

SAMIP expands media innovation support to Southern African countries

The South Africa Media Innovation Program (SAMIP) has welcomed four new regional media ventures to be part of its pioneering independent media development programme.



Source: www.unsplash.com

The new cohort includes media organisations from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Lesotho that were selected for inclusion in the multi-year programme.

SAMIP is a program of the Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF), a not-for-profit investment fund for independent media in countries where access to free media is under threat, with objectives to diversify, strengthen and support innovation among independent media initiatives.

SAMIP's regional expansion comes after four successful years supporting more than 20 media outlets in South Africa to accelerate digital innovation and sustainability with a combination of capacity building, training, specialist mentoring and grant funding.

The new regional cohort includes established online news organisation *263chat*, which has successfully distributed a digital e-paper for the past four years and has plans to extend its news offering with an SMS news product for Zimbabwe's underserved audiences.

Another Zimbabwean news outlet invited to participate in the multi-year capacity-building programme is hyperlocal digital news outlet *The Citizen Bulletin* which provides local news reporting to the Matabeleland community.

SAMIP will also be working with a young team from Lesotho's weekly newspaper *Newsday*, who are looking to diversify their product offering with a video news service, which they are currently distributing through social media.

In Namibia, the non-profit *Namibia Media Trust* will be exploring innovative ways to empower marginalised communities, particularly those living with disabilities, to tell their own stories in the media.

"The new regional participants have exciting projects that explore new distribution and revenue models, with a focus on underserved audiences. We look forward to working with them to develop their product ideas and businesses," said Bilal Randeree, SAMIP programme director.

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