

Report shows western sources dominate how the Africa story is told

One-third of all African stories in news outlets on the continent are sourced from foreign news services according to a new report from Africa No Filter. The 'How African Media Covers Africa', highlights the fact that stories about Africa continue to be told through the same persistent and negative stereotypes and frames of poverty, disease, conflict, poor leadership and corruption.



Source: APO

The research surveyed 38 African editors, analysed content from 60 African news outlets in 15 countries (Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, DRC, Egypt, Tunisia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal) between September and October 2020. In addition, four facilitated focus groups were held with 25 editors of

African media, editors of Pan African outlets and international correspondents.

The results confirm challenges and experiences that are common knowledge within the industry: advertising revenue and newsrooms are shrinking, influencing the kind of news that Africans read and that news is largely negative and conflict filled.

Key findings

Key findings from the report show 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.

- 63% of outlets surveyed don't have correspondents in other countries in Africa
- 1/3 of all coverage on Africa was from non-African sources, with AFP and BBC accounting for 1/4 of all stories found in African outlets about other African countries. African news agencies contributed minimally.
- 81% of the stories analysed were classified as "hard news" e.g. conflicts and crises driven by events – they were also largely political in nature
- 13% of the news focused specifically on political violence, civil unrest, armed conflict
- South Africa, followed by Egypt were the countries with the most diverse coverage that was not necessarily linked to newsy events meaning that those two countries are probably the 'best known' on the continent

"Media is incredibly influential in setting the agenda and determining narratives about Africa," says Moky Makura, executive director at Africa No Filter.

"The research clearly shows that despite years of independence, Africans still don't hold the pen when it comes to writing our stories. More importantly, we continue to promote the narratives about Africa being broken, dependent and lacking agency through the stories we share in our media about each other. We need to take back the pen."

Africa No Filter is a not-for-profit set up in 2020 to help shift harmful and stereotypical narratives about Africa through research, advocacy and grant-making to storytellers. It is funded by the Ford Foundation, Bloomberg, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Luminate, Open Society Foundation, Comic Relief, the Hilton Foundation and the British Council.

Makura adds: "Ironically, 50% of editors surveyed thought their coverage of other African countries didn't contain stereotypes. It shows clearly that we have some work to do in educating ourselves about the role we play in perpetuating outdated stereotypes about ourselves. Narrative matters and it has implications beyond just storytelling, it impacts investment in Africa, on youth and opportunities people see in their countries, on migration, creativity and innovation," Makura says.

In response to this report, Africa No Filter is launching the continent's first and only news agency that will focus on stories of creativity, innovation, arts & culture, and human interest to fill the gap in the market.

The How African Media Cover Africa report is available for download at <http://bit.ly/AfricaNoFilter>

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>