Founder’s Letter

Dear Friends,

It’s hard to believe that another year has gone by! Global Press Institute is nearly nine years old, yet I feel as hopeful and passionate about our mission now as I did the day we launched.

With our new brands fully established, Global Press Institute, Global Press Journal and Global Press News Service charged into 2014 ready to prove the efficacy of our new social enterprise model. As you’ll read in the pages ahead, the year was full of new programs, internal promotions, expanded syndication, new news desks and of course, extraordinary journalism.

The Institute team implemented more than 20 new training modules across all news desks and successfully launched brand new desks in Guatemala and Democratic Republic of Congo. Over at the Journal, our decision to move the majority of our editorial processes out of the United States allowed for faster, more context-rich news production. And at the News Service, more than 80 media, corporate and educational partners have now signed up to bring our world-class news product to their audiences.

Above all, when I look back on 2014 I am proudest of the dedication of our talented team and of the truly incredible journalism they have produced. Our reporters remind us that real journalism doesn’t exist to spin fear or mislead for political purposes: at its core, real journalism serves to elevate our understanding and awareness of this incredible world. It spurs action, not reaction. And it offers greater access to information, which allows all of us to make more and better choices and live freer, fuller lives.

I thank you – our donors, readers, and friends – for remaining on this journey to change the world with us another year.

In the continued pursuit of courage and truth,

Cristi Hegranes
Founder & Executive Director

Community Impact

Global Press Journal news stories create community-based impact in every region of the world where we operate.

AMERICAS

In August of 2012, GPJ published an article about a group of grandmothers who were looking for their grandchildren who were stolen from them during Argentina’s last military dictatorship (1976-1983).

The more than 500 stolen babies belonged to pregnant women who were kidnapped by members of the military regime. The officers forced the women to give birth in clandestine detention centers erected across the country. The officers then gave the babies to families associated with the regime, who raised them as their own.

Two years after the story was published, the president of the group, who was featured in the article, was reunited with her grandchild, after 37 years of searching.

AFRICA

GPJ Zambia reporter Prudence Phiri reported on the mounting garbage problem in Lusaka, the capital city. In her reporting, Prudence highlighted the many illnesses caused by close proximity to trash. But she also noted that residents were unwilling to travel the long distances required to properly dispose of their trash. After her article was published in October 2014, the local government increased trash collection and has provided more dumpsters to residents. Advocates say these two changes will decrease incidence of cholera among children and will greatly improve the community.

ASIA

In September 2014, GPJ coverage of how gentrification was destroying the culture of used bookshops in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, prompted social action to try to save the bookshops. Local media picked up the story and the booksellers featured in the article say that they experienced increased business as a result.
Global Talent

GPI’s talented global team is the core of our work. We have continued to enhance our organizational model with new hires and promotions across all three brands:

Global Press Institute

Formalizing the Institute’s role as the organization’s training arm, we began for the first time to dedicate staff solely to our training programs across the world:

• Maura Bogue, the Journal’s Managing Editor, became GPI’s first-ever Senior Training Strategist
• Ivone Jeannot Laens, a long-time GPI reporter and Argentina Desk Editor, is taking on the new role of Regional Trainer for the Americas
• Apophia Agiresaasi, an experienced GPI reporter in Uganda, is taking on the new role of Regional Trainer for Africa
• Tara Bhattarai, one of GPI’s first reporters and Nepal Desk Editor, is taking on the new role of Regional Trainer for Asia
• Nakinti Nofuru, our lead reporter in Cameroon, is taking on the new role of Global Engagement Coordinator

Global Press Journal & Global Press News Service

• Former intern Natalia Aldana was promoted again to Associate Global Editor
• Krista Kapralos took on the role of Special Projects Editor, responsible for producing the Focus On series, in addition to serving as Senior Syndication Strategist
• Wairimu Michengi, a long-time GPI reporter in Kenya, became the Journal’s first Regional Editor for Africa
• Jameson O’Neal, an experienced editor with three decades in journalism, became Senior Copy Editor
• GPI will also be adding assistant regional editors to our team in 2015

GPI is pleased to welcome two extraordinary leaders to our Board of Directors:

• Emily Kaiser is a veteran Reuters journalist and is currently editor-in-charge of company news coverage across Asia
• Deepak Puri is a Silicon Valley executive with experience in both engineering and business development at firms including Oracle, Netscape, AOL and VMware, where he currently works

“Focus On” Initiative

Global Press Journal’s new Focus On initiative brings readers in-depth, investigative local and global series coverage on some of the world’s most pressing news topics, allowing us to leverage our unique global network of trained journalists to provide comprehensive multimedia reporting. Focus On also enables GPI reporters and editors to work together to advance ideas and conversation about important global issues.

“[These journalists] aren’t foreign correspondents. They are local reporters with the unique ability to take something that could be ‘foreign’ to us and make it very familiar to us, for the themes of humanity that resonate in these stories.” – Asra Nomani, Guest Editor, Focus On: Mental Health

Focus On: Innovation & Preservation

Featuring captivating profiles that include the first female “tempo” driver in Nepal, a Kenyan priest challenging stigma against homosexuality, and a Sri Lankan martial arts master who teaches an ancient form of fighting, our first-ever Focus On offers a grassroots look at the fascinating tension developing communities experience between cultural preservation and modern innovation.

Focus On: Maternal and Reproductive Health

This series explores the diverse way maternal and reproductive health issues play out across the world, from Nepalese teens overusing the morning-after pill to the dramatic rise of Cesarian sections in Mexico and a growing debate in Zambia about the traditional belief that infidelity leads to childbirth complications.

Focus On: Mental Health

In our most moving and powerful series yet, Journal reporters from Argentina to India broke the silence on the often hidden issue of mental health.

Focus On: Food Security and Climate Change

As guest editor Karen Coates put it, this Focus On “is different from many reports on climate change, which tend to focus on the science from a Western perspective. The stories here come from the ground. These reporters are asking tough questions in their own regions, all over the map, about how the scientific phenomena affect people at the local level.”

Focus On: Body Image

Throughout the world, standards of beauty drive women to think, behave and spend in very specific ways. Our final series of 2014 investigates the myth and the reality of the way women (and some men) treat and view their bodies. Reporters from more than 12 countries contributed to this conversation about everything from eating disorders and skin bleaching to preservation of ethnic dress and the growing global transgender movement.
Best News Stories of 2014

GPI editors, trainers, reporters, and staff nominated the 14 Best News Stories of 2014. Below are six stories from the list that represent the essence of GPI: local journalists unearthing stories that they alone are capable of fully telling; a rich editorial process that prizes ethics, accuracy and empathy; and a distribution model that maximizes readership and opportunities for social change.

ASIA

Coping With Mental Illness, Two Kashmiri Women Explore Effectiveness of Spiritual, Psychiatric Treatment Paths
By Aliya Bashir, GPJ Indian-administered Kashmir

While Kashmiris afflicted with illnesses such as depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder have the option of seeking help from faith healers or mental health professionals, the stigma associated with mental illness deters many from getting psychiatric care.

About this article: Aliya is a powerful person. She has a very strong sense of who she is and what she wants. So, when she said she wanted to write this story in a new style, her editors agreed. The result, a dual profile of two women struggling with mental illnesses and seeking very different treatment paths, was one of the most complex, balanced and human pieces of journalism we've ever read. She treated both women with a deep dignity that honored their choices while also highlighting the severe shortage of mental health services in Kashmir.

Bonded Laborers in Nepal Hope Actions of Government and NGOs Will Truly Free Them
By Kalpana Khanal, GPJ Nepal

Young girls from poor families in remote regions of Nepal are often forced into indentured labor. Since 1996, some 12,000 such girls, called kamlaris, have been rescued from servitude. Kamlaris, their families and local organizations fighting for their rights have brought government attention to their plight.

About this article: Kalpana produced one of several articles we ran this year on the issue of bonded labor and child trafficking. This piece demonstrated the best qualities of GPJ reporting – powerful human storytelling and in-depth investigation.

AMERICAS

Haitian Poets Extol Nation’s Beauty, Highlight Potential
By Rosenie Mont Gerard, GPJ Haiti

Distressed that Haiti is primarily known as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haitian poets are using their art form to highlight the country’s beauty and potential. Four years after a devastating 7.0 earthquake, Haiti remains one of the world’s poorest countries, with over half of its 10.17 million people living on less than $1 a day. Poets, educators and activists say art, education and tourism can reinvigorate Haiti.

About this article: Rosenie proved herself to be a stunning writer with this piece. The care she took with each sentence was a reminder of how precious every word is in an article. GPJ editors took a lot of time and energy to make sure the English translation matched the poetry with which she wrote about the poets of Haiti.
Despite Loss in Final World Cup Match, Argentines Thank Team for Distraction From Economic Turmoil
By Ivonne Jeannot Laens, GPJ Argentina

Although their team lost the final World Cup match, Argentines celebrate their strong showing in the competition and remain grateful for the month-long distraction from the country’s dire economic problems.

About this article: Ivonne has a unique ability to showcase solutions in her community. Her reporting in this story acknowledges the challenges of Argentina today, but focuses instead on the spirit and perseverance of her community.

AFRICA

Traditional Healer in DRC Treats Suspected Poisoning Victims Regardless of Tribe
By Esther Nsapu, GPJ Democratic Republic of Congo

In Goma, a city in the Democratic Republic of Congo, people who fear they have been poisoned with a locally made potion called karuho often turn to Riziki Mbeta. The healer began learning folk medicine about 10 years after ethnic hostilities in neighboring Rwanda began spilling into the DRC, spreading fear of revenge killings. While neither the potency of the poison nor the effectiveness of its antidotes has been scientifically verified, even health care professionals refer patients to Mbeta. Nonetheless, some reports suggest “karuho phobia” causes locals to assume they’ve been poisoned when they are suffering from more common diseases, such as tuberculosis.

About this article: In the nearly-9-year history of GPI, a reporter’s first story has never made it to the best-of list! Cristi spent the month of November in Congo with Esther and the other new members of GPJ DRC. Esther’s choice of topic for her first story demonstrates her commitment to telling the challenging stories of Congo. Her first article unearthed an aspect of life in Congo that seems surreal to an outsider. But as an insider, she was able to capture the reality of what it is like to live in a place where one fears the reality of being poisoned.

Zambian Community Debates Traditional Belief Linking Infidelity and Rising C-Sections
By Prudence Phiri, GPJ Zambia

Zambian doctors affirm there is no scientific basis for the widespread myth that infidelity directly causes childbirth complications, but they nonetheless encourage the belief because they say it deters risky sexual conduct.

About this article: This is one of our favorite pieces of the year. It is so uniquely GPJ! The ability to explore a long-standing cultural belief against modern medicine is something that only a GPJ reporter is truly capable of. The source access Prudence secured was truly first-rate. The result was a very unique and important piece of journalism.
News Desks in Guatemala and Democratic Republic of Congo

This past year GPI opened our long-awaited news desks in Guatemala and Democratic Republic of Congo. GPI now has programs operating in 27 countries around the world.

GPI Guatemala

Guatemala receives very little attention in the international press. It has been nearly 20 years since the conclusion of the country’s bloody civil war, in which the Guatemalan government was accused of committing genocide against the country’s Mayan population. The country’s struggles with indigenous rights, women’s equality, and the drug trade combine with limited telecommunications infrastructure and a weak rural media sector to make GPI Guatemala one of our most important programs.

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project, women are grossly under-represented in the Guatemalan media. In 2010, there were just 37 female reporters nationwide and women were the subjects of news coverage just 17% of the time.

GPI Democratic Republic of Congo

Democratic Republic of Congo has attracted a lot of attention among the philanthropic community in recent years as a result of the devastating civil war and its impact on the Congolese people and natural environment.

Yet Democratic Republic of Congo remains a place so distorted by its own corruption and so stereotypically covered by mainstream media – war, poverty, disaster, disease, repeat – that GPI’s work is deeply needed. Our new program has the power to diversify the singular narrative that has long plagued Congo, to increase access to information, to elevate awareness, to provoke change.

The GPI Democratic Republic of Congo team set records for the speed of its reporting, with published stories on Global Press Journal within a month of the training program launch. These articles, on a traditional healer treating suspected victims of ethnic tension-related poisoning, child soldier rehabilitation, a midwife who performs free services for pygmies and refugees, and a new taxi association trying to make road travel safer in Goma, have already begun to shine light on elements of Congolese life previously unknown to the wider world.

GPI Democratic Republic of Congo is also providing hope, empowerment, and professional opportunities to our reporters, beginning a ripple effect that can transform communities.

GPI Guatemala News Desk

“Before GPI, my job was that I took care of my elder sister’s children and in return she would buy soap for me... GPI will help me to be self-sufficient. I will be independent and I will no longer work taking care of someone’s children. I will be a powerful woman in my society. I will be empowered.”

-- GPI Congo trainee Merveille Kavira
Awards & Honors

Congratulations to GPI Sri Lanka reporter Chathuri Dissanayake, winner of the Subramaniyam Chettiar Social Development Reporting Merit Award at the Journalism Awards for Excellence in Sri Lanka. Chathuri’s excellent reporting this year included a fascinating story on secondhand bookshops in Colombo, Sri Lanka’s capital, which may have to relocate when a major government development project in the area nears completion, and an incisive piece about the ramifications of social media use as a bullying tool among Sri Lankan teens.

Cristi was honored to be named by the New York University Alumni Association as the 2015 Distinguished Young Alumna. The Distinguished Young Alumna award is presented to an outstanding NYU graduate who is under the age of 35, has demonstrated sustained excellence in her professional, vocational, social, and cultural endeavors, and deserves acknowledgement as embodying the spirit of distinction that brings pride to the University.

Cristi was also a recipient of the 2014 Boehm Media Fellowship. Boehm Media Fellowships provide journalists, authors, bloggers, writers, editors, filmmakers, and other media experts at the helm of social innovation the means to participate in the Opportunity Collaboration, one of the most important gatherings devoted to poverty alleviation worldwide.

2014 Supporters

Thank you to GPI’s incredible community of dedicated, generous, and visionary financial supporters, and a special welcome to our new funders, indicated with an asterisk (*).

- 11th Hour Project*
- Ashoka
- The Arthur Guinness Fund
- Channel Foundation
- Cloud Mountain Foundation
- COMO Foundation
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- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation*
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- Open Road Alliance
- Open Square*
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- San Francisco Community Foundation*
- Seattle Foundation*
- Simone Otus Coxe & Tench Coxe
- Skees Family Foundation*
- Stewart R. Mott Foundation*
- Susie Tompkins Buell Foundation
- Tecovas Foundation
- U.S. Charitable Gift Trust

GPI continued on the path towards financial sustainability this year with $18,000 in syndication revenue generated through Global Press News Service. Additionally, we are grateful to have received our first impact investment this past year, a $75,000 recoverable grant from Open Road Alliance!
On Tap in 2015

This year we will continue to build upon the successes of Global Press Institute’s unique training programs, Global Press Journal’s professional news operations, and Global Press News Service’s social impact and sustainability model.

Be on the lookout for more news stories, on more topics, from more locations than ever before! With our successful launch in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we are even more committed than ever to bringing our work to diverse media markets in need of ethical, authentic, independent news sources. 2015 expansion possibilities include Comoros, Laos, Morocco, and Papua New Guinea, as well the likely launch of our first news desk on a Native American reservation here in the U.S.!

We will also be continuing our popular Focus On series, with in-depth global coverage of topics such as sports, global cuisine, technology innovators, and human trafficking. Additionally, the Global Press Journal team is launching two exciting new special projects to provide greater coverage of refugees and stateless people, and to test the efficacy of global freedom of information laws. These special projects will allow GPJ reporters to further develop their investigatory journalism skills while covering critical issues around the world.