WHY WE INVESTED
Executive Summary

Nearly two years ago, we were privileged to be given the mandate to shift harmful, stereotypical narratives about and within the African continent.

With a small team and an unflinching belief in the power of stories, we ventured into grant-making, research, disruption projects and community building.

The result has been a growing ecosystem of storytellers and content creators who are skilled, informed, connected, supported and in a better position to put out authentic stories that are reflective of the dynamic, evolving continent in which 1.3 billion of us live.

So we decided to document the journey.

This report is a testament to what happens when you are given the trust, the funds and a powerful mission. Thank you to our funders for their vision.

In 2021, we invested USD 1,529,585 in 97 grantees and funded 5 research reports. It’s a small drop in a very big ocean but it’s a start. Africa is a continent full of many young people doing things differently and we went out of our way to find them, fund them and give them a platform to share their many stories.

With the Kekere Storytellers Fund we’ve been able to amplify emerging voices and create room for even more diverse content.

Understanding that the media reflects and defines our culture, we funded research on How African Media Covers Africa. Our research revealed that a third of African stories in news outlets are sourced from foreign media and that quality journalism is not the norm in Africa. African journalists require more skill and capacity building to report and document narratives that aren’t a great disservice to the continent and her people.

To close this gap, we invested in several independent African media platforms for even more diverse coverage and representation. We also partnered with some amazing individuals and organisations who are pioneering conversations about a different and divergent continent.

Many African content creators go to YouTube as a knowledge-source, a response to the lack of in-person courses and accessible educational opportunities for artists on the continent.

To begin to change this, we supported a few organisations with grants that enabled them to teach, train and equip Africa’s budding content creators. And to encourage upskilling, we made empowering African journalists with the skills to produce locally relevant and globally competitive content an essential part of our grant-making.

Pop culture is probably the single most powerful genre when it comes to influencing and shaping young people’s views on the world, Africa included.

We funded individuals, projects and platforms who are using pop culture to define and explore the African identity, consequently shifting harmful narratives about Africa and Africans.

Giving ourselves permission to take risks, we launched bird — a digital story agency that’s dedicated to putting out stories that provide an alternative perspective on bird. It’s content is free and supports journalists across Africa by offering paid work and training.

By creating stories with alternative perspectives, bird is changing narratives one story at a time. Today, over 350 stories have been written by 40 contributors, amassing a quarter-million views – a sign to keep going.

Research is a key part of what we do because it makes our work defensible. As part of our research intervention, we invited early-to-mid career professionals to investigate African narratives through the ANF Academic Fellows Programme.

To unpack youth narratives about Pan-Africanism and continental integration, we conducted 4,500 cellphone interviews with young people aged 18–35 in nine African countries and subsequently published the One Africa? report.

The report has been published by 43 media platforms. On Reddit, the report has amassed 1.5 million monthly views and has been viewed by 69,000 people across different social media platforms.

With our research also giving us insight about what to throw our weight behind, we were intentional about amplifying female representation on the continent and supporting women-led media, arts and culture initiatives and organisations.

We consistently received more applications from men than we did from women, so we had to be deliberate about identifying women to balance the scales. Amongst several others, we partnered with Women in Media Initiative Somalia (WIMISOM) to conduct trainings for female journalists, bloggers, and social influencers.
A lone, a dustpan and a brush are limited. Together, they can sweep a house clean. This is the importance of unity — greater, long-lasting impact. Knowing this, our community building strategy is premised on the need to join efforts with other changemakers to develop a stronger ecosystem for more sustainable impact.

We do this through our newsletters and the ANF Academy. Our monthly newsletter informs 12,224 readers of events happening in the media and arts and culture space on the continent.

Through it, we amplify the work of our grantees and share information on our funding opportunities in English and in French.

It’s been a phenomenal journey riddled with lessons at every turn. Our first year of grant-making and research has revealed that there is no “sure way” to deliver effective grant-making and philanthropy.

We’ve learned that while reports from our grantees helps with essential feedback on milestones, building and sustaining relationships with them has made all the difference. We’ve learned to be dynamic, open to change and committed to innovating.

As the arts, culture, and media landscapes continue to change, we plan to be even more dynamic in our strategies to create room for more learning and better iterations.

Thank you for your support.

“We came, we saw, we invested and we learned—alot. This is our way of sharing this phenomenal journey to impact with you.”

Moky Makura | Executive Director, Africa No Filter

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Introduction

This report highlights Africa No Filter’s first year of grant-making and research investments. We explain why we invested, identified priority key areas, and showcase some of the arts, culture, and media narrative champions we partnered with through our grants.

We also share key things we have learned in a year of decolonising grant-making in Africa.

At Africa No Filter, we believe that if we invest our money, time, and voice into the community of African storytellers and content creators, we will over time see an increase in narratives and stories that reflect a more diverse, dynamic, and evolving continent.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

In 2021, we invested USD 1,529,585 in 97 partners and funded 5 research reports.

We believe by investing our money, time and voice into the community of African storytellers and content creators we will over time see an increase in narratives and stories that reflect a more diverse, dynamic and evolving continent.

Inputs: Time, Money, Voice

Outputs: Grant making, Research, Disruption projects e.g. bird, ANF voice, Community building

Outcomes: Storytellers who are: Skilled, trained, equipped, Networked so they can collaborate across borders, genres and mediums, Informed so they have access to data driven insights, research and knowledge on impactful storytelling and narratives, Connected to markets so they can build sustainable business models, Supported, amplified and mentored
In October 2021, African Development Bank President Akin Adesina, addressing African Ambassadors in the United States, said:

“A concerted effort to change the narrative on Africa in the US is necessary to attract increased investments into the continent.”

This is one of the most high-level articulations of the importance of narrative made in 2021. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana, humanitarian Graca Machel, development economist Carlos Lopes and other leaders have spoken about the need for narrative change on the continent. Narrative matters. It has implications on business and investment, trade and aid policies, migration, and innovation on the continent.

The prevailing narrative of Africa as a broken continent lacks nuance. It does not reflect a continent that is diverse and dynamic. It robs Africans of the “African Dream” and makes us feel “less than”.

Africa No Filter is one of a few organisations working to shift stereotypical narratives that persist about and within Africa.
Very few institutions are as powerful as the media in interpreting the world for their audiences. They define narratives and inform what the world believes about Africa, and what Africans believe about the continent. Stories have the unique ability to move us to perceive and formulate beliefs and attitudes about important issues – and to act on them.

MEDIA REFLECTS OUR CULTURE WHILE ALSO DEFINING IT
Our research on How African Media Covers Africa found that one-third of all African stories in news outlets on the continent are sourced from foreign news services. As a result, stories about Africa continue to be told through the same persistent and negative stereotypes and frames, often excluding the lived experiences of Africans.

Our research also found that there is a gap within African media in the representation of every day human stories that are not rooted in stereotypes and tragedy. In addition, journalists in Africa require more skills and capacity building to expand their storytelling approaches.

Investing in independent African media creates opportunities for more diverse and unique stories to reach audiences across the continent. It also increases representation of alternative content and voices. Capacity building empowers journalists, platforms, and organisations to be skilled, innovative, and globally competitive.

We took a chance to bet on some amazing organisations and individuals because we love what they are doing and what they represent.

We hope that these partnerships will lead to a change in conversations and offer divergent ideas about Africa and Africans.

With a demographic as young as Africa’s, it was important for us to work with organisations that specifically engaged with and amplified young voices. For long-term social change, the best way to get people to pay attention, get involved and to act is to focus on what they are already paying attention to.

Natasha Kimani | Africa No Filter Research and Media Program Lead
Investing In Arts & Culture

We cannot deny the influence Arts and Culture, especially pop culture, has on the globe. Africa’s artists have taken ownership of the lens through which they want to be seen, whether it is an album, a film, a painting, or an immersive theatre piece – the artist starts the story.

Africa No Filter’s funding is the ink and our artists hold the pen.

We recognise that the voices of creatives in the sector are vibrant, contemporary and showcase the creativity and innovation of this continent.

Investing in Arts and Culture benefits the artist, but it also means more quality content being made for audiences.

We take pride in our focus groups, webinars, and online discussions with the artistic community because they provide an opportunity for us to understand where our investments can have more impact.

We use insights from our community to shape our grant making strategy.

As an artist myself, I know how hard, yet liberating it is to master an artistic medium for self-expression.

As a previous partner, I understand how empowering it is to not only be supported financially by an organisation, but also to be assigned a program lead who has a personal, vested interest in my project.

Jessica Hagan | Africa No Filter Arts & Culture Program Lead
Our Partner Portfolio

**Partners Across the Globe**

Total Number of Partners: 97

**Partners Gender Breakdown**

- Men: 57%
- Women: 43%

**Our Partners by Category**

- Arts & Culture: 47
- Media: 39
- Research: 11

**Types of Grants**

- Special Projects: 4
- Capacity Building: 7
- Academic Fellows: 11
- Operational Support: 19
- Kekere Grants: 18
- Project Support: 38

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WHY WE INVESTED
African media still have a long way to go in ensuring gender diversity in newsrooms. Women are less likely to hold senior or influential positions.

In addition, the representation of women in African media has been wanting. These prejudices have resulted in negative narratives and stereotypes about African women.

While women represent more than half of the population in many African countries, they are underrepresented or misrepresented throughout existing media.

Investing in media organisations and initiatives that are intentional about shifting existing harmful narratives and increasing representation in the newsroom is one of the integral ways that ANF hopes to contribute to enhancing gender representation within newsrooms and in stories that are told about the continent.

Women in Media Initiative Somalia (WIMISOM) is conducting training for journalists, bloggers, and social influencers, enabling them to produce powerful stories and programs.

The initiative will have a ripple effect of upskilling and empowering journalists, as well as change how stories about Somali women are told, particularly their political and economic roles in their society.

Nasro Abdirisak
Director Of Wimisom
Why We Invested

Women In Arts And Culture

We were intentional about supporting women-led Arts and Culture initiatives and organisations because of the lack of accurate representation in the sector.

When we hosted a focus group with filmmakers, a common sentiment was that women in film, for example, were only put at the centre of a storyline that’s tied to a man – and these storylines were often written and directed by men.

It became clear that the only way to ensure empowering and accurate narratives about African women existed was to support women telling their own stories in creative ways.

It was also important for us – as an organisation with visibility – to platform women doing great work in the sector.

Akosua Hanson is the founder of Moon Girls Live, a graphic comic novel that follows the adventures of African queer superheroes fighting for a continent free from corruption, patriarchy and the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Akosua, who is also the founder of Drama Queens, a grassroots youth organisation for social change, uses this comic to frontline women and celebrate the roles African women play in activism.

Her team is mainly comprised of women illustrations, writers, editors, and colourists based in Ghana and Nigeria. Our $5000 grant was used to produce the third season of the graphic novel and to connect Moon Girls Live to new audiences.

“We can also host more book club sessions for activism around the issues in the novels. Book clubs are an invaluable way of fostering community around Moongirls and creating spaces for young Africans to envision a better Africa free from the shackles of oppression and neo-colonialism.”

Akosua Hanson
Founder of Moon Girls Live

Partner Spotlight
Quality journalism is not the norm in Africa, and this is something we are experiencing first-hand through our work with bird – our narrative changing story agency.

There is a skill and an art to creating compelling stories and many journalists, especially young mobile journalists, lack basic storytelling skills. Equally, media organisations are struggling to grow their business or remain economically viable.

Empowering African journalists with the skills to produce locally relevant content that is globally competitive is an essential part of our grant-making, along with support narrative-shifting media platforms to continue innovating products that disrupt stereotypical perceptions of Africa.

This is of our overall strategy to contribute to the increase of more diverse African storytellers who focus more on content that reflect our evolving continent.

HEVA Fund is piloting Ascend, a media program that aims to address the gender imbalance in media leadership and ownership in Kenya.

Ascend has three objectives: enable women-owned and led media initiatives to strategise expansive growth; empower women media founders to with the entrepreneurial capacity to run sustainable businesses; and give them the tools and training they need to seek external financing and grow their audiences.

The impact of this program will thus be multi-dimensional and far-reaching.

The success of Ascend will teach HEVA and ANF valuable lessons about boutique interventions in emerging media practice, the kind of investments they needed by women in media to reach their desired audiences, as well as practice sustainably within happy and healthy institutions of whatever size.

Dr Njoki Ngumi
HEVA Fund Learning and Development Manager
Our focus groups also taught us that many creatives are self-taught, with YouTube as the go-to resource. However, creative hubs and organisations are adding skill-enhancing opportunities for their communities into their portfolios.

This is often done in response to the lack of in-person courses and inaccessible educational opportunities for artists on the continent.

Africa No Filter wanted to support a few of these organisations by awarding grants that support training and capacity building.

Zeitz MOCAA is creating Africa’s first Museum Fellowship for 8 young people.

We invested $25,000 into the Museum for Zeitz to deliver a 12-month programme developed to educate a new generation of Africa’s art and museum professionals.

The goal of the fellowship is to redefine heritage and museum practices in Africa - a relevant and important discussion given the global conversation on art restitution.

The programme is combined with an accredited, post-graduate degree facilitated by the University of Western Cape.
Pop culture is a catchall phrase that encompasses entertainment (such as film, music, television, and video games), sports, news (as in people/places in the news), politics, fashion, technology, and slang. It is probably the single most powerful genre when it comes to influencing and shaping young people’s views on the world, Africa included.

Pop culture reflects beliefs while also defining them, and because of its impact, it has a huge role in shifting harmful and stereotypical narratives within and about Africa.

ANF’s investment is helping Zikoko craft our content at a quality level that we’ve not previously been able to and to land that content on global distribution platforms that will give us more reach than we’ve ever had. It is a critical next step for our mission as a publication - to go beyond speaking to Africans in Africa and start to reach Africans and other audiences across the world.

We’re eager to present a new and dynamic vision of what young people in Africa are about, and ANF is helping us to accomplish that.
We partnered with organisations that amplify socio-economic and social justice causes and other areas for reform across the continent. We believe that advocating for change on critical issues can help move the global image of Africa towards one of a modern, progressive continent.

Media as a tool for advocacy is growing exponentially. Bloggers, vloggers, journalists, and citizen journalists are mobilising for and advocating for relevant socio-economic, and justice causes.

Rainbow Egypt is an LGBTQI media monitoring organisation in Egypt. They have embarked on an ambitious project to monitor media across Egypt and track conversations on and around the LGBTQI community, highlighting allies and drawing attention to the harmful and negative stereotypes.

The project will also track LGBTQI-related violations through reports that will be published annually.

This project matters because it will be a repository on the importance of representation and responsiveness across different media platforms – which can be replicated across the continent.

Keleketla! Library is an incredibly transformational Johannesburg-based arts archive and performance space.

The Drill Hall Anti-Gory Arts Advocacy Programme is a long-term project to restore the Drill Hall as a site for arts, heritage, social welfare, and cultural production.

The founders, Rangoato Hlasane and Malose Malahela, are two passionate creative practitioners who are using part of this grant to curate a systematic archive of the Drill Hall arts, culture, and social justice projects in the form of a book and a documentary.

Supporting this type of Arts advocacy empowers creatives to hold governments accountable and engage in policy for transformational change.
Emerging Voices

EMPOWERING EMERGING VOICES
Africa is a continent full of young people doing things differently – challenging the status quo and eager to be heard.

We went out of our way to find them and fund them, giving them a platform to share their stories.

There are voices and platforms outside traditional newsrooms who are becoming sources of news content for Africa.

Digital platforms have created spaces for these voices.

Adelle Onyango’s Legally Clueless is one of Africa’s most successful podcasts.

Our partnership led to the development of a series that captured different aspects of the lives, experiences and perceptions of young Kenyans Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa and Eldoret.

The stories were recorded live in Universities and Tertiary institutions in these four cities.

We invested in this project because it centres young people’s experiences and lets them take the lead in telling their stories.

Legally Clueless is centered on amplifying African’s stories. This is rooted in authenticity with the aim of helping us as Africans learn about each other and to add more voices to the global African narrative.

In doing this, the podcast erases the harmful and heavily biased view of Africa & Africans that currently exists.

Through storytelling we can not only own our stories but own how we are represented globally.

Laboratoire Kontempo is a Kinshasa-based hub which works with emerging local and international artists in a transdisciplinary experimental space to challenge perspectives and trends in international contemporary arts spaces. The founder Christ Muke is committed to platforming emerging voices on local and international stages.

Option ONDG, the project we are supporting, is an artistic exchange programme for seven local artists and three international artists.

Their work will explore Kinshasa in conversations about the perception of Africa and African cultures, postcolonial realities and their power dynamics and linguistic, intellectual, and epistemic hierarchies.

Christ Muke
Founder of Laboratoire Kontempo
We launched the Kekere Storytellers Fund in 2020 to fill a gap we identified. It is our most popular grant category. Through it, we can offer grants of $500-$2000 to support innovative and high-quality content. The grants are paid through Western Union to prevent the rigid and intimidating due diligence processes required for larger grants. Projects span 3-12 months. The most exciting part about the Kekere Storytellers Fund is the recipients and their projects – they are fresh, exciting, and full of passion.

**Tinnah Joma** started establishing her name in Madagascar’s Slam poetry circles when she was just 14-years-old. The multidisciplinary artist uses dance and oral traditions to create work that engages with human rights, domestic violence, racism, freedom of expression, and autism awareness.

She is used her $2000 grant to stage a multidisciplinary spoken word and dance project called *I am an African.*

**Abdulsalam Hamza** is a travel documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Abuja, Nigeria. He sees photography and filmmaking as a medium of expression and as a great way to preserve memories, make meaningful connections and experience the world.

He believes that photography can inform, educate, and shape narratives.

He used his $1800 funding to produce the second season of *Gembu Vlogs*, a travel series set around the Mambilla Plateau region of Nigeria.

Born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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**Partner Spotlight**

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**Tinnah Joma**

Artist & Creative

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**Abdulsalam Hamza**

Travel Documentary Photographer & Film Maker

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The Critics Company is an award-winning multimedia and entertainment company in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Known for its SciFi films, it aims to create magical experiences through the art of filmmaking.

Their work, Chase, has amassed over 1 million views on Youtube.

The company is best remembered for going viral in 2019 after being featured on CNN.

Their $2000 grant was used to produce Wrong Answers Only, about a director who navigates content creation in a time of limited human interaction.

Lee Mthimkulu is a multi-disciplinary artist and creative.

Since graduating from the University of Johannesburg under the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) in 2013, he has evolved as an artist, recently incorporating sculpting into his practice.

He used the $1800 grant to produce the second volume of By Way of Illustration, a coffee table book that documents contemporary African illustrators.
Investing In Storytelling Innovators

Digital platforms have democratised how content is distributed. This has opened the market to innovators who are using new models to challenge the status quo.

Over 80% of Africans with access to the internet use WhatsApp regularly. It was a no brainer for The Continent to choose to disseminate its content via WhatsApp.

The Continent is a weekly newspaper produced in partnership with the South African Mail & Guardian. It showcases the best reporting from journalists across Africa and offers its readers reliable news from a continental perspective.

With our support, The Continent has been able to hire a full-time News Editor, which has enabled them to become fully independent and to continue churning out weekly content on Africa.

The Republic is an independent Nigerian online magazine that invests in emerging voices from across the continent.

The Republic helps African freelancers reach global digital audiences.

It provides the editorial and capacity-building support required to bring emerging African voices into the rapidly evolving global digital landscape.

Through a unique content development process that combines collaboration with training, The Republic generates more representative digital content focused on Africa beyond memes and graphic news headlines.
Investing In Storytelling Innovators

GOOD TIMES AFRICA
The COVID-19 pandemic left festival lovers, concert goers and theatre fanatics in a serious state of lack.

The buzzing atmosphere, the opportunity to meet new people and the chance to discover new talent was snatched away from the world in just a matter of days.

This was a major issue for our partner Good Times Africa, a Pan-African concert and festival production company known for staging some of the best live events in East Africa.

Blankets & Wine is an online film-concert hybrid hosted on YouTube, which showcases young, innovative African talent from all walks.

The two-hour showcase is a series of live musical performances intertwined with comedy sketches and short films which tell a story of the experiences and achievements of young people in East Africa.

Their first online event had over 57,000 views on YouTube and was highly commended for platforming African artists and introducing them to new audiences from all over the world.

They have been pivotal in building Africa’s creative ecosystem and championing the breadth of talent that exists.
We know that one organisation can’t change the narrative of a continent, so we are deliberate about partnering with other changemakers.

We do this by amplifying the voices of creatives using our digital platforms; linking the community to encourage collaborations; mentoring; upskilling through capacity building workshops and connecting them to opportunities to showcase their art.

ANF Academy activities are designed to equip storytellers, content creators and creatives with the skills to enhance their storytelling capacities and sustain their creative enterprises.

This is in line with our vision to leave an empowered narrative change ecosystem and an informed community of storytellers who continue working to shift harmful representations of the African continent way after we are gone.

**ANF ACADEMY WEBINARS in 2021**

1. Grant writing for creative professionals
2. Grant budgeting and financial management
3. 4-week digital skills training for creatives in partnership with Facebook and Digivate 360
WHY WE INVESTED

NARRATIVE MATTERS NEWSLETTER
Our newsletter is how we inform, connect, engage, inspire and amplify the ANF community.

It goes out monthly in both English and French and we currently have over 12,000 subscribers.

ANF WEBINARS
We host webinars only when we think we have something important worth sharing.

This year we hosted 2 solo events and one in partnership with Arena Holdings, South Africa’s largest media group.

AFRICA NO FILTER PRESENTS:
A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHO IS TELLING AFRICA’S STORY
17TH FEBRUARY 2021 | 3PM GMT, 5PM SAST, 10AM ET

Jonathan Rosenthal
Africa Editor at The Economist

Vasantha Angamuthu
African News Agency CEO

Thesele Kaleseng
CEO and seapenap group

Agui Deng
Program Manager, Bloomberg Media Initiative Africa and Africa Corporate Philanthropy, Bloomberg

Dapo Clouyunomi
Publisher & editor-in-chief of Premium Times, Nigeria

#africanofilter #takebackthepen

THE FUTURE OF MEDIA
The Future of Media is the role of the media in defining Africa’s story. Speakers include

13 July 2021 | 1600 - 1700
To register, visit www.quickslink.co.za/future2021

AFRICA NO FILTER PRESENTS:
How to Write about Africa
Reframing Storytelling & Centering Equity
20 July 2021 | 16:00 CAT | 10:00 ET | 16:00 GMT

Karen Knight
Write to the Future

Rafie Albasheer
CEO of The New African

Prof. Kehinde Akinfele-
Original of Newsroom

The Bongani Foundation
Emphasises the importance of data in Africa’s story

The Nemer
Enhancing the power of media

Reinforced by: Reckitt Benckiser

18 WHY WE INVESTED
Disrupting Narratives

We have given ourselves permission to take risk and make (comparatively) big bets as we strive to make lasting, systemic impact in our narrative change work.

**BIRD**

We embarked on an ambitious goal to establish a story agency, like Reuters that deliberately set out to redefine the type of stories media were used to carrying about the continent.

Bird was launched in response to the findings from our research on *How African Media Covers Africa*. bird produces multimedia stories designed for an African, mobile-first audience, for distribution to Africa’s leading digital news platforms.

The content is distributed for free and support’s journalists across Africa by offering paid work and training. By creating stories with alternative perspectives, bird is changing narratives one story at a time.

Through its 6-month pilot phase, bird signed up 35 media partners to test the content mix and the demand.

Over 400 stories have been written by 50 contributors for our media partners that include Nation Media Group, Radio Africa Group, Daily Trust Nigeria, Quartz Africa, Arena and Mail & Guardian.

They have amassed a quarter-million views – a sign to keep going.
HOW TO WRITE ABOUT AFRICA IN 8 STEPS: AN ETHICAL STORYTELLING HANDBOOK

Our ethical storytelling handbook, How to write about Africa in 8 steps, has been a huge success, with a whopping 6,286 downloads to date.

The announcement was picked up extensively in the media and generated a lot of interest following the webinar we hosted on the handbook. As a direct result, we have been approached by many organizations to help with their storytelling. We are now working to develop the book into a short course for organizations.

"Your Ethical Storytelling Handbook is an excellent resource, and one that we’re already using."

Emmar Sinnige
Corporate Communications Manager Amref
We invest in research because it makes our work defensible and provides insights into where we should invest. Our research priorities are simple: we want to understand the prevailing stories and resulting narratives around Africa, and the impact of these narratives on Africans.

Some of our research interventions include:

**HOW AFRICAN MEDIA COVERS AFRICA**
The report was launched in January 2021 and got a lot of attention. Key finding included the fact that one-third of all African stories in news outlets on the continent were sourced from foreign news services. As a result, stories about Africa continue to be told through the same persistent and negative stereotypes and frames of poverty, disease, conflict, poor leadership and corruption.

The report surveyed 38 African editors, analyzed content from 60 African news outlets in 15 countries and included findings from four focus groups we held with 25 editors of African media, editors of Pan African outlets and international correspondents. The report showed that the sources for news gathering on African countries are problematic, the resulting content continues to feed old stereotypes, and often the quality of local journalism doesn’t allow for nuanced and contextualized storytelling that is critical for telling stories about the 54 countries in Africa.

**ANF ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME**
We wanted to bring academic rigour into the narrative change space and increase the body of research around the subject. So, we invited early-career academics to investigate the African narrative across a range of mediums, including broadcast television, social media, online mainstream media, spoken word poetry, visual art/photography, and digital short-form storytelling.

The year-long fellowship will end in February 2022, and research results will be published later in the year.

Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang (Ghanaian) earned his PhD from West Virginia University in 2017 and lectures at the University of Ghana’s Department of English. He will examine how short story writers articulate African narratives online.

Babajide Owoyele (Nigerian) is a dual PhD candidate at the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions and the chairperson of Artificial Intelligence and Intelligent Systems at Hasso Plattner Institute. He will data mine various platforms to explore how financial institutions contribute to narratives about Africa.

Molemo Moiloa (South African) lectures at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she received her Master’s Degree in Social Anthropology cum laude. Her study explores how art and artefact restitution is being discussed across the continent.
ONE AFRICA?: UNPACKING YOUTH NARRATIVES ABOUT PAN-AFRICANISM AND CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION

We wanted to find out more about young African’s attitudes to their African identity. We conducted 4,500 cell phone interviews with young people aged 18-35 in nine African countries.

Results from the One Africa? report point to a narrative shift in action.

We saw that young people have a strong African identity that seems unaffected by the prevailing broken, dependent continent narrative.

There were regional differences between North Africa

and the rest of the continent. Respondents from West, East, and Southern Africa had a much higher affinity with the concept of being African, especially those from Ivory Coast (94%) and Uganda (93%). The report also showed that even though only 31% of respondents in sub-Saharan Africa had travelled to another African country, 57% said it was too expensive.

The report has been published by 43 media platforms and was posted on Reddit.

Dr. Maame Nikabs, a Ghanaian linguist based at Queen Mary University of London, and Dr. Mphathisi Ndlovu, a Zimbabwean journalism lecturer, based at Zimbabwe’s National University of Science and Technology, studied Covid-19 narratives about Africa emerging from both Western and African media.

Western media typically described Covid-19 in Africa using war metaphors, while African media talked about the dangers and ‘catastrophe’.

However, both Western and African media still perpetuated stereotypical narratives about Africa in their reporting of Covid-19, including focussing on catastrophe, impending danger, tragedy, despair, corruption, poor governance, and human rights abuses.
What We Learned

01 CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: We consistently received more applications from men than we did from women, so we had to be deliberate about identifying women to balance the scales.

02 AFRICA IS MORE THAN 4 COUNTRIES: Most applications were from South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana. We became deliberate about open and inclusive grant call outs to ensure that other African countries were not left out of the process. This included receiving applications in French and Arabic.

03 BEYOND REPORTING: Reports by partners are essential to giving in-depth feedback on their progress, milestones, and approaches. However, we have found that relationships building with our partners have made all the difference. Creating safe environments for partners to share their challenges and different approaches have created learning opportunities for both ANF and our partners.

04 COMMUNITY BUILDING IS CENTRAL TO SUCCESSFUL GRANT MAKING: A number of our partners were introduced to us through our larger ANF Community. Building and cultivating external partnerships and conversations has led the ANF Grants team to be aware of amazing opportunities in the continent. Community building has enabled us to leverage the contributions of multiple players to make progress toward more inclusive and diverse grant making.

05 CREATIVES DESIRE TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING: Our ANF Academy workshops were borne from several conversations with the creative community, where it became evident that in addition to funding opportunities, creatives needed capacity building to empower them to amplify their work and make a living off the same.

06 GIVE FLEXIBLY: While in general our partners must be working on projects that are shifting harmful and stereotypical narratives, we are learning that placing unnecessary restrictions on partners can do more harm than good. Giving partners room to ideate and implement their projects is proving more beneficial and impactful and gives them the security and confidence that our support is here for the long term.

07 LOOK TO THE FUTURE: ANF will not be here forever. It is therefore important for us to think long-term change when it comes to investing our voice, time, and money. We are therefore keen to invest in organisations and individuals that are working towards small systematic change in the narrative building space.

08 ASK FOR FEEDBACK: we continue to seek feedback from both successful and unsuccessful applicants on our grant application process. Not only did we receive feedback that will improve the process for grant applicants, but we also learned how much it meant to our partners that we asked their opinions!
Conclusion

O ur first year of grant making and research has revealed that there is no blueprint or road map to effective grant making and philanthropy. Being dynamic and open to change has helped us understand our sectors better and engage deeper with our creative community.

As we continue to grow, we realise that static approaches and strategies may not be what we need to achieve our goals and overall outcomes. As the arts, culture, and media landscapes continue to change, we seek to be even more dynamic in strategies to create room for more learning and better iterations.

As we evaluate our first year of grant making, we seek to interrogate whether our current strategy is producing significant results or meaningful impact.

We couldn’t have done this without the support, faith and investment of our funders.
Our Partners

MEDIA
Capacity Building Grants
• Heva Fund
• Thompson Foundation
• WIMISOM
• Memunatu Magazine
• Afrika Matters Initiative:
  • Media Challenge Initiative:
  • Brittle Paper
• Moleskin Foundation
• One World Media

Podcasts, Blogs and Vlogs
• Legally Clueless Podcast by Adelle Onyango
• Africa Podcast Festival
• Your Space Podcast by Misha Nyamangara
• We Three Queens YouTube Vlog
• The Africa Podfestival
• Sinatou Saka and the 1st Africa Francophone Podfestival
• Gembu YouTube Vlog by Hamza Abdulsalam
• Afroport Podcast by Frank Ogallo
• Uncle Mo YouTube Vlog
• Goodbye Gold Coast by Joewackle J. Kusi
• AfroFoodie Blog and Vlog
• SOWT Podcast

PLATEFORMS
• Africa Digital Media Studios (Vumi Central):
• A24 Media:
• Bird
• Every Day Africa

ADVOCACY
• Journalists for Justice
• Twaweza
• Marilio Wane
• Rainbow Egypt

RESEARCH FELLOWS
• Babajide Owoyele
• Daniel Oloo
• Fungai Machiri
• Gideon Chitanga
• Gladys Kalichini
• Kofi Asihene
• Kwabena Opoku-Agyemanga
• Loubna El-Mkaouar
• Maame Nikabs
• Molemo Moiloa
• Mphathisi Ndlovu

New Media and Content Creation
• New Humanitarian
• Amplify Africa
• Lolwe
• Memunatu Magazine
• True Africa
• The Continent
• Big Cabal/Zikoko
• The Republic
• Everyday Africa
• TAP Magazine
• Kosinima
• African Arguments
• The Republic
• AfroFoodie
• Sal Jalloh
WHY WE INVESTED

ARTS & CULTURE
Capacity Building (Fellowships & Training)
• Atelier Kampala
• Africa Podcast Workshop (Children’s Radio Foundation)
• ANYA/Visa For Music
• The Rele Arts Foundation
• New Africa Nation
• AYA Academy
Creative Hubs
• Creatives Garage
• Keleketla! Library
• BBnZ

EVENTS & FESTIVALS
• ArtX
• Good Times Africa – Blankets & Wine
• Lagos International Poetry Festival
• Lusaka Film Festival
• Youth At The Table (YATT)

FILMS
• BB Partners Advisory (When I Say Africa)
• Baby Plantain Productions
• The Critics Company
• Michael Mulusa
• Mohamed Dione

GALLERIES, MUSEUMS & LIBRARIES
• ArtHARARE
• Library of Africa and the African Diaspora (LOATAD)
• SCCA Tamale

PUBLICATIONS & ONLINE PLATFORMS
• Abantu
• ArtThrob
• By Way of Illustration
• Cushstock
• Jante Juma
• Manyano Media
• Moon Girls Live
• Poems To My Father by Onyango Otieno
• Woodhouse Literary and Rights
• Uzoma Dunkwu
• Hind Bouqartacha
• Edith Knight Magak
• Fumbani Innot Phiri

PERFORMANCE ART
• Bryan Wanjiku Emry
• Fidelis Tinnah Joma
• Ivy Alexander
• Tseliso Monaheng
• Hind Bouqartacha
• Edith Knight Magak
• Fumbani Innot Phiri

RESIDENCIES
• Laboratoire Kontempo (Option ONGD)
• Zeitz MOCCA
• Performance Art
• Bryan Wanjiku Emry
• Fidelis Tinnah Joma
• Ivy Alexander
• Tseliso Monaheng

EMERGING ARTISTS FELLOWS
• Baingor Joiner
• Dylan Habil
• Ghislain Kinmagbo
• Haneefah Adam
• Katanu SANNA
• Lloyd Foster
• Mpho Ts’uene
• O’Plérou Grebet
• Prince Andrew Ardayfio
• Progress Nyandoro
• Stella Tchuisse
• Yuran Gonçalves

Our Partners