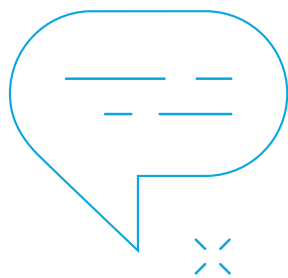




RNW Media

Annual report 2017



A message from our CEO

Dear friends of RNW Media,

It's incredibly exciting. After a history of 70 odd years in the media world we are in many ways a start-up. We are emerging as a truly unique organisation, working at the intersection of the tech world and international development for young people's rights. It is also nice to see that, in addition to having a niche, our work is complementary to that of other organisations. Many organisations provide services and do advocacy. We create digital communities and give young people a voice to enrich and help ground the advocacy work of other organisations.

We were ambitious in 2017. We set out to build our organisational programme, Enabling the Next Generation, to fit our strategic ambitions, and to do that with less budget than before. We handed over platforms no longer aligned to our mission, strengthened the theories of change of our thematic programmes based on our research, built the capacity of our local teams, developed a model to sustain our impact, recharged our human resources and went full-steam ahead with fundraising.

We got great results in enabling some of our platforms to become independent. El Toque, our Cuban platform, is now on its own and has become a highly respected voice in independent, non-traditional media. What's Up Africa is being broadcast through the BBC World News and Ivoire Justice continues under the leadership of the Centre for Education for a Sustainable Society (CESD) in Ivory Coast.

To do more for the sustainability of our impact, we developed a new model for our Love Matters global programme. Love Matters will become a global network and brand. Our first network partner is Love Matters Mexico (Hablemos de Sexo y Amor), in the process of being successfully handed over to Mexico Vivo. We will further expand our global Love Matters network and brand to include Love Matters India.

We achieved a lot on the ground. We strengthened our online presence in Yemen, Syria, and Libya, and increased our visibility in Egypt. Yaga Burundi and Habari RDC, our digital communities in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), influenced their governments, and Love Matters became an even-more respected partner for scientific and professional bodies. In India and China, Love Matters won prizes. We launched a programme on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) persons in Kenya and India, as well as in Uganda and Nigeria, two new countries for us.

We achieved 38 million sessions on our websites last year, and more than 10 million young people followed our social media platforms. And imagine, from that large social media community those who engaged interacted an average of approximately seven times. We released platforms, but we also rebuilt our Love Matters websites to improve user experiences. In addition, the change in Facebook's algorithm affected our engagement. Furthermore, we gained an amazing audience when we joined WeChat in China.

We invested in our human resources. We hired many new people to bring in new skills and built our teams in the regions. We also welcomed two new members to our Supervisory Board. Thanks to improved organisational human capacity, and despite the delays and temporary gaps that occur when a new programme is being developed, we delivered on our ambitious plans.

We were highly efficient. We did all that work, reaching millions of young people, with less budget. At the same time, we kept our eyes on our future income. We increased the number of proposals we submitted. New funding came from UNESCO and UNICEF for our work in the Middle East. Additional funding came from AmplifyChange for Love Matters, and EuropeAid approved our proposal for Justice4her in China. In addition, we received a grant for 2018 and beyond from the Dutch Postcode Lottery to refine our data-driven and digital approach and ensure the sustainability of our platforms.

What does 2018 hold for us? It's definitely a year full of expansion: looking for big ideas to improve how we measure our impact; getting new commitments; upscaling our models that work; and finding new, daring partners to roll them out.

It goes without saying that we are only able to do our work thanks to the ongoing support of our funding partners. We would like to express our gratitude to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nuffic, AmplifyChange, the Ford Foundation, ideas42, the Packard Foundation, EuropeAid and our newest donor, the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

Naturally, we wouldn't be anywhere if it weren't for the hard work and inspiring engagement of our colleagues in our focus countries and in Hilversum, as well as the watchful eye of our Supervisory Board. A special thanks goes to all of you!

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Lampe
CEO



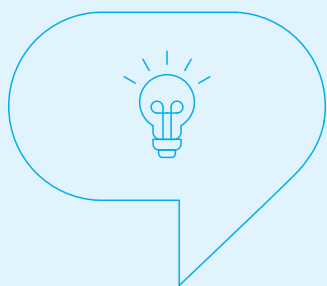


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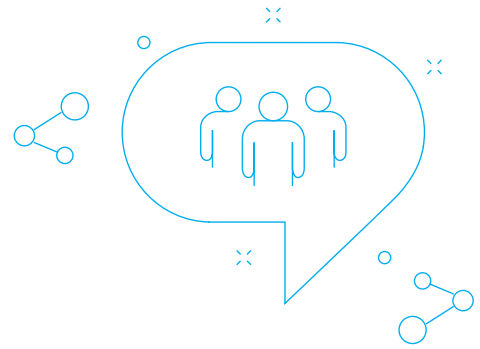
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01.

About us



1.1 Who we are

RNW Media is an international organisation that uses digital media for social change. We build digital communities of young people—through websites, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and other channels. Our digital platforms provide science- and rights-based information. They are also safe places where young people can engage in constructive dialogue and focus on their aspirations.

1.2 Vision

Our vision is to contribute to a world where young people in restrictive settings confidently claim their rights, assume their place in society and shape a better future.



1.3 Mission

Our mission is to identify young people's needs, and to bring young people together in user-owned digital communities where they can safely engage on taboos and sensitive topics and generate strong stories for advocacy to unleash their potential for social change.

1.4 Target group

RNW Media focuses on young people aged 15 to 30 who live mainly in fragile or socio-politically repressive states, what we call "restrictive settings" at RNW Media. In these settings, young people are often a large majority of the population, and their rights, in particular their right to freedom of expression, are under considerable pressure.

1.5 Values

RNW Media is a value-driven organisation. We are:

- Aspirational—we strive to give our best for the next generation in restrictive areas by awakening their aspirations.
- Honest—we keep integrity as our point North. We're the best example of what we stand for; always respecting the context where we work.
- Inclusive—we believe that "together" is the only way forward. We convene user-owned digital communities that are a safe place to talk about sensitive topics.

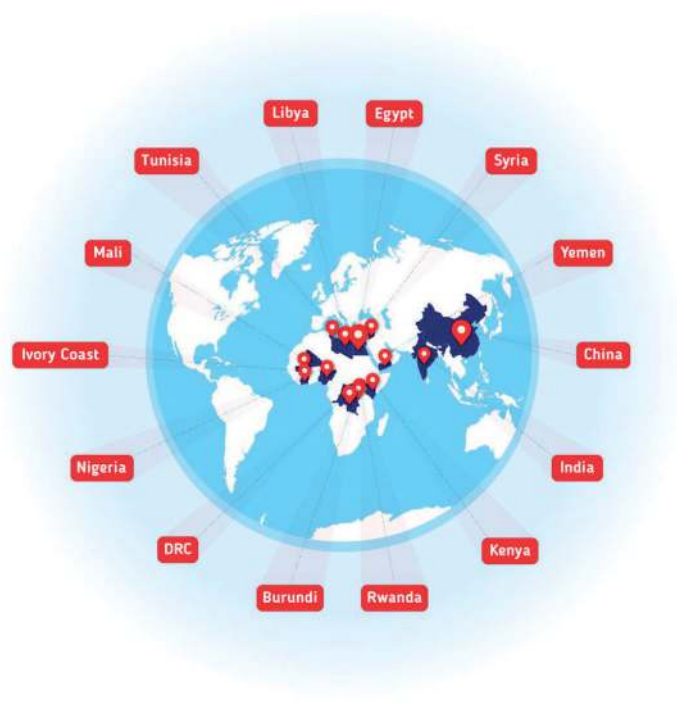
1.6
What we do

Through our platforms young people living in restrictive settings get comprehensive science- and rights-based information. They also find a safe space to engage in constructive dialogue and focus on their aspirations. As a result, we create enabling conditions for young people to claim their rights confidently, assume their place in society, and shape a better future.

RNW Media has three programmes. Our Citizens' Voice programme addresses social cohesion and inclusive governance. Our sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programme, Love Matters, addresses love, sex and relationships, and our RNTC Media Training programme provides capacity building for professional and citizen journalists.

1.7
Where we work

In 2017, RNW Media worked in 12 countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa we had projects in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. In the Middle East and North Africa, we worked in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. In Asia, we worked in India and China, and in Latin America, through our global Love Matters network in Mexico. We will be expanding our operations in Africa in 2018.



02.

Global context



What did the world of young people look like in 2017? If we have numbers in mind, it belonged to them. There are over 1.8 billion young people in the world today, 90% of whom live in developing countries. However, the world did not belong to them in very many other ways. Young people faced exclusion. Most were jobless, and many were structurally left out of decision-making. Young people were part of an increasingly digital world. More than half of the world's population was online, and nearly 2.8 billion people used social media monthly; 91% of them doing so via mobile devices. Africa had the lowest internet penetration but is among the fastest growing internet populations.

Young people dealt with increasing political turmoil. Extremist parties were popping up everywhere. Authoritarian governments strengthened their grip. There were crackdowns, in some cases deadly, on sexual and gender minorities, on journalists, human rights defenders and democracy advocates and on NGOs in several countries. Conflicts raged, with parts of Syria and Yemen, for example, destroyed and facing humanitarian catastrophes.

Young people experienced online spaces become a breeding ground for anger and divisiveness. Fake news, incitement of hatred, abuse, and harassment, particularly against women and minority groups, affected social media feeds. Increasingly, governments used online spaces to suppress dissent, polarised communities and manipulated public opinion, and a handful of companies controlled the information they saw online.

Young people saw the consequences of bad sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes. Violence affected a third of all women, and 23 million adolescent girls in developing regions faced unmet needs for modern contraception. The United States Government reinstated an expanded version of the Global Gag Rule. According to the measure non-U.S. NGOs receiving U.S. funding cannot provide legal abortion services. They also cannot provide advice on where to get an abortion or even provide information on abortion or the need to make safe abortion available. Last year, an estimated four million 15 to 19 year-old girls underwent unsafe abortions.

How did young people respond? They pushed back. They ran for political positions in Kenya in a difficult electoral environment. In India they joined the "Not in my name" campaign against Islamophobia and the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and assault. They also took part in popular support for the International Criminal Court and they joined initiatives to fight online radicalisation and develop alternative narratives. Young people also supported SheDecides, the Dutch Government's global campaign, launched in response to the Global Gag Rule, to maintain essential services for sexual and reproductive health and family planning in developing countries.

03.

Our innovation



Innovation is hardwired into RNW Media's approach. When it comes to innovation, we outdid our targets. We committed to implement at least one innovation and implemented several. We spent slightly more on innovation than we targeted (5.6% versus 5%), and established at least five innovation partnerships.

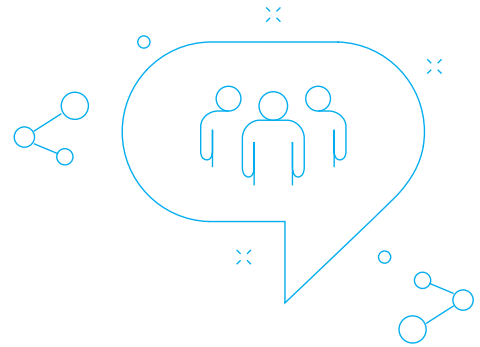
Our highlight innovation concerned developing a means of optimising our platform content. We launched a proof of concept study with our project in Burundi that employed language, sentiment and topic detection models, applying Natural Language Processing methods, to find out whether our Yaga Burundi blog creates conversations amongst its audience. We found out the answer to our question was "yes". To do the proof of concept we had to develop the aforementioned models in Kirundi and Kinyarwanda. That's the first time, ever, that such models have been developed in these languages. Following from this proof of concept we took initial steps toward developing a data scraping and text mining tool with different functionalities. In line with the purpose of our proof of concept, we want to make sure we are continuously able to improve our content strategies and platform moderation in order to amplify the voices of young people.

We also implemented some more discrete, related innovations. For example, we totally rebuilt our Love Matters websites. We restructured the information architecture and the navigation of the websites to ensure young people could find the content they seek faster and more easily. In line with that we also used different digital techniques, like Facebook's Instant articles and Google Accelerated Mobile Pages, for fast loading of mobile content anywhere.



04.

Organisational development



“Make it work, make it grow”, such was the title of our annual plan for 2017. And that’s what we did.

4.1 Programme development and expansion

From inception to planning

An intensive inception process involving key consultations with young people and rigorous country context analyses marked the beginning of 2017. We put great effort into understanding young people’s needs in the different countries and into understanding the digital landscape. Our research was also part of our commitment to sustainable impact, to ensure we have solid theories of change driving the content of our programmes, as well as part of our commitment to engage young people in our strategic thinking and planning. After inception, in the summer of 2017, we planned design workshops to support the local teams to take robust ownership of their activities and develop their 2018 country work plans.

Scale-up

We extended Love Matters’ positive approach to love, sex, and relationships to work for LGBT rights. With funding from AmplifyChange, we launched the *Rights, evidence, action—amplifying youth voices* programme with Choice for Youth and Sexuality. That meant working in new countries, Nigeria and Uganda. We also developed plans for a regional approach to our Love Matters platforms, please see chapter 8; *Looking ahead* at page 32 for more information.’

4.2 New organisational structure and staffing

New organisational structure

We went from managing our digital communities and producing content for our digital platforms in Hilversum to doing that work directly in our focus countries. To fit that new decentralised way of working we adjusted our organisational structure. New or transformed departments took shape: Programmes and Implementation; Business Development; and Finance and Operations. Each of these has a senior manager on the Management Team. Human Resources and Stakeholders were formed to be the two respective supporting teams under the CEO. In addition, we launched a larger digital and data team, which we then folded under Programmes and Implementation.

Staffing

Ninety percent of our job functions were new last year. We recruited many new employees. In Hilversum we brought on more than 20 people, including digital and data talent in an extremely competitive commercial market. We also brought on interim expert capacity for quick action on projects.

4.3 Capacity strengthening

Capacity assessments

As intended, we did full capacity assessments with our local teams, looking at the range of skills needed to run our platforms. We studied four capacity areas: technical (digital) capacity; media capacity; content knowledge; and management capacity. Once our teams feel their skills are where they need to be they will be able to drive the digital platforms independently of the Hilversum office.

Global Week

We strengthened knowledge across the organisation through our third Global Week. Our corporate retreat took place from 25-29 September and brought 70 staff members together from our office in Hilversum and the countries where we work. We held interactive sessions to develop knowledge and skills on online campaigning, web content development, planning, monitoring and evaluation, data strategy, sustainability, ICT, digital security and business development. Country coordinators fed back what they learnt to their teams afterwards.

Targeted training

We organised trainings across local teams, for example, on storytelling with support from RNTC's "Media for Social Change" programme. We also organised tailored trainings based on the aforementioned capacity assessments. We trained trainers of Love Matters Egypt on content, in particular on sexuality. In Syria and Libya we organised video-making trainings. In Yemen, we organised a locally-facilitated training on security.

4.4 Business development

Our approach

We need to optimise our funding mix and find innovative new funding models to have a solid balanced income base by 2021. In 2017, we updated our income diversification strategy to focus on institutional donors, private foundations, and specific investors. We saw our strategy align with the needs of young people and donors, and saw there is a market for youth dialogue.

Winning proposals

We submitted 50 proposals in 2017, well surpassing our target of 32, and saw 50% of them make it to the second round. We delivered proposals to AmplifyChange, the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), DfID, EuropeAid and the Dutch Postcode Lottery. We also submitted smaller proposals for RNTC trainings. Two highlight successes were the grant Justice4her won from EuropeAid to support the rights of women migrant workers, and the grant of the Dutch Postcode Lottery announced in early 2018. Furthermore, our teams also worked hard to raise funds for incidental activities. This paid off for Yaga Burundi, which received €20,000 from CCFD-Terre Solidaire to support local events.



4.5 External relations and communications

Network development and positioning

We took a content-driven approach to our network-building. We organised four US-based roundtables with PeaceTech lab, our US peace and security partner, and leading experts from various sectors. Themes covered peacebuilding and humanitarian work in Yemen, data for social good, supporting Syrian independent media, media capacity building, and supporting media sustainability and literacy. The roundtables showed that success in restrictive settings requires careful strategising characterised by innovative thinking, cross-sectoral collaboration and sustained capacity building and mutual learning. The roundtables led to more than 200 new contacts and helped position RNW Media as a key player.

Key events and conferences

RNW Media participated in a number of key events and conferences. At the invitation of Alibaba group, we participated in their second Global Conference on Women and Entrepreneurs in July in Hangzhou. We also participated at the European Development Days 7-8 June in Brussels, and at the RightsCon 29-31 March, also in Brussels. We are proud to have been part of the Spindle Summer Lab and its companion Partos Innovation Festival 12 October in Amsterdam, where our Online Echoes project won second place for most innovative idea. We also joined EuroNGOs 27-28 September in Brussels.

Our platform on African opinion, arts and music, This Is Africa, rolled out #FutureAfrica54 on 25 May, Africa Day. The online French and English language campaign supported young people's engagement in the African Union's Agenda 2063 for development and showcased young Africans at the forefront of social and economic development. The campaign featured the viewpoints of some 100 influential young Africans as well as dozens of bloggers. #FutureAfrica54 reached over 800,000 accounts.

Communications for stakeholder engagement

We strengthened the basis for our internal and external communications in 2017. We launched the development of several strategies and plans, such as the stakeholder relationship management strategy, an internal communications strategy and plan, a social media strategy and content calendar, and a press strategy, accompanied by an updated press list.

We also did a comprehensive audit of our communications tools. This audit revealed a need to develop more promotional materials that could be use in a business-to-business context, including a cutting-edge animation. We also saw our current corporate website no longer fits our organisational model and strategy, and a redesign was in order. We evaluated our quarterly email communications to key stakeholders and concluded we needed to communicate more to a broader range of stakeholders as well. So we decided to launch an external newsletter in 2018.

Press coverage

Our work continued to attract attention in major media outlets. One World Netherlands reported on our Habari RDC project, as did France Culture and the Courier International. The Economist, the Guardian and One World all reported on Love Matters India's VR film. And naturally, Love Matters received loads of attention in India's national press, from the Business Standard but also from The Hindu. In China, some 120 Chinese mainstream media reported on Love Matters China's major festival on sex education [Internal section on Love Matters China], including national news agencies like China.com. In Egypt Love Matters also got plenty of visibility. Our project coordinator in Cairo spoke on national television about the Love Matters platform and the right to safe abortion in Egypt, and BBC Arabic radio interviewed the Love Matters Egypt moderator about a new booklet on sexual pleasure for Muslim women.

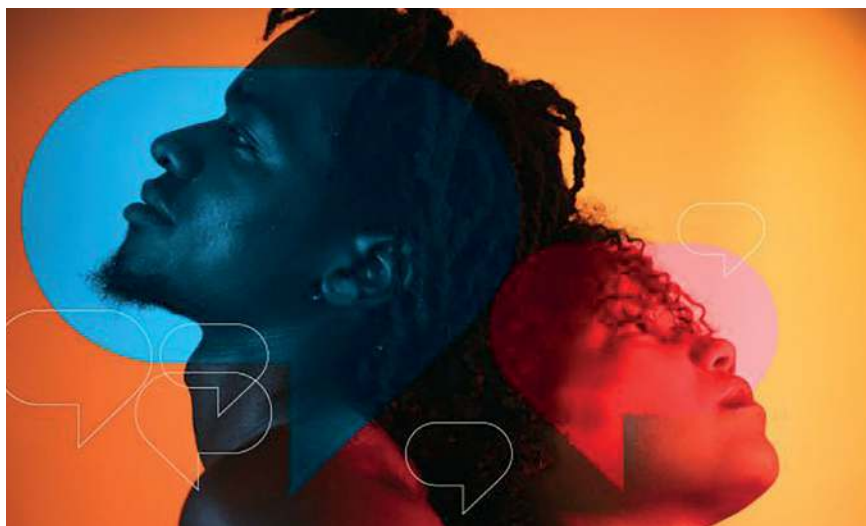
Large Jordanian outlets like Alghad, covered RNTC's training with Syrian journalists living and working in Jordan, "Producing Media to Counter Radicalisation". Private television and independent online sites, like Libya's Channel and Libya Al-Mostakbal, respectively, featured our work in Libya. In Yemen, we got attention in national television and regional news. We also enjoyed coverage in blogs like "Digital Power" for our overall digital approach. As a result, our coverage had a wide scope, from sector-specific, niche outlets to international outlets with large audiences.

4.6 Sustainability

We want the platforms we launch to be independent and locally owned long after grant cycles end. Our approach really took shape last year. We released platforms that no longer fit the organisational strategy, but we ensured they would be able to stand on their own two feet. The hard work paid off as previous platforms are flourishing.

Using innovative ways of delivering content—drones and 360° videos—the El Toque blog site addresses topics the Cuban government's media side-lines. Last year, we saw El Toque increasingly being seen as a reliable, independent source of information. Our Ivoire Justice platform, developed for President Gbagbo's International Criminal Court trial, was handed over to the Centre for Education for a Sustainable Society (CESD) in Ivory Coast and receives support from the Open Society Institute for Western Africa (OSIWA) under the new name, "Observateur Citoyen". What's Up Africa was handed over to the BBC World News in April.

In addition, as explained earlier, we developed a model to expand our Love Matters global programme. This approach will help sustain our Love Matters communities. We articulated a strategic approach, a solid plan and a set of tools to support local teams to become independent partners of a Love Matters global network and brand.



Our global network and brand approach to Love Matters marks a shift in how we looked at sustainability initially. We had committed to ensuring six platforms would become independent in 2017. We ended up releasing three, with a fourth planned for 2018. But with our new concept for our Love Matters global programme, Hablemos de Sexo y Amor, Love Matters Kenya and Love Matters India will not just be independent. They will continue to contribute to, and reap the benefits of, being part of a well-recognised brand, learning and fundraising network.

4.7 Managing our top five risks

We have identified a series of risks to our work and our organisation, and accordingly, defined mitigating approaches. In the course of 2018 we will review our list to reflect, among other things, the risks associated with an increasingly dynamic digital landscape. Below are our current top five risks and ways of mitigating them.

1. Increased pressure on (international) NGOs and the work they do

This poses a high risk in terms of likelihood and impact, both financial and other. It is a risk over which we have weak control. It is difficult to do enough to mitigate this risk, as civic space is reducing constantly and almost everywhere.

To mitigate the risk:

- We focus on close cooperation with the international development sector organisation, Partos, and with other (human rights) actors to increase support for international development and the organisations involved; and
- We lobby with other Dutch actors, including the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies, to alleviate the pressure on civil society.

2. Physical safety and security in target countries

The associated risk is high in terms of likelihood, a medium risk in terms of financial impact and a high risk in relation to other impact. It is a risk over which we have moderate control.

To mitigate this risk:

- We have a safety and security protocol;
- We run trainings in collaboration with local partners;
- We have clear security and crisis management procedures;
- Local security officers send updates register incidents in our registration system;
- Our employees in The Netherlands are from the countries involved;
- We divert focus (temporarily) to less sensitive/political subjects;
- We can work from other countries and/or work with the diaspora of the countries in question; and
- We can be flexible in selecting programme focus and make adjustments to programmes during implementation if the local context requires it.

3. Digital safety and security

The associated risk is high in terms of its likelihood. With regard to financial impact it poses a medium level risk, and a high risk in relation to other impact. It is a risk over which we have moderate control. This risk and the physical safety and security risk described above are interlinked. Digital hacking could cause lack of physical safety and security for our teams in the countries.

To mitigate this risk:

- We have a digital security policy and work rules in place;
- We do (awareness) trainings in collaboration with experts, including collaborating with other international organisations and local parties;
- We engage in continuous monitoring of the safety and accessibility of our platforms, especially in high-risk countries;
- We have established a cloud-based digital work environment open only for all colleagues, Office 365, that accommodates differing levels of sophistication in internet access, allows for staff to be anonymous in their local contexts and makes it more difficult for third parties to access their digital data and information;
- We are adapting to comply to the European privacy regulations (GDPR) as mentioned above; and
- We support sharing knowledge and access to aliases and encryption methods.

4. War or severe and continuous violence and/or natural disasters

This risk is high in terms of its likelihood. In terms of financial impact the risk posed is low, but high when it comes to other impact. It is a risk over which we have weak control.

To mitigate this risk:

- We can work from other countries and/or work with the diaspora of the countries in question;
- We hire our employees in The Netherlands who are from the countries involved;
- We keep in touch with local partners;
- We engage in active monitoring of the situations in the countries where we work;
- We have a protocol and trainings on physical and digital safety;
- We stop activities if needed, according to established criteria;
- We have disaster preparedness; and
- We can adjust our programmes and targets during implementation.

5. Disappointing additional funding/income growth

This risk is medium in terms of its likelihood. In terms of financial and other impact the risk posed is high. It is a risk over which we have strong control.

To mitigate this risk:

- We have defined a priority target list of high potential donors and foundations and strengthened relations with them;
- We further intensify local/ international acquisition;
- We strengthen networking, with a clear focus based on strategy and target setting per programme and the individual staff involved;
- We do further donor diversification, income growth from private donors; corporations; and foundations;
- We monitor pipeline development strongly;
- We make the organisation as lean as possible, further reducing overheads through benchmarking with the NGO sector;
- We train employees in acquisition and business development;
- We do prudent budgeting, including large income sources only when they are certain;
- We do continuous (short and long term) planning and adjusting, developing fall back scenarios;
- We have a flexible staff policy, investing in core staff and a flexible workforce;
- We analyse the income and costs on fundraising activities; and
- We build reserve capacity in terms of commitments and reservations and have a continuity reserve.

4.8 Quality management

Research, monitoring and evaluation

We work from an evidence based perspective at all levels, including in the development, improvement and assessment of our platforms and projects. We organised youth consultations with young people in seven countries. Based on the findings of these consultations, in particular, we adapted the Theories of Change for both the Love Matters and the Citizens' Voice programmes to reflect better young people's needs and key issues. For the new programme, Rights, evidence, action–amplifying youth voices, we rolled out baseline research in Kenya and India, thus refining the content for our work on LGBT issues as part of our Love Matters global programme.

Local teams also organised specific studies related to the context and thematic focus of their respective platforms. In China, the Justice4Her team did research on domestic violence among women migrant workers, including a survey with Beijing Normal University which received 1,500 responses. Also in China, the Love Matters team rolled out research on (online) comprehensive sex education.

They presented the findings at the 5th Greater China Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference. In India, with support from ideas42, Love Matters finalised an environmental scan on intimate partner violence as well as two baseline studies. One focused on how young people understand intimate partner violence and relationships. The other sought to understand online engagement on the issue on the Love Matters website and Facebook site. The Love Matters India team used the findings to develop an online campaign on intimate partner violence and healthy relationships among young couples in India.

We improved our Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) system. We adapted our approach to emphasise the following: use of evidence to strengthen advocacy or improve services (depending on the country focus); identifying and measuring users' changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour; and identifying and measuring inclusive discourse on our platforms.. Our local teams then adapted this umbrella system to develop country-specific PMEL frameworks based on their own "domesticated" theories of change.

Standardising internal processes

We invested a lot in our ISO-guided quality management processes. In a new organisation where over 90% of the team has a new job, standardising our various internal processes has been immensely helpful for operationalising our work. We improved our ability to identify and correct gaps and inconsistencies and ensure responsibility and accountability are clear and owned.

4.9 Finances

At the start of 2017 we launched our new programme called, "Enabling the Next Generation", under a four-year grant of € 34 million from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As described above, we created new functions, teams, and departments and adapted others. Our new organisation came in line with our new strategy, "Enabling the Next Generation: young people, media and social change 2016-2021", and with our Enabling the Next Generation programme.

We closed 2017 with operating revenues totaling € 14.7 of which € 10 million came from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Enabling the Next Generation programme. We had an additional € 4.6 million in income from other donors, like AmplifyChange, ideas42, Nuffic and Ford Foundation, and from real estate rental and our partial ownership of dB mediagroep B.V., a Dutch audio tech company.

We had budgeted for a deficit in 2017, but the deficit was not actualised due to various factors. We had positive results from the termination and unwinding of our operations in Costa Rica, and the office building we rent out was revalued. Also, we benefited from the continuing recovery of dB mediagroep B.V. in which we hold a 75% interest. In April 2018 we reached an agreement with the minority shareholder to buy its 25% shareholding, such that in 2018 RNW Media will own 100% of the shares of dB mediagroep B.V.

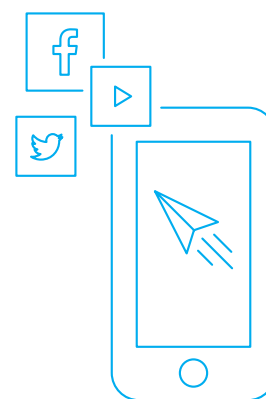
The fact that spending was somewhat lower than budgeted also weighed against the budgeted deficit. The expenses associated with implementing our strategic objective to create sustainable impact, for example, by releasing or handing over platforms, came out lower than expected.

Thanks to our hands-on experience and research in 2017 we developed better insights and understanding of the digital arena. We realised RNW Media would need to invest more in data collection, storage and analysis and in digital innovation and development. As a result, we planned for a budgeted deficit for 2018 of € 2.5 million. The budget does not reflect new funds, for example, new grants of the Dutch Postcode Lottery and EuropeAid or increases in the existing AmplifyChange grant.

Please ask your contactperson of RNW Media for the extended Financial Report 2017.

05.

Year at a glance



January

- Launch of the Rights, evidence, action–amplifying youth voices programme
- Launch of renewed Citizens' Voice platform in Libya

February

- Love Matters publishes report “Sex education in the digital era”
- Deep Dive on data for social change

March

- Theater of the Oppressed anti-radicalisation play in Yemen

April

- Independence Ivoire Justice platform
- Hand over What's Up Africa platform to BBC World News

May

- Yemen Youth Panel and UNESCO run youth debate on freedom of expression
- Yemen Youth Panel's #SaveUsama Facebook campaign is nominated for an Intercultural Innovation Award
- Deep Dive on the evolving role of independent media
- Love Matters India #BearNoMore campaign wins Social Media for Empowerment award

June

- Love Matters India wins #NotMusicToMyEars Blue Elephant award

July

- Programme inception officially closes
- Launch baseline study Rights, evidence, action–amplifying youth voices

August

- Roll out design workshops in all countries
- Initiate partnership with Reach A Hand Uganda for Rights, evidence, action–amplifying youth voices

September

- Global Week
- Habari participates in CIVICUS's Speak! campaign
- Love Matters video series on abortion #StepintoOurShoes
- Deep Dive on building global media capacity

October

- RNW Media wins Spindle award
- News of funding from EuropeAid for Justice4Her
- MoU signed with Mexico Vivo for transition of Hablemos de Sexo y Amor platform

November

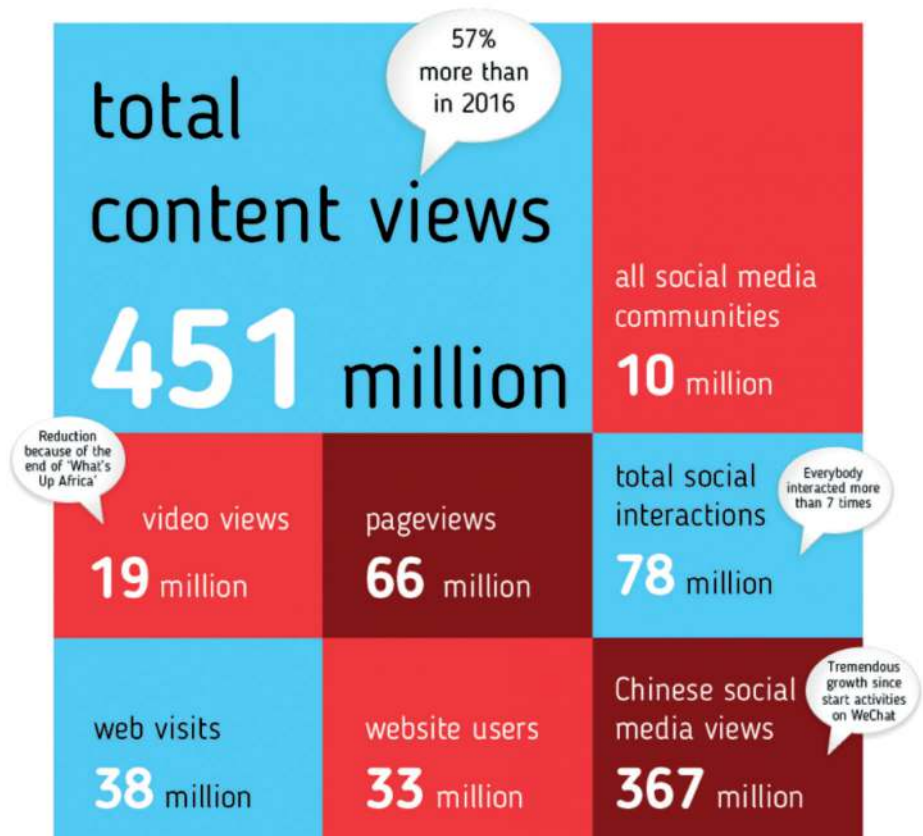
- Accreditation RNTC
- 200 young people in Syria trained on debating
- Sadat and Y-Crew perform, “Love Matters, love is not a shame”, song for Love Matters Egypt 16 Days campaign
- Love Matters China co-organises major national conference on adolescent sexual and reproductive health

December

- Deep Dive on media sustainability and literacy
- Independence El Toque platform

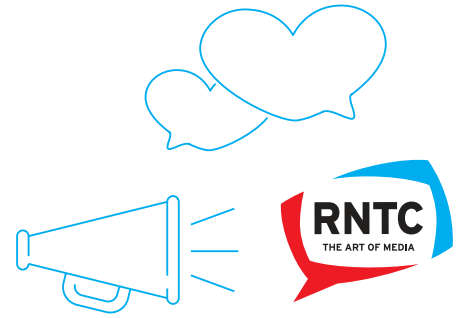
Reach

RNW Media has a very active and engaged community: from over 10 million social media community members in 2017, those who engaged interacted an average of approximately seven times. Also, as Love Matters China became active on WeChat (reported to be China’s most popular app) we got a significant rise in the platform’s social media views and gain in audience. At the same time, a number of different factors affected our reach. In 2017 we redesigned the Love Matters websites to improve navigation and the ability to find the content young people are searching. We released platforms, such as What’s Up Africa, such that we no longer count their impact and, we were affected by the change in the Facebook algorithm in the summer of last year. Please check our infographic below to learn more.



06.

Our programme achievements



6.1 Getting to know our programmes

RNW Media has three programmes: Citizens’ Voice; Love Matters; and RNTC Media Training. The first two are thematic, while the third one focuses on capacity building.

Citizens’ Voice strengthens social cohesion and inclusive governance so young people in all their diversity can be meaningful participants and leaders in their communities. Citizens’ Voice builds youth movements. Through our digital spaces young people can voice opinions, engage in non-polarising dialogue, and imagine the kind of society they want. Local networks of journalists, bloggers and change-makers from across the political spectrum run the platforms.

Love Matters addresses SRHR issues comprehensively. Topics include contraception, safe abortion, the rights of LGBT persons, and gender based violence. With a pleasure-positive approach and non-judgemental discussions on the platforms we bypass traditional gatekeepers and provide young people accessible science- and rights-based information, professional advice, peer support and personal stories.

Our **RNTC Media Training** programme provides training to professional and citizen journalists, content creators, and others who wish to hone their oral, video or written communications skills for change. With 50 years of expertise, RNTC has an Online Academy, offers two Masters’ programme modules, and provides a mix of courses including specifically tailored ones. RNTC’s courses cover a range of topics, from how to develop media campaigns to investigative and data journalism and media business entrepreneurship.

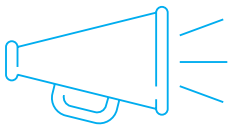


Sharpening the focus of our thematic programmes

Our inception process marked the beginning of 2017. We put a lot of effort into understanding young people’s needs in the different countries and understanding

the digital landscape. One of the issues that emerged from the consultations with young people was their focus on addressing employment and advancing their economic opportunities. After inception we planned for design workshops to develop country plans. In the summer of 2017, in the course of only a few weeks, we organised several workshops to support the local teams to take robust ownership of their activities and develop their 2018 country work plans.

6.2 Our global Citizens' Voice programme



Citizens' Voice in local settings

And then it all came together

On the basis of the outcomes of the youth consultations and country analyses, we adjusted the content focus of the Citizens' Voice programme to focus more on young people's aspirations. Our focus on democratisation proved to be too risky for roll out in-country, given the shrinking space for civic participation and the repression young people face.

Amazing successes

Citizens' Voice in the South of Libya, a region usually overlooked by donors and NGOs, launched a conference bringing together 40 young change-makers. In Syria, RNW Media fully repurposed the digital platform, Ma3akom, to make sure it focuses on engaging young people living in Syria rather than members of the diaspora, as was previously the case. In Yemen, the Yemen Youth Panel organised a debate on new media together with UNESCO for more than 300 people. And in China, the Justice4her project established partnerships with more than 40 international and local organisations, including UN Women and Beijing Normal University.

Habari RDC

Launched in June 2016 as an independent online platform, Habari RDC brings together 100 young bloggers and change-makers from all over DRC and almost 200,000 Facebook followers. These young people produce content that merges opinions, testimonials and stories from across the country, including from Kinshasa, Katanga, Eastern Kasai and the Kivus. The blog had some 772,430 million content views (web page views and video views) in 2017.

Habari RDC seeks to contribute to improving social cohesion and inclusive governance in DRC through non-polarising discourse on political and social issues among youth peers. In the course of last year, we saw the platform become a respected site for reliable and unbiased information and opinion. Habari RDC engages with both the political majority and the opposition, and as a result, is seen as a neutral community, bringing together people from across the political spectrum.

The fact that people trust Habari RDC, has helped the platform influence decision-makers. Habari RDC was able to organise a Q&A session with the youngest member of Parliament elected in 2011, Patrick Muyaya Katembwe. The meeting was an exceptional opportunity for Congolese young people to ask questions about recently passed laws in DRC and take on an active role in problem solving.

Habari RDC also gained visibility through strategic public events such as the Speak! campaign in September. As part of the Civic Space Initiative, launched by CIVICUS and designed to amplify the voices of citizens, Habari campaigned online and offline to support freedom of speech. Habari's Twitter campaign had 29,000 message views, and events in four cities in DRC brought together hundreds of people. These events included a public speaking competition with youth 15-18 years old, theatre, music concerts and slamming (naturally, with 'sapeurs' in full strut).



Success story

The hydroelectric power station—commissioned by DRC President, Joseph Kabila, and funded by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation—had increased the price of electricity beyond what residents could afford. As a result, they were returning to heating with wood from the national park nearby, a veritable environmental attack. A member of the Parliament learnt of the situation through the Habari blog and contacted the Habari RDC team on WhatsApp to know more. Laden with information, the MP took up the issue in Parliament and wrote an official letter to the Minister of Energy. And the Minister took action! He wrote a letter requesting the company reduce its price of electricity to fit legal ceilings.

Yaga Burundi

Yaga Burundi produces online content to promote tolerance among Burundian youth and prevent incitement to hatred. In 2017 the platform had over a million content views and close to 200,000 followers on Facebook, occupying very close to a third of the Facebook market share in Burundi. In addition, thirty-five percent of all young Burundian people online are on the platform. The platform is well acknowledged by the authorities thanks to its non-partisan approach. As a result, Yaga Burundi is now seen as a “mover and shaker”.

Yaga Burundi organised 10 debates in partnership with the French Institute of Burundi. In each debate Government representatives, researchers and university professors interacted with young people on their concerns for the future. Yaga Burundi also ran 45 radio shows, each of which received close to 100 direct engagements from the public.

“Thanks to the different exchanges of thought, I have changed my way of thinking. Before, I couldn’t stand opinions contrary to my own. But now, I manage to remain in dialogue with other young people with different political beliefs.”

Ezéchiél Ndayizeye, one of Yaga Burundi’s bloggers



Success story

Singing the national anthem at assembly every morning is standard practice for students in Burundi. But the directors of schools in Gitega district ruled students should sing a concert’s worth of patriotic songs every day. Young teacher, Félix Ndereyimana, wasn’t happy with the decision and wrote a blog for Yaga roundly condemning what he called a waste of pupils’ time. The blog attracted more than 1,000 comments, shares and likes on Yaga Burundi’s Facebook page, and soon afterwards, the Education Ministry reversed the ruling.

Huna Sotak

In 2017, we steadily built and reconceptualised our work in the Middle East and Northern Africa region (MENA region). Huna Sotak (“Here’s Your Voice”) is an umbrella for our local platforms in the region: Huna Libya; Ma3akom; and Yemen Youth Panel. In 2017, we focused on building the Citizens’ Voice programme in the different MENA countries to develop solid personnel capacity and project management as well as implementation structures in-country. We had over 3.7 million total content views and a million social media community members.

“My work is published without being manipulated, or totally disregarded, the way I have experienced with other organisations. RNW Media is a true example of professionalism,” says Syrian political cartoonist Huna Sotak contributor, Morhaf Youssef, whose work has won two prizes for Best Cartoon and Best Satire Cartoon at the international Pisa Internet Festival 2017.

Huna Libya

Throughout 2017 Huna Libya remained the online platform for young Libyans. Huna Libya’s Facebook page had a particularly active community of close to 227,500 fans. Huna Libya gives a voice to young influential Libyan bloggers and opinion-makers, and actively works to build diverse communities of young people, empowering them to put sensitive issues on the national agenda.

We organised a design workshop with our local team in Libya in October to develop the Huna Libya programme. An interesting result of this workshop was the development of partnerships with organisations outside traditional media. Some of the organisations are headed by quite young CEOs. We concluded the workshop with a clear focus to develop an approach to stimulate non-polarising dialogue. In addition, in line with the project design process we organised a “videos for social change” course to improve the video-making skills of Libyan change-makers from across Libya.

Towards the end of the year, Huna Libya established a partnership with a youth-led group, called Moomken, to survey young people’s concerns. Quality education and employment emerged as the two top pressing issues of concern among 252 young people in Libya. Taking quick action, Moomken submitted a petition to the Ministry of Education and to the Ministry of Labour demanding they address young people’s demands for improving education and providing opportunities to the large numbers of unemployed Libyan youth.



Success story

RNW Media hosted a three-day youth dialogue with Fezzan Libya, a youth-led organisation operating in Southern Libya, a particularly marginalised area cut off from youth services. The event in Libya brought together 50 young change-makers from all ethnic groups and political parties to discuss the issues affecting their lives, including terrorism and “tribalism”, and their aspirations around peace and social cohesion. The response from participants was very positive. As Mohammed said, “I’m truly touched to be here today. We aren’t enemies, we are all Libyans here. I was thrilled to see the attendees applauding together, some of them hugged each other as well”. And Amina added, “Attending this event made me understand my peers’ problems”.

Ma3akom

The Ma3akom platform in Syria continued to engage an online community of bloggers and change-makers, both on Facebook (117,000 young Syrians) and on Huna Sotak, to share their realities and aspirations in war-torn Syria. Towards the end of 2017, we teamed up with the Syrian young activists’ group—3amerha or “Build It”—and Y-Stage to train a group of change-makers on facilitation and debating. In total, we trained 200 young persons, mostly university students, on how to stand up for their views and use reasoning, argumentation and debating

to bring about change. The trainees also shared their aspirations and discussed the challenges of living in Syria. One of the debaters noted: “When you carry a bullet and I carry a bullet too, we ruin our country. But when you have an idea instead, and I have another, we can rebuild our country!”

Yemen Youth Panel

Yemen Youth Panel is an online community of more than 190,000 followers, with the sixth most popular Facebook page in Yemen, with almost 2.6 million video views on that page. In a country where young people are three-quarters of the population, it is important for youth voices to be heard and amplified. As a result, we craft the articles on our platforms in Yemen through monthly surveys. Since we launched Yemen Youth Panel in 2015 some 15,000 young people have expressed themselves on sensitive social and political themes like weapons, domestic violence, women’s rights and other issues affecting their daily lives. In June 2017, our surveys revealed a topic of particular interest to young people is social marginalisation, and this at a time when the infrastructure situation was at its worst.

Also based on community-owned content, Yemen Youth Panel provides awareness raising and training activities. These include theatre, trainings, storytelling competitions and public debates. Not letting ourselves be daunted by the effects of the war, our Yemeni colleagues mirror activities in both North and South Yemen.



In honour of World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO and Yemen Youth Panel organised a debate on “New Media: Freedoms and Regulations” on 17 May 2017 at the University of Sana’a in Yemen. Students and young journalists who were trained on freedom of expression, social media and online hate speech shared their opinions with more than 300 people, including media and NGO representatives.

“I always wanted to be a politician and a decision-maker, this debating training added to my skills to be a good speaker and be able to convince people to buy my ideas, I want to be a leader and change the situation in Yemen. I think that today’s debaters will be tomorrow’s leaders.”

One of the participants

On the occasion of the International Day for Universal Access to Information on 28 September UNESCO and Yemen Youth Panel organised a series of activities on youth engagement in the Sustainable Development Goals. The activities included cartoon exhibitions, inspirational talks and debates on the role of access to information in relation to education, employment and peace and justice.

Justice4her

Launched in 2016, Justice4her seeks to reduce gender based violence among young women migrant workers in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong provinces in China. Justice4her's website is the only one in China tailoring information to young women migrant workers. Offline, Justice4her educates and raises awareness on rights and gender equality and works with pro bono lawyers and media professionals to increase access to justice.

"Justice4her has a clear focus, we want to create an enabling environment to reduce gender based violence among female migrant workers, by strengthening their voices, raising awareness of their situation and increasing their access to justice."

Lei Ma, RNW Media's regional manager for China

RNW Media's China team implemented Justice4her in 2017 in collaboration with two partners, Beijing Qianqian Law Firm (which provides pro bono legal services) and Half the Sky Public Education (a grassroots NGO focused on the rights of migrant workers). RNW Media and Beijing Qianqian Law Firm brought six cases to Chinese court in 2017. Some of these gained international media attention. Last year, Beijing Qianqian Law Firm also organised a series of awareness-raising lectures on marriage and family laws.

Along with court cases, one of Justice4Her's most visible activities was a large online campaign against gender based violence and a film screening with Half the Sky. Justice4Her launched the campaign on WeChat and Weibo in November, gaining over 12 million views of the hashtag on Weibo (Chinese Twitter). The film "Places where we slept those years", based on the stories of women migrant workers generated 40,000 visitors for content pages on RNW Media sites, and according to reports, stimulated nearly all screening participants to decide to take action to change their life conditions. No wonder then that Justice4Her had a total of 74.5 million social media views in 2017.



Success story

A young woman contacted the Justice4her team in May 2017, complaining that she'd been sexually harassed and molested by a courier from one of China's biggest companies. After consultation with Justice4her's partner Qianqian law firm, she blogged about her experience and demanded an apology. The article attracted massive public attention on Justice4her's platform, with more than 7,000 reposts on Weibo, and some 10 Chinese mainstream media picking up the story. In the end, the company was forced to issue a public apology to the woman.

Success story

Hong Mei, a Chinese young woman migrant journalist from the province of Inner Mongolia of China, was killed by her husband in 2016. Hong Mei's murder received considerable visibility thanks to the WeChat group RNW Media and Beijing Qianqian Law Firm set up in 2016. This visibility helped raise awareness on gender based violence and the plight of women migrants in China. Awareness was also raised thanks to the decision of the High Court of Inner Mongolia, which found the husband guilty.

6.3 Our global Love Matters programme

Love Matters takes over the world

In 2017, RNW Media worked to help Love Matters' platforms become independent and sustainable. We worked to develop a model to ensure the sustainability of Love Matters. We started with Love Matters Mexico (Hablemos de Sexo y Amor), now under the stewardship of Mexico Vivo, the national organisation that took over the platform. To read more please turn to our section on sustainability.

Young LGBT stand up for their rights

With support from AmplifyChange, Love Matters launched the Rights, evidence, action-amplifying youth voices programme (REA). In collaboration with CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, REA supports young LGBT persons in India, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda to claim their sexual and reproductive health and rights. In these restrictive settings for LGBT it is very difficult, if not outright dangerous, to discuss and learn about sex, same-sex relationships and sexuality.

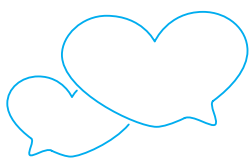
As part of REA we rolled out baseline research in India and Kenya, with twice as many respondents as originally intended. We wanted to know the attitudes of young people towards LGBT persons and their rights. Results of the study? A very high percentage of respondents had some knowledge about LGBT, but when asked about their nuanced understanding, they showed much less knowledge. So, young people do not know much about LGBT issues, and that means they do not support the sexual and reproductive health and rights of LGBT? Wrong! A large majority of the young people in both countries say they think LGBT persons should have the same rights as heterosexual people.

Unique report

Love Matters and the Institute of Development Studies produced the report, "Sex Education in the Digital Era". Much of the research on sexuality in the digital era is moralistic and slanted. For those working on sexual and reproductive health, youth and digital development issues, learning more about the subject is a major challenge. There is a lack of scholarly work on these topics for a mixed audience of researchers, policymakers and practitioners. The report showed a clear urgency for academics and practitioners to understand and develop digital literacy skills to help build online environments for sex education.

Amazing successes

Love Matters India won prizes with several (online) campaigns. Love Matters in Egypt grew significantly through an online campaign against gender based violence, and in China, Love Matters organised a national festival on SRHR. They had the unique chance to make the voices of young people heard to Government officials from the Chinese Ministry of Health and international organisations, such as UNESCO and UNICEF.



Love Matters in local settings

Love Matters India

Love Matters India could easily be considered an incubator for innovation. In February the team launched a podcast series, under the Packard Foundation India grant. This strategy is meant to raise awareness and increase the knowledge of young people in an interesting and fun manner. The podcasts talk about safe sex, first time sex, abortion, and pornography—to name a few topics. The podcasts are positive, focus on pleasure, non-judgmental and use simple language.

"The episode about virginity was very useful as it had nice people talking about something important. The fact that it is a radio programme without any visuals actually helps some of us feel more comfortable about sharing our thoughts and participating in discussions."

A follower of Love Matters India podcasts

What's Love Matters India's reach? At end 2017, Love Matters India had 35 million total content views, and 1.3 million social media community members.

Who hasn't heard of Kya Yahi Pyar Hai? It's Love Matters India's Virtual Reality film on intimate partner violence. The film showed force and violence don't belong in a loving relationship. In partnership with Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (now, there's an innovative partnership!) we screened the film across Delhi metro stations. We also organised a launch screening of the film in Mumbai, home of Bollywood. Not surprisingly this rare experience in public spaces received attention from famous personalities and celebrities, along with space in national press and social media. The film is listed as one of the five finalists for the Social Impact Media Awards 2018. It was screened in Berlin and in different cities in the US. Commenting on the film, the selection panel for Global Voices, San Francisco USNC-UN Women VR Film Festival - Lived Stories said: "Your film stood out as special and unique among the many strong films from around the world that were submitted."

"We learned that a VR experience can prove to be a very important tool for social impact if used, strategised and planned right. Our team is using the lessons learned for the next VR film production on abortion we are now working on."

—
Vithika Yadav, programme manager Love Matters India

Love Matters China

In September, with support from the Ford Foundation, Love Matters China rolled out a 15-day online campaign on gender based violence, focusing on less-addressed issues like emotional abuse and excessive control. Test screenings of the featured video, "Obsessive Love", showed the video could be effective for changing controlling attitudes. The campaign had over 2.3 million participants, and it was mentioned 21 times in Chinese media. More broadly, Love Matters China had 327 content views.

"Let's talk about love" is a Love Matters China rap song performed at the 5th Greater China Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference in November, organised by Love Matters China with the China Family Planning Association. It's surely the first rap song in China on school-based sex education. The interactive, multi-platform conference brought together some 300 people from various sectors from all over China. An additional 700,000 people joined the event online. More than 120 Chinese mainstream media organisations covered this event, and we had more than 4.5 million page views on Love Matters China's social media platforms. More than 85% of the participants reported their knowledge increased through the event, and they strongly see the need for comprehensive and scientific sex education.

"This is the best event I've ever seen which is filled with advanced theories and best practices from all China, and I am so impressed by the liveness and vitality of young people who participate in this event. I have seen the prospect of the success of the Love Matters China project and your project team members are rigorous, highly professional, meticulous and full of vigour."

—
One of the key speakers, Peng Xiaohui, professor of China Huazhong University and director of the Sex Education Committee of China Sexology Association

Love Matters China reached over 200,000 followers on Weibo (Chinese Twitter) in August 2017 thanks to two popular tweets in August. The tweets were about the “Great Wall of Vagina” exhibition designed by sculptor, Jamie McCartney. The tweets challenged the stereotypical misperception and disparaging distortion of the body image of women and generated 25 million page views and 22,000 comments on Love Matter China’s social media platforms.

One follower said: “This is the very first time I know that every woman’s vagina looks different; women should stop feeling ashamed about their body because they are perfect the way they are.”

Love Matters Egypt

Love Matters Egypt grew quickly in 2017. The platform had a total of 24 million content views in 2017, and well on the way to a million social media community members and the YouTube channel reached more than 120,000 subscribers. The campaign, #saynotoVAW, part of the global 16 Days Campaign against Violence against Women, reached more than one million social media users. It was the first time Love Matters Egypt took part in such a large campaign with other actors. An offline event complemented the online activities. It included a stand-up skit on gender based violence by the famous comedian, Ali Quandil, a live concert by the equally well-known singer, Mohamed Mohsen, and a closing ceremony hosted by the Egyptian actress, Injy El Mokkadem.

“I am really proud of the campaigns we did, especially the one on gender based violence. We were able to engage young people on social media. We created content to fight gender based violence. We have changed attitudes on intimacy and identity.”

Ramy Mitwali, country coordinator of the RNW Media Love Matters Egypt platform



Success story

Love Matters Egypt gets to influence young, bright minds! Thanks to a strategic partnership with the International Federation of Medical Students’ Association (IFMSA) that emerged from a successful training with 80 young trainee medics, Love Matters Egypt will be delivering a specially tailored training for secondary school and university students. The training is designed around the science- and rights-based, pleasure-positive approach of Love Matters. And as if that weren’t enough, as part of their awareness raising strategy that complements these trainings, Love Matters Egypt published content twice a week in mainstream media, first in Almasry Alyom and later in Alwatan News.

Love Matters Kenya

Love Matters Kenya focused on its engagement in the REA programme last year. It wasn’t easy to post content on LGBT issues given the particularly risky electoral environment in Kenya throughout 2017. Simply put, they were overheated times. Nevertheless, work continued. Love Matters Kenya had 3.9 million total content views and 1.3 million social community members.

Major activities included the Baseline Research described above, as well as networking and partnership development with other SRHR organisations within Kenya and in the region. The baseline study established a benchmark for online activities under the REA Programme, and measured changes within young people's knowledge around reproductive health in Kenya, with a focus on following up on the changes in attitudes over time. We massively surpassed the target of 800 respondents with a total of 2,017 respondents completing the survey in Kenya. The analysis of the results of the survey validated the need for a reliable online resource on SRHR that includes LGBT issues. This was good news since the Love Matters Kenya website continued to have a strong online presence last year, hosting almost two million sessions and growing its social media community to 1.3 million followers.

With the Network for Adolescents and Youth in Africa (NAYA), our local Kenyan partner for REA, we set out to strengthen our relationships with other actors in the SRHR sector. We developed partnerships with the East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative (UHAI), the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK), and the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (NCHRD). We also participated in the International SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression) Forum, which brings together the embassies of supportive governments, as well as regional organisations working on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. We also reached out to a variety of other community-driven organisations, like Ishtar MSM, Gay Kenya Trust, FEMNET, and Minority Women in Action.

Love Matters Mexico

In 2017 Love Matters Mexico, or “Hablemos de Sexo y Amor”, as it's known in Latin America focused on sex, love and relationships. No surprises there since that's what Love Matters is all about. Young people particularly sought information about virginity, love-making, sexual practices considered taboo and sexual pleasure. They also sought information on having healthy relationship, for example, on managing jealousy. Love Matters Mexico proved the popularity of its platform through its 4.8 million content views last year, and a social community of 1.5 million young people.

As addressed earlier, Latin America is no longer part of RNW Media's target countries. Consequently, we started a handover process for the platform. In June 2017 we met with the organisation, Mexico Vivo. Mexico Vivo is a well-established and well-connected national level organisation, credible across Latin America, that provides sex education to young people. Mexico Vivo wanted to take over the platform and stay close to the Love Matters global network and brand at the same time. The remainder of the year we worked together with Mexico Vivo on making Love Matters a lead case for defining the process and steps for making the Love Matters global programme sustainable.

“Thanks for this information on the first time. Your words were exactly what I was looking for and I'll check right away the links. I love your platform!”

—
A Love Matters Mexico user

6.4 RNTC Media training programme



The biggest payoff of 2017 for our Media Training programme was having a clear strategy for RNTC, our media training centre, and a clear plan and set of activities. The mandate of the training centre and its position as part of RNW Media were clearly articulated. Now the goals for RNTC are two-fold: providing capacity development for RNW Media and become financially sustainable through commercial ventures. In light of the latter we explored new possible markets, and in 2017 we succeeded in producing income through new commercial courses and additional Nuffic courses, thus training 568 people from all over the world through a mix of offerings.

Aligned programmes

RNTC's three biggest courses in the last two years have been the Investigative Journalism, Producing Media for Counter Radicalisation, and Media Campaigning for Social Change. These link thematically with RNW Media's other work, in particular the Citizens' Voice programme. Accordingly, we offered training to our local Citizens' Voice teams through RNTC.

We took some important steps for our courses in 2017. We strengthened our team of trainers, bringing on fresh expertise on RNTC themes. And we developed a new course on data journalism to offer in 2018.



Students can now get their credits

In 2017, RNTC became accredited as an academic institution through the Netherlands Qualification Framework (NLQF). That means all our courses now provide academic credit. RNTC can offer a one-year honours programme, and in 2018 that will be extended to a longer master's programme. We also further developed the online academy to educate in multiple languages—English, Arabic, French and Chinese—and serve a broader range of trainees.

On request

In addition to doing open courses in Hilversum and refresher courses in regions, RNTC offers tailored commercial trainings. Last year, we have offered a number of these. Here are just some highlights. We designed a training for SPARK in Irbil Kurdistan, with the theme "Media Campaigns for Countering Radicalisation". For TechSoup Europe we took part in their Tech4Stories project and did a number of trainings on "Media Campaigns for Influence" with civil society organisations in Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania. With the Netherlands Embassies in China and Jordan, respectively, we did trainings in journalism and producing media to counter radicalisation. For Nepad we designed a French and English course in media campaigns for African agriculture and food security officers from 25 different African member states. For BBG, we provided a training on "Broadcast Management and Entrepreneurship", and for the University of Amsterdam we provided a training on "Data Visualisation".

They love RNTC

Whether online, face to face or in Hilversum, RNTC's trainings receive a 90% satisfaction rating. Last year was no exception to the last 12 years. RNTC conducts surveys immediately post training and six months after the training. Our training and trainers maintain a very high satisfaction rating with respondents scoring our courses, giving them 9/10 or even 10/10. The courses always 'exceed expectations'.

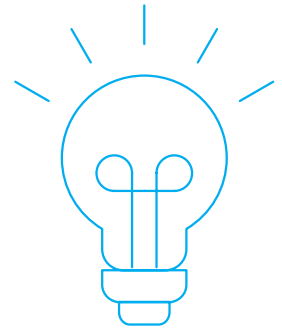
“RNTC has opened me up to a whole new world of journalism. Their teaching techniques are amazing; what a pool of trainers! Prior to this course, I thought there was nothing more to learn about TV/radio production and content generation than what I already picked up in journalism school in Nigeria and my eight years of practice. As the course progressed, I was shocked by the huge knowledge-gap that’s there to be filled. All the topics I explored here, I could not have not IMAGINED before coming here. They were quite revealing.”

Abayomi Adisa, Programmes Producer and alumnus of one of RNTC courses



07.

What did 2017 teach us?



It was the first year our organisation started working at the intersection of the tech world and international development, rather than specifically in the media sector. That required strong internal focus. We learned a lot and had to adapt a lot. But that is the kind of organisation we want to be, one where evidence based critical thinking leads quickly to problem solving and adaptation. We had to make changes at the level of content, in our organisational structure and in staffing, and in relation to how we were engaging with data. We needed a real model for sustainability rather than individual sustainability plans for specific platforms, and if RNTC was going to bring in money a more commercial approach was needed.

Young people's aspirations

The inception phase brought us interesting and valuable insights on the ideas and ambitions of young people. Young people, regardless of the difficulties of their circumstances, think and dream about a better future for themselves. And explicitly political issues are too risky to tackle head on. Read more about those changes in the section on our Citizens' Voice programme.



How we organise ourselves in our work

We had to revise our organisational structure and staffing. The emphasis of our work on data required a different structure and different skills across our teams; to shift into a digital and data driven organisation we had to put more emphasis on 21st century skills. It was challenging to find the right people. The changes we had to roll out were ambitious for a Human Resource team that itself wasn't fully operational yet. Please read more in the section on "Organisational structure and staffing".

When it comes to quality data more is more

Our ambition is to be a data-driven organisation. This means ensuring our data strategy is aligned with our organisational strategy and impact goals. Everything we design must support those goals, and our data must continuously inform our interventions and boost our outcomes. We need to improve our data collection, storage and analysis to measure platform performance, programme performance, and to get deeper insights on young people's behaviour and engagement. Two major action points emerged. First, we need to develop a truly comprehensive data strategy to drive the work and embed our data approach throughout our organisation at all levels. This strategy would also need to take data governance into account. Second, our data team was a stand-alone unit. We needed to integrate the Data Team in our Programmes and Implementation department to bring together the team members who would actually need to be working together very closely.

Shifting responsibilities

Shifting responsibility to local partners to run the platforms that fall outside our strategy was energising. But technical handovers are complex and take time. Finding qualified technical persons who can host a site or manage hosting are in short supply in some regions. We needed a model for sustainability, one that would guide processes from A to Z and provide for all the training and capacity needed in challenging environments.

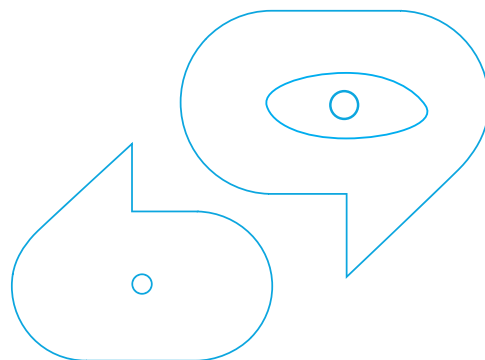
RNTC, market leader

Through workshops, conferences and in the other ways we reached out, RNTC learned more about the media training market expectations, who the big players are, and how we can network in those spaces and compete at the same time. We found out we are a market leader. Those insights led to the development of new courses, such as the data journalism course and the creation of an honours programme in "Advocacy Journalism".

We also realised offering trainings alone is not sufficient. An enabling environment is needed for trained media professionals to be effective and use what they have learnt. This requires improved thinking and linking up with other organisations to support the development of an enabling environment.

08.

Looking ahead



In 2018 we will be looking for new creative ways to bring young people into our communities and engage them actively. Campaigns are an excellent way to do that. We want to explore new distribution methods for our campaigns, for example, through unexpected partnerships, to increase reach and impact. We will leverage the online data collected through our analysis of the discussions on our platforms so we can provide more targeted, relevant interventions.



Data and digital go to the next level

A big focus for 2018 is to expand our pioneering role in the field of digital media, a role which will be enhanced through our new grant from the Dutch Postcode Lottery approved early 2018. Based on the pilots we successfully rolled out, RNW Media will develop a Natural Language Processing tool to mine text and scrape conversations. We will use the tool to monitor and analyse dialogue on our websites and social media platforms in order to detect sentiments expressed and monitor if they change over time. As part of our efforts we will build models for all the main languages used in our target countries. Importantly, the tool will also allow us to measure the effect of our activities more effectively and objectively, feeding directly into our PMEL system.

Last but not least, as part of our data approach we will also focus on compliance with the new European privacy regulations (GDPR). The GDPR focuses on the policies, processes and protection of all data collected, the privacy of personal data collected and the use and sharing of this data.

Citizens' Voice

Through the Citizens' Voice programme we saw young people who live in conflict zones want to look beyond war and conflict and advance their economic opportunities. We are seeking ways to support these young people's aspirations through partnerships with other NGOs working in the same countries. As a first step we joined forces with Dutch NGOs working on young people and economic empowerment. The new Youth Engagement Coalition involves Aflatoun, Save the Children, SPARK, Stichting ZOA and War Child. On a different note, our efforts to hone our platform offer will continue, with This is Africa being released, since it no longer fits the current Theory of Change for Citizens' Voice. Citizens' Voice will launch new projects in Mali and Egypt.

Love Matters

In line with the objectives, we face some major programming scale up ahead of us. As mentioned above, some of Love Matters programmes will become independent. Love Matters will go regional, with Love Matters Africa, Love Matters Afrique, and Love Matters Arabic. We will also launch new Love Matters projects in Rwanda, DRC and Burundi.

RNTC Media training programme

RNTC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2018. We intend to do a training roadshow in key locations, and along with key celebratory events, to produce a book of impact stories from RNTC trainees. Many of our trainees have gone on to have illustrious media careers and have great narratives for us. Perhaps most importantly, we want to launch a new scholarship programme for RNTC. It will run parallel to the Nuffic scholarship programme and give more candidates the possibility of a scholarship to participate in our trainings.

Partnerships and networking

In addition to the new Youth Engagement Coalition RNW Media will continue to develop new and exciting collaborative partnerships with different types of stakeholders. For example, partnerships with social enterprises like Triggerise will deepen, but new partnerships with corporations, for example, in the entertainment world will see the daylight, as will relationships with donors like the Dutch Postcode Lottery. We are actively strengthening our relationship with the Dutch Government—through the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies as well as with Dutch parliamentarians through the SRHR Multi-party Initiative—and seeking to establish relationships with other donor governments. International NGOs operating from The Netherlands will continue to be obvious potential partners, and so our work with the Broad Human Rights Platform (Breed Mensenrechten Overleg) and Share-Net International, the SRHR Knowledge Platform, will continue.