

## Global Press Institute: Digital journalism for women in the developing world

San Francisco, United States  
Mike Berkowitz



### Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

### Project Stage:

Established

### Budget:

\$250,000 - \$500,000

### Website:

<http://www.globalpressinstitute.org/>

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### Project Summary

#### Elevator Pitch

#### **Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.**

GPI uses journalism to educate, employ, and empower women in the developing world to produce high-quality local news coverage that elevates global awareness and catalyzes social change.

#### About Project

#### **Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?**

GPI uses journalism as a tool to solve two pressing global challenges: women's empowerment and the decline of quality international reporting. These problems know no boundaries: in too many developing countries women lack access to professional skills and networks, while news coverage of the developing world wanes. Over the last 25 years, foreign news in daily newspapers has declined by 53% and more than 60% of all foreign bureaus have been closed. Most remaining coverage of the developing world is conducted by foreign correspondents who are parachuted into a country, often don't speak the language, and don't understand the culture. This shapes the news we see, and deprives women in these countries of a chance to use their natural storytelling skills to report on their own communities.

#### **Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!**

Using digital technology, GPI educates, employs, and empowers women in the developing world through the practice of professional journalism. GPI offers women a unique training-to-employment opportunity that builds the skills necessary for success in professional journalism – including reporting, digital literacy, ethics, and advanced writing – and then provides them with long-term employment as journalists. GPI reporters are paid a living wage to cover every aspect of life, politics, society, and culture in their communities. GPI operates news desks in 25 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, and has trained and employed more than 130 women. Their stories – generally 1-2 each month per reporter – are published on GPI's newswire and are syndicated to more than 50 news outlets around the world, ranging from small, local language outlets to major news agencies such as the BBC, Reuters, and UPI.

### Impact: How does it Work

**Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.**

As a young woman growing up in rural Nepal, Tara Bhattarai dreamed of becoming a journalist. But with little formal education and few opportunities for women journalists, her dream seemed out of reach. Then in 2007 GPI opened an office in Kathmandu. Tara and four other local women participated in GPI's "The Principles & The Practice" training program, a 2-week intensive on ethical storytelling using digital technologies, followed by six months of targeted reporting exercises. Armed with a kit of multimedia tools, Tara and the other GPI reporters in Nepal learned to use digital platforms to increase access to information and create social change. In the years since that first training, Tara has earned a strong living wage from GPI and has published more than 100 investigative feature stories on a range of pressing social issues. Working within the GPI editorial structure, she has received constant coaching, feedback and skill development. In 2010, the Prime Minister of Nepal became aware of Tara's high-impact reporting and human storytelling, and along with other members of Parliament he used one of Tara's articles about violence among inter-caste couples as the basis for a new law criminalizing such violence. Tara has won or been shortlisted for more than eight international journalism awards, and earlier this year she fulfilled another dream when she became the GPI Country Editor for the Nepal news desk. As editor, Tara is responsible for training and employing the next generation of women in Nepal who dream of creating social change through journalism.

## Sustainability

### **Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

GPI's unique training-to-employment model sets it apart. While many international development and media organizations provide training, few offer opportunities for ongoing practical application of learned skills. Additionally, GPI reporters write and publish in their native languages, so they are not obliged to know English to participate in the program – a requirement at most other organizations in this field. Our closest competitors are World Pulse (an English-only blog platform that does not pay its contributors) and Women's eNews (which does not provide training or long-term employment, and requires knowledge of English or Arabic). However, we have active training and content-sharing partnerships with these groups to strengthen our collective work, so we do not see them as a threat.

## Team

### **Founding Story**

Cristi Hegranes founded GPI after serving for 11 months as a foreign correspondent in Nepal, where she began to recognize many entrenched, problematic aspects of her profession. Most correspondents were parachuted into a country, didn't speak the language, and didn't understand the culture. They lacked access to real people and often wrote through a lens of bias and stereotype. The reality of developing nations such as Nepal was eclipsed by stories on war, disaster and disease. While reporting from a village in Eastern Nepal, Cristi met Pratima, the community matriarch. Pratima was passionate, literate and an incredible storyteller, but she lacked two critical tools that Cristi had access to: journalism training and a credible global platform. It was then that Cristi decided to found GPI, to empower women like Pratima – local women, with social, historical, political context – by providing training and a professional platform to share their stories.

## File attachments:

 [gpi\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](#)

## About You

### **Organization:**

Global Press Institute

### About You

#### **First Name**

Cristi

#### **Last Name**

Hegranes

#### **Twitter URL**

<http://www.twitter.com/pressinstitute>

#### **Facebook URL**

<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalPressInstitute>

## About Your Organization

### **Organization Name**

Global Press Institute

### **Organization Country**

, CA, San Francisco, San Francisco County

### **Country where this project is creating social impact**

### **Age of Innovator**

18-34

### **Gender of Innovator**

Female

### **How long has your organization been operating?**

More than 5 years

**Has the organization received awards or honors? Please tell us about them**

The Global Press Institute (GPI)'s work has been continuously recognized and lauded by both journalism and social justice organizations for its unique and effective impact. All told, GPI has won more than a dozen journalism awards and honors. In 2008, founder Cristi Hegranes received the Ida B. Wells Award for Bravery in Journalism. In 2010, the Society of Professional Journalists recognized GPI for Bravery in Journalism. Last year GPI received the prestigious Kurt Schork Prize from the Reuters Foundation for Excellence in International Reporting for its coverage of political rape in Zimbabwe, and Cristi was honored with a Jefferson Award for Public Service. Earlier this year, GPI reporter Chanda Katongo was named Journalist of the Year in Zambia, while Jackee Batanda of the GPI Uganda News Desk received the Elizabeth Neuffer Fellowship at Harvard University.

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Innovation

**How long have you been in operation?**

Operating for more than 5 years

**Which of the following best describes the barrier(s) your innovation addresses? Choose up to two**

Access, Transparency.

Social Impact

**What solution(s) does your initiative address to better the lives of girls and women by leveraging technology? (select all applicable)**

Access to technology, Access to education/training, Access to economic opportunity.

**What has been the impact of your solution to date?**

GPI has had an enormous impact. The combination of training and employment in a dignified profession empowers GPI reporters and provides the means by which they can elevate living standards for themselves and their families. 98% of GPI journalists report feeling empowered as a result of their work with the organization.

By covering stories ignored elsewhere and increasing access to information in countries that do not have free and global media, GPI promotes global awareness about the developing world.

Additionally, more than 25% of GPI stories in the last year have catalyzed direct action, sparking social protest, provoking international attention to issues first covered by GPI, and even changing laws in a country. For example, this June, after GPI Kashmir reporter Aliya Bashir wrote about a local children's hospital where more than 500 children had died since January due to faulty ventilators, Doctors Without Borders and Project Hope contacted GPI about donating ventilators.

**What is your projected impact over the next 1-3 years?**

Over the next three years GPI plans to add additional reporters and editors to our current news desks, supply more of our news desks with multi-media technology and training, build a syndication platform and extensive new syndication partnerships, and formalize our model for creating social change through journalism. This will lead to more trained and empowered women journalists in the developing world; a much larger readership for our original content; and significantly more news stories being generated by GPI that create social impact. We strive for this multi-level impact model: empowered women, an informed global citizenry, and social change that results from transparency and public pressure.

**What barriers might hinder the success of your project? How do you plan to overcome them?**

Geopolitics and security issues are the biggest potential threats to GPI's work. We address these risks by not working in active conflict zones, conducting thorough security assessments before opening a news desk in a country, implementing rigorous security protocols, and working closely with the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Another potential barrier that could hinder our success would be our reporters, who now have marketable skills, being hired away by other news organizations. While this would be, in a sense, a natural and welcome development for the women, GPI tries to retain reporters by paying a living wage and promoting our most talented reporters to Senior Reporters. Furthermore, we mitigate against any harm to our program by employing multiple reporters at each news desk.

**Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and track growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact**

Produce high-quality multi-media journalism at five target GPI news desks: Argentina, Cameroon, India, Kenya, Nepal

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your six-month milestone

**Task 1**

Acquire high-quality cameras and recording equipment for the five news desks

**Task 2**

Launch multi-media training program at the five news desks

**Task 3**

Develop a syndication audience specifically around GPI's multi-media content

**Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone**

Utilize GPI multi-media content to elevate its position in the global media and drive greater social impact

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your 12-month milestone

**Task 1**

Acquire high-quality cameras and recording equipment for all 25 GPI news desks

**Task 2**

Scale multi-media training program to all 25 GPI news desks

**Task 3**

Build syndication platform specializing in multi-lingual, multi-media content to feed GPI news stories to other media

Sustainability

**Tell us about your partnerships**

To enhance its impact and enable other social change organizations to benefit from its work, GPI maintains strong partnerships with dozens of nonprofits. These partnerships include working with Free the Slaves to create a training module on Reporting Modern Slavery; sharing GPI's "The Principles and The Practice" curriculum with news organizations such as World Pulse; and providing content to nonprofits including the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Global Fund for Women (in process), the Institute for Inclusive Security, NPR, and Women's eNews.

**Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren't specified within the list**

GPI's biggest pro-bono needs right now are for an accountant and an auditor. We are always looking for collaboration opportunities to strengthen our work, share our expertise, and market our content. We can, as appropriate, make connections for other initiatives to partner media outlets, and we can share ideas, research, and information that our journalists generate in the course of reporting.

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