

Global Media Index to track Africa coverage by global media

A Global Media Index that will track and measure the way Africa is covered by top global media outlets is being developed by Africa No Filter, Media Monitoring Africa and the University of Cape Town (UCT) to launch this year.



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With one-third of all African stories in news outlets on the continent are sourced from foreign news service and global media reports often criticised for viewing the continent through the lenses of disease, poverty, conflict, corruption, and poor leadership, the need for such an index is important.

Moky Makura, executive director of [Africa No Filter](#), says: “Very few institutions are as powerful as the global news media. As storytellers to millions of audiences, the news media set agendas for policy-making, frame political debate and shape global public perceptions.

“Global Media Index is part of our watchdog role and is designed to show what’s right rather than wrong with reporting on Africa.

“There is progress, and we have seen evidence that global news outlets have become more thoughtful about their coverage, but we are not entirely there, and our hope is for this Index to shine a beacon on who is doing this right,” says Makura.

Contributing to a better understanding of Africa

The Global Media Index is the latest project funded jointly by the New York-based The Africa Center, and narrative change organisation Africa No Filter focused on media narratives of Africa.

The research will be led by Professor in Media Studies at UCT’s Centre for Film and Media Studies, Herm Wasserman, working with Associate Professors, Tanja Bosch and Wallace Chuma and Dr Meli Ncube, also from UCT, in collaboration with William Bird from Media Monitoring Africa.

Wasserman says that the objective is not to promote uncritically positive 'sunshine journalism'.

“Rather it is to showcase well-crafted, properly investigated, ethically sound and impactful journalism that takes the African continent seriously in all its diversity and complexity, empowers African citizens to participate in democratic participation and meaningful conversations about the continent, and contributes to a better understanding of African societies, politics and culture within a globalised world.”

Necessary and timely

Uzodinma Iweala, CEO of The Africa Center, called the Index necessary and timely. “If we are going to change narratives about the continent and its Diaspora so that they are more representative and reflective, we must have a baseline understanding of what those narratives are and where they reside.

“This Index is a step in the right direction. It will help to create a new qualitative and quantitative approach to understanding how journalists report on Africa and its people in addition to where the messages they share are most resonant in the international media landscape,” says Iweala.

The project will draw on a range of methods, including content analysis, institutional analysis and interviews with journalists working for global media outlets. The aim is to establish the dominant themes, narratives and journalistic practices shaping the image of Africa.

The Index will put 20 leading global media platforms under the microscope to analyse how they tell Africa's stories, whose voices are being heard, which topics are prioritised, and how they are covered. It will also highlight best practices in reporting on the continent.

The Global Media Index will complement a suite of initiatives under Africa No Filter's disruption pillar, including Africa's first news agency for human interest stories, *bird*, and the ethical storytelling handbook, [*How to Write About Africa in 8 Steps*](#).

For more information, please visit www.africanofilter.org.