerste paar dae van die inperking dit gereeld vir die polisie gewys het," sê Oatway.

Op 'n uitsettingstoneel in Johannesburg was Yeshiel Panchia, 'n vryskut-fotojoernalis van dié gebied, se ontmoeting met polisiebeamptes minder aangenaam.

"Een van die beamptes het gedreig om my te arresteer nadat sy my papierwerk – wat in orde was – deurgegaan het," vertel Panchia. "Dit is toe dat sy sê, 'die media is nie 'n essensiële diens nie', en haar wapen op my rig," sê Panchia.

Nadat sy haar wapen op hom gerig het, het haar senior kollega hom ondervra. "Ek het my papierwerk aan hom verskaf en hom meegedeel dat ek 'n joernalis is wat aan 'n storie in die omgewing werk. Hy het toe sy kollega gevra om ons te los," sê Panchia.



Felix Dlangamandla, 'n fotojoernalis van Daily Maverick. FOTO: Deaan Vivier

**"JY VRA
JOUSELF,
'WAT HET ONS
GETREF?'"**

DIE ONSIGBARE: VANUIT 'N ANDER OOGPUNT

Korter lense is verruil vir langer lense sodat fotografe se kameras hulle nader aan die toneel kon neem. En soortgelyk het mense se vensters die deure na hulle huise geword.

"Jy moet ander *frames* kry. Mense wat deur vensters kyk of mense wat van balkonne afkyk. Jy moet op 'n ander manier na mense en die samelewing begin kyk," vertel Madelene Cronjé, 'n fotojoernalis by *New Frame*.

Covid en die inperking het deure oopgemaak na betugte gebiede soos Alexandra en Khayelitsha waar fotografe nie noodwendig baie gekom het nie, sê Delay.

"Ons het 'n kans gehad om nuwe mense te ontmoet en ons vooroordele te los," vertel Delay. Volgens hom was dit ook makliker om foto's te neem tydens vlak vyf van die grendelstaat as vlak twee, omdat daar 'n verandering in die samelewing en in mense se gedrag was.

"Tydens vlak vyf was daar troepe in die strate, mense is gearresteer of mense het in lang rye gestaan vir kos. Tydens vlak twee gaan die lewe eintlik 'normaal' voort – ons dra nou net maskers," sê hy.

Oatway het sosiale afstand vanaf 'n ander perspektief beoefen en met sy hommeluig oor die Johannesburgse middestad gevlieg.

"Dit was interessant. Die middestad was heeltemal leeg – maar mense het net op beweeg en die inperkingsdae bo-op ou woonstelblokke se dakke deurgebring," sê Oatway. Hy vertel dat dit 'n uitdaging was om in digbevolkte gebiede, soos Alexandra, die inperking af te neem.

"Dit het nie gelyk of daar 'n inperking was nie. Mense kon nie heeldag in hulle klein huise bly nie," sê Oatway. "Wanneer die weermag gepatrolleer het, het mense in hulle

21 April 2020. Stanley Zaki (58) is deur die metropolissie geskiet met 'n rubberkoeël. FOTO: James Oatway





"Jy moet op 'n ander manier na mense en die samelewing begin kyk," sê Madelene Cronjé. FOTO: Madelene Cronjé

huise ingegaan, maar weer uitgekom en sokker in die strate gespeel as die weermag weg was."

Goeie nuus in dié tyd was skaars, maar Oatway was gelukkig genoeg toe hy deur Alexandra gery het en gehoor het hoe iemand die trompet speel.

"'n Jong seun het sy broer se trompet in hulle agterplaas leer speel," vertel Oatway. "Dit was lekker om te sien."

BRING DIT HUIS TOE

Jou grootste vrees is dat jy die virus gaan kry – veral wanneer jy in die areas ingaan waar mense getoets word, sê Dlangamandla.

"Op 'n stadium begin jy ook siek voel, al is jy nie regtig siek nie," vertel hy. "Jy begin wonder of jou masker jou genoeg beskerm."

Maar Dlangamandla het een doel voor oë gehad – om 'n ingeperkte nase in te lig. "Dit was iets heeltemal nuuts – maar ek moes die bul by die horings pak," vertel hy.

Joernalistiek is natuurlik belangrik – maar die rol van fotojoernalistiek het nog belangriker geraak omdat dit iets anders is om dinge te sien gebeur, vertel Cronjé.

"Dit is 'n vyand wat mense moet *fight* – wat hulle nie kan sien nie. Fotojoernalistiek help net om dit bietjie huis toe te bring, sodat mense kan sien wat aangaan en waarteen hulle moet veg," sê Cronjé. ■

To read this article in English, visit the SMF website. See page 7.



Madelene Cronjé, 'n fotojoernalis van New Frame. FOTO: Vetrakat



"DIT IS 'N VYAND WAT MENSE MOET FIGHT – WAT HULLE NIE KAN SIEN NIE."

'n Weermagbeampte in Mayfair, Johannesburg, maak seker dat die aandklokkeel toegepas word. FOTO: Felix Dlangamandla/Netwerk 24

FIND YOUR

MOJO





Today, journalists create, curate and post content all from the palms of their hands. **Yusuf Omar**, an award-winning mobile journalist and co-founder of *Hashtag Our Stories*, a mobile journalism company, shares what mobile journalism (mojo) is and why it is flourishing in a pandemic.

By Nicole Nasson

IT is a story most journalists are familiar with: Unemployment. A story that then freshly-graduated Rhodes University journalism student, Yusuf Omar, knew quite well. Publication after publication rejected him because of the dreaded *e-word* most young journalists still need to acquire – experience.

So, instead of enduring more rejection, Yusuf Omar did the one thing he could to gain a “yes”. He packed his bag and backpacked through Africa. And luckily for him, this was a career-initiating move.

“My big break was being in Egypt during the first Arab Spring, right at the end of that trip from Damascus. And, it’s luck. But also, by virtue of how many times you mission out on these adventures, you start to create your own luck,” says Yusuf Omar.

He reported on anti-government protests, known as the Arab Spring, in 2010. This was a series of demonstrations which occurred among many Arab countries against their oppressive regimes. Soon after, he became a journalist at one of South Africa’s biggest news agencies, *eNCA*. Yusuf Omar then went on to work for the other media names such as *CNN* in London and *Hindustan Times* in New Delhi before starting *Hashtag Our Stories* with his wife, Sumaiya Omar.

Established in 2017 as a mobile journalism company, *Hashtag Our Stories* focuses on training a new generation of mobile journalists and storytellers, while producing content made on cell phones for mobile viewing.

“It was always, from day one, built on empowerment; built on how do we empower people to tell their own stories?” says Sumaiya Omar.

With an background in finance and economics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Sumaiya Omar is not a journalist. Not in the conventional sense, she says. It was her husband that introduced her to the world of journalism and media.

Through her exposure to the newsroom and the media industry, Sumaiya Omar saw a unique gap in the market that her husband and herself could fill.

“I saw that there was a big space to do something really different. We saw that there was traditional media on the one side, covering a lot of politicians, people on top,” says Sumaiya Omar.

“[On the other side] there was a whole landscape of people. Real people on the ground were being missed. And then myself, from a business perspective – it was then my job to see, ‘Okay, how do we take this and create it into a sustainable business?’”

Imani Dlamini, a producer at *Hashtag Our Stories*,

PHOTO: Nicole Nasson

believes that mobile journalism is forward-thinking and hopes it will become more mainstream.

"It's cheap. It's literally your phone. You can reach places that you might not be able to reach if you're carrying out a big chunky camera," says Dlamini.

IT IS JOURNALISM

"It's just journalism. It's still storytelling. You still have to convey a message. You still have to inform people about a particular story. It's just with your phone and it's a quicker form of storytelling," says Kelly-Jane Turner, a mobile journalist at African News Agency.

Also known as selfie journalism, or mojo for short, mobile journalism is unique in its accessibility and speed, says Dlamini.

"I think of the accessibility as well. Anyone can do it. Anyone can create a video, but still adhere to journalistic principles and ethics and all of that. So, it's serious journalism. It's not just pulling out a phone. It's not like being an influencer – it's journalism," says Dlamini.

COVID-19 GOT YOUR MOJO?

Earlier in 2020, major print media companies such as Caxton and Media24 either closed some of their publications or scaled down on production. Another prominent publication, Associated Media Publishing, closed down completely. Coupled with the already strenuous financial situation print media found itself in over the past few years, the Covid-19 pandemic cut the thread on which some of these companies were hanging.

However, that did not mean that news consumption declined. In fact, it increased. Statista, a database company, revealed that 11% more South Africans read newspapers, 24% more read magazines and 36% more listened to the radio. Including South Africa, the survey monitored news coverage in 13 countries including the United States, Singapore, France and China.

By this time, many countries around the world already experienced a major impact due to the pandemic. But traditional news sources had to adapt to the change in the demand for news consumption and adhering to the pandemic health and safety protocols, Yusuf Omar says.

"For the longest time, mobile phones for most traditional organisations were [used for] the viral videos or a bit of UGC (user-generated content). And then when Covid hit, they had no choice, but to resort to mobile phones for their reporters, for everyone's stuck at home. It is incredibly difficult to cover," he says.

According to Yusuf Omar, *Hashtag Our Stories* carried on as per usual.

"*Hashtag Our Stories* is a decentralised network of mobile storytellers all over the world. So, we're

uniquely designed to report remotely during an event like this, says Yusuf Omar. "So, it's been incredibly positive in terms of our ability to tell amazing stories from our hearts. Our numbers have been really positive."

MOVING FORWARD

The company collaborated with a few notable technology and media companies in an effort to train and assist journalists in mobile journalism.

One of these collaborations is 'First Person', a *Snap Original*-supported project which enables users to tell their stories through Spectacles, a recording device that looks like real spectacles.

On 6 September 2020, *Hashtag Our Stories* announced a new free six-week mobile journalism course for African storytellers, in partnership with Facebook and the International Centre for Journalists. Yusuf Omar also exclusively disclosed that they're working on a TV series.

"They haven't announced it yet so I can't share the television station, but it's one big major TV broadcaster in the [United States]," he says. "We are producing 34 episodes, which is really cool because it's like a new version of us. [Instead of] mobile and vertical, now we're doing 16-by-nine and high definition 4k and cinematic and drone." ■

MOBILE JOURNALISTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

While Covid-19 protocols prevented most people from going about their business as usual, some journalists still went to work. African News Agency mobile journalist, Kelly-Jane Turner says that because of the pandemic, some journalists had to turn to other beats, including mobile journalism.

"I feel like [journalists] should know how to do basic mobile journalism things, because you never know where your editor is going to place you. Previously, I did features only and videos. Now we have this website, *Coronavirus Monitor*, [where] we only do coronavirus stuff," Turner says.

Producer at *Hashtag Our Stories* Imani Dlamini says that the pandemic allowed for her to work on new projects, namely the series *Covid Kindness on Hashtag Our Stories* Instagram page.

"When [the Covid-19 pandemic] really came into full swing, we created a series called *Covid Kindness*. Basically, it was a series of stories of people who are performing acts of kindness during the coronavirus," Dlamini says.

I THINK OUR GENERATION IS MORE AND MORE DRIVEN BY A PURPOSE AND WE DON'T JUST WANT TO BE A PART OF THE WORLD. WE WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

CITIZEN JOURNALISM VS MOBILE JOURNALISM

The Haiti earthquake, the Beirut explosion and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement, while devastating, provided good examples of citizen journalism and user-generated content. Networks and publications like CNN and the *New York Times* received citizen submissions for the 2010 Haiti earthquake. BBC Africa reports. Social media users posted footage of the Beirut explosion and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement online platforms like Twitter.

According to the journalist David Cohen, citizen journalism is a form of journalism reborn online and evolved out of a larger family of social media. A 2010 research paper by Martyn Duffy, Ester Thorson and Mi Rosie Jahng defined a citizen journalist as, "an individual, who is not a trained professional, but who nonetheless may report on his or her neighbourhood or community".

While Yusuf Omar, co-founder of *Hashtag Our Stories*, encourages everyone to tell their own stories and become storytellers, he does make the distinction between being a reporter and being a journalist.

"I think anybody can report on what they've seen or heard or witnessed. I think a journalist comes with a set of ethics and principles and values," says Yusuf Omar.

Even though *Hashtag Our Stories* is a mobile journalism company that offers training to citizen journalists, it uses citizen journalist sources for their stories, says Naemah Dudan, the news editor at *Hashtag Our Stories*.

"We curate stories from citizen journalists or sources every single day, but we still do the journalism on the story. We still do the fact checking. If people say they were in a certain place at a certain time, we still have checked that up [sic], and I think that's an important thing to note," says Dudan.

DID COVID KILL THE RADIO STAR?

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen the world flip on its head. Like many industries, radio has been thrown head-first into murky water. As the listeners' lives have been altered, the industry as a whole has been forced to adapt to these circumstances.

By Kesia Abrahams

Over the past few months, the radio industry has been hit by the unimaginable – a global pandemic. One that, like many other industries, has forced it to quickly adapt or fall behind. One question, however, remains – will Covid-19 cause the end of radio?

ALL FOR THE LISTENERS

One of the biggest adjustments radio stations have had to make, during the lockdown period, was to change according to listener habits, says JM Henning, presenter at *Smile 90.4 FM*, a commercial radio station.

“Our regular listeners were no longer following their daily routines, so we had to ensure that listeners, who used to tune in out of convenience, would now actively choose to tune in at home,” he says. Radio producers and presenters have to consciously tune their station’s content to ensure that it resonates with their listeners’ lived experiences, he continues.

“Globally, stations that haven’t adapted to the changes in listener habits have seen their audience numbers decline, as they search for the station that best resonates with their experiences and values,” says Henning.

According to Renaldo Schwarp, head of the digital team at *Jacaranda FM*, an independent radio station, their adjustment to the pandemic was smooth.

“*Jacaranda FM* has for the last few years already been digitally focused on a strategic level. Our

audience engages with us on-air, online, and through our other digital touchpoints, including our podcasting and audio-on-demand platforms,” he says.

ON AIR FROM THE COMFORT OF THE COUCH

One of the main changes radio stations had to make during the first phase of the pandemic was to begin working from home. At *Jacaranda FM*, it meant that staff members had to acclimatise to this change, explains Schwarp.

“We started broadcasting our radio shows from the comfort of our own homes. The company was fantastic in the way that they ensured all staff members had everything they needed to effectively continue doing their jobs,” he says. This, however, was not the case for all radio stations.

“For the first three months of lockdown, there was no one on air. Everything was just music,” says Lance Agulhas, presenter at *Puk FM*, a campus radio station based in Potchefstroom. In April, the station created a new system whereby presenters had to send their script the day before it would be played on-air, he says. This had its downsides.

Working from home has also brought about a string of issues, as most of the students have gone home and don’t tune into the station as often as they did while on campus, he says.

Agulhas also maintains that the drop in the number of students on campus during lockdown meant the radio station lost many of its listeners.

THE COUCH ISN’T ALWAYS COMFY

The pandemic period has been quite a challenging time for stations in terms of advertising, says Jörg Nanny, operations manager at *MEM 92.6*, a campus and community radio station based in Stellenbosch.

Financially, community and smaller commercial stations have taken a harder hit, says Tim Zunkel, a self-employed media consultant.

“For many community radio stations, all that Covid-19 did was unearth the myriad of financial trouble they were already in,” he says. Community



media is a very complex thing to run, explains Zunckel, as a lot of communities don't possess wealth or have local businesses to help the radio stations stay in business.

In addition, local governments and municipalities often don't support community media with the necessary funding from an advertising perspective. Commercial radio stations, however, have also taken a hit with regards to advertising, says Zunckel.

Advertising revenues declined and budgets were cut across the industry, says Marlène Fouché, senior producer at *SABC News for Monitor, Spektrum* and *Naweekaktuel*.

"Advertising budget cuts had a massive impact on revenue for radio stations, it has picked up a bit over the last month, but it will take a while to recover to what it was pre-lockdown," she says.

(BROADCASTING) A NEW LIGHT ON THE SITUATION

During the lockdown period, radio stations have learned numerous lessons, especially with regards to creatively producing content.

"We've learnt that it is possible to work from home and that the technology and techniques we've had to incorporate will benefit us in the future," says Fouché. For many stations, this has been a period of development as a team, says Schwarp:

"It has been great to see how we, as a team, work well together. We have great leadership and some really skilled individuals making sure the station evolves," he says. In addition, it has shown stations the true loyalty of their listeners.

"Research has shown in the South African perspective [that] people are spending more time listening to their radio stations," says Zunckel. According to lockdown streaming statistics conducted by *MFEM 92.6*, the station experienced a 4% increase in streaming between April 2020 and September 2020.

People trust their radio stations to deliver accurate news, up-to-date information, and the correct chatter about all things in their community, says Zunckel. Similarly, statistics by *Mediamark*, a media sales and

solution company, have shown that radio listenership in South Africa grew by 35% during the first two months of the lockdown period.

"The fact that people still wanted to tune in via streaming means there is still a lot of loyalty towards the station from our listeners," says Nanny.

RADIO IN THE AFTERMATH OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

"The future for radio after the pandemic would be to focus on the other elements that will make radio stronger," says Carla Mackenzie, presenter at *Jacaranda FM*.

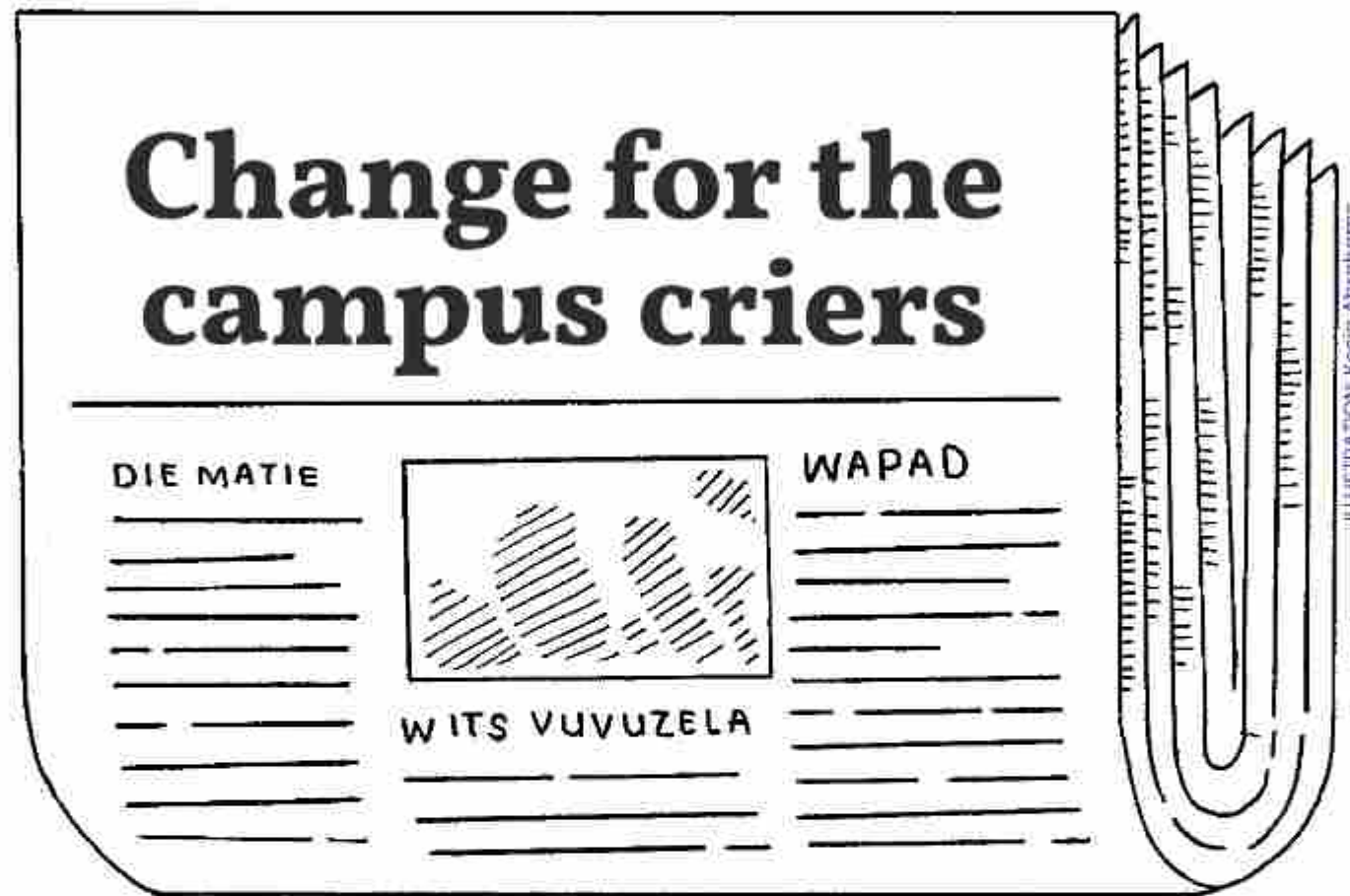
There are so many different new things presenters can do, other than just switching their mics on and being on the radio, she says. In a digitally enlightened age, various forms of content creation have been established, including podcasting and videography.

However, in the midst of the pandemic, it is still uncertain what the future will be like for radio, as the environment is still changing daily, says Nanny.

What is left for stations to do now is to apply what they have learned during these times and, hopefully, keep offering a better product that engages their listeners and adds value to their daily lives, he says. ■



PHOTO: Filip Barna/Unsplash



By Octavia Avesca Spandiel

Due to the effects of Covid-19 many journalists have been forced to rethink their workspaces and some publications have been forced to close down or reinvent themselves. Student-led publications were no exception. Publications at Stellenbosch University, North West University and University of Witwatersrand revealed how they remain an active voice for students.

Student-led publications are as vital to the university space as mainstream media is to South Africa, says Thabo Mpho Miya, who was an active member of the University of the Free State's student media community.

Miya was involved in various roles on the Bloemfontein main campus. He was a student journalist and news editor of *Transa Post*, the student-led publication. In addition, he served as the chairperson of the student media council. He is currently a content developer and writer for a communications company, The Republican Creatives, based in Johannesburg.

However, Covid-19 is delivering unprecedented challenges in the student media industry, says Rod Amner, a senior lecturer of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University.

"Student publications should embrace the tectonic shifts in the media industries by inventing new ways of engaging audiences with multimedia material across a range of platforms," Amner says.

This is a scenario which *Wapad*, North West University's student-led publication, faces in the current world. According to the editor-in-chief, Alet Janse van Rensburg, *Wapad*, established in 1946, had no choice but to transition from print to digital during the national lockdown.

Limited access to tangible resources similarly forced Stellenbosch University's campus newspaper, *Die Matie*, which was founded in 1941, to trade printing for posting online.

Zinhle Belle, who is currently studying journalism at the University of Witwatersrand, writes for the on-campus student-led publication, *Wits Vuvuzela*. The publication, which was established in 2004, announced in 2019 that they would end their printing processes that year, says Belle.

However, the publication still continued to be the active voice of students by telling stories remotely during Covid-19, says Belle. She believes operating exclusively online came at the right time for *Wits Vuvuzela*, because the global pandemic was challenging the traditional practice of journalism.

Meanwhile, Lian van Wyk, editor-in-chief of *Die Matie* from August 2019 to September 2020, says *Die Matie* had a relatively effortless transition from a print newspaper to fully functioning online.

"We have a good online team and our online presence functions as it should. We operate at limited capacity, but that is a symptom of the lack of students on campus," says Van Wyk.

Living in unprecedented times

In contrast to *Die Matie*, *Wapad* faced many challenges in transitioning from print to an online publication during lockdown.

"We are being told that we are at a global inflection point. Young people are the most important actors in the task of re-imagining and reshaping a post-Covid world and student journalists should catalyse this project."

In particular, Janse van Rensburg says that it was challenging moving all print content online. This was due to the lack of access to resources, such as an internet connection, for many of the student journalists while they were at home.

"After the shut down, some student journalists still wrote a few articles to publish on our Facebook page," she begins. "Even this proves to be extremely challenging and as the editor I find that student journalists were more reluctant to volunteer to write stories, compared to earlier this year."

While adapting, *Wapad* journalists will continue to produce quality stories from home. "The vision would be to improve our online presence," says Janse van Rensburg.

Die Matie, however, moved fully online in March and printing stopped immediately, says Van Wyk. While the student-led publication has "a well-oiled website," journalists struggled to create quality content for the online platform, Van Wyk believes.

"It has honestly been very difficult. Our journalists struggled to adapt to online learning and more often than not, could not face the extra pressure of producing quality stories from home," Janse van Rensburg admits.

From here on forward...

There is so much to learn from the new approaches to media production, says Amner. He suggests that student-led publications should establish

a national body, with schools of journalism. Building a national body will be beneficial in supporting editorial development of the student press, he says.

"We are being told that we are at a global inflection point. Young people are the most important actors in the task of re-imagining and reshaping a post-Covid world and student journalists should catalyse this project," says Amner.

It is important to hold on to authenticity and truth in student-led publications if they are to prosper, says Jessica Feldtman, third-year journalism student at Rhodes University.

Student-journalists will have the necessary skills to rebuild and redefine the way journalism will look in the future. Therefore, it is important to gain critical skills to do so, says Amner.

"My vision is to ensure that we still gain the skills of a traditional journalist: being able to construct a good story, but to ensure we are able to adapt that [skill] to a modern setting," says Belle.

Meanwhile the vision for *Die Matie's* future is for traditional print to continue, says Van Wyk.

"Now we have to get the new troops moving so that *Die Matie* can ride the Covid-19 wave and get back to printing in 2021," says Van Wyk.

Remaining an active voice

If the student community does not have an independent voice, context gets lost in translation, Miya believes.

"When the mainstream press is burdened with the sole responsibility to report on matters affecting student populations, it is similar to when foreign correspondents from outlets in the global west are given the responsibility of telling local stories," says Miya.

The #FeesMustFall movement of 2015 to 2016 is an example of the way the South African media changed the narrative at times, says Belle.

It is important for student-led publications to advocate for themselves on a national scale because of the brutality against student journalists during events, Miya believes.

"I find this, [advocating on a national scale] to be crucial, because myself and my colleagues became aware that during protests, there was a lot of intimidation and harassment of student-journalists," he explains.

Therefore, this should encourage student-led publications to use platforms that build creative relationships with student audiences through the various changes as publications will have to adapt in the next few years again, says Amner.

"There is much to be gained by exploring news approaches to media production that build deep relationships with student audiences," says Amner. ■



DEAFENING SILENCE

By Isaac Ndlovu

The past few months have seen a number of sporting activities and events decline. Due to lockdown restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, many sports reporters find themselves without jobs. Those who are still employed now face a different reality.



“THERE ARE SO MANY STORIES BEHIND SPORTS. THIS PANDEMIC HAS FORCED THE INDUSTRY TO LOOK AT SPORTS A BIT DIFFERENTLY AND LOOK AT THE STORIES BEHIND SPORTS PLAYERS.”



IT normally takes something unexpected to silence a stadium. It may be a last minute goal to condemn the home supporters to PSL relegation, or a pivotal wicket to ensure a side's Mzansi Super League defeat.

However, in 2020, that unexpected event happened off the pitch. Due to the nationwide lockdown restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the suspension of all sporting events, including the 2020 Olympics, has had an impact in the newsrooms of many publications.

Former *SABC* sports reporter, Rob Delpont, admits that, since March, the past few months have been incredibly difficult for him, as well as his colleagues.

Delpont's five-year contract with *SABC* expired prior to the nationwide lockdown. Since, there have been no talks of a renewal.

"With no sports to cover, who could blame an employer?" asks Delpont.

Despite having years of experience in the industry, Delpont has been struggling to find full-time work.

"I found myself [as a freelancer] without any real work for much of the lockdown," says Delpont.

Prior to the lockdown, Delpont had constantly been a reporter on-the-ground, he explains. Most of his working days required him to be at training fields or match venues.

"This obviously stopped completely. It was quite a change to suddenly not see people. It's how I got my stories, and my energy," says Delpont.

According to Delpont, many other sports journalists have found themselves having to find other sources of income.

SPORTS PUBLICATIONS SCRAMBLE PLANS

In addition to a lack of jobs for journalists and freelancers, a number of media houses had to undergo organisational restructuring during this time, explains Delpont.

Current *SuperSport Blitz* journalist, Wesley Gabriels describes the first three months of lockdown as a period of uncertainty for sports reporters.

"In the beginning, it was rather tough. As [sports reporters] we're in a space where [at a point] we didn't know what was going to happen next," says Gabriels.

"We'd work only two to three shifts a month with strict restrictions," he elaborates.

According to Delpont, sports channels such as *SuperSport* have had to turn to documentaries or so-called 'nostalgia pieces' until various sports began returning around the world. At the time of the writing, most global sports have returned and local lockdown restrictions on sporting events are gradually being lifted.

This was also true for creating content for radio, says *Eyewitness News (EWN)* and *KFM* sports reporter, Nick Archibald.

Archibald believes that the shift to focusing on sports 'behind the scenes' has made a difference.

"Most sports publications started focusing on other aspects of sports, sports itself is more than just the game," says Archibald.

The lack of sporting activity forced Archibald to report on more than just goalscorers and world records, but also on the stories of perseverance and dedication behind every athlete.

"There are so many stories behind sports. This pandemic has forced the industry to look at sports a bit differently and look at the stories behind sports players," explains Archibald.

Archibald describes that the difference between radio, TV and community sports reporting is a key separator in the level of negative impact publications experience.

"On TV you get the opportunity to talk and get your visual side of past events. In radio, your time frame is short, making things fast paced," says Archibald.

COMMUNITY REPORTERS HIT HARDER

According to Gabriels and Archibald, community reporters, compared to national reporters, were hit harder by the lockdown.

Wouter Pienaar, a community sports reporter at *Pretoria Herald*, confirms that some sports publications have struggled more than others, and admits that community sports reporting is one of them.

"We didn't have things that we could report on. We couldn't report on national news or write about international sports on a larger scale," says Pienaar.

Part of the reason why Pienaar couldn't write on international sporting activity is because community news usually focuses on local events that are relevant

to local readers. Despite the challenge of not covering any sports, Pienaar believes that they continue to do their best in providing news that is relevant and interesting to the public.

Some of the alternatives explored by community sports reporters include writing longer pieces and profiles on athletes from the community.

Due to the impact caused by Covid-19, *Pretoria Herald* has also changed their approach. The newspaper now publishes a smaller edition due to a drop in readership and lack of revenue, according to Pienaar.

"We had to cut down and go the route of becoming a free publication. This puts us in a different ball game for newspapers," says Pienaar.

According to Dylan Jack, current writer for *SA Rugby Magazine*, it is a challenge to find ideas for a sole sport magazine, especially during these times.

The pandemic continues to accelerate the initial pressure in the magazine industry. The lack of sporting events is also proving costly for *SA Rugby Magazine*.

For Jack, during the pandemic, sports reporters are tasked with selling a product that is simply not available.

"It's difficult, trying to sell sports [content] to the public, especially when there's no sports," explains Jack.

A PROMISING FUTURE

Despite this, both Archibald and Jack believe that publications reporting on "behind-the-scenes stories" have proven to be a game-changer.

"Players had more time to chat [during lockdown] and we've been able to form closer relationships with them," explains Jack.

He believes this will provide an asset going forward in the future of sports reporting.

According to Delpont, sports reporting does lend itself to a lot of speculation, and that is what it felt like for the life of sports reporters in the past months.

Sports reporting has become more about the 'lifestyle approach', says Delpont. It is now about the sports stars and their lives, he says.

Despite all the challenges currently faced by these sports reporters, most of them believe in the future of their jobs, as long as sports continue to exist.

"There will always be sports, and with that there will always be reporting," ends Archibald. ■

CANCELLED!



Super Rugby League
15 March 2020



Premier Soccer League
16 March 2020



Two Oceans Marathon
8 April 2020



Comrades Marathon
14 June 2020

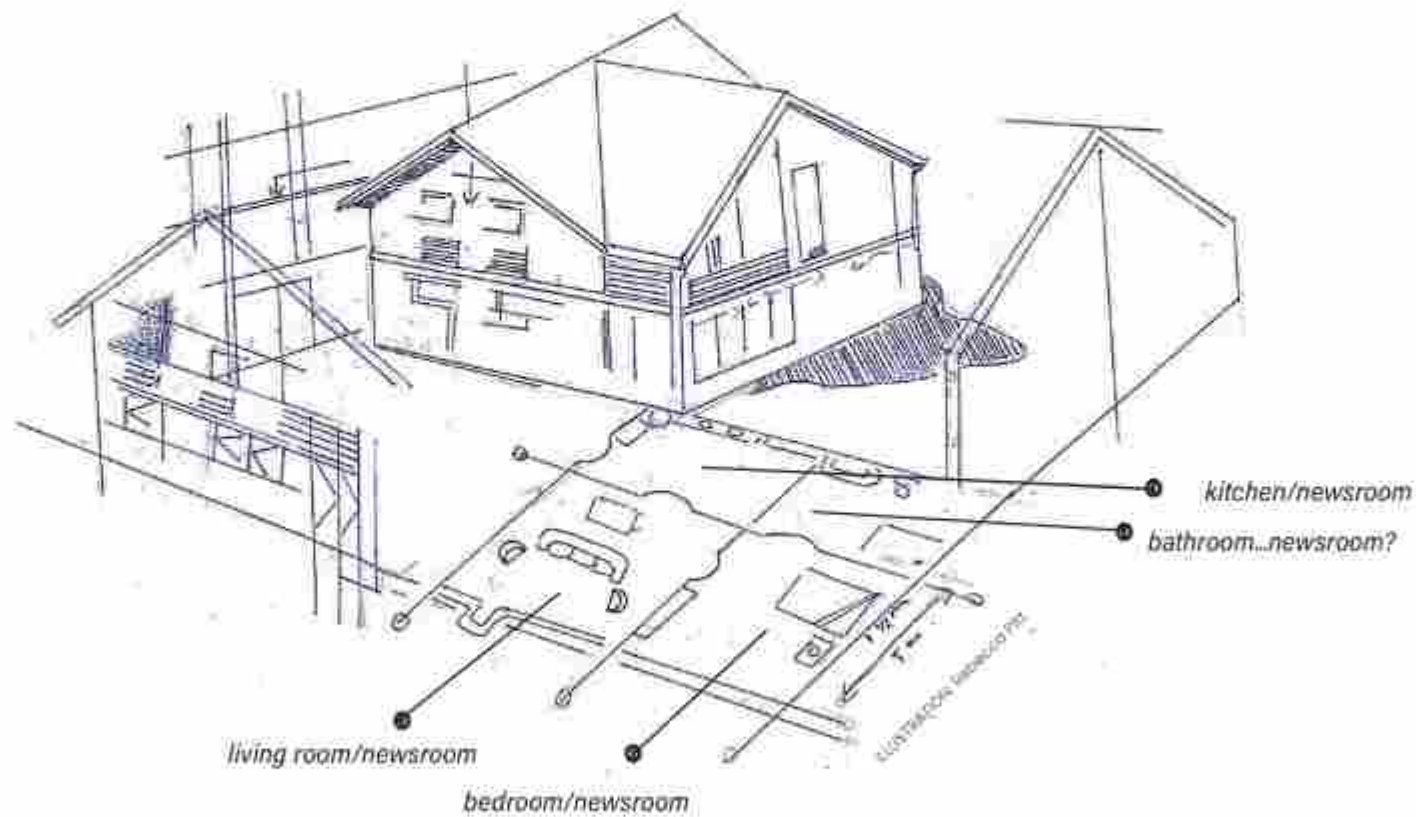


Tokyo Olympics
24 July 2020

AN INDUSTRY SHEDDING ITS SKIN: THE NEW(S)ROOM

By Rebecca Pitt

When Covid-19 hit, it changed the face of the workforce in most industries – the newsroom was no exception. The traditional newsroom model has since become obsolete. With a number of publications losing their office spaces, and many not returning to the office soon, a new newsroom is emerging.



Don't come to the newsroom close to deadline day. You would be lucky to see anyone's faces; everyone is glued to their computer screens. "The newsroom is a lot less friendly close to deadline," says Chantel Erfort, the editor of 15 weekly Cape community newspapers, including the *Southern Suburbs Tatler* and *Athlone Times*. When the newspaper is printed, that feeling of angst in the newsroom is replaced with familiar excitement: It is the feeling of relief.

When the national lockdown was implemented due to Covid-19, that kind of newsroom camaraderie moved to the dispersed homes of journalists and editors. Newsrooms had temporarily closed in March, along with most communal working spaces, soon after President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the commencement of a national lockdown on 27 March. Newsrooms across the country had to empty out overnight. But the world of news never really stands still, says Ané van Zyl, a journalist at Afrikaans online news outlet, *Netwerk24*. The media moved to their various homes and began recording the pandemic day-by-day from living rooms, kitchen tables and spare rooms. For those magazines and newspapers that have closed down since then, it means that the newsroom is a thing of the past. And for the media publications that remain, it means that the newsroom will radically change.

A 'ONE-MAN-NEWSROOM'

"Non-existent" is how Paula-Anne Smit, editor of the community newspaper the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, describes the state of the traditional newsroom of her publication. A few months ago, the newsroom was where Smit was working in her office, meeting with sources and journalists, and taking calls. Now all of that is being done from her kitchen table. "I now work entirely from home – from production to sending the paper off to the printers," says Smit.

At the time of writing, it had been 29 weeks since Van Zyl had been at her newsroom in Media24. "I like to think of it as a time capsule where time is frozen in middle-March. My desk pad is still flipped on the month of March and my teacup stands on my desk, just as I left it on the day we said goodbye," says Van Zyl.

That newsroom was "dynamic", she says. "One moment the newsroom can be quiet with everyone typing away calmly. The next moment a news tip may reach one of us, causing some – or all of us – to drop what we're doing to help find information, or devise plans on how to tackle it," says Van Zyl, who is now working from home full-time. She says she is working a "one-man-newsroom", and so are her colleagues.

Van Zyl, along with the others who are still employed by publications that remain at Media24, would be allowed to return to the Media24 offices on 1 October. This was after the Media24 board had approved a return-to-office plan, she says.

THE INEVITABLE CHANGE

The changes in the newsroom were expected, says Toast Coetzer, travel editor and senior journalist at *Weg/Go!* magazine. *Weg/Go!* magazine was part of the pool of publications that lost their office spaces after Media24 had announced the outsourcing of a number of titles in July. According to Coetzer, leaving the office space was inevitable – Covid-19 just accelerated it.

"We were very ready for that," says Coetzer.

That was also true for the editorial team of *Home/This* magazine, another former Media24 publication that had lost their office space, tells Wicus Pretorius, editor-in-chief at *Home/This* magazine. Before Covid-19, Pretorius was sure that the magazine would continue to work as it had been for another three to five years. "[Covid-19] has changed the way we are going to work forever," says Pretorius.

This comes in an already struggling industry, where the drop of newspaper and magazine sales is financial reason enough to have smaller newsrooms, according to Smit. "Working from home will allow companies to cut costs attached to running an office," Smit says. In addition, providing for fixed costs, like IT, could very easily have a negative impact on a title, says Pretorius. Those funds could instead, for example, go towards purchasing data and airtime for journalists, Smit says.

THE NEWS MEETING

Along with airtime and data, a good internet connection was all that was really needed to work just as efficiently from home, says Van Zyl. It is the same for Pretorius' and Coetzer's teams. *Home/This*' art director and layout editor now work from Pretorius' home for faster fibre. "For [the art team] to do their jobs, they need fast internet," Pretorius says.

In some cases, it is more productive working from home, explains Erfort. But that isn't always the case. "If you wanted to discuss something about layout – it was a meeting with the art director. If you wanted to do tweaks to something – it was a meeting... you had to phone on WhatsApp or [Microsoft] Teams," says Pretorius. Since then, the editorial at *Home/This* began streamlining all decisions. "We organised ourselves much better...and started thinking of new ways of putting the magazine together, which worked out quite nicely," Pretorius says.

One has to adapt because this is the only real option, Coetzer says. At *Weg/Go!*, the regular Tuesday meetings, and smaller sub-meetings, moved to Microsoft Teams. The same was done for Erfort's publications. According to Erfort, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp became the primary source for immediate communication – close to the kind of communication that was found in the newsroom. That immediate communication is something Van Zyl misses. "That contact is now replaced by WhatsApp messages or calls," Van Zyl says. Yet, this kind of communication works just as well, she says.

The lockdown had forced newsrooms to try out this new model, Erfort says. "We have seen that it works."

NEWSROOMS ARE THE PEOPLE

Even though this new model works, having a shared space again would be nice, says Coetzer. But it is unlikely that the newsroom would ever return to the way it once was. Still, it remains necessary for a space where teams can come together, according to Erfort. "Ultimately we work with people," she says. "Putting newspapers together is a very collaborative process."

People need to sit down and talk about things, Erfort says. "When I think about a newsroom, I think about ideas. I think about collaboration. I think about teamwork."

Right now it feels lonely," she says.

"You are not doing this alone, you are doing this with someone else who cares about [your publication] as much as you do. So there is a bit of that camaraderie feeling you lose when you are not sitting together at the physical space," says Coetzer. Newsroom camaraderie is still there though, the platform for it has just changed, he says.

But changes are expected in this industry, tells Smit. "These changes aren't the first and they won't be the last, we just need to keep up." ■



Wicus Pretorius, editor-in-chief of *Home/Tuis* magazine, sits in on the bi-weekly meeting for upcoming issues. PHOTO: Rebecca Phil

WHO WORKS WHERE?

PAULA-ANNE SMIT, editor of the *Graaf-Reinet Advertiser*, is running a local news publication from her kitchen table. "My desk is dangerously close to the fridge, but this is a work in progress," she says.

Travel editor and senior journalist at *Weg!/Gal Magazine*, **TOAST COETZER**, has found a new working space in a spare room in his apartment. The room is full of boxes, and all of his reference books and travel guides are in reach.

According to **CHANTEL ERFORT**, the editor of 15 Cape community newspapers including *The Southern Suburbs Tatler* and the *Athlone Times*, she is working from her lounge. Erfort now has time to have lunch with her husband – a perk of not needing to go into the office.

Editor-in-chief of *Home/Tuis* magazine, **WICUS PRETORIUS**, turned one room in his house into a mini newsroom. The layout editor and art director works there, whilst Pretorius works at his dining table.

ANÉ VAN ZYL, a journalist at *Netwerk24*, is working "here and there", she says. "But always at a desk or a table with my laptop," says Van Zyl.

STRESSED OUT/ STRETCHED OUT

INSIDE

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FROM STRENGTH TO
STRESS

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BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE

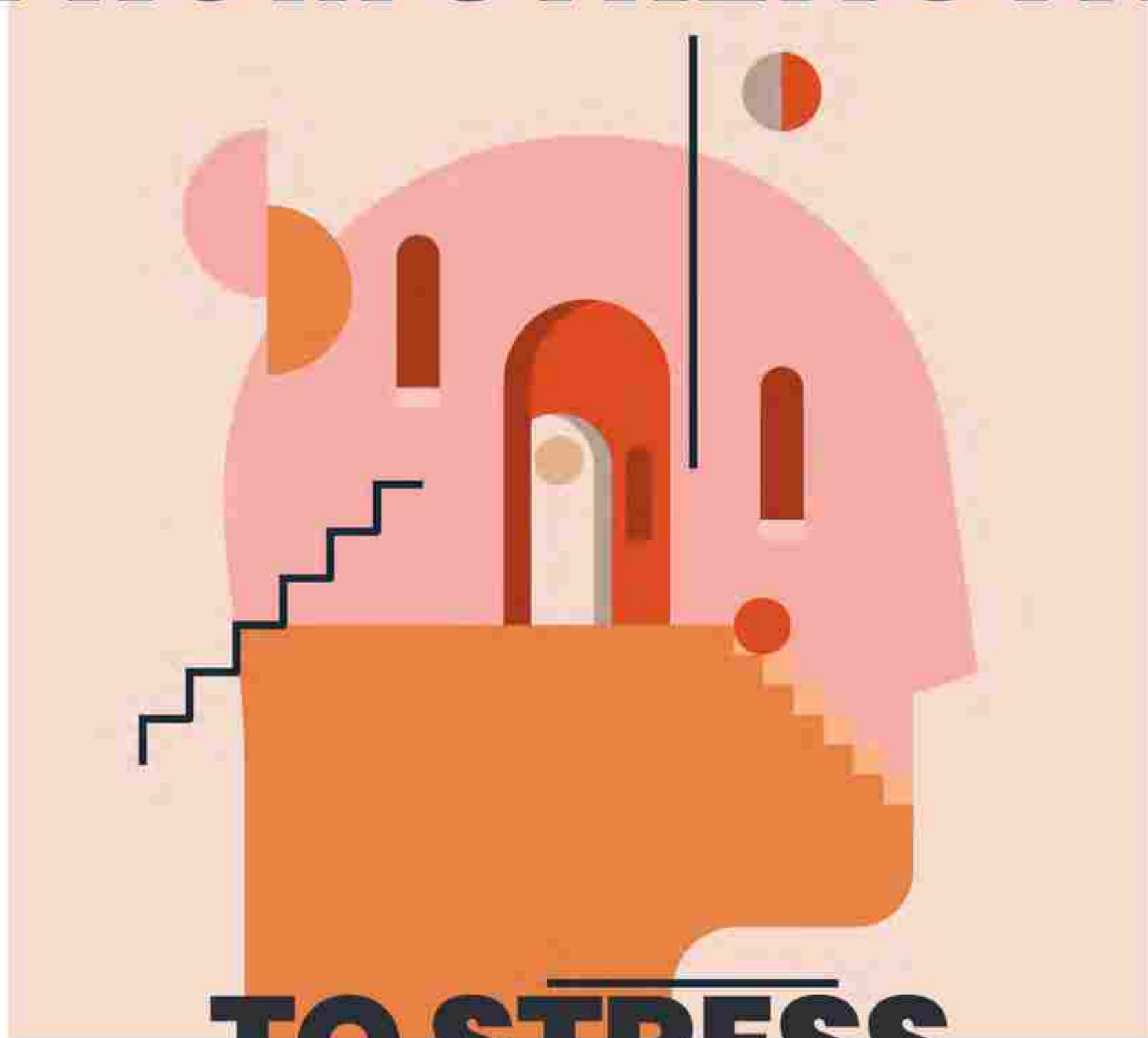
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WHEN NEWS
BECOMES NUMB(ERS)

GOING INTO ISOLATION DURING COVID-19 WAS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE, BUT IT WAS ALSO A SOURCE OF MENTAL STRAIN FOR SOUTH AFRICANS. JOURNALISTS WERE NO EXCEPTION. WHILST DOCUMENTING THESE EXTRAORDINARY TIMES WAS NECESSARY, IT IS CLEAR: ALMOST NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO THE DISTRESSING NATURE OF THE PANDEMIC.

SMF

FROM STRENGTH



GRAPHIC: Paul Craft/Shutterstock

TO STRESS

By Rachelle Button

Seemingly overnight, journalists worldwide had to flee their newsrooms and set up home-based offices. The tension of covering a global health crisis; coupled with the sudden change in work environments may have resulted in greater levels of mental distress and anxiety.

This has forced South African newsrooms to put their resilience to the test.

Shortly after the nationwide lockdown was announced, people went into a “survival-threat” mode. In line with Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, their primary concerns were food, protection and accommodation, says Priscilla Bateman, a counsellor and clinical social worker who specialises in employee wellness.

“People were not thinking about their emotions. It was all about protecting themselves and ensuring

may have an adverse effect on employees’ mental health, says Shelagh Goodwin, head of human resources at Media24. As a result, an employee health and wellness provider, Careways, has been utilised since the beginning of lockdown she says.

“Quite early on, we brought [Careways] in for counselling sessions with groups of journalists, at their request, to help them deal with the anxiety that goes along with being in a situation which at the time,

health to be isolated from one another,” says Farber.

A journalist at Netwerk24 and the Afrikaans daily newspaper, Arisa Janse Van Rensburg, echoes this sentiment. “I moved in with my parents and gave up my apartment because I got too lonely,” she says. As an extrovert, who is motivated by the presence of others and also values routine, Janse Van Rensburg struggles with being away from the “organised chaos” of the newsroom.

Covid-19 has exacerbated the tendency for the media to overlook the mental health care of workers.

their family stays safe,” says Bateman.

This was especially true for the media industry who still had to leave their homes for work purposes.

Bateman says this has resulted in mental health professionals only seeing the full psychological impact of the nationwide lockdown several months later.

“As the lockdown progressed, people became much more aware of their mental health. So, only now are people coming out and saying they are struggling to cope,” says Bateman.

According to Bateman, many of the emotions individuals are feeling during the Covid-19 pandemic are similar to those experienced during the SARS outbreak in 2003.

“People were feeling upset and hopeless. They were angry and felt a lack of control,” says Bateman.

The media industry is no exception to these experiences. As journalists adapt to the challenges posed by the remote newsroom (see page 72) their mental health has arguably never been more important.

Organisational support

Media24 identified that the transition to working from home and the unknown of the Covid-19 pandemic

was fairly unknown,” says Goodwin. As a general rule, the media is not good at looking after the mental health of workers, according to Sipho Kings, the acting editor-in-chief of *Mail & Guardian*.

“Covid-19 has exacerbated this problem. At *Mail & Guardian* we try to change this by working towards a ‘caring’ office environment, where people can talk and feel listened to,” says Kings.

Feelings of isolation

According to Kings, this is especially important when people are working in isolation and personal problems are intensified.

“We also try not to stigmatise mental health and encourage people to talk with anyone they feel comfortable with or a professional,” says Kings.

“It comes down to allowing the people who work in newsrooms to be humans and create a space where they feel safe to communicate.”

Tanya Farber, the senior science reporter for *Times Live* and *The Sunday Times* says that feelings of isolation have been the main challenge for Arena Holdings’ newsroom.

“I think what we’ve gained from not sitting in traffic jams – it’s really had an impact on our mental

“I am a very social person and I get my energy from other people. I also have little rituals, like setting out my clothes for work the following day [which] I no longer did [because] I would only put on sweatpants,” says Janse van Rensburg.

No more ‘business as usual’

According to Bateman, many company executives have had to adopt a more empathetic stance in their management style to account for the potential adverse mental health effects of working from home on their employees.

“It was important for management and organisations to have an understanding of what each person’s work and home conditions were like,” says Bateman.

“Managers had to learn how to accommodate staff and their unique circumstances and also be productive.”

As the lockdown got progressively longer, Goodwin and her HR team had to find ways to keep spirits up within the Media24 environment.

“At one point, people started feeling a bit despondent. Then we had a strong focus on really just trying to keep people connected, making sure we celebrated fun events together,” says Goodwin.

“I think we have produced amazing news under very challenging circumstances, but I think we have lost something in the process.”

She says initiatives like knitting scarves for Mandela Day and sharing photos of their pets allowed staff to feel connected while being physically apart.

Creating virtual connections

Although Kings stays in contact with *Mail & Guardian* journalists virtually, he misses the informal conversations in the newsroom to check in on how they are doing. To combat this, *Mail & Guardian* have regular online meetings and keep in contact over WhatsApp. “We have regular Google Meet meetings where we discuss the diary as well as review meetings where we talk about how things are going, where we need to improve and also [generally] speak about the state of the world,” says Kings.

The virtual meetings at Netwerk24 allows Janse van Rensburg and her colleagues to feel less lonely and in solidarity with one another while the newsroom works from home.

“Our editor-in-chief continuously sent emails to check up on everyone and also contacted us personally to make sure we were coping,” says Janse van Rensburg. “We were invited to sit in on virtual meetings if you were tired of being alone.”

Keeping head above water

Farber says that virtual communication has been a necessary coping strategy for her during lockdown as she has been able to reconnect with loved ones living abroad.

“My world has shrunk a *helluva* lot, geographically. I was able to reconnect with old friends which has been a coping strategy for what a weird time it has been as a journalist,” says Farber.

The danger with working from home is that you don’t shut down and leave your office because your office is in your laptop now, says Kings.

To combat this, Kings works with *Mail & Guardian*’s news editor to make sure the newsroom finds a balance and works specific hours for regular news.

“[This] is so people know that at a certain time they can step away from work,” says Kings. “I work with the news editor to try and make sure people know they can take



PHOTO: Charles Deluvio/Unsplash



PHOTO: Nathan Dumlaai/Unsplash

leave, so there is less chance of burnout.”

Farber says that for many journalists, their profession is their calling, which makes the media more resilient than other industries.

“Most people who work as journalists...it’s a calling. You feel like it’s in your blood and that you have to do it,” says Farber.

Readers would be hard-pressed about whether journalists were in the newsroom or not, that’s how resilient the media has been to lockdown and working from home, Farber believes.

“I think we have produced amazing news under very challenging circumstances, but I think we have lost something in the process,” says Farber. ■

ADJUSTING TO THE NEUROTYPICAL WORLD

To many, living with ADHD is a challenge within itself. For these people who pursue a career in the media industry, it can be even more challenging to chase stories and meet deadlines. However, to some, it is also a life full of twists and turns.

By Wilné van Rooyen



“That roller coaster of mine was this whole lot of super achievements and also some ‘beautiful failures,’” says Dave Pugh-Parry, former photojournalist, about his life prior to being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Pugh-Parry was diagnosed at the “young age of 45” in 1999, and says his life changed radically after that moment.

“[F]or the first time I understood why my life had been a series of ups and downs,” says Pugh-Parry.

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), people with ADHD show a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity which interferes with functioning or development.

Katherine Ellison, journalist and Pulitzer prize winner, was diagnosed when she was 48, and similar to Pugh-Parry, describes her life before her diagnosis as a roller coaster.

“I made many mistakes at work and in my personal life but somehow persisted,” she says.

WIRED DIFFERENTLY

Understood.org, an organisation which offers support programmes for the neurodiverse, says that for many people with ADHD, the world can feel like it’s built for a ‘normal’ that doesn’t include them.

One of the biggest problems that people with ADHD have is with executive functioning says Psychiatry Professor Renata Schoeman, who has contributed to a few journal articles about adult ADHD.

COMMON ADULT ADHD SYMPTOMS

- Impulsiveness
- Forgetting names and dates
- Missing deadlines and leaving projects unfinished
- Extreme emotionality and rejection sensitivity
- Becoming easily distracted and disorganized
- Suffering generalized anxiety disorder and depression
- Low frustration tolerance
- Trouble multitasking
- Excessive activity or restlessness

SOURCE: ADDitude

Executive function is a set of mental skills which include working memory, flexible thinking, and self-control, according to Understood.org. These are skills used every day to learn, work and manage daily life. People with ADHD struggle with executive functioning, and therefore struggle to focus, follow directions, and handle emotions.

Due to executive dysfunction, Schoeman mentions that a journalist with ADHD might have difficulty meeting deadlines or might leave things until the last minute, which can cause a lot of anxiety.

“They can also then continuously miss deadlines, for example, and they might find that they lose their confidence and that they feel like a failure,” Schoeman says.

To try and combat executive dysfunction, Pugh-Parry tries to prioritise his day by visualising it. This is a process where he sits with his diary and visualises himself completing his tasks for that day successfully.

“What that does is, not for my ego, it drives me to make sure that I will deliver the very best that I can,” he says.

Visualising is important because most of the brain activity for people with ADHD is in their occipital lobe, says Pugh-Parry.

According to the National Centre for Biotechnology Information, the occipital lobe is responsible for visual processing.

“So we think in pictures and in movies,” Pugh-Parry says.

TO MEDICATE OR NOT TO MEDICATE

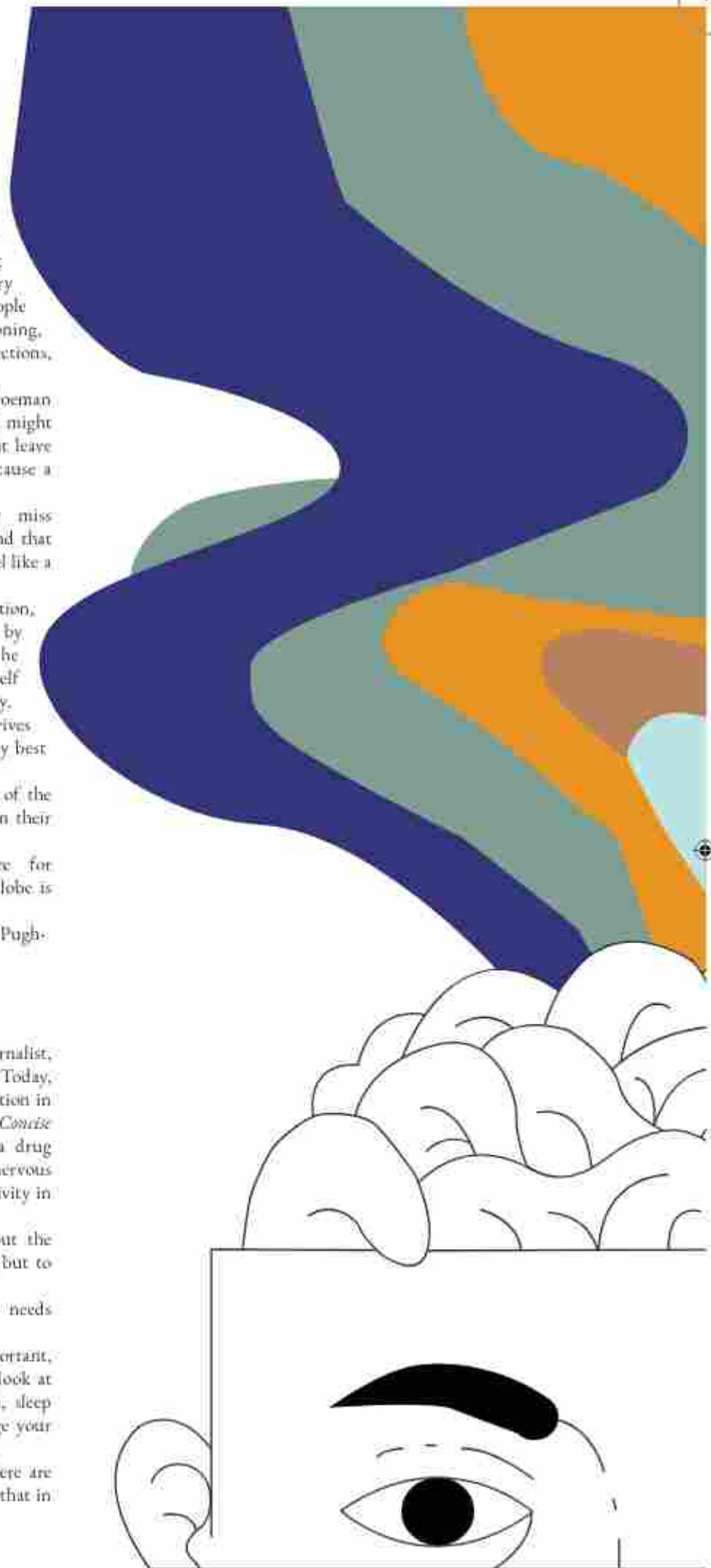
Roxanne Mooney, a *Huizenoot* online journalist, was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 20. Today, she uses methylphenidate to help her function in everyday life. According to the *Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary*, methylphenidate is a drug which stimulates sympathetic and central nervous systems and is used to improve mental activity in people with ADHD.

“I know there are many debates about the effectiveness and necessity of medication, but to me, it’s honestly a lifesaver,” says Mooney.

However, not everyone with ADHD needs medication, says Schoeman.

“There are other things that are also important, we need to look at therapy. You need to look at a healthy lifestyle, so to exercise enough, sleep enough, eat healthily, you need to manage your technology,” says Schoeman.

Although Schoeman maintains that there are alternatives to medication, she does admit that in



several instances it is crucial for some to function in everyday life.

"[M]edication is safe, it has been shown in many studies that it is safe to use for people with ADHD and that it is very effective in the use of, or in the treatment of ADHD," says Schoeman.

THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Mooneys says some of her colleagues know that she has ADHD and mentions that the pace at which they sometimes have to file stories for the website can be challenging.

"I have had to learn to work a bit faster than what I would prefer," she says.

One journalist, who wishes to remain anonymous, was diagnosed with ADHD as an adult in mid-2017 and says she has only told her boss and head of human resources (HR).

"I only told my boss after she complained about the standard of my work. I'm not ready for other colleagues to know. I fear their judgement," she says.

Not only can adapting to a work environment be daunting for people with ADHD but having to adjust to a pandemic as well can be dispiriting.

"I'm still very much at the start of my career, and I think the pandemic has actually been a learning curve," says Mooneys.

Working from home has been a huge challenge for her.

"I've realised that I'm able to focus [much better] in a traditional office because my head has 'fixed' on the idea that that's where work happens," she says.

Mooneys thinks the media world has to change in general with regards to how they view mental health as a whole.

"For me, I find that there are still too little areas of discussion, or areas where one can have safe discussions on how journalism impacts our mental health," Mooneys states.

Companies and managers need to educate themselves with mental health conditions according to the anonymous source.

"They need to make sure that, as much as possible, their employees feel they can be open about their mental health. Employees need to know that there are mechanisms of support for them," she says.

Professor Schoeman suggests that communication between companies and employees with ADHD needs to be adjusted.

EMBRACING THE NEURODIVERSE YOU

Embracing their neurodiversity is something that other journalists have struggled to overcome.

The same anonymous journalist, for instance, says she is yet to embrace her neurodiversity and is still learning of the effects ADHD has in her life. As an example, she lists long-term planning as one skill she struggled to develop due to her neurodiversity.

"I was very good at online news. It got to a point where I was absolutely certain in my abilities and coped just fine for 12 years. Then I went into PR and had to do more long-term planning. That's when the ADHD was picked up," she says.

Ellison however decided to embrace three positive characteristics of ADHD – creativity, energy and enthusiasm – which has helped her in her career. Ellison says that one should tap into these positive characteristics.

"It took me a while to become comfortable with being open about it, but it's a defining part of my identity," says Mooneys.

Mooneys has also stopped hiding it on social media.

"I now know that I can't seek change and not help to facilitate change. So when I can, I try to engage on topics such as neurodiversity," she says.

Professor Schoeman says journalists with ADHD might have to put in additional effort and make sure they are working with a psychiatrist.

"I think your diagnosis should not be an obstacle in terms of following your dreams," says Schoeman. ■

Om die artikel in Afrikaans te lees, besoek die SMF-webtuiste. Sien bladsy 7.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Neurotypical: adj.

Neurologically typical; spec. exhibiting ordinary, as opposed to autistic, thinking and behaviour.

Neurodiverse: adj.

Showing a range of variation in mental or neurological functioning; esp. (of a group) including persons on the autism spectrum; (of a person) neurodivergent. Also: of or relating to such persons or groups.

Neurodiversity: n.

A range of variation in mental or neurological functioning in a group; esp. one that includes some persons on the autism spectrum; the state or quality of being neurodiverse.

SOURCE: Oxford English Dictionary

BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE

For decades journalists have been portrayed as society's stoic drinkers, relying on alcohol as a crutch to deal with the trauma and the stress of the trade. Today, support programmes for journalists are on the rise, but some journalists believe that media houses are still not doing enough.

By Fern Bamber

I was hooked. I had to drink in the morning to get to work. I drank to face the blank copy paper on which we typed our stories. In the end...I was unemployable in the media industry after 10 years of hard drinking," recalls veteran journalist Joe Thloloe.

At the end of his first day on the job, colleagues took Thloloe for a "baptism" at a shebeen in Westbury, or Western Township as it was known at the time. Here, the rookie journalist had his first drink of alcohol, Thloloe says, who started his journalism career at *The World* in 1961.

"Most journalists at the time drank hard," Thloloe says. Daniel "Can" Themba, a renowned South African writer, had a mantra, "Drink hard, live fast and leave a beautiful corpse," which was adopted by Thloloe and his colleagues. Thloloe says that the booze turned him and many of his colleagues into "creatures that were dragged into the house by the cat." Many of his friends in the media died because of alcohol, he says.

In those days, the topic of trauma and mental health was not openly discussed. "We glossed over it. We laughed about it," says Thloloe. "Some media houses offered help from doctors and social workers, but we scoffed at these. They were for weaklings, and journalists are tough and don't welcome any help that could mark them as weak."

The irony is that their drunken stupors clearly showed how weak and vulnerable they really were, Thloloe says.

It was when he reached rock bottom that Thloloe sought help, and started from scratch to rebuild his career. It has now been 49 years since he had his last drink.

"When I was editor-in-chief at *SABC TV* from 1995 to 1997, we offered help to members of the team who were covering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," says Thloloe.

Psychologists and counsellors were ready to assist the staff, who were constantly bombarded with terrible stories, kept long hours and were emotionally exhausted, he recalls.

"At the meeting where I offered this help, I was laughed at — they weren't weaklings; they could ride the punches," Thloloe says. Many of them succumbed to substance abuse and other ills, he explains.

There is now help everywhere, Thloloe says, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and The South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA).

"In this day and age, all it takes is the courage to acknowledge the problem, face it and seek help," says Thloloe.

he says. He adds that this

ARE MEDIA HOUSES DOING ENOUGH?

The courage that Tholoe speaks of is evident in the growing number of journalists making use of support structures.

"In the 15 years that I've been doing this, we've seen an increase in journalists who are coming to us to seek support for psychological issues," says Maria Salazar-Ferro, emergencies director at the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

She is not the only one to have noticed this. "This is a new trend particularly with younger journalists and we welcome this openness," says Kate Skinner, executive director of the South African Editors' Forum (SANEF).

Skinner thinks that while initially it was not a focus of conversation, self-care is now an important issue. "One of the reasons why Qanitah Hunter won the Nat Nakasa award in 2019 was because she highlighted issues of mental trauma around online harassment," Skinner says.

According to Hunter, journalists are often exposed to the ugly belly of the world. There is a high chance they will witness, write about and experience trauma on the job, she says.

"Despite this, there is no support built into our jobs. There is often a sense of bravado that is inculcated, [which] leads to devastating mental health challenges."

This means that many journalists suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or anxiety that is ignored, she says.

Hunter argues that mental health awareness in the industry is low.

She also knows of many colleagues who have and still do battle with alcohol abuse as a result of the career, she says.

"Alcoholism or substance abuse is often normalised. It's part of the bravado of journalism."

According to Hunter, media houses are not doing enough to support journalists. "Media houses have to pay for counselling and support for journalists. It should be a standard [and] not the exception," she says.

Media24's safety policy for journalists requires that a journalist who has been exposed to trauma must be referred for counselling, according to Shelagh Goodwin, head of human resources (HR).

"We offer a confidential counselling service to all of our staff and their families, through an organisation called CareWays."

This, Goodwin explains, includes face-to-face therapy from trained professionals, as well as debriefing sessions for teams that have been exposed to trauma.

Where they suspect substance abuse, they have a formal HR process to assess the situation and intervene, she adds.

One journalist, who wishes to remain anonymous, confirms that there is still a drinking culture in the media industry. Journalism has a strong de-stressing culture attached to drinking as a "crutch," he says.

"Sometimes the things we see and experience aren't always nice, so meeting up with colleagues at a bar after a rough day has become sort of a habit. People bond over experiences out

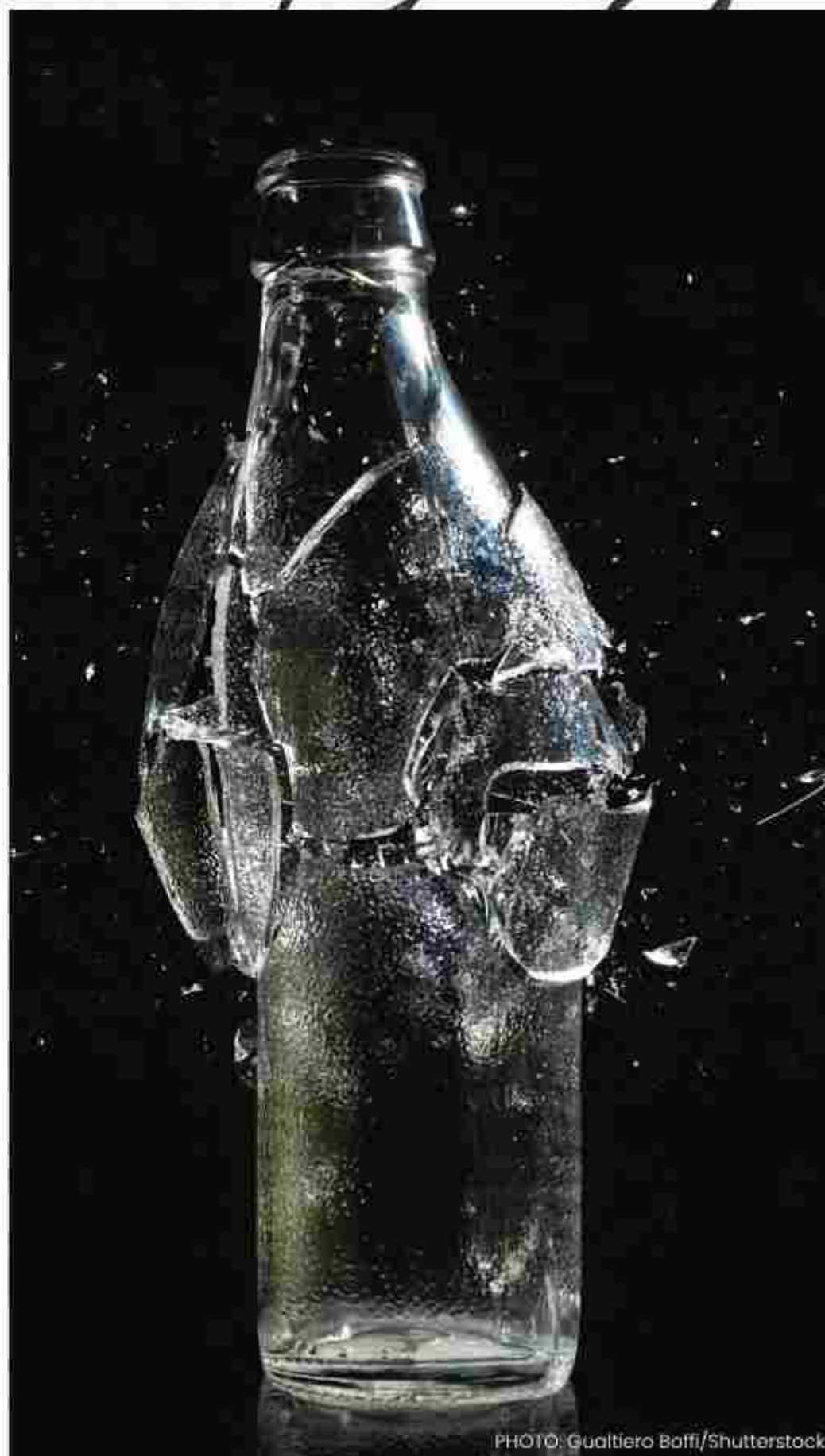


PHOTO: Gualtiero Boffi/Shutterstock

According to chemistry,

"SWINGS OF INTENSITY, LACK OF CONTROL"

"Anecdotally, journalists are known to cover up the **trauma** and stress of their lives with **alcohol and drug** abuse. This is documented in the brilliant *Bang-Bang Club* book," says the executive director of the South African Editors' forum (SANEF), Kate Skinner.

Greg Marinovich, co-author of the book, confirms that the topics of substance abuse and **mental health** were not things that were openly discussed during that time, nor were there **counselling** services available for journalists.

Marinovich thinks that there is a whole swathe of jobs that have similar swings of intensity, lack of control, fear of failure etc. that lead to **substance abuse**.

"If there is substance abuse among journalists, that may partly be due to a need to manage the **stress** of covering **traumatic** events and stories, which can be extremely hard on journalists," says Shelagh Goodwin, head of Media24's human resources.

TRAUMA

Thembi Msane, the spokesperson for the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), says that the organisation has treated journalists who suffer from **alcoholism** and **substance abuse**.

"There is so much **trauma** that takes place, that comes with the job. Remember, some of the stories that are reported are stories of gender based violence, as an example, or murders that have taken place. Those are some of the things that I think sometimes can impact a person's **mental health** and mental well-being."

People that follow up on these stories experience what is known as "secondhand **trauma**," Msane explains. "So someone might have experienced **trauma** firsthand, and then relaying it to you as a journalist might also traumatise you. It can also trigger your own experiences."

"Each and every job has its own challenges. And it's about how you as a journalist are able to cope. And how honest you are with yourself, and also what we call **self-care**, it's important for people to take care of themselves so they don't burn out, because once you've burnt out, everything else will actually be a challenge to you, she says.

SMF

in the field and drinking is in itself a bonding activity of sorts," he admits.

Like Hunter, he argues that media houses do not do enough to support journalists psychologically.

"You will be asked where the story is first before your editor asks you if you're okay after having witnessed a murder scene," he claims. "In some cases, your editor doesn't really care how you are, as long as they get the story."

A culture of quantity over quality has crept in over the last few years as the pressures mount in reputable media houses to keep up with the ever growing demand for news, he says. He adds that this "diminishes the need to look after staff."

"Most media houses will sacrifice journalists on the altar of pumping out stories, no matter their quality or the impact on the person or persons," he says. "It's ruthless. It's cut-throat. Most journalists have some or other crutch they've developed over the years as a coping mechanism."

EMPTY GLASSES

Cut off supply to something, and one will very quickly find out where one's addictions lie. This is according to the same journalist who wishes to remain anonymous. During the nationwide lockdown, he says he noticed that many people, who don't consider themselves alcoholics, would do everything possible to find booze.

"I think Covid-19 and the lockdown may have been a wake up call to some journalists who couldn't go a weekend without getting wasted," he says.

On the other hand, it instilled home drinking away from prying eyes, he says. This in itself can become an addiction, as one is accountable to nobody but oneself, cooped up in the house, he adds.

"There is greater scrutiny of those who are the watchdogs of society," says the source.

SOCIETY'S STOIC DRINKERS?

Reflecting on the present times, Greg Marinovich, photojournalist and co-author of the *Bang-Bang Club*, believes that media personnel are now more likely to open up about such issues.

"Of course, this depends on your cultural background," he says. "Gen Z' and millennials are much better at finding help."

According to Skinner, because of Hunter's work in highlighting the importance of mental health, SANEF is going to be taking on the issue as a campaign.

"We're going to be talking to media houses to ask them to ensure trauma counselling. This would include looking at substance abuse," she says.

"The profession was certainly known for alcohol abuse in the early years, but my impression is that this happens much less now," Goodwin says. ■

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When news becomes numb(ers)

By Megan Muller

As an essential service, it remains the media's responsibility to report on Covid-19. However, according to numerous experts, this information has the potential to either desensitise or sensitise the public to the Covid-19 mortality rate.

The numbers keep on rising. South Africa confirmed its first case of Covid-19 on 5 March. Three months later, on 23 June, South Africa had surpassed 100 000 cases and two months thereafter, on 21 August, the country exceeded the 600 000 mark. This is according to government data released by the Minister of Health, Zweli Mkhize.

"I think it is fair to say that people are more and more removed from the daily reality of Covid-19," says Dennis Webster, a journalist at *New Frame*. Webster explains that this is due to the focus the media are placing on the number attached to Covid-19 reporting, rather than the person affected by the virus.

He further states that the role of the journalist should therefore be to put people at the heart of journalism.

According to Marcus Low, journalist, health specialist and editor of the online health publication, *Spotlight NSP*, part of the work of public interest journalism is to make sure news consumers are immersed in the surrounding events of the world.

Thus, it remains crucial to report accurately and responsibly on statistics and epidemiology. This is in order to inform — or sensitise — readers as fully and accurately as possible on what is happening, adds Low.

Desensitisation

Low believes that surveys like the *National Income Dynamics Study - Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM)* suggest that many people are deeply traumatised and fearful of Covid-19, which does not

suggest desensitisation.

"Desensitisation is a constant threat in journalism, be it regarding Covid-19, TB, poverty, or war. Part of the challenges for serious journalists is, and will always be, to sensitise the public about issues of public interest," he adds.

According to Low, the primary role of journalism is to show the human impact of the pandemic.

"It is telling the stories about frontline healthcare workers, people who fell sick and who have recovered, and the people who have passed away," says Low.

At the same time, there is also a need for articles that help people understand the statistics, the science and the economic impact. Ideally, one will see articles of all these different kinds being published, he says.

"We are fortunate that in South Africa we have a diversity of publications covering Covid-19 from different perspectives," says Low.

He believes that journalists who have compassion for the people they write about tend to produce better journalism.

"It is best to resist becoming desensitised as a journalist and to respect the dignity and humanity of every person you write about," says Low.

News and numbers

Covid-19 has dominated news cycles, and for good reason, says Kyle Cowan, an investigative journalist at *News24*.

"It is a severe public health threat and readers look to reputable news publications to provide them [with] the most important and up to date information, and failing to do so could be seen as neglecting our duty to

inform the public," says Cowan.

This is why *News24* launched its own dashboard, a single-page resource which gives the public a large and unprecedented view into the pandemic. It aims to make key metrics for the measurement of the epidemic available to its readers, he says.

Cowan believes that the media have a role in highlighting the severe impact of Covid-19. "A duty also exists to present the deaths from Covid-19 — impartially and without emotion — factually and to always question the truth and accuracy of information presented to the public."

Behind the number

According to Anton Harber, Caxton adjunct professor of journalism from the University of the Witwatersrand, journalists use numbers to show scale and to inform the public's understanding and analysis.

"We need numbers, but to report on numbers is to only touch on the surface," Harber explains.

Some publications do not have the resources — or do not care — to dig into what lies behind the numbers, Harber believes.

For Harber, this may be due to prejudice. Most of the reported numbers could be about people of a different class to those in the newsroom and this taints the sympathies of some, he says.

He also believes that the newsroom is filled with voices and faces of more "privileged" people. As a result, he maintains that this affects how it influences their coverage of Covid-19 among different class structures.

"Journalists come from a certain class; by and

large, and there is a prejudice — conscious or unconscious — towards voices and faces like our own and against those who might come from a different class,” says Harber. Pandemics, and all sorts of catastrophes, aggravate and expose pre-existing fault lines, believes Wolfgang Preiser, professor and head of the division of medical virology at Stellenbosch University.

“There is a general tendency to highlight issues affecting the better-off rather than the poor, which was probably the same with Covid-19,” he says.

However, Preiser believes that there hasn’t been neglect in coverage on the challenges facing the poor.

He explains that the failures of the Eastern Cape health system, for example, were well documented by the various news publications.

Drawing the line

According to the South African Press Council’s preamble, the media exist to serve every society. As a result, the Press Code of South Africa should always guide journalists on how they ought to navigate themselves between desensitising, infringing on privacy, and causing harm, says Pippa Green, veteran journalist and the Ombudsman of the South African Press Council.

When it comes to individuals who have contracted

the virus, if the person is not a public figure, the media should respect their right to disclose it publicly or not, according to a close reading of clauses 3.1 and 3.2 of the Press Code.

It is the same in the case of death. The code urges respect for privacy and dignity, except if the public interest overrides this. Therefore, it would be wise to respect the wishes of those who are directly affected by the virus, whether by infection or death, says Green.

A balance should be found between discussing the numbers and also the personal suffering, says Kate Skinner, executive director of the South African National Editors’ Forum (SANEF).

“We also need reporting of people across the country, including rural areas and small towns. There are gaps around that issue,” she says.

According to Skinner, there are a lot of lessons including ensuring that all areas of the country are covered and also covering all aspects of the crisis, including personal, political and economic stories.

Low maintains that the principles of good journalism must always apply.

“[[It’s] respecting the dignity and humanity of those who you report on and always remembering that behind the numbers and the science, there are actual human beings,” he says. ■

PHOTO ON PAGE 69: A road cuts through recently filled graves in the Olifantvlei Cemetery outside Johannesburg, South Africa, on 5 August 2020. South Africa, with more than half a million cases of Covid-19, has become one of the five worst-hit nations in the pandemic. AP Photo/Jerome Delay

QR CODE 1: News24 Covid-19 Dashboard

QR CODE 2: News24 We Remember tribute page



2

Clauses 3.1 and 3.2 explained:

According to the South African Press Code, the role of the media is to serve society and its freedom provides for independent scrutiny of the forces that shape society.

Pippa Green, veteran journalist and the Ombudsman of the South African Press Council, says that media reporting should be guided by clauses 3.1 and 3.2 of the Press Council, which state that;

“The media shall:

3.1 exercise care and consideration in matters involving the private lives of individuals. The right to privacy may be overridden by public interest;

3.2 afford special weight to South African cultural customs concerning the protection of privacy and dignity of people who are bereaved and their respect for those who have passed away, as well as concerning children, the aged and the physically and mentally disabled.”



1

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ACCURATE INFORMATION DURING A PANDEMIC IS ESSENTIAL. HOWEVER, THE SHEER AMOUNT OF INFORMATION DURING COVID-19, AND THE UNCERTAINTY THAT SURROUNDS THE VIRUS, RENDERED SOME INFORMATION MISLEADING AND INACCURATE. WHILST MORE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COVID-19 IS SURFACING, JOURNALISTS CONTINUE TO COMBAT AN INCREASINGLY MORE COMMON ENEMY... MISINFORMATION.

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HEALTH REPORTING

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COMMUNICATING A
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FROM PANDEMIC
TO INFODEMIC

A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH REPORTING

Prior to Covid-19, health reporters were tasked with converting medical jargon into unambiguous information. The novel Coronavirus has exacerbated the need for experienced health reporters who are able to easily communicate important facts to the general public. In 2020, seasoned health reporters have proven to be a critical source of accurate information.

By Kirithana Pillay

PHOTO: Clay Bonney/Unsplash



During a global pandemic, health journalism is needed for a number of functions, such as educating the public on symptom recognition and treatment methods. This is according to Dr Harry Dugmore, health and medical journalism expert who was a professor of health journalism at Rhodes University and is currently a senior communications lecturer at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia.

"In a time of great danger it is really important to have verified information that you can trust in order to protect yourself and your family," he says.

The role of health journalists during a pandemic is to transform specialist knowledge into understandable knowledge to ensure that the layperson is well-informed, says Dugmore.

EDUCATING OR INDUCING PANIC?

By translating specialist knowledge, health reporters have the power to induce panic or to help the public make educated decisions, says Pontsho Pilane, health journalist and editor.

"It's a matter of life and death and I think sometimes we don't realise that inaccurate information can result in people not taking the situation seriously, or taking it too seriously, and doing things like panic-buying," says Pilane.

According to Pilane, many people receive their health knowledge from the media. "[I]t's important that the media provide people with the necessary information that they require in order to protect themselves from the pandemic," she says.

KEEPING UP WITH THE CONSTANT CHANGES

Converting complex medical information into something that is understandable to the broader public is essential work, according to Dr Nisha Jacob, public health medicine specialist and lecturer at the University of Cape Town.

"It takes misinterpretation or misunderstanding out of the picture," says Elri Voigt, freelance journalist at *Spotlight NSP*, a public interest health journalism website.

Additionally, it is important to communicate the changes and grey areas in public health policies and plans, says Joani van Dyk, senior journalist at *Bhekisa Centre for Health Journalism*. Since the science surrounding Covid-19 keeps changing, Van

Dyk says, "[I]t is extremely important to keep up with what is happening."

According to Jacob, examples of this change include how, at the start of the pandemic, the public was told to not wear masks because they could worsen the spread of the virus. "It doesn't help when you have all this controversy within academic [spaces]," says Jacob.

Health journalists can thus assist in conveying changing narratives. "For the lay public, it is critical that - as information evolves - it is packaged in an easy-to-understand format," she says.

The media have also kept the public up to date with the latest regulations relating to the National State of Disaster, says Voigt.

"Journalists have been working so hard to try and keep up with all this information that changes so quickly," she says.

HEALTH, POLITICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The National State of Disaster is an example of the intersection between health and political journalism. "Journalism forces you to look into other fields when you're doing health stories," says Van Dyk.

An example of this intersection is Van Dyk's article "*We are not respected like nurses: Porters, security guards demand more Covid-19 protection*". In this piece, Van Dyk reported that support staff receive less Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) than other hospital workers. The article was imperative in the country's national PPE guidelines being changed.

It is the responsibility of the journalist to hold governments and healthcare practitioners accountable, according to Voigt.

"If you look at some of the corruption with PPE supplies, it is essential for health journalists to keep government and health practitioners accountable," she says.

Pilane believes that all journalists, not only those who specialise in health, should hold those in power accountable, especially during a pandemic.

"We need to ask the difficult questions to get the accurate information," says Pilane.

HAS HEALTH JOURNALISM BEEN EFFECTIVE DURING COVID-19?

According to Jacob, health journalists have indeed been conveying accurate information, for the most part. "I think in South Africa the messages have

been fairly well guided by science," she says.

The media have been relaying the messages from technical experts on how the public can stay safe and what they should do when they have symptoms of Covid-19, says Voigt.

Additionally, Dugmore believes that public health campaigns and health journalism go hand in hand. "Health journalism works best when it is complemented by strong public health awareness campaigns," he says.

To improve health reporting, journalists should approach various experts in different fields, says Jacob.

"Sometimes when one focuses on one technical expert, one only gets one perspective. I think the media's role is to be able to understand the issues from different perspectives and bring them together," she says.

It is not the sole duty of health journalists to report on symptom recognition, according to Dugmore. He believes that if public health campaigns are effective in educating the public about symptoms and treatments, journalists can report about interesting scientific developments.

THE NEED FOR MORE HEALTH JOURNALISTS

Whilst the number of public health campaigns during Covid-19 have been adequate in South Africa, the country needs more health journalists, says Pilane.

"I think health journalism has been effective [during the pandemic] but there are not enough health journalists in the country," according to Pilane.

This problem is not unique to South Africa, but is endemic to the world, according to Dugmore. "There is no society that doesn't need more and better health journalism," he says.

Health journalism is also covered by general reporters, however, this can be problematic when reporters do not know how to translate medical jargon, says Pilane.

Van Dyk says that South Africa's media landscape is interesting as there are many donor-funded organisations which focus on social justice and health. These include *Bhekisa*, *GroundUp*, *Spotlight*, *NewFrame* and *Health-e News*, among others.

"Even so, I don't think there are enough health journalists who are trained specifically to report on health systems and science," says van Dyk. ■

**The
Guardian**

WHO warns over 'alarming' Covid-19 transmission rates

CHINADAILY 中国日报
COM.CN

Volunteers gladly join frontline virus fight

n p r

CDC Releases Plan For Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution



COMMUNICATING A CRISIS
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The dynamic and often complex nature of Covid-19 data has presented journalists with challenges in communicating relevant and accurate information to the public. This has led to the redefinition of the role of the journalist as a communicator, and forced the return of a value-centric approach to journalism.

By Victoria O'Regan

BY nature, pandemics instil a climate of fear and panic. If they didn't, it would be surprising, says Glenda Daniels, an associate professor at the department of media studies at the University of Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg.

"It's human nature to fear death," she says.

The critical role that the news media play in communicating the urgency and severity of the pandemic without stoking public fear of the virus, cannot be overstated nor exaggerated. But, for journalists reporting on the health crisis, the challenges posed by the pandemic are numerous. Oftentimes, the media finds itself in a very difficult situation about what and how to communicate "the facts", which continue to change, says Daniels [See story on pg 73].

One of the biggest challenges, during fast-moving pandemics like Covid-19, is access to credible information, says Mia Malan, founder and editor-in-chief of *Blackista*. This is because the science is not fully established and, in most instances, the publication of research is fast-tracked as scientists skip traditional peer-reviewed processes to publish research in the form of pre-prints, she says.

"But because of the nature [of the virus] and the urgency for the information...we now have a lot of pre-print studies, and it results in research results being reported as the gospel very often, when two weeks later it turns out not to be true," says Malan.

According to Malan, "misinformation" that gets communicated to the public can either instil false hope or generate fear.

The second challenge is that, "Covid-19 has, overnight, turned everyone into health reporters," but without equipping them with the scientific knowledge to evaluate scientific data and policy methods, says Malan. For journalists without backgrounds in statistics or epidemiology, it's difficult to report accurately on data, if one cannot first understand the science, says Malan.

However, if the media were too calm in its communication on Covid-19, the public would accuse them of hiding the facts and downplaying the severity of the pandemic,

according to Daniels. This begs the question: As the virus proliferates, how can the media ethically report on Covid-19 as not to induce fear, but to reflect accurately on our current reality?

MEANINGFUL STATISTICS

Context is an important component to reporting ethically on the pandemic, according to Malan.

"Because so much context is also required by the [pandemic], it makes it even harder to report on it and even easier to make mistakes, and not necessarily always intended mistakes," says Malan.

According to Malan, without context, certain visual representations of the virus or maps, have the potential to misconstrue or simplify information. "During times like this, [journalists] need to really try to have accurate visual representations and not simplify it in a way that is sensational or just downright wrong," says Malan.

Early on in the pandemic, some projections of mathematical models were, for example, sensationalised and used out of context, even by respected journalists, she says.

Inaccurate numbers and statistics can contribute to a kind of sensationalist reporting, adds Pippa Green, veteran journalist and ombudsman for the South African Press Council. "So, it's very important to check numbers, to check figures – but also to use them in proportion."

BRIDGING THE GAP

"People relate to stories, especially when they're under pressure," says Gaya Gamhewage, head of learning and capacity development, health emergencies programme at the World Health Organisation (WHO), in Geneva. "They do not relate to facts and figures."

While Covid-19 is a global pandemic, national and local journalists play a critical role in interpreting "global-level knowledge" and relating it to the community, according to Gamhewage. The critical role of national and local journalists in a pandemic is to interpret the information and data provided, and make it relevant to



the socio-cultural context of their audience, says Gamhewage.

"How do South Africans understand disease?...How does the community explain disease?" Gamhewage asks.

A journalist's job is to bridge that gap – to be factual, but frame the story in a way that people understand, according to Gamhewage.

The pandemic demands that journalists reconsider what news is essential, explains Gamhewage. "Journalists should not hide, nor should they overwhelm [the public] with information. They should select what is relevant and try and tell a story around it," says Gamhewage.

According to Malan, *Bhekisisa* adapted its news coverage during the pandemic, as "Covid-19 demands a broader audience".

"Our traditional audience at *Bhekisisa* is a very niche audience," says Malan. "It's one of decision-makers. With [Covid-19] all of that changed...we wanted to reach a wider audience because there was much more of an openness to consume that sort of information."

One way in which *Bhekisisa* achieved this was through a partnership with a community organisation based in Cape Town, called *Ehluwoza*. According to their website, *Ehluwoza* is a collaborative project among youth from Khayelitsha, South African biomedical researchers, scientists, and conceptual artists.

Bhekisisa would not normally have partnered with a community organisation, says Malan. "But, [*Ehluwoza*] had such powerful, grassroots information right from a township that we became [open] to partnering with them because of [Covid-19], so that our audience could see what happens right on the ground," says Malan.

ETHICAL JOURNALISM FORMS PART OF THE REMEDY

In an unprecedented public health crisis, Kate Skinner, executive director of the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF), explains that journalists can best serve the public by adhering to ethical guidelines and codes, such as the Press Council code of ethics and the ethics code of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA).

"Ethical practices sit at the centre of journalism," says Skinner. During a pandemic, journalists can best serve the public by "sticking to credible sources, by explaining the implications of the virus in clear simple terms, by being honest about what is known and not known, [and] where possible, giving people solutions to problems," according to Skinner.

"Accurate and truthful reporting, balanced reporting, verification, respecting people's dignity, not invading people's privacy - these are ethical responsibilities that apply normally, but during the pandemic [these responsibilities] became more pertinent and even more, I think, challenging," says Herman Wasserman a professor of media studies and director of the centre for film and media studies, at the University of Cape Town.

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

While the role of the news media remains that of informing the public, the pandemic has forced journalists to re-examine their role to not only communicate the latest statistics, but also provide solutions to how society can work through the crisis together, according to Herman Wasserman, a professor of media studies and director of the centre for film and media studies, at the University of Cape Town.

"I think frameworks like constructive and solutions journalism...might help us to think through ways in which journalists do not only see themselves as spectators on the sideline, reporting on what is playing out, but also [try] to more actively help to empower people," says Wasserman.

Wasserman referred to media reports where there has been an emphasis on mask-wearing, sanitation and handwashing as an important form of solutions journalism. "I think that already helps audiences feel less powerless and less fearful," he says.

Wasserman also noted the shift in Covid-19 media coverage in South Africa as the year progressed. "Media coverage changed from rising Covid-19 death tolls and reports of stockpiling near the beginning of the pandemic, to reports on recoveries," says Wasserman. This, according to Wasserman, can be seen as another way to balance public fear with hopeful outcomes and, therefore, enforce constructive news coverage.

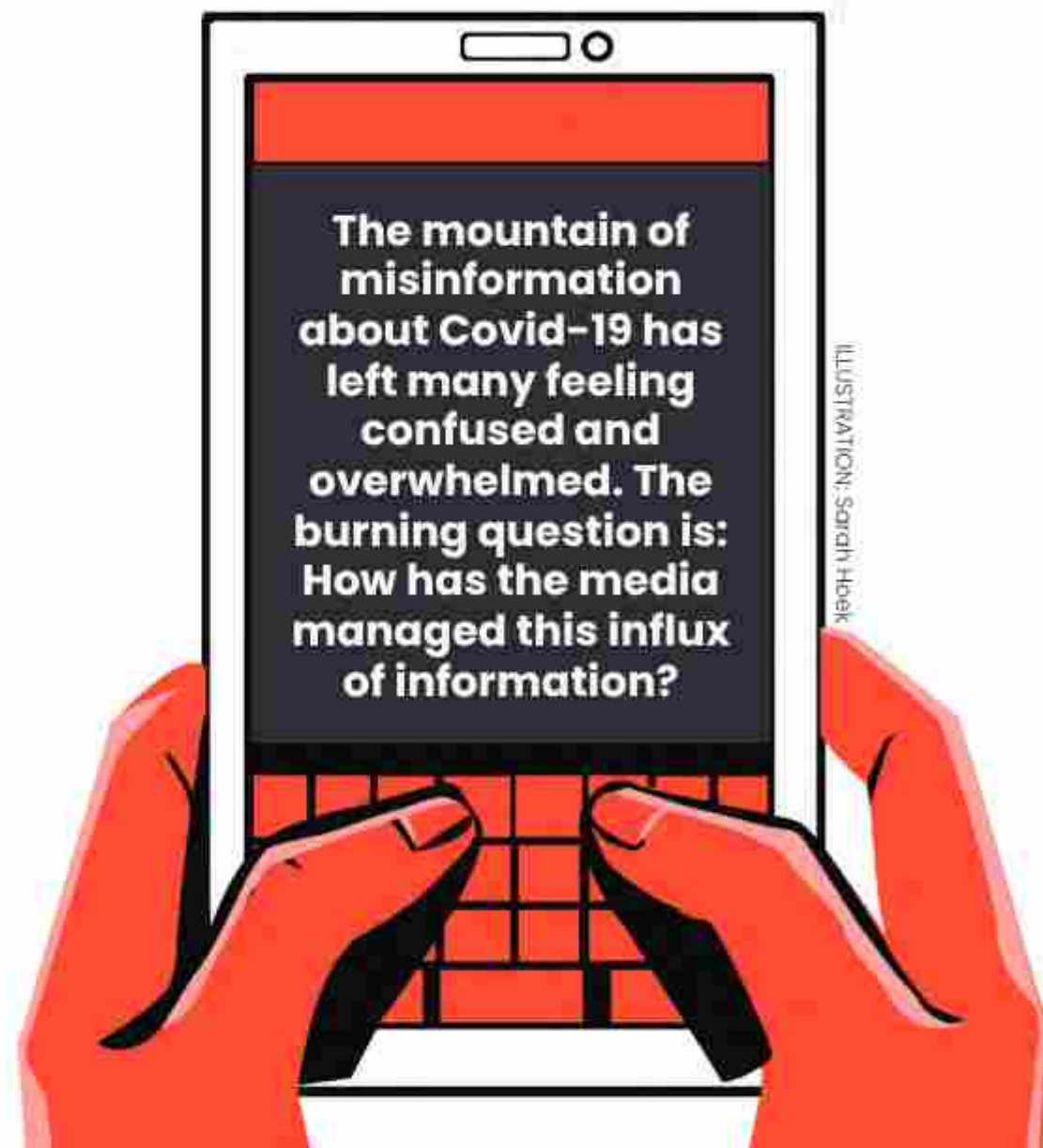
"It's not to sugar coat things or just assuage people's fears and anxieties for the sake of alleviating them," says Wasserman. "But it's also important to look at the possible solutions and outcomes and to be more constructive in the reporting."



PHOTO: Bruno Bucar/Unsplash

FROM PANDEMIC TO INFODEMIC

By Tyler Setzer



Since Covid-19 first crossed international borders, the world has been confronted with not only an unprecedented pandemic, but also an 'infodemic' – a term first coined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to refer to an overabundance of information.

As the science around Covid-19 develops rapidly, new information about the virus travels through society regularly, and as a result, for the last seven months, people around the globe have been grappling with an onslaught of information, both factual and fabricated.

DISINFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION

A number of people have come to use the term 'fake news' to describe any incorrect information on the internet. However, it is useful to differentiate between the different types of incorrect information, says Kate Wilkinson, deputy chief editor at Africa Check, a fact-checking non-governmental organisation (NGO).

"Disinformation is false information that is created with the purpose, or shared with the intention, to mislead or fool people," says Wilkinson.

Misinformation, rather, can be understood as false information that is not shared or created with the intention to mislead, says Wilkinson.

"Often [people] are sharing it because they think it's true and they think that somehow, they are doing something good by passing this on to someone else," adds Wilkinson.

COVID-19 AND THE RISE OF MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

Covid-19 is a unique event in that it is truly global. There is probably not a country or person in the world who is not aware of it or not consuming information on it, says Wilkinson.

"And what that means is that the audience for information, whether accurate or

inaccurate, is suddenly the whole world," she says.

Moreover, when you are faced with a virus which people know very little about, and you add in life and economic changes, as well as an information influx and lockdown regulations, you've got the perfect storm for disinformation, says William Bird, director at Media Monitoring Africa (MMA).

"What we know about disinformation is that it tends to have the greatest traction when there's uncertainty or tensions are running high," he says.

WHEN GOVERNMENT GETS INVOLVED

In March 2020, under the Disaster Management Act, the South African government introduced regulations stating that disinformation about Covid-19 is a criminal offence, as reported by MMA.

However, to go beyond saying that certain information is wrong, and to make it a criminal offence, is very problematic, says Pippa Green, a veteran journalist and ombudsman for the South African Press Council.

"It hasn't been applied to the press yet, but in a bad situation it could be," says Green. "I think that it can be used as a weapon against journalists if the government wishes to do that," she adds.

According to Green, mistakes require apologies, not criminal charges. In other words, journalists should try not to make mistakes, but if they do, the penalties should not be criminal ones because those would have a distinctly "chilling" and "disinhibiting" effect on all reporting, says Green.

Similarly, the moment any kind of limitation on freedom of expression is in place, red flags should be raised, says Bird.

"In fact, it's the first time our government has sought to do anything like this [criminalising disinformation]," he says.

But according to Bird, the regulation is tightly defined, and to be found guilty under the regulation, the government must prove that you intentionally sought to deceive

THE LOW-DOWN ON DISINFORMATION

According to William Bird, director at Media Monitoring Africa, people create disinformation to either:

- Shift some kind of **political agenda**.
- For **ideological purposes**, or to create conspiracy.
- To **draw traffic** to websites.
- To make **money** (by playing on people's emotions).
- To create and spread **fear and panic**.

FA

someone with false information. This is incredibly difficult to prove, says Bird. "It's easy for me to say I just wanted to inform you, how do you show it was my plan to deceive you?" he says.

Those accused of disinformation could easily hide behind the excuse that they believed the information to be true, and that their intention was to inform, not to deceive, says Bird.

REPORTING FACTUALLY WHEN THE FACTS ARE THIN

When it comes to reporting on Covid-19, journalists have been particularly challenged, according to Aisha Abdool Karim, a health journalist at *Bhekisisa*. As large quantities of information circle the media landscape, much of this remains unverified, she elaborates. "It's difficult to report on something when you don't have a real fact to check it against," says Karim.

Initially, information and knowledge on Covid-19 was limited. This made it difficult to debunk mis- and disinformation, says Karim.

One doesn't know if something is right or wrong because there isn't enough information to categorically state, one way or another, if it's accurate, she adds.

"Overall, I think [the media] were trying to do the best with what information was available," says Professor Taryn Young, executive head of the department of global health at

Stellenbosch University.

However, according to Young, what was concerning was how the media would sometimes share the findings of studies that needed to be further investigated.

"The understanding of the robustness of the data wasn't always there... [When] you see any research study, you must be critical of it. You can't just read the findings and say, 'oh we must report this'," she says.

On the same note, according to Wilkinson, often an absolute interpretation of events, studies, research, or data, ends up being communicated in the media without the disclaimer of uncertainty.

"I think that it would help a lot if the media were more honest with their readers in that regard... we need to leave room to acknowledge that we do not have all the answers," she says.

Similarly, another issue was that the media occasionally quoted from scientific papers that had yet to be peer-reviewed, leaving room for misinformation, says Dr Jantjie Taljaard, head of infectious diseases at Tygerberg Hospital and Stellenbosch University.

"It is a very complex world to move around. So, I think it's unintentional from the media's side sometimes," says Taljaard.

According to Young, to help combat this issue, she and a colleague teamed up with *Bhekisisa* to run a free, online epidemiology course for journalists in Africa. "We covered things like study design, and bias, and

epidemiological research. And as we went along, we applied it to Covid-19 examples," she says.

MISINFORMATION: AN INEVITABLE INFODEMIC CONSEQUENCE

Despite the challenges under Covid-19, most media houses have seen an increase in traffic to their sites, as well as a considerable rise in audience and readership. This shows that, during a crisis, people go to the media that they know and trust, says Bird.

"We have seen a significant uptake in credible news sources and that's a good thing. So, I think fundamentally, [Covid-19] has highlighted both the importance of communication as a fundamental right and need, but also the importance of credible journalism," says Bird.

As far as the media is concerned, one has got to be tolerant, says Green. "If you're going to report, and be active and prolific in your reporting, there are going to be mistakes made," she says.

However, some of these inaccuracies can be linked to being "fast and first," says Wilkinson.

"What is important there, is first of all, that you acknowledge the mistake and that you work quickly to fix it, but that you are also transparent about it... that you come clean and you leave a record of what has happened so that it is clear to everyone how everything played out," she says. ■

CHECK

HOW TO SPOT DISINFORMATION

According to William Bird, director at Media Monitoring Africa, if you see a post on social media that makes you feel:

- angry
- despondent
- sad
- cheerful
- or very anxious

Check it against any other **credible media house** – if you don't find it – don't share it.

KNOW WHAT CREDIBLE LOOKS LIKE

According to Kate Wilkinson, deputy chief editor at Africa Check, when you are wondering whether something is **reliable**, make sure to look out for:

- **Attributed** quotes.
- The **names** of organisations.
- The name of the **author** or journalist who wrote the article.
- The name of the website/**news organisation**.

If these things are not included – do more **research** before believing or sharing that information.

PRESSED

AGAINST

THE

WALL

While media representatives were reporting on the implementation of Covid-19 preventative measures, some were subjected to intimidation and harassment from law enforcement officers. Media experts warn that keeping media representatives from doing their work, is a threat to media freedom.

By Hloni Manare

When Covid-19 hit South African shores in early March, the South African government implemented a number of regulations to limit the spread of the virus.

According to Azarrah Karrim, a journalist at *News24*, many South Africans did not know much about Covid-19 and the necessary precautions they needed to take to protect themselves from contracting the virus.

South Africans needed factual and accurate news and information in order to educate themselves on the virus, she says.

"The hard lockdown in South Africa made it more important for journalists to be out there, telling the stories that people needed to know because everyone was stuck at home and unaware of what was happening outside," says Miriam Mannak, a multi-platform journalist who has written for *BusinessDay* and *The Guardian*, among other publications.

At that point, it was up to journalists to take the concept of a pandemic such as this and write about it in layman's terms so that it was easily digestible, says Mannak.

However, instances of the alleged harassment and assault of journalists reporting on the ground, threatened the ability of journalists to report on what was happening across the country, says Karrim.

Incidents of police allegedly shoving journalists or breaking their equipment show how harassment and intimidation by law enforcement jeopardises the future of media freedom, says Mannak.

As ordinary South Africans, people have the right to be protected by the police, says Mahlatse Mahlatse, South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF)

secretary-general. Mahlatse is also SANEF's former chairperson and represented the organisation at the height of the reported incidents of police harassment of journalists during lockdown. She also maintains that the police must also recognise when one is there as a representative of the media industry.

"Attacks against journalists occur because some police officers do not believe that journalists should have been involved in showing what was truly happening during the enforcement of the hard lockdown. We have had incidents where police have forcefully removed footage from journalists' possession because they didn't like how they [the police] were depicted," says Mahlatse.

These incidents are a raw experience for journalists, such as Karrim who was caught in the crossfire when the police fired at local residents who were not adhering to lockdown regulations in Yeoville, Gauteng.

"During the first day of the lockdown, I was driving around Johannesburg, just seeing how people were adhering to the regulations. I stopped when I saw a police *nyala* (van) and got out to start filming. By then, four policemen were coming out of the van and began shooting at some people who were loitering around, who then ran off," she recalls.

She says that after she was spotted by one of the policemen, he and other policemen on the scene made their way to her. As the officer attempted to stop her from recording she began screaming, "I'm the media!", and waved her media pass in the air.

After she had identified herself, the officer lowered his gun and told her to leave.

"The following day, I went to lay a complaint at a police station. I was met with such a passive aggressive manner and, by then, I knew that it

wouldn't go very far. I have a colleague who had the same experience a few years ago and his case is still ongoing," says Karrim.

INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTION

In a country where media independence is democratically protected, journalists should be working freely and not in fear of their lives, according to Mahlatse.

"Recently, SANEF handled a case of a journalist who had to flee to Lesotho because he was in fear of his life, following police intimidation. The case was taken all the way to the Presidency as we felt that it was unacceptable that journalists were being treated like that, and that it was a direct violation of the South African Constitution," says Mahlatse.

The case she is referring to is of community journalist Paul Nthoba who fled to Lesotho in May after he was allegedly assaulted by the police, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Nthoba had been reporting on the enforcement of lockdown regulations by police in the Free State, where he was assaulted and charged for breaking lockdown regulations.

He reported the case at a nearby police station but was subjected to further intimidation from the police. As a result, Nthoba fled to Lesotho, where he sought exile status. It is unclear if he has returned to South Africa.

According to Karrim, there was an unspoken understanding between the government and the media that information needed to be shared faster than the virus, as the two needed to work together to inform the public.

"People and the government put a lot of trust into the media, as that was their main source of

information. So, it was important that we report accurately and daily because of this trust. That trust is a privilege," she says.

South African Police Services (SAPS) declined to comment and instead referred *SMF* to the Standing Order 156. This is an extensive directive guide to all SAPS members on how they should interact with the media. It contains a number of instructions against interfering with the media's duty of taking photos and videos.

According to Section 10 (3)c of the policy, "a media representative may under no circumstances be verbally or physically abused and cameras or other equipment may not be seized" unless the equipment is being confiscated as evidence.

Additionally, the policy states that "under no circumstances whatsoever, may a member willfully damage the camera, film, recording or other equipment of a media representative".

THE REALITY FOR FREELANCE JOURNALISTS

Police intimidation is harder on freelancers as they do not have any backing from media institutions, says Lynne Smit, chairperson of the Southern African Freelancers' Association (SAFREA).

Because freelancers are more independent, they face a greater risk because they do not have the protection provided by media companies, explains Smit.

Wesley Fester, a freelance video journalist based in Cape Town, witnessed police harassment earlier this year when he was covering the removal of refugees, who had settled in Greenmarket Square in Cape Town. He was with a reporter from *Newsroom Afrika*, who was shoved and manhandled by members of the City of Cape Town's law enforcement, he says.

"That incident showed how journalists are treated by the police as the incident has still not been resolved. As someone who has faced it, I know how to deal with it. But for other reporters that are perhaps new to the field, there is probably more trauma [which] they face," says Fester.

According to Fester, there is always a disconnect between media freedom and law enforcement because journalists bring truth to power and that does not always go down well.

Journalists may have the credibility from the Constitution that grants them a lot of rights, but we also have people that do not want to lose their power, says Smit. ■

What to do when confronted by police

Remain calm. Do not raise your voice or provoke violence against you. Delete your data at the threat of violence.

If you are detained, ask what crime you are suspected of committing. If the officer demands to view the material or confiscates your equipment, ask what legal basis s/he has to do so, and ask for the officer's name, police station and commanding officer.

Lay a complaint with the station commander at the nearest station as disobeying a standing order is a disciplinary offense.

If the above is not fruitful, you may take legal action against the SAPS.

Source: SANEF

Did you know?

World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1993 based on the recommendations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s General Conference.

From then on, the 3rd of May, the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek (a statement of "free press principles compiled by newspaper journalists" in a conference in Windhoek, Namibia in 1991) was commemorated as World Press Freedom Day.

Source: United Nations



UNCENSORED

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RULE OF (F)LAW

COVID-19 HAS HIGHLIGHTED SOME
OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES
PREVALENT IN OUR COUNTRY.

THE COVERAGE OF THESE ISSUES
HAS AMPLIFIED UNHEARD VOICES
IN SOCIETY. HOWEVER, LIMITED
RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONAL
PUSHBACK ARE NARROWING THE
SCOPE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MATTERS
THAT NEED REPORTAGE.



26

jaar van

leë

beloftes

Door Carl Thomas

Ná 26 jaar van demokrasie kry verslaggewing oor sosiale geregtigheid steeds nie genoeg aandag nie. Media-persoonlikhede en sosiale geregtighedsaktiviste het gesels oor hierdie soort verslaggewing in Suid-Afrika en hoe Covid-19 gehelp het om verborge sosiale ongeregtighede na vore te bring.

Suid-Afrika het een van die mees progressiewe grondwette en regstellende beleide ter wêreld. Maar in plaas daarvan dat die beleide gebruik word om armes en die mees kwesbare groepe te bemagtig, word dit misbruik deur die regering om 'n netwerk van "patronaatskap" te skep.

Dit is die woorde van *Network24* se politieke en parlementêre verslaggewer, Llewellyn Prince.

Volgens Prince gebruik baie politici hul platform om hulself te verryk.

"Die voordele van die beleide sypel dan nooit deur na die mense wat dit regtig nodig het nie en dit is hoekom verslaggewing oor sosiale geregtigheid belangrik is," vertel Prince. "Mense bevind hulself nou in 'n posisie waar hulle moeg is van ongeveer 26 jaar se leë beloftes."

RAS EN APARTHEID

Alex Patrick, 'n joernalis by *TimesSelect*, vertel dat sosiale geregtigheid-verslaggewing Jan Allemann in Suid-Afrika bewus maak van hoe die meeste Suid-Afrikaners se lewenstandaarde regtig lyk.

Edwin Cleophas, besturende direkteur van die Social Justice Agency, meen dat verslaggewing oor sosiale geregtigheid 'n platform aan ontevrede gemeenskappe kan bied om hul saak te stel in die hoop om gehoor te word.

"As 'n mens in sommige van die armste gebiede gaan, sien jy net bruin en swart mense," sê Patrick. "Ek was al in huise waar agt mense één kamer deel."

Volgens Patrick is hierdie soort verslaggewing belangrik omdat die armes in Suid-Afrika nie 'n sé het nie.

"Hoe kan daar al vir langer as 10 jaar rioollekke in Durban Deep wees?" vra sy. "Dit is duidelik dat as jy arm is, is jy niks."

Zukiswa Pikoli, 'n joernalis by *Maverick Citizen*, sê die grootste probleem met sosiale geregtigheid-verslaggewing in Suid-Afrika is dat die "gesig van sulke stories oorweldigend swart en vroulik is".

"Jy kan nie ras uit die stories haal nie," sê Pikoli.

"As jy dit uithaal, sal jy 'n onvolledige prentjie van Suid-Afrika sien – een sonder nuanse."

Die voorsitter van die Suid-Afrikaanse Redakteursforum (Sanef) se etiese en diversiteitskomitee, Monica Laganparsad, vertel dat townships – soos Khayelitsha en Soweto – die nagevolg is van die ruimtelike beplanning van apartheid.

"Hierdie ruimtelike beplanning het spesifiek plaasgevind om mense van kleur buite die stad te hou," sê Laganparsad. "Nou bly hulle steeds daar."

Laganparsad vertel dat swart mense elke dag hope geld moet spandeer om by hul werke uit te kom, terwyl die staat hul woonbuurte in townships en informele nedersettings afskeep. "Dit is duidelik 'n sistemiese probleem," vertel sy.

Laganparsad sê dat sulke sistemiese probleme vandag steeds bestaan en dat dit die lewens van swart mense bemoeilik.

'N KWYNENDE MEDIA INVLOED

Charles Smith, nuusredakteur by *Network24*, meen dat die media onder geweldige druk is en dus is dit onmoontlik om aandag te skenk aan alle sosiale ongeregtigheid.

"Dit is nie die media se werk om filantropies te raak nie – maar deesdae moet joernaliste daardie rol vertolk, omdat die mense nie meer die regering vertrou nie," sê Smith.

Hy meen dat dit deesdae die media se verantwoordelikheid is om te verseker dat mense se regte nie geïgnoreer word nie weens 'n korrupte regering.

"Die media se invloed is nie meer wat dit altyd was nie," vertel Smith. "Die fopnuus-verskynsel het ook die media se reputasie geskaad." Hy sê dat dit dus nou moeiliker is om die staat verantwoordelik te hou aangesien die staat verslaggewing dikwels as fopnuus probeer bestempel.

Volgens Ignatius France, die voorspraak- en opleidingsbestuurder by The Justice Desk, 'n organisasie sonder winsbejag wat vir menseregte veg, is joernaliste se benadering tot sosiale geregtigheid

Ongelykheid in Suid-Afrika

Volgens die **Wêreldongelykheidsdatabasis**, besit die **top 1%** van Suid-Afrikaners wat geld verdien byna **20% van die land se inkomste**, terwyl die **top 10%** **altesaam 65%** van alle inkomste huis toe neem. Dit beteken die **onderste 90%** verdien altesaam **35%** van die land se inkomste.

Die *Inequality Trends Report*

2018, wat deur Statistiek

Suid-Afrika en die

Suid-Afrikaanse Arbeids- en

Ontwikkelingseenheid opgestel

is, het uitgewys dat **tussen**

2011 en 2015 het 'n **wit persoon**

gemiddeld R24 646 per maand

verdien. Dit is **drie keer meer**

as die R6 899 wat swart mense

gemiddeld verdien het. Tydens

dieselfde jare het Suid-Afrika se

medioan-inkomste met 15%

gekrimp. Daarenteen het die

verdiensle van die **top 2%** in

daardie tydperk **met 15% gegroei**

terwyl diegene wat in die **top 1%**

was, 'n **groei van 48%** ervaar het.

dikwels gesensasionaliseer en winsgedrewe.

Om stories te vertel ter wille van die verkoop van koerante of om intekenare te lok ondermyn die waarde van die mense oor wie daar gerapporteer word, meen France.

'N VERSKUIWING IS NODIG

"Die aanname of idee dat die media nie bevooroordeel is nie, word al lank betwis en in sommige gevalle is daar bewys dat dit foutief is," sê France. "Die media is besigbode en besighede wil geld maak."

France meen dat daar 'n verskuiwing in die media nodig is. Eerder as tendensgerig, moet die media meer doelgerig in hul verslaggewing wees, sê hy.

Laganparsad en Patrick is van mening dat hoofstroommedia nie genoeg doen om sosiale ongeregtigheid op te los nie. Pikoli sê weer dat daar nou eers regtig aandag geskenk word aan sosiale ongeregtigheid. Cleophas meen die media doen wel genoeg, maar is dalk nie altyd regverdig nie.

"Hoe die media verslag lewer, kan soms bevooroordeel wees," sê Cleophas, wie 'n meestersgraad in ontwikkelingsstudies van die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland (UWK) behaal het.

Hy vertel dat die teikenmerk van 'n publikasie, en waar hulle hul geld vandaan kry, beïnvloed oor watter inhoud daardie publikasie verslag lewer.

"Die media se verslaggewing laat dit lyk asof mense weens die pandemie begin honger ly het, maar mense het nog altyd honger gely in Suid-Afrika," sê Patrick.

SOSIALE MEDIA: DIE STAATMAKER EN KWAADSTOKER

Laganparsad vertel dat verslaggewing oor sosiale geregtigheid belangriker begin raak het namate Suid-Afrika die piek van die pandemie bereik het.

"Covid-19 het ongelykheid in so 'n mate in die

kollig geplaas dat selfs die hoofstroommedia dit nie meer kon ignoreer nie," sê Laganparsad.

Prince en Smith sê dat sosiale media ook 'n kardinale rol gespeel het om sosiale ongeregtighede tydens die pandemie uit te wys in Suid-Afrika.

"Ek dink mense het al die impak van sosiale media besef toe dit verban is tydens die 'Arab Spring'," vertel Prince. "Danksy sosiale media kan mense nou tuiting gee aan hul frustrasies en sodoende ondersteuning van ander mense kry om druk op die regering te plaas."

Smith waarsku egter dat mense soms die pad byster raak op sosiale media.

"Baie kere help sosiale media egter ook die media om meer bewustheid te skep rondom sosiale geregtigheid, as die media nie die hulpbronne het om lig op alles te skyn nie," sê Smith.

Pikoli sê dat sosiale geregtigheid-verslaggewing 'n tol eis op joernaliste aangesien hulle gereeld ander mense in moeilike situasies sien.

"Daar is definitief 'n behoefte om sulke stories te vertel. As joernalis moet jy jouself egter uit die storie probeer hou, terwyl jy terselfdertyd ook empatie betoon," vertel Pikoli.

POLITIEKE GULSIGHEID

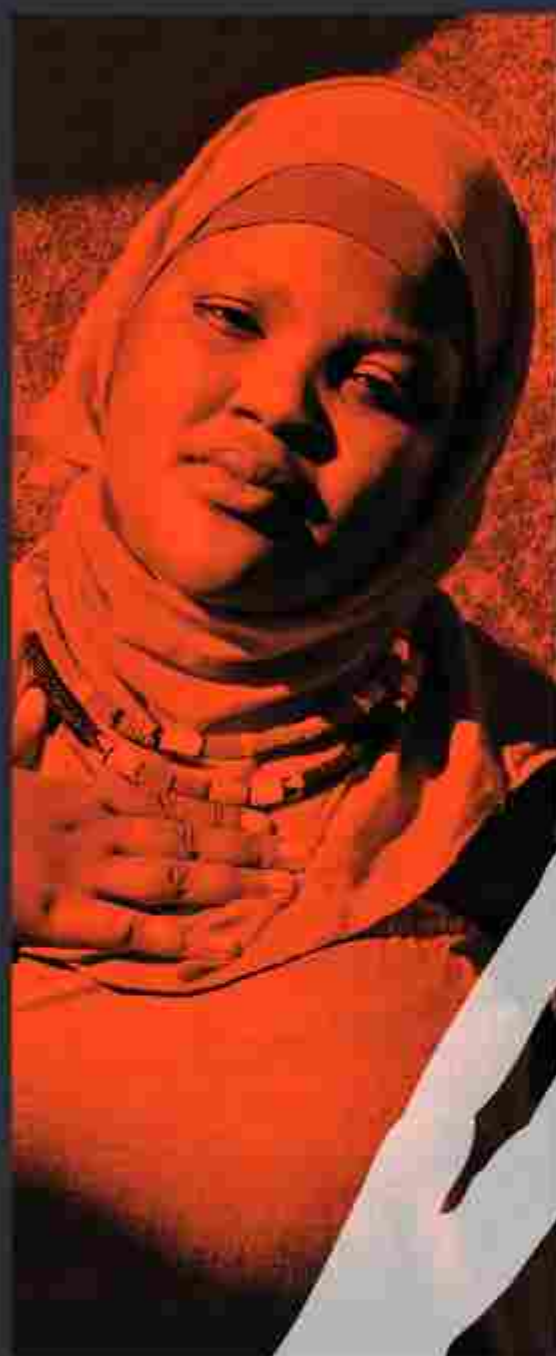
As die regering voortgaan om korrup te wees, gaan sosiale geregtigheid-verslaggewing altyd belangrik bly, meen Patrick.

"Baie van ons politici weet hoe dit voel om niks te hê nie," sê sy. "n Mens sal dink dat as jy arm grootgeraak het en jy beland in die politiek, sal jy jou beste gee om arm mense te help."

Maar volgens Patrick is daar 'n gulsigheid onder politici wat hulle verhinder om hul werk ordentlik te doen.

"Daar moet 'n stokkie voor korrupsie gestee word. Suid-Afrikaners verdien beter," sê sy. ■

To read this article in English, visit the SMF website. See page 7.



THE PEN *AND* THE PLACARD

Affirmed by the emergence of social justice news publications, such as *GroundUp* and *New Frame*, the traditional separation of journalism and activism is increasingly blurred. Journalists and activists Nelisiwe Msomi, Zoë Postman and Kamva Somdyala explain how they navigate both roles.

By Masego Mafata

Nelisiwe Msomi says she has subverted the status quo and chosen justice above all since she was a child. It was inevitable that this self-identified feminist, and journalist at *Health-e News*, would use her career to challenge and question the world around her.

People like Msomi, are often the subject of the ongoing ethical dilemma in the media industry – and society – regarding whether a person can concurrently fulfil the roles of being a journalist and activist.

In an *Al Jazeera* article, written in 2017 and titled *The Case Against: Can Journalists Be Activists*, Deepak Adhikari says, “An activist tries to influence the debate, whereas a journalist helps create an informed debate.” Adhikari believes that people cannot hold both the pen and the placard. Instead, they must choose either journalism or activism.

According to Zoë Postman, a journalist at *GroundUp*, Adhikari’s quote reflects the prevailing traditional view that there is no bridge between journalism and activism. “When you are a journalist, you write what you write about the story and that’s it,” says Postman.

In this traditional view, journalists who invest themselves in their stories lose their sense of objectivity, she says. However, for Dinesh Balliah, a journalism and media studies educator and academic at the University of the Witwatersrand, viewing journalism and activism as mutually exclusive does not necessarily result in objectivity.

“We are using the word activism to refer to partisanship and this is incorrect. We need to approach the term with nuance [because] we can be gender activists and still practice journalism that

is fair and factual. If it is not fair and factual, it is not journalism,” says Balliah. To define activism as “reflecting on social justice issues and amplifying that for social good” allows for a better understanding of how one can navigate being both an activist and a journalist, she says.

According to Msomi, journalists do not give people voices. Instead, journalists amplify people’s voices, she believes. “Our job as journalists is to take the mic where it would not ordinarily reach,” says Msomi.

“In our newsrooms in South Africa, one narrative dominates, and this is why we lack a diversity of stories,” says Balliah. To this end, Msomi says she is fortunate to have worked alongside people who share her approach towards journalism; telling the stories of black women.

“Even if the newsroom may be full of black women, it is not created or conducive for black women to be productive. [Hence] I am very passionate about finding and telling the stories of black women, in a way that they are comfortable with,” says Msomi.

For Balliah, there is room for Msomi’s approach to journalism. “There is a stance in everything we do and write about, which is why objectivity is misleading. What matters is how we reflect on this stance and how we ensure that our journalism is still factual and fair despite the stances we take,” says Balliah.

BIASES AND FRAMING

Postman is closely aligned with the African Reclaimers Organisation, which champions the recognition and remuneration of recyclers in

Johannesburg. She says that biases held by journalists who are openly activist are no different to ordinary biases held by other journalists. Therefore, the same checks and balances used to filter out general biases apply to activists’ biases, says Postman.

“It is definitely difficult [to filter out your biases] and that’s why you work with a team of people who edit your work and make sure that, as much as you are involved in these communities, or as much as you are an activist, the writing itself is not influenced by your biased view[s],” says Postman.

According to Postman, self-awareness and the acknowledgement of one’s positionality – skills all journalists require – make it easier to grapple with the tensions which arise from fulfilling both roles.

In Kamva Somdyala’s case, it was being aware of his positionality, as a student during #OpenStellenbosch and #FeesMustFall in 2015/16, that made him realise he can be both an activist and a journalist.

“I [was] a student, but I believe on myself the responsibility of documenting things. I was never looking to be an activist. I knew that my role was not going to be holding up placards and being on the forefront, but I knew that I had a role to play, that I could tell the stories that were going to emerge,” says Somdyala, who is currently a content producer at *News24*.

Realising how the media often vilified students in their coverage of protests is what encouraged Somdyala to use his journalism to include the students’ perspective in his framing of the stories, he says. Somdyala says it was important to help people realise that what was written in the media about

PHOTOS on previous page (from left to right): Nelisiwe Msomi, journalist at *Health-e News*, by Stefanie Jason; Kamva Somdyala, content producer at *News24*, by Masego Mafata; Zoë Postman, journalist at *GroundUp*, by Al Postman.

student protests was only one of many angles. "It's all about how you frame your story and the voices you amplify," he says.

Activist and grade 11 pupil, Tanya Kaseke, says there is an intersection between journalism and activism because writing is an effective way to convey a message. As someone who uses writing in her activism, she says, "I don't think we see enough protest in journalism, specifically from young people. [I] try and tap into that field to try and make sure that the voices of young people are taken more seriously in the media."

Often, she says, the media frame the contributions of young people in a very tokenistic manner, and this is what she is trying to correct. Since 2015, the Johannesburg-based student's work has been featured in the *Daily Maverick*, under an alias to protect her identity.

JOURNALISM | ACTIVISM AND COVID-19

Kaseke's work usually focuses on xenophobia — especially afrophobia — as well as women and children's rights. However, she says the Covid-19 pandemic forced her to widen the scope of issues that she tries to address due to the various, often intersecting, inequalities that the pandemic has exposed.

"Covid-19 widened the nets in terms of coverage," says Msomi. The social-justice nature of her work can often blur the line between activism and journalism, something that has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, she says. "The workload has increased, but what we are seeing is that Covid-19 just highlighted the inequalities that we have been writing about as health journalists," says Msomi.

For Postman, the Covid-19 pandemic has made it even more difficult to grapple with the tensions between being an activist and a journalist. "I get to see first-hand how Covid-19 has destroyed people's [lives] and while there are people who are okay with just writing the article, I have to do more than that because as both an activist and a journalist, I know the limitations of the media," says Postman. ■

“IF IT IS NOT FAIR AND FACTUAL, IT IS NOT JOURNALISM.”

RULE OF (F)LAW

By Daniele-B von Ziegler Smith

In the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, the South African government was faced with a choice: To either follow the State of Emergency Act or to implement the Disaster Management Act. The unintended consequences that followed their decision had an impact on social justice reporting, trust within government – and on the media.

Following the announcement of a nationwide lockdown, to manage the spread of Covid-19, the decision to implement the Disaster Management Act (DMA) broadly authorised the executive to create rules, bypassing the role of parliament. This was according to Geo Quinot, professor of law at Stellenbosch University (SU) and public procurement law expert. The publication of court directions, regulations and directives by various ministers resulted in confusion within the public and the media, he suggests.

"DMA laws are a perfect storm of fear, heavy-handedness and a generally unprepared government," says Cheresé Thakur, attorney and advocacy coordinator at *AmaBhungane*.

Lockdown's unintended consequences impacted the operation of courts, limiting journalist's abilities to do their jobs, according to Claudia Mailovich, senior political writer for *Business Day*.

Covid-19 court coverage

"Courts were definitely not as accessible as they usually are. That is a kind of diminution of the principle of open justice and the rights to freedom of expression," says Thakur.

Before the national lockdown, journalists were usually able to walk into courtrooms at any time and attend those court cases being held, explains Thakur.

However, practical problems that resulted from the lockdown illustrated that the government was not technologically savvy or adequately prepared to deal with the pandemic she says.

"In terms of [the] functioning of courts, the media were permitted to attend," says Thakur. This was due to the fact that virtual access was granted, as the media is considered an essential service.

"With a virtual hearing, there's almost this gatekeeping that happens," she says. Accessing court records without physically going to court

was, for example, challenging for journalists during the lockdown.

"Electronic access to court records has definitely been something that has slowed down investigative journalism/reporting because you just don't have the papers," she adds.

Registrars are also "overworked and unresponsive", which contributes to the difficulties in ensuring court reporting and open justice can be facilitated, says Thakur.

"Lockdown has illustrated our court's inability to deal with a disaster situation," says Quinot.

According to Mailovich, prior to lockdown implementation, there was already a "major backlog in the courts". Based on Mailovich's early pandemic-reporting and concerns raised by the National Bar Council of South Africa, this backlog of cases not being heard would severely impact access to justice. "Justice delayed is justice denied," she says.

Access to information

Under level 5 lockdown regulations, social justice and human rights organisations weren't initially viewed as essential services. This was according to Ghalib Galant, national deputy coordinator of the Right2Know campaign, which lobbies for the public's access to information and the media's rights and duties to access and disseminate it.

"Journalists were granted essential service status early, but that didn't mean that they had free and unfettered access," Galant says. For example, despite providing an essential service, journalists investigating the conditions inside homeless shelters were unauthorised to enter, he says. Despite claiming this may have been to mitigate the health risk linked to the spread of Covid-19, Galant feels that was perhaps the "benign interpretation".

"That was a clampdown on freedom of expression particularly, as it pertains to freedom of the press," says Galant, who also describes the impact of the disaster as a "virtual suspension of the Constitution".

"The limitations of rights still need to be tested against section 36 of the Constitution. [Limitations on rights] need(s) to be reasonable, proportionate and the least restrictive measure," Thakur explains. According to Thakur, there wasn't time for this during the initial lockdown period due to the imminence of the situation. The time and opportunity to make a measured analysis presented itself afterwards, but the government persisted with strong measures that they subsequently tried to justify, she adds.

"People were concerned that the DMA regulations themselves weren't being tested by government officials against the provisions of the Constitution," says Thakur.

Professor Thuli Madonsela, chair in social justice at the law faculty at SU, thinks that the State of Emergency Act, as provided for under section 37 of the Constitution, might have been preferable. She says that it facilitates more access to information, accountability and guarantees in terms of fundamental human rights.

According to Mailovich, the manner in which press briefings are held has changed. "Even the way parliament and portfolio committees have done their work has changed, the moment that the online meeting starts, documents are shared," says Mailovich. Initially, asking for a live stream of press briefings was met with difficulty, says Mailovich, but "now that's the default".

For journalists, not being able to meet with interviewees in person during lockdown meant that they were restricted to the type of information interviewees were willing to share over the phone, she says.

Some stories could be written from one's couch,

while others, like a feature on homelessness, cannot, she says. "You're doing journalism a disservice if you're not speaking to them [the homeless]," Mailovich says.

Social justice lens

Mailovich believes that the reality of the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, including unequal access to technology, thereby impacting accessibility to information.

"I've been completely shocked, disappointed, and concerned about the lack of social justice focus in much of what we see," says Quinot. "The effect of lockdown, and especially the form of lockdown we've had for as long as we've had it, is undoubtedly going to cost lives," he says.

The reasoning behind the government's decision to implement a "stringent, hard lockdown," surrounded the narrative of saving lives, he says. Taking extraordinary measures to stop the virus will save lives, however, "poverty is undoubtedly going to cost lives," Quinot explains.

"Reasons for lowering lockdown levels have been less about saving lives and more about saving jobs," says Galant. He elaborates that without the inflows into the fiscus, social justice is unattainable.

From a social justice perspective, Madonsela feels that the government could be criticised for their failure to do a "Covid-19 social impact assessment".

Commendable efforts have been made to predict the likely impact on health, says Madonsela. However, she feels that their approach lacked consideration of a contingency plan to mitigate the pandemic's unintended consequences. This includes limitations on access to information and freedom of the press, as reflected in sections 32 and 16 of the Constitution respectively.

Transparency, truth & trust

"The saving grace in South Africa, compared to countries comparable to South Africa, is the media," says Quinot.

He elaborates that the media plays a critical role in curbing tender corruption by providing the public with vital information. Galant notes the importance of transparency, not only surrounding Covid-19, but also pertaining to procurement contracts and government spending patterns.

"Transparency should just be there from the start, so the journalist can have material readily available, do the analysis and present that to the public through the media," says Quinot.

An example which raised a concern for Quinot, was when Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, minister of cooperative governance, made remarks in a press statement that a large number of public submissions

'ZUMA-ERA' DÉJÀ VU

According to Geo Quinot, professor of law at Stellenbosch University and public procurement expert, the court's treatment of challenges during lockdown is comparable with "the court's response towards the end of the Zuma era". He says that the conventional wisdom was that "the courts pulled us through".

"The courts [in the 'Zuma era'] held everything together and because of that, there could be real change," says Quinot. During the pandemic, however, Quinot is inclined to draw the opposite conclusion.

"This is the same judiciary that really took [President Jacob] Zuma to task, that's now almost tiptoeing around the executive and if we can't rely on our courts in the darkest hour, where do we go?" Quinot questions.

Transparency requires proactive disclosure. The imprecise framework followed under this natural disaster has resulted in opportunistic behaviour, and is "very problematic," he adds.

"Wherever there's secrecy, corruption can flourish," says Ghalib Galant, national deputy coordinator of the Right2Know campaign. The government hasn't been as transparent as it could be, he maintains.

were received regarding the cigarette ban and that they have responded to those submissions.

"That was an instance where the president said one thing, and then the minister did something else a week later, and then subsequently it emerged that there's a strong likelihood that the minister [Dlamini-Zuma] actually lied," says Quinot.

"It was very bad communication, was confusing and didn't contribute to any form of trust of government," Mailovich says.

"A big part of the rule of law is certainty in what the rules are. I mean, that's the point of having rule of law, isn't it?" says Quinot.

Accuracy is imperative, particularly during a pandemic. One of the post-pandemic challenges for the government is going to be rebuilding South African society's trust, says Mailovich. ■

DISASTER MISMANAGEMENT ACT

There have been significant 'subtle' shifts in the law, says Geo Quinot, professor of law at Stellenbosch University (SU) and procurement law expert.

"It's not been that overt, which is of course in itself a worrying phenomenon," he says.

There's a "deficit in our broader constitutional system", which has been pointed out for years, says Quinot. However, there hasn't been a concerted effort to address the need for more controls, he adds.

"We've been very ambivalent in South Africa about that," he adds.

"In the latter part of the lockdown we've really had arbitrary, quite authoritarian rule [of law] in South Africa," says Quinot.

Professor Thuli Madonsela, chair in social justice at the law faculty at SU, agreed with Quinot saying "there was more 'command and control' instead of leading people".

Ministers leveraged their power far too much, as opposed to generating hope and inspirational leadership she says.

DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP

"We as a nation allowed [the] government to deviate from the law," says Professor Thuli Madonsela, chair in social justice at the law faculty at Stellenbosch University (SU).

"The undemocratic part of the previous state [Apartheid] was authoritarianism, and what they leveraged was fear," says Madonsela.

Madonsela says that citizens were mobilised into compliance without questioning why. "People become used to this, and before we know it these authoritative tenancies will creep in beyond Covid-19," she warns.

Geo Quinot, professor of law at SU and procurement law expert, noted that we're supposed to have a much deeper participatory democracy. "It's questionable whether we have that now, of course, and whether that's an acceptable kind of way of dealing with the pandemic," he adds.

DIE SKOENMAKER – 'N KORTKORTVERHAAL

'n Week voor sy dood sit die skoenmaker met my een rooi skoen in sy hande. Hy ondersoek die skade aan die leer en besluit of dit tyd is vir 'n nuwe sool.

Hy vryf oor die leer en toets hoe ver dit meegee.

Hy vertel vir my van sy groot projek. Hy het 'n boom geskuif. Grootliks op sy eie.

Eers het hy die nuwe gat gegrawe en toe het hy rondom die boom begin grou – versigtig om geen wortels te beskadig nie. Dikwels moes dit met sy hande gebeur. Waar hy tot op die wortels gegrawe het, het hy klam lappe oor die wortels gegooi. Hy was haastig. Nie om klaar te kry nie, maar om die boom geskuif te kry sodat die wortels weer ondergronds kon kom. Teen die stam van die boom het hy stutte opgerig.

"'n Paar dae se grawe in, het die boom begin sug. Dit is nie goed as 'n boom sug nie," het hy gesê.

Nou het hy my skoen gekantel. Hy het die brug geknak en die sool bekyk.

Na sug, het hy verduidelik, kom 'n gesteun en 'n gekreun, en daarna kom kraak. En kraak is die boom se doodskreet. Die sug is dus 'n belangrike waarskuwing. Hy het verdere versterkende stutte rondom die boom aangebring. Die boom het staande gebly, maar snags wanneer die skoenmaker in sy kooi gelê het, kon hy hoor hoe sug die boom.

Hy het al sneller gewerk, totdat hy een oggend al sy bure en dié se bure en wié nog ook al bymekaar kon kry om hom te help met die kantel van die boom.

Lappe, matte, lakens – alles wat hy kon kry het hy ingespan en om die boom gevou. Die bure moes vashou so al wat hulle kon. Al swetend en swetsend is die boom horisontaal laat sak.

Toe die boom lê, het hulle die lappe soos 'n draagbaar ingespan en die boom begin skuif. Sentimeter vir sentimeter. Sweetdruppel vir sweetdruppel. Sug vir sug.

Dit was 'n byna onbegonne taak om die boom weer opgetrek te kry en staan te maak. Maar die bure moes maar hulle vashou ken, en die skoenmaker het met sy stutte gekom en gebalanseer en gestut totdat die boom se bewe bedaar het.

"Toe kon ek die wortels begin toegooi."

Hy wou die boom nie laat gaan voordat al die grond nie in die gat was nie. Hy het die son sien ondergaan, en die uile hoor roep, en die son sien opkom. Hy het die verplanting van die boom byna nie oorleef nie, het die skoenmaker gesê.

Vir maande nog het die boom soms snags gesug, het hy vertel. Maar mettertyd het die boom weer sy takke na bo begin strek, en sy wortels na onder. En hy het sterker op sy nuwe plek gestaan. Die skoenmaker het my skoen voor my neergesit. Die sool sal nog hou, maar die leer moet gelap word.

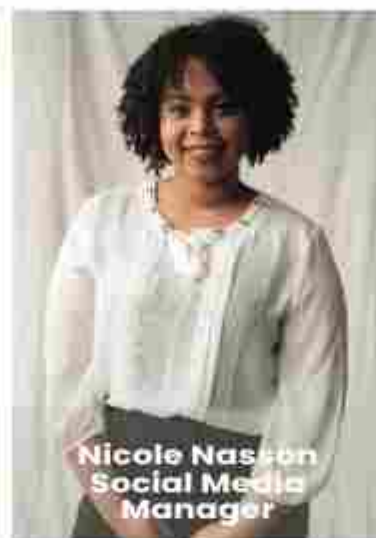
*Op uitnodiging
deur Anneli Groenewald*

Rykia van Reenen – genoot aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch se Departement Joernalistiek 2020

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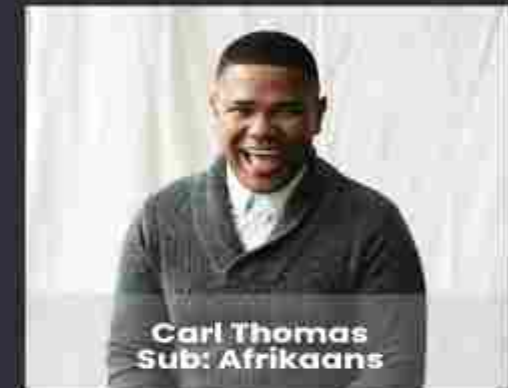
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RE: MAKING BANANA BREAD

LOCKDOWN MADE US GO BANANAS

During the nationwide lockdown, South African kitchens were filled with the aroma of freshly-baked banana bread. The well-loved loaf made its comeback, as we reverted to **simpler ways of living and yearned** for a sense of comfort and familiarity. Comically, a warm slice of banana bread smeared thick with butter, made surviving lockdown seem more likely.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup butter
1 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
3 medium mashed, very ripe bananas (1 cup)
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped walnuts

RECIPE: *Company's Coming* by Jean Paré

METHOD

Cream **butter** and **sugar** together. Beat in **eggs** one at a time, beating until smooth. Add mashed **bananas** and blend in.

In a second bowl stir **flour** with **baking soda, baking powder, salt** and **nuts**. Add to banana mixture stirring only to moisten.

Transfer to greased 23 x 12 x 7 cm loaf pan. Bake in 180°C oven for about 1 hour, until inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Let stand for 10 minutes. Remove from pan and place on cake rack to cool.

Wrap to store.

To make **choc chip** banana bread: Add 3/4 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips to the second bowl.

**1 June
2020**

The South African Government announced a move to level 3 lockdown.

**11 June
2020**

Africa recorded over 200 000 Covid-19 cases.

**22 June
2020**

The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in South Africa breached the 100 000 mark.

**29 June
to 21 July
2020**

The WHO held its first Infodemiology Conference.

**1 July
2020**

Bulelani Qolani was forcibly removed from his home in Empolweni by City of Cape Town law enforcement officers.

**21 August
2020**

The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in South Africa breached the 600 000 mark.

**17 August
2020**

The South African Government announced the implementation of level 2 lockdown.

**8 August
2020**

News24 implemented their paywall.

**24 July
2020**

Tokyo Olympics cancelled due to Covid-19.

**7 July
2020**

Media24 announced the closure of a number of publications, reduced frequencies and digital acceleration.

**29 August
2020**

Daily Maverick piloted their newspaper, 168, with a print run of 8 800 copies.

**21 September
2020**

The South African Government implemented level 1 lockdown.

**26 September
2020**

Daily Maverick launched their print newspaper, 168.

**1 October
2020**

Some publications returned to the Media24 offices.



FRAGILE

2020



SARS-CoV-2

EDITION